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INTERCARGO: Charterers preventing crew change must be held to account

INTERCARGO, the body representing the interests of dry bulk sector operators, has learned that in a number of instances, charterers in the dry bulk sector have been preventing much needed crew changes from taking place during the period of the charter, despite the ship owner agreeing to accept the associated costs.

In these instances, charterers have been seen to simply ignore relevant provisions and charter party clauses that could be employed. Indeed, it has been reported that bulk carriers changing crews in certain countries in SE Asia are being treated as ‘toxic’ by charterers for the 14 days following crew change.

In a statement INTERCARGO says: “INTERCARGO strongly condemns the non-compassionate practices of some charterers of dry bulk carriers, in their rejection of crew change outright during the charter period. This flies in the face of industry wide efforts to offer seafarers the essential rest that they have been so long without during the COVID-19 pandemic, and which is essential to the safe operation of the shipping sector.

“Ironically, this appalling practice has been reported primarily in the dry bulk sector, