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PIRATE ATTACK ON FILIPINO SEAFARERS SPARKS PROTESTS

The hijacking of the cargo ship *Beluga Nomination* that resulted to the killing of one Filipino Seafarer in January this year has put the industry more apprehensive about the worsening piracy attacks in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Crewed by a majority of Filipinos, one of the *Nomination* crews was shot dead while another had reportedly remained missing after the incident.

The violent incident prompted the maritime industry to reconvene its stakeholders that included labor and management sector, and leaders of various concerned government agencies in the Philippines.

Statements condemning the actions of the Somali Pirates over the *Beluga Nomination* incident in the strongest terms had been released by both private and state agencies. DOLE expressed “outrage over the senseless disregard for human life” and “condemned in the strongest possible terms the atrocity of the Somali pirates.” From the private sector, the Joint Manning Group (JMG) and the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) denounced the attack and the killing with indignation. They also “encourage others to do so if only to inform the global maritime community and the Filipino people that this atrocity is outrageous.” (The two statements are found in the succeeding pages of this issue.)

Meanwhile, the incident brings us into inquiry on the status of Piracy in Africa with the following relevant data from EUNAVFOR updates:

➤ As of January 01-31, 2011, the number of Piracy incidents totalled to 28 of which 23 were unsuccessful attacks; cases where ships were pirated totalled to four (4) including MV *Beluga Nomination*, and one (1) case where a pirated ship was released.

➤ As of February 1-28, 2011, the number of Piracy incidents totalled to 20 of which seven

(13) were unsuccessful attacks; cases where ships were pirated totalled to five (7).

Pirated Vessels (January 01 – February 28, 2011)

| DATE OF INCIDENT | VESSEL NAME | VESSEL TYPE | CREW COMPOSITION | PLACE OF INCIDENT |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| January 15, 2011 | MV Samho Jewelry | Tanker | 21 Crews (Myanmar, Korean, Indonesian) | 350 NM South East of Muscat |
| January 17, 2011 | MV Eagle | Bulk Carrier | 24 Crews (Filipino) | 490 NM South of Salallah |
| January 22, 2011 | MV Beluga Nomination | General Cargo | 12 Crews (Polish, Filipino, Ukrainian) | 390 NM South Seychelles |
| January 25, 2011 | MV Khaled Muhheiddine K | Bulk Carrier | 25 Crews (Polish, Egyptians) | 330 NM South East of Omani |
| February 08, 2011 | MV Savina Caylyn | Oil Tanker | 22 Crews (Italian, Indian) | 670 NM East of Socotra Island |
| February 09, 2011 | MV Irene SL | Crude Carrier | 25 (Greek, Georgian, Filipino) | 350 NM South East of Muscat |
| February 12, 2011 | MV Sinin | Bulk Carrier | 23 (Iranian, Indian) | 350 NM East of Masirah |
| February 13, 2011 | FV Alfordous | Fishing Vessel | 8 Crews | 70 NM West of Socotra |
| February 18, 2011 | SV Quest | Yacht (US) | 4 Crews | 430 NM South of Salallah |
| February 24, 2011 | SY ING | Yacht (Danish) | 7 Crews | 275 NM North of Socatra |
| February 28, 2011 | MV DOVER | Bulk Cargo Carrier | 23 Crews (Romanian, Russian, Filipinos) | 50 NM South of Oman |

Source: JMG, DOLE, [EUNAVFOR](#)

FSA ENDORSES EMPLOYMENT OF ARMED SECURITY GUARDS ON VESSELS

In view of the escalation of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden and other pirate-infested areas, several members of the Filipino Shipowners Association (FSA) have submitted application to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) to deploy armed security guards onboard ships transiting High-Risk areas. Relatively, FSA has given endorsement of said applications to their members.

In response, MARINA ruled that applicants will be required to submit a copy of contract between shipowner and the armed security service provider, the rules of engagement and the qualifications of the guards that will be employed. Source: FSA, JMG Memorandum Circular 007-11

ASIAN SEA PIRATES CHANGE ROUTE

The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) has reported that armed robberies in Asia have switched concentration from Indonesia to the Strait of Malacca and Singapore.

ReCAAP has seen a trend in piracy incident reports which showed a decrease in the number of incidents in Indonesia and an increase in the Strait of Malacca and Singapore.

