



THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

4-5 TOYOMI-CHO, CHUO-KU, TOKYO 104-0055 JAPAN

PHONE: +81-3-3536-6521 FAX: +81-3536-6522

MEDIA RELEASE

16 February 2007 (a.m.)

UPDATE 3: NISSHIN MARU FIRE

Crew who remained on board to extinguish a fire that broke out on the second deck at the rear of the Japanese whale research vessel have been attempting to enter the sealed area in search of their missing colleague.

The area remains hot and filled with dense smoke. Attempts are being made to install ventilators into the area to remove the smoke before a full search can be conducted.

The fire on board the vessel has been extinguished and it's now a matter of removing the dense smoke from the poorly ventilated area.

The Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research, Dr Hiroshi Hatanaka, said the crew was making every effort to enter the area in which the fire broke out to search for Kazutaka Makita, a 27-year-old sailor working on the vessel.

"The area remains filled with dense smoke and is taking some time to clear because of the poor ventilation. We are attempting to install electric ventilators to clear the smoke, but as yet have not been able to fully enter the area to conduct a full search."

Accompanying whale catcher vessels have been providing support. An electric cable has been installed from the Yushin Maru to provide power to the ventilators.

The Institute of Cetacean Research reiterates there is no danger of fuel and/or oil from the Nisshin Maru being leaked into the Southern Ocean. The area in which the fire broke out is not located near the fuel holds.

"Fears that this might turn into some environmental disaster are premature. The vessel is not drifting, it's not listing and it's not leaking. The Nisshin Maru is stable and the fire has been contained to one area well away from any fuel and oil storage."

Further updates will be provided as they become available.

ENDS

For further information contact ICR spokespeople:

Glenn Inwood +64 21 498 010

Gabriel Gomez +81 3 3536 8227