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MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand watercraft attacks the Nisshin Maru

The research-base vessel Nisshin Maru, currently engaged in the Japanese whale research program in the Antarctic (JARPA II) was subject to attack today for about two hours by the New Zealand-registered watercraft Ady Gil following a brief encounter with the Bob Barker*, a vessel sent to the Antarctic by the antiwhaling group Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. The encounter with the Bob Barker occurred at 00:00JST.

In a manner similar to their 23 December attack on the Shonan Maru No. 2, at about 0300JST the Ady Gil came to collision distance directly in front of the Nisshin Maru bow repeatedly deploying and towing a rope from its stern with the intent to entangle the Japanese vessel's rudder and propeller. Further, the activists onboard the Ady Gil recurrently shoot a green laser device aiming at the Nisshin Maru crew and fired butyric acid-containing ball-like projectiles with a launching device. One of these projectiles landed in the Nisshin Maru's deck.

After broadcasting a warning message through a long range acoustic device (LRAD), the Nisshin Maru started its water cannons and proceeded to prevent the Ady Gil coming closer. Neither injuries to the Japanese crew nor damage to the Nisshin Maru resulted from the New Zealand watercraft's attack.

The Sea Shepherd extremism is becoming more violent. Aiming directly to the Nisshin Maru crew, the activists have repeatedly fired illegal high-power laser devices which can produce blindness when irradiated to the naked eye and have fired projectiles containing butyric acid, a substance highly hazardous to the human body including skin and eyes. Their actions are nothing but felonious behavior. In addition, their repeated deploying and abandonment of ropes designed to entangle the propeller of our navigating vessels ultimately ends becoming litter which is spoiling the Antarctic marine environment.

The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society extremist actions which threaten the safety of Japan's whale

research vessels and their crews. Contrary to its claims to be a marine wildlife conservation group in reality they are dedicated to fund-raising and to spread violence under pretext of protecting whales.

Following last December attacks, Australia, the de facto home port country to the Steve Irwin neglected to take appropriate and objective actions when the activist's vessel briefly made a port call in Hobart. The Institute of Cetacean Research urges again all related nations including the Netherlands, the Steve Irwin's flag state, and New Zealand, the Ady Gil flag state, to take every means available to prevent the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society actions and strongly request that they observe their international obligations and deal with the Sea Shepherd in a strict and objective manner.

* While the Bob Barker briefly approached to the Nisshin Maru, the Steve Irwin which left Hobart on December 31 2009 has not appeared in the scene.

Photographs and video of the incidents in the Antarctic can be seen at:
<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea.htm>

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