ReCAAP further recommended that ships take preventive measure while navigating these areas. Among which, it was recommended that look-outs be maintained during the night, locking of cabin doors and windows, and being cautious about boats offering barter and taxi

services around anchorage areas. Source: [Fairplay Daily News](#), JMG Memorandum-Circular 007-11

JOINT STATEMENT of the JOINT MANNING GROUP (JMG), and the ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' AND SEAFARERS' UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) 05 February 2010, Manila, Philippines On the M.V. "Beluga Nomination" piracy incident

As issued through JMG Memorandum-Circular 002-11 dated 08 February 2011

The officers and representatives of five national organizations belonging to the Joint Manning Group (JMG) and the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) express deep concern over the piracy incident involving the international cargo vessel *M.V. Beluga Nomination* that already claimed the life of a Filipino Seafarer.

M.V. Beluga Nomination was attacked in the afternoon of 22 January 2011 by a fast craft with an unknown number of pirates. Four days later, an element of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) in the area attempted to rescue the vessel's crew, during which one pirate was killed.

The pirates, in retaliation, shot and killed a Filipino crew member. During the incident, two crew members, one of whom a Filipino, managed to escape. The other two, one Filipino and one East European, are still missing and are now the subject of continuing search and rescue operation.

Seven out of 12 crew members remain hostages. Of the seven, four are Filipinos and three are East Europeans. Negotiations for the early release of the vessel and the hostages are ongoing between the pirates and the shipowners.

We denounce this attack and the killing with indignation, and encourage others to do so if only to inform the global maritime community and the Filipino people that this atrocity is outrageous. We are one with the government in rightfully condemning the pirates' lawless behavior and their senseless disregard for human life.

International piracy is a threat to global shipping and the industry is dealing with it to the best of its abilities and capabilities through tripartite consultation, international cooperation, implementation of most practical and preventive measures, and best management practices (BMP).

Among and within the industry, we comply strictly with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) - Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) mandatory anti-piracy training program for all Filipino seafarers prior to joining their vessels. In cooperation with the Maritime Training Council (MTC), we continue to review and update the anti piracy training module in response to the changing needs of the times.

We are equally concerned with the seafarers and their families who are affected by piracy incidents. We continue to cooperate with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in providing medical assistance and post-trauma counseling.

More importantly, we join the government in its urgent call for more effective, unified and comprehensive actions of competent UN bodies and other international organizations in

the global shipping community to address and end the piracy problem. Source: JMG, AMOSUP

“DOLE CONDEMNS KILLING OF FILIPINO SEAFARER; PLANS ACTION WITH MANNING INDUSTRY ON BETTER PROTECTION OF SEAMEN AGAINST PIRACY

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz yesterday strongly condemned the killing of a Filipino seafarer in the hands of Somali pirates as a "senseless disregard for human life", and said the Department has discussed with its tripartite partners a plan of action containing measures on how to better safeguard and protect Filipino seafarers on board international vessels traversing the pirates-infested waters of the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.

"We express outrage over this senseless disregard for human life and we condemn in the strongest possible terms the atrocity of the Somali pirates," she said.

"We are also saddened by this tragic incident, and deeply condole with the family and relatives of the deceased Filipino seaman. Earlier, I have instructed Administrator Carmelita Dimzon of the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration (OWWA) to extend all possible assistance and monetary benefits to his family, and she has reported that the OWWA had already acted accordingly," she added.

Baldoz issued the statement after the DOLE received reports that Somali pirates had shot and killed a Filipino seafarer last 26 January 2010 onboard the MV Beluga Nomination, a general cargo ship hijacked by Somali pirates off the coast of Seychelles on 22 January 2011.

A preliminary report of the MV Beluga Nomination's local manning agency, Marlow Navigation Philippines, Inc., said that Farolito Vallega, 48, and a bosun at the vessel, was shot and killed by pirates apparently in a "fit of anger" after an element of the Combined Maritime Forces, the international anti-piracy contingent patrolling the waters of the Gulf of Aden, attempted to free the MV Beluga Nomination and rescue its crew.

