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MEDIA RELEASE

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Japanese ship attacked third time in 24 hours

The Nisshin Maru research vessel working for Japan's Antarctic whale research program (JARPA II) was today subjected to its third attack in less than 24 hours from the Dutch ship, the Steve Irwin.

Activists from the Steve Irwin shot acid and paint projectiles at the Nisshin Maru.

At about 20:30hrs JST February 17 (0030hrs NZDT February 18; 2230hrs AEDT), activists in rubber boats approached the Nisshin Maru and started firing numerous butyric acid and paint projectiles with launcher guns. Some of the projectiles landed and spilled on the Nisshin Maru deck.

The Dutch ship launcher gun projectiles have power enough to penetrate through the Nisshin Maru protective nets and tarpaulins.

There was no damage to the Nisshin Maru nor were there injuries to its crew.

The Nisshin Maru used its water cannons and broadcasted warning messages to prevent the Dutch vessel rubber boats approaching. The Togo-registered Bob Barker has disappeared from the scene and is no longer following the Nisshin Maru since the 16 February evening.

The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns Sea Shepherd's dangerous and violent actions carried out against Japan's whale research vessels and crews who are conducting perfectly legal research activities in the Antarctic.

The ICR urges again the Netherlands (the Steve Irwin's flag state), Australia (the de facto home port country to the Steve Irwin), and all other related countries to take every means available to prevent the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society illegal and violent actions.

The ICR strongly requests that these countries observe their international obligations and deal with the Sea Shepherd in a strict and objective manner.

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

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