

Press Release 12, April 30th, 2013

**Dansk:**

## **Sømænd frigivet i Somalia**

**Efter mere end to års fangeskab er de seks sømænd, der blev kidnappet af somaliske pirater i forbindelse med kapringen af det danske fragtskib M/V Leopard i januar 2011, frigivet og bragt i sikkerhed.**

De to danske og fire filippinske sømænd er for ganske kort tid siden blevet løsladt ud fra Somalias kyst og befinder sig nu i trygge omgivelser.

"Det er med meget stor glæde og lettelse, at vi kan meddele, at vores kollegaer endelig er frigivet. De sidste mere end to år har været særdeles traumatiske og umenneskelige for vores besætning og deres familier, og vi glæder os meget til atter at få vores kollegaer hjem", siger Claus Bech, direktør i Shipcraft.

"Jeg har netop talt med sømændenes familier. Det var et meget bevægende øjeblik, og det siger sig selv, at den lykkelige besked blev modtaget med stor glæde", siger Claus Bech, der nu selv tager af sted for at møde sømændene på deres opholdssted.

### **I sikkerhed med professionelt personale**

Sømændene befinder sig i sikkerhed og er omgivet af professionelt personale, heriblandt læger og psykologer.

"De første vurderinger er, at vores kollegaer efter omstændighederne har det ok. Men det er vigtigt for os, at de får den bedst mulige lægelige hjælp nu, og så snart vores besætning er blevet grundigt undersøgt og har fået lægernes accept, vil de blive hjulpet hjem til deres familier", siger Claus Bech.

### **Umenneskelig situation**

For gidslerne har den lange tid i fangeskab været umenneskelig og opslidende. På nuværende tidspunkt er den konkrete viden om deres tilbageholdelse begrænset. Sømændene blev kidnappet af somaliske pirater i Det Arabiske Hav i januar 2011, da piraterne kaprede fragtskibet M/V Leopard. Piraterne fik imidlertid beskadiget skibet under angrebet og måtte derfor efterlade skibet drivende. Piraterne kidnappede i stedet besætningen og tog dem siden med ind på land, hvor de blev flyttet rundt på forskellige lokationer. Gidslerne har i få tilfælde fået lov til at tale med deres familier.

Shipcraft har nu fokus på at hjælpe sømændene tilbage til et normalt liv. Når sømændene snart vender hjem, har de først og fremmest brug for fred og ro samt uforstyrret samvær med deres familier.

"De traumatiske og umenneskelige oplevelser, vores kollegaer har været igennem, har selv sagt sat dybe spor hos dem. Vi har nu al vores fokus på at sikre sømændene en god reintegration", siger Claus Bech.

### **Tæt samarbejde med myndigheder og gidseltagningsekspert**

Siden besætningens kidnapning har Shipcraft arbejdet tæt sammen med de danske myndigheder for at sikre den bedste håndtering af situationen. Rederiet har i hele forløbet desuden haft tilknyttet velrenommerede udenlandske - og siden ultimo 2011 også danske - gidseltagningsekspert. Ekspertene har igennem hele forløbet rådgivet Shipcraft i de særdeles vanskelige forhandlinger med piraterne.

”Gidselsagen har trukket ud i mere end to år. Vi er et meget lille rederi, og piraterne har haft helt urealistiske forventninger til løsesummen”, siger Claus Bech.

”Vi har sammen med vores rådgivere kæmpet hårdt hver eneste dag siden kidnapningen for at finde en løsning. Vi er glade for, at det hårde arbejde, som alle involverede har lagt i at få besætningen løsladt, nu er blevet belønnet med vores kollegaers frigivelse. Vi vil gerne rette en stor tak til vores eksterne eksperter og de danske myndigheder for deres hjælp og assistance i denne svære tid”, siger Claus Bech.

Af hensyn til eventuelle fremtidige gidselsituationer kan Shipcraft ikke udtale sig om løsesummens størrelse, men det ligger fast, at Shipcraft har betalt et anseeligt millionbeløb, der er væsentligt højere end i tidligere gidseltagninger, hvor der har været danskere involveret.