The vessel has a 12-member crew, seven of them Filipinos. Of the seven, one seafarer, Ferdinand Aquino, 46, a cook, has escaped after he jumped overboard and was rescued; while another seaman, Elviro Salazar, 26, a wiper, was reported missing. Four remain captives of the pirates.

Marlow Navigation Philippines, Inc. had reported to the DOLE that its principal continues to negotiate for the release of the hostages and to undertake search and retrieval operation for the missing Salazar and the body of Vallega.

It also said that it is working on the provision of the death benefits of Vallega and the continued allotment of the wages for the rest of the Filipino seamen.

"I have also directed the OWWA to provide the necessary package of assistance to Mr. Aquino and his family, as well as to the family of Mr. Salazar," said Baldoz.

She explained that the DOLE and its tripartite partners in the private sector are closely working together to ensure that Filipino seafarers are better protected against sea pirates and are calling for firmer, decisive international action against sea piracy.

Secretary Baldoz last Saturday, together with top officials of the DOLE, OWWA, Philippine

Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and Maritime Training Council (MTC), met with officials and representatives of the Joint Manning Group (JMG) and the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) to review and assess current anti-piracy procedures and measures and in order to come up with updated action plan on how to provide better protection to Filipino seafarers.

Baldoz reported that the DOLE, JMG, and the AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF had agreed to undertake the following:

1. Strengthen reporting systems between the DOLE and the manning industry on incidents of piracy;
2. Update the mandatory anti-piracy preparedness training program for all seafarers being prepared by the MTC and the National Maritime Polytechnic (NMP), particularly on the aspect of Best Management Practices (BMP);
3. Recommend to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation on the anti-maritime piracy program with the United States that would greatly enhance education and training capability in this particular area;
4. Encourage the JMG and other industry stakeholders to intensify promotion of BMP to deter piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Arabian Sea Area pursuant to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Circular; and
5. Recommend to the DFA to strongly urge the United Nations to review the existing mandate of the multinational forces in the Indian Ocean and empower such forces to take a more proactive role to combat piracy, and to encourage governments, whose flag the pirated ships are flying, to prosecute pirates if

and when apprehended by the naval forces.

The JMG, composed of five national maritime organizations and the AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF, are two of the DOLE's dialogue partners in the maritime sector. Both have also strongly denounced the killing of Bosun Vallega." Source: DOLE

INDUSTRY UPDATES

POEA RESTORES EXIT CLEARANCE VALIDATION AT NAIA

The POEA has restored the implementation of OFW Exit Clearance validation in the country's major airports in an attempt to combat human trafficking and illegal recruitment. It will be recalled that exit clearances at airports was dropped by POEA in March 2008.

New POEA Administrator Carlos S. Cao Jr. said, in the POEA statement dated 09 February 2011, that the validation of the OFW Exit Clearances (which comes in the form of the Overseas Employment Certificates or E-Receipts) is necessary to ensure that only workers who are properly documented with authentic documentations required for working abroad will be allowed to leave the country.

POEA claimed that the validation process will not last more than a minute with the help of technology and as more validation machines will be installed the concerned airports.

Hence, effective March 1, 2011, all OFWs travelling out of the country via NAIA Terminals 1, 2, and 3 will have to pass through the Labor Assistance Center (LAC) to have their exit clearances validated prior departure. Exit

clearances that are validated shall only be held valid until the date of the confirmed flight. Revalidation will also be allowed but only to flights that have been cancelled or rescheduled for valid reasons.

Relative to this development, JMG met with Admin. Cao on 18 February. On said meeting the directors of JMG were able to explain that the form of illegal recruitment that is being prevented by the validation process never happens in the sea-based industry. JMG explained that a seafarer cannot be deployed unless he/she has a definite airport destination wherein the ship he/she will embark is located or is docked. Also, before the airline boards the seafarer, the agent at the receiving port will have to issue "ok to board" to the airline. The seafarers' departure is also supported/validated by several pre-deployment documentations such as the POEA. Employment Contract Annex III, and the Certificate of Cover which the seafarer is supposed to be secured with prior his departure.

As a result of the meeting, Admin Cao's guaranteed that the sea-based industry will be exempted from the validation process. This was manifested on the latter issuance of POEA Memorandum Circular 03 Series of 2011 dated 28 February 2011.

