

## NUSI efforts secure release of Indian Seafarers of MT Heroic Idun from Nigeria

A fter nine months of captivity in Nigeria, the seafarers of the VLCC Ship MT. Heroic Idun reached India last week. The MT. Heroic Idun Marshall Islands flag tanker was arrested by Equatorial Guinea forces on allegations of crude oil theft. Subsequently, they were handed over to Nigerian authorities for further investigations into the matter.

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NUSI and the Indian seafarers' petitioned to Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi seeking justice for the seafarers of MT. Heroic Idun. NUSI took up the matter with the Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of External Affairs, and Maritime Administration. NUSI ensured that the plight of the Heroic Idun seafarers remained in the spotlight and received due attention.

NUSI along with seafarers also demonstrated at the Nigerian Consulate in India demanding the release of the seafarers of MT. Heroic Idun. The issue was also discussed at the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO), and Human Rights Commission to garner support and intervention at the international level.

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All charges against the crew were dropped, and the ship was released after paying fines. On 10th June, the 16 Indian seafarers of MT. Heroic Idun reached India. Team NUSI and the families of the seafarers welcomed and received them at the airports in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata & Cochin respectively. As the seafarers embraced their newfound freedom, they were determined to move forward with their lives, cherishing their loved ones and resuming their seafaring careers with renewed vigor and a deep appreciation for justice and compassion.

Through their interventions with the Nigerian government, the Indian government successfully secured permission for the crew to remain on board the ship, ensuring they were provided with regular food instead of being taken to



Warm Welcome Beatwine of Herole Liden Battwine of Herole Liden a detention center on land. The crew members were also granted periodic contact with their families. Indian Mission officials maintained regular communication with the crew and conducted consular access on numerous occasions to ensure their well-being.

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Furthermore, the Indian Mission collaborated with the shipping company to arrange legal representation for the crew. They emphasized to the Nigerian authorities that no oil theft had occurred, asserting that necessary permissions had been obtained and that the crew members were unaware of the operational decisions. The Indian side also highlighted the humanitarian issues faced by some of the crew members.

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