

Guiding Spirit to Shipping Industry

Sagar Sandesh

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India and Belarus decide to

16 Indian Sailors Held Hostage by Guinean Navy, Seek Govt Help for Release



16 Indian Sailors Held Hostage By Guinean Navy, Seek Govt Help For Release

Sixteen Indian sailors, who are part of the 26-member crew of the ship "MT Heroic Idun" detained in Equatorial Guinea on the west coast of central Africa, have appealed for help to be released from "unlawful" detention. The Norwegian-flagged MT Heroic Idun was arrested by the Equatorial Guinea naval ship in international waters on August 12, 2022.

The crew that has been held in Malabo is against their will. Eleven crew members are on the vessel. Crew physical and mental well-being has declined over the period of the detentions; some crew members have contracted typhoid and malaria others reflecting on suicide.

Given the length of time, the crew has been held, their physical and mental well-being has declined significantly. OSM Maritime top priority continues to be, in order: (1) safe release of the crew (2) safe release of the vessel.

Here is a brief summary received from the vessel.

Heroic Idun being on charter to Mercuria and sub-chartered to BP arrived AKPO offshore terminal operated by TotalEnergies and arrived on location in accordance with voyage orders and tendered notice of readiness 00:01 on 8th August 2022. The AKPO terminal is located approximately 10 nautical miles into the Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and approximately 200 kilometers from Port Harcourt.

During pre-arrival preparations for cargo operations at the terminal, the vessel had submitted all documents received with a request to complete and return. Based on this, the vessel proceeded to tender NOR on location as per the commercial LAYCAN listed in the voyage orders.

Upon arrival, however, it turned out that not all Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) clearances and Navy clearances

were in order. Based on this, the vessel was in the afternoon requested to leave the MEZ and ordered to stay outside the 10-15 nautical miles away from AKPO Terminal. The vessel complied with this order immediately.

Master expressed his concern regarding this to relevant

stakeholders, including the charterer and the company. Awaiting clarification and hope to be allowed inside MEZ or to leave HRA until the cargo is ready, the vessel remained drifting with engines ready and a heightened state of alert. A contingency plan was to breach the MEZ if they were attacked by pirates with the expectation that terminal guard vessels would intervene.

A few hours later, after dark, at around 21:00 local time,

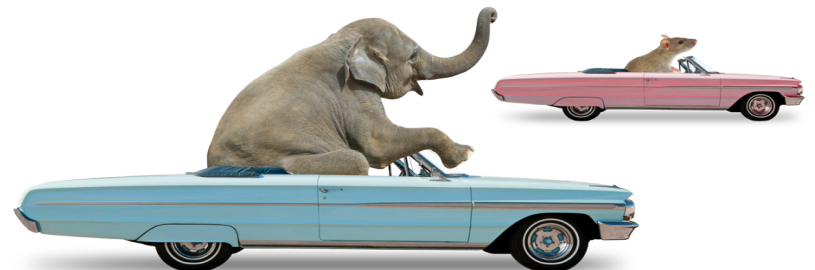
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16 Indian Sailors Held Hostage....

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the OOW picked up VHF communications that a vessel was approaching with the intent of intercepting the vessel. Master was called to bridge.

Subsequent communication with the approaching vessel did not provide confidence that this was a legitimate Navy vessel, and the plead to provide more time to gain confirmation was not accommodated. The vessel was ordered to follow the alleged Navy vessel to "Bonny Fairway Anchorage" and was given a maximum of 10 minutes to comply.

Several parties were contacted to try and confirm the identity and intention of the alleged navy vessel without success. The alleged navy vessel GONGOLA was not using AIS during the approach, as can be seen

below replay from Marine Traffic.

Heroic Idun had AIS on at all times. Other vessels transmitting AIS data.

Heroic Idun never approached any FPSO or SBM in any attempt to connect and load crude oil. Heroic Idun complied with the orders from AKPO to leave the MEZ around 13-14:00 UTC and remained well clear until they were intercepted later in the evening.

Based on a lack of positive identification and confirmation of motive, the Master activated best management practices in accordance with "BMP West Africa". This included increasing to full speed away from the interceptor, sending distress alert, activating SSAS, fire hoses pressurized to create a

curtain, crew mustering in the citadel with only three persons remaining on the bridge, CSO reporting to MDAT-GoG and flag, a company activating war risk insurers contingency team etc.

After almost 1,5 hours of the chase and several attempts to do what appeared to be attempted boardings, the aggressor turned away and headed in the opposite direction. The vessel had successfully escaped what was thought to be an act of piracy.

As per advice from, amongst others, the war risk insurers contingency team and in agreement with CSO, the vessel proceeded at full speed to a position >250 nm from the Nigerian mainland where she remained adrift awaiting clarifications upon consequences of the escape.



Candle light campaign at Kochi for release of seafarers of MT Heroic Idun. Distinguished persons among are Ms Jillian Carson & Capt. Naveen Vinod

The next morning the following was received:

Master, after having had some time to process the events, indicated that the alleged Nigerian Navy vessel highly likely indeed was a naval vessel.