The circular likewise specifically required manning agencies to submit to LAC a weekly report on the list of seafarers they have deployed. This was intended for statistics and data capture. Source: [POEA](#), JMG

CAPT OCA AWARD IS LATEST FOR EXEMPLIFYING 'NEW HEROES'

In memory of the dear departed Capt. Gregorio S. Oca, president and founder of AMOSUP, and his valuable contributions to

the maritime industry both locally and internationally, the Bagong Bayani Foundation, Inc (BBFI), has included the Capt. Gregorio S. Oca Award as a distinguished category for the Bagong Bayani Awards starting 2011.

Having its roots in 1984, the Bagong Bayani Awards was created to pay tribute to Overseas Filipino Workers, who are labeled as "*bagong bayani*" or new heroes of the country, who have distinguished themselves through their work and civic/social contributions. The awards are given to those who have exemplified the image of the OFW as a competent, dignified and responsible worker and have also given valuable contributions to the socio-economic well-being of their community and the nation as a whole.

In 09 February 2011 the BBFI, in cooperation with OWWA and POEA, has opened the nomination for the Bagong Bayani Awards 2011. Invitation for nomination was sent to the Joint Manning Group (JMG) on the same date.

The 2011 BBA Awards will be featuring five Award Categories as follows:

1. Bagong Bayani Awards for Outstanding Employee
2. Bagong Bayani Awards for Community and Social Service
3. Bagong Bayani Award for Culture and the Arts
4. Capt. Gregorio S. Oca Achievement Award
5. Blas F. Ople para sa Natatanging Bagong Bayani

Among these awards, the Blas F. Ople Award still remains to be the most coveted being the award of highest prestige. This award is given to an OFW who have been nominated, qualified or excelled in at least two of the other award categories.

The Capt. Gregorio S. Oca Award, on the other hand, will be given to an OFW who has epitomized any of the numerous achievements of the late captain.

As per the guidelines set by the BBFI, the nominees for the awards must preliminarily satisfy the following qualifications:

- Must be an OFW for at least two years
- Must have no past or present criminal or derogatory record
- Must be of good moral standing, or has received recognition from past or present employer for exemplary behaviour or outstanding service; and
- Must obtain employment Contract processed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Source: BBFI

MSAP 2011

The Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council, Inc (PJMCC) has carried out the Maritime Schools Assessment Program (MSAP) 2011 last February 11-12, 2011. The MSAP is conducted annually since 2007, and 2010 marks its fifth year.

According to PJMCC, 85 schools nationwide have participated to this year's MSAP, of which 42 are from Luzon, 28 from Visayas, and 15 from Mindanao. Mr. Ericson Marquez reported during the FAME general membership meeting last 24 February 2011 that the MSAP 2011 has received participation from prominent maritime schools including MAAP, John B. Lacson University and the University of Cebu.

The maritime industry, particularly from the PJMCC, has also rounded-up 127 volunteer proctors that facilitated the examination.

According to Mr. Marquez, this is the first time that the MSAP Examinations will be evaluated

by automated means through a system called SCAN TEST OMR Scoring Machine.

The MSAP is an industry-initiated program which measures the quality of maritime students that our schools in the country are producing. Through the MSAP, the industry hopes to likewise evaluate the quality of maritime education that is provided in the Philippines with the end-in-view of producing a pool of qualified marine officers and seafarers that will man international vessels in the coming years. Source: PJMCC

POEA ISSUES ADVISORY ON DEPLOYMENT TO ME COUNTRIES

With the current insurgency occurring in Libya, Yemen and Bahrain, the Philippine Overseas Welfare Administration has released POEA Advisory No. 6 Series of 2011 deferring the processing and deployment of OFWs in the Libya, Bahrain and Yemen until political and security conditions in those countries have been stabilized. The advisory was issued February 22, 2011.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has its hands full with efforts to repatriate OFWs especially from Libya since the condition there is far more serious than in Yemen and Bahrain.

Within two days after his appointment as current "acting" Secretary for DFA, Albert F. Del Rosario, has traveled to Tripoli, the capital city of Libya, under "difficult circumstances" according to DFA. This was on Sunday, 27 January 2011. Secretary Del Rosario will bring to safety some 550 Filipinos to the nearby country of Tunisia.

