

MEDIA RELEASE

20 February 2013

Sea Shepherd vessels sabotage Nisshin Maru refueling and provoke collisions

On February 20 around 1100JST until about 1200JST during refueling operations, the Antarctic whale research (JARPAII) mother ship Nisshin Maru (NM) and her supply tanker were subject to sabotage by the Sea Shepherd (SS) ships Steve Irwin (SI), Bob Barker (BB) and Sam Simon (SmS). The SI and BB are sailing under the flag of the Netherlands while the SmS has Australian registry.

1. As the NM was about to come alongside her supply tanker for refueling, SS vessels, SI, BB and SmS, in foolhardy obstruction attempts, repeatedly came at close-quarter distance with the NM and the supply tanker. During their obstruction to refueling operations the SS vessels provoked several collisions (at the least: SI once; BB twice, SmS once) with the NM. The BB collided with the supply tanker too.
 2. There were no injuries to the crews of research vessels including NM and the supply tanker. However, the NM suffered denting damage and broken hand railing on her bow section while the supply tanker port side hull was dented and her hand railing was damaged. Both vessels' ability for navigation was not affected by these damages.
 3. During the attack, the NM used her water pump as a preventive measure to make SS vessels refrain from further approaching and repeatedly broadcasted a warning message to stop them. However, the NM decided to interrupt her refueling operation attempts judging from difficulty due to the extremely dangerous behavior of the SS vessels.
- On 17 December 2012 the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an Injunction Order enjoining Sea Shepherd, Paul Watson and anyone acting in concert with them from physically attacking the Japanese research vessels or any person on them and from navigating in a manner that is likely to endanger the safe navigation at sea of any such vessel. The Injunction Order also prohibits them from approaching any vessel engaged by the Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) or Kyodo Senpaku (KS) any closer than 500 yards (about 457 meters) when the research vessels are navigating on the open sea.
 - The ICR and KS filed a Motion for Contempt against Sea Shepherd for approaching the research vessels last January in violation of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Injunction Order. The ICR and KS will provide the Court with additional evidence concerning the 15 and 20 February obstruction actions by Sea Shepherd.

- Japan's research whaling in the Antarctic (JARPAII) is a perfectly legal activity carried out under the International Whaling Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). This time, SS sabotaged refueling operation which is essential for the safe navigation of ships. Thus it threatens safety of our research ships and lives of crews on it and is therefore unacceptable. Over and over again, we call on all related countries including the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand which are flag states and/or port State of SS vessels, and United States in which headquarter of SS is based to take every measure available to restrain them and deal with their criminal actions in a strict and objective manner.
- SS's allegations that there was oil spillage during the research vessels refueling operations are unfounded. Refueling from the supply tanker to the research vessels is safely conducted through a hermetically sealed fuel transfer system, making leakage impossible. SS's allegations and rumors about the supply tanker hitting icebergs and oil spilling are equally unfounded.
- An International Treaty establishes specific standards regarding the type of fuel oils that can be used or carried in the Antarctic Ocean. The fuel being carried by the Antarctic research vessels' supply tanker fulfils those specific standards and there is no breach of any international treaty regulations.

NOTE: Images to be attributed to THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH, TOKYO, JAPAN (<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea.html>)

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