MDAT-GoG, who was contacted by CSO during the actual event

in hope that they could confirm that there was an ongoing naval action upon the vessel came with the following close out the message:

Quote: "We received information about the incident that took place yesterday on one of your ship."

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16 Indian Sailors Held Hostage by From Page -3

The vessel that attempted to board was probably a Nigerian navy ship that wanted to carry out (very clumsily) routine control." Unquote

IMB Piracy Reporting Centre contacted the deputy DPA that they had received information that a boat attempted to board your vessel MV Heroic Idun on 8th Aug 2022 at 2300 UTC, around 10-15 nm off the AKPO oil field, Nigeria.

Follow up email from IMB Piracy Reporting Centre further informed that they had been advised by the Nigerian Navy that it was their naval patrol vessel named GONGOLA that had intercepted our tanker and had requested

to board for investigation. They had advised that our tanker fled the area after the naval patrol vessel wanted to board.

The vessel remained adrift 270-210 nm off the Nigerian mainland, awaiting clarifications on the consequences of the escape. The crew also expressed great concern of returning to Nigerian waters, fearing personal prosecution and, in the worst case being sentenced to jail time in Nigeria.

The vessel commenced and remained drifting inside, but close to the edge, of Equatorial Guinea (EG) and Sao Tome & Principe EEZ.

On 12th August 2022

at around 13:00 UTC while inside Sao Tome & Principe EEZ, the Heroic Idun was approached by EG navy amphibious ship "Capitan David" with orders to stop engines. The navy vessel arriving in broad daylight and with AIS switched on naturally led the Master and his crew to comply with all requests.

The eventual order from the navy vessel was for the Heroic Idun to follow the Capitan David to Malabo, unless they had orders to open fire. Master complied and was at gunpoint escorted at 10 knots towards Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

Closer to Malabo the

order was to go to Luba anchorage to anchor where another EG navy vessel "Wele Nzaz" joined the escort. Instructions from Naval Vessel Capitan David was to proceed to Luba Bay and to anchor in position provided by Luba Port Control: 03-29.0 N // 008-33.8 E.

Upon arrival and once completed anchoring, the following ranks were ordered ashore 14th August 2022: Master, 2nd Officer, 3rd Officer, Ch Engineer, 4th Engineer, Pumpman, AB 1, AB 2, Fitter, Motorman 2. Further items removed from the ship: All crew Passports, Deck & Engine Logbooks, ORB I & II, GMDSS Log and Ships Certificates.

In addition, 2 Media persons and 8 Naval

personnel with weapons boarded.

Later in the day, additional ranks were ordered ashore: Engine Cadet, OS1, Motorman 3, Messman1, Messman2. POB remaining (Ranks) per 14.08.22 12:40: Chief Officer, 3rd Officer Jr, Deck Cadet, AB, OSx2, 2nd Engineer, 3rd Engineer, Electrician, Motorman, Chief Cook

Indian Sailors pleading Government's HELP FOR RELEASE! In addition, the Application for prompt release of vessel MT Heroic Idun with all crew filed by the Marshal Islands against Equatorial Guinea is received by The International Tribunal for the law of the Sea under article 292 of the United Nations Convention.

MARINE NEWS

NEW DELHI
Sagar Sandesh News Bureau

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar stressed on primacy of a Rules Based Order and expressed commitment of the Indian Navy and

that of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) towards promoting the idea of 'collective responsibility' for Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

He was speaking at 18th Western Pacific Naval Symposium at Yokohama



Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar

on November 7 and 8. Chief Naval Staff Admiral R Harikumar has concluded five day official visit to Japan from November 5 to 9th

During the visit the Chief of Naval Staff witnessed the International Fleet Review (IFR), hosted by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) off Yokosuka on November 6th in commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of its formation.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, was embarked on board JMSDF Ship Izumo for the Fleet Review, along with distinguished heads of delegations from

participating Navies. Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kamorta represented the Indian Navy in the International Fleet Review. Rear Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, the Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet was embarked on board INS Shivalik during the Fleet Review. Participation of the two indigenously built ships of the Indian Navy at the IFR aptly showcased the ship-building prowess of Indian shipyards to the international gathering and participating navies.

Following the Fleet Review, Japan, as the current Chair of WPNS, hosted the 18th Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) at Yokohama on November 07-08

Indian Navy participates in the WPNS, as Observer, since 1998. This year's edition of Exercise MALABAR is also being hosted by Japan. Initiated in 1992, this year marks the 30th anniversary of Exercise MALABAR.

To mark this special

occasion, Chiefs of Navies participating in Ex- MALABAR held joint consultations to review the progress achieved through this exercise thus far and areas that could be focussed upon during future iterations, with an aim to further enhance interoperability amongst the participating navies.

The Chief of Naval Staff interacted with the crews of participating Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kamorta and expressed satisfaction on the scale and complexity of this multilateral exercise. One P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft of the Indian Navy has also been deployed to Japan separately to participate in Exercise MALABAR-2022. The sea phase of this edition of Exercise Malabar would continue until 15 November 2022.

Admiral R Hari Kumar, conveyed his special compliments to Adm Sakai Ryo, Chief of Staff, JMSDF for highly professional and successful conduct of these high intensity multilateral maritime engagements.

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