According to POEA Administrator Carlos S. Cao, Jr. during his speech in a general membership meeting of FAME, the government has chartered the Qatar Airways

and the Philippine Airlines for purposes of evacuating/repatriating OFWs from the above mentioned politically distressed countries. Source: [POEA](#), [DFA](#), JMG Memorandum-Circular 007-11

JMG RENDERS COURTESY CALL TO MTC DIRECTOR CASCO

Last 15 February 2011, the officers and directors of the Joint Manning Group met with the new Maritime Training Council (MTC) Executive Director, Liberty T. Casco, for a Courtesy Call at the Maritime Training Council.

With Dir. Casco being already well-versed about the sea-based industry, the meeting revolved significantly on the upcoming projects/programs of the MTC in relation to the requirements of the STCW Manila Amendments, anti-piracy measures, and developments on seafarer's assessment procedures as well as measures to eliminate fraudulent seafarer certifications.

In line with MTC's plan for the early implementation of the Manila Amendments to the STCW, Dir. Casco informed the group that MTC would conduct an awareness forum on the STCW Manila amendments with plans to involve the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the said event. The forum is targeted sometime in July this year.

It is also part of MTC's immediate plans to release the MTC-approved Piracy Training Module for the endorsement of POEA. MTC is anticipating that the Piracy Training Module, once endorsed by POEA, will serve as a model course that manning agencies can adopt or use. Dir. Casco was glad to announce that as of the present date, the module is on the final stage of creation.

Dir. Casco also told the group that the Council is engaging on plans and measures to

safeguard the maritime training and education system and safeguard the issuance of certificates to avoid acts of forgery and fraudulent documentations. This remains to be a work in progress, according to the director.

Furthermore, comes March of 2011, Dir. Casco said that MTC would be pushing for a change in the procedures of assessment of seafarers. It will be recalled that the industry, first by FAME and afterwards by JMG, submitted a proposal to MTC suggesting that seafarer's assessment be conducted by MTC-accredited training centers and not through the National Assessment Center (NAC) so as to make the procedures less hassling. MTC honored the proposal and is facilitating necessary changes in the procedures.

The new procedure will allow accredited training centers to directly conduct assessment of seafarers. These training centers will be in reportorial terms with the NAC for the issuance of national certificates which will be issued only by the NAC.

With the new procedure, seafarer's assessment will be less complicated and less taxing while also allowing necessary control over issuance of national certificates. Source: JMG

JMG JOINS POEA IN CELEBRATING EDSA'S 25TH YEAR

It was at POEA that the late former president Corazon C. Aquino, the heroin of EDSA, made her first speech during the famous triumphant upheaval in 1986 at EDSA better known as the EDSA People Power Revolution.

During the 25th Anniversary Celebration last 25 February 2011, POEA conducted a grand celebration at POEA Building with the ceremonial unveiling of the historical marker on

the place where the late President Corazon Aquino delivered her first speech. No less that current President "Noynoy" Aquino graced the occasion.

Several leaders of the JMG attended the occasion as special guests in the ceremony including Mr. Ericson M. Marquez, President of FAME and Director for JMG; Capt. Teodoro B. Quijano, Director of FAME and JMG. Also, thirteen marine officers from the NYK-Fil, groomed in their Type-A uniforms, were audience to Pnoy's ceremonial speech.

Alongside that ceremony, the POEA also held a job fair at the POEA Lobby. The Joint Manning Group, in behalf of the member manning agencies of FAME, FSA, INTERMAP, PAMAS and PJMCC conducted the recruitment activities as manned by its secretariat. JMG also streamed a video featuring/promoting the Filipino seafarers beside their counter for public viewing. The job fair offered a total of 25,000 job opportunities for Filipinos with the participation of 42 agencies from both land-based and sea-based industry; overseas and domestic. Source: JMG

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THE JOINT MANNING GROUP

is an umbrella organization of the
five largest manning associations
of the Philippines namely:



the Filipino Association for
Mariners' Employment, Inc.
(FAME), the Filipino Shipowners'
Association (FSA), the
International Maritime
Association of the Philippines
(INTERMAP), the Philippine
Association of Manning
Agencies and Shipmanagers,
Inc (PAMAS) and the Philippine-
Japan Manning Consultative
Council (PJMCC)

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