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LAUNCH OF REPORT ON HUMAN COST OF MARITIME PIRACY 2012

A report highlighting latest details of the human cost of maritime piracy will be released in London on Tuesday morning 18th June. This updated report studies not only the human cost of Somali Piracy, but also, for the first time, examines the threat of piracy to seafarers in the waters off West Africa.

It further discusses the long-term psychological and financial difficulties faced by seafarers following attacks and periods of time spent in captivity.

The detailed report has been developed through the combined efforts of the Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) project of One Earth Future foundation, of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), and of the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme (MPHRP). It will be launched at an event on 18th June from 11:00am to 12:00 noon in the Plaza Suites 1-2 at the Park Plaza Riverbank Hotel, 18 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TJ. All the media are invited to attend.

The report's findings will be addressed at the event by Kaija Hurlburt of OBP, Pottengal Mukundan of the IMB, and Roy Paul of the MPHRP. Their presentations will be followed by a panel discussion of how the findings of the report fit into the larger discussion of seafarer welfare in areas of high risk, the potential for more transparent reporting on the treatment of hostages, and ways to improve resources available to seafarers. Guests at the event will include a wide range of those involved in all aspects of shipping and counter piracy on the high seas.

Journalists who would like to conduct interviews with the panel speakers before or after the event are invited to approach the speakers through their contact details below.

The report finds that incidents of violence against seafarers remain high, and whilst there has been an 80 percent drop of attacks off the coast of East Africa, the average period for hostages that remain captive off of Somalia exceeds two years. Additionally, more seafarers were subjected to attacks and boarding by West African Piracy than by Somalia-based piracy. The report also includes a statistical analysis of the violence caused by acts of piracy, analysis of seafarer interviews discussing their perception of piracy, and sections discussing the different threats and economic impacts faced by seafarers off East and West Africa.

According to Kaija Hurlburt of OBP, "The report shows that continued vigilance and better reporting is needed to relieve the plight of seafarers; as long as one hostage remains in captivity, the human cost is too high." Roy Paul of MPHRP added: "Seafarer welfare, both during and after being taken hostage, remains a huge concern and the effects of piracy reach far beyond the days spent in captivity." According to Pottengal Mukundan of the IMB, "This report is unique in that it contains information submitted by Flag States, on-line surveys of seafarer concerns regarding piracy, as well as firsthand accounts from released seafarers."

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