### **Sømændene har brug for ro**

Shipcraft beder medierne om at have forståelse for, at sømændene nu har brug for ro og samvær med deres familier.

”Vi har naturligvis forståelse for, at sagen har stor offentlig interesse, og vi vil derfor løbende holde medierne orienteret om nyt i sagen. Det er muligt nu, hvor offentlig omtale ikke længere kan være til skade for vores besætnings frigivelse. Til gengæld er det vores håb, at medierne vil respektere, at vores kollegaer i denne tid først og fremmest har brug for fred og ro sammen med deres familier”, siger Claus Bech.

**Henvendelser fra pressen kan rettes til Shipcrafts direktør Claus Bech via kommunikationsrådgiver Mads Lindberg på mail: [press@shipcraft.dk](mailto:press@shipcraft.dk) eller telefon: 2981 0290.**

**English:**

## **Seamen Released in Somalia**

**After more than 2 years of captivity, the six seamen, who were kidnapped by Somali pirates in connection with the seizure of the Danish coaster M/V Leopard in January 2011, have been released and lead to safety.**

The two Danish and the four Philippine seamen have very recently been released off the Somali coast and are now in safe surroundings.

”It is with very great happiness and relief we can inform that our colleagues finally have been released. The past more than two years have been extremely traumatic and inhuman for our crew and their families, and we very much look forward to having our colleagues back home”, informs Claus Bech, Managing Director of Shipcraft.

”I have just talked to the families of the seamen. It was a very emotional moment, and it goes without saying that the happy news were received with great joy”, informs Claus Bech, who now himself travels to meet the seamen at their resort.

### **In Safety with Qualified Team**

The seamen are now in safety and are surrounded by a professional team consisting of both

doctors and psychologists.

"The first evaluations are that our colleagues, considering the circumstances, are ok. However, it is important to us that they receive the best possible medical assistance now, and as soon as they have been thoroughly examined and have received the doctor's acceptance, they will be brought home to their families", informs Claus Bech.

### **Inhuman Situation**

This long period of time in captivity has been inhuman and exhausting for the hostages. For now details of the captivity is limited. The seamen were kidnapped by Somali pirates in the Arabian Sea in January 2011, when pirates captured the coaster M/V Leopard. However, the pirates damaged the ship and left it drifting. Instead the pirates kidnapped the crew and since took them ashore, where they were moved to different locations in Somalia. On a few occasions the hostages have been allowed to talk to their families.

For now Shipcraft's main focus is to help the seamen get back to a normal life. When they return home, they first and foremost need peace and quiet and undisturbed time with their families.

"The traumatic and inhuman conditions our colleagues have experienced have of course affected them deeply. Now our main focus is to ensure they get a good reintegration", says Claus Bech.

### **Close Cooperation with Authorities and Kidnapping Experts**

Since the kidnapping of the crew Shipcraft has worked closely with the Danish Authorities to ensure the best possible handling of the situation. During the entire period the company has been closely connected to well reputable foreign - and since the end of 2011 also Danish - kidnapping experts. The experts have throughout the duration of the kidnapping advised Shipcraft in these extremely difficult negotiations with the pirates.

"The kidnapping has been going on for more than two years. We are a very small company and the pirates' expectations to the ransom have been completely unrealistic", informs Claus Bech.

"We have together with our advisors been fighting hard every day to find a solution. We are happy that the hard work all involved parties have done in order to have the crew set free, now have been rewarded with their release. We wish to thank our extern experts and the Danish Authorities for their help and assistance during these hard times", says Claus Bech.

Considering possible future kidnapping situations Shipcraft cannot reveal the size of the ransom, but Shipcraft has paid considerable millions, substantially more than previous kidnappings where Danish citizens have been involved.

### **The Seamen needs peace and quiet**

Shipcraft now ask media to accept that the seamen will need peace and privacy with their families.

"Of course we realize that the matter has great public interest, and we will keep the media informed about any news. This is now possible as publicity no longer can endanger the release of our crew. In return we hope that the media will respect that our colleagues now first and foremost need peace and privacy with their families", informs Claus Bech.

**Inquiries from the press can be directed to Managing Director Claus Bech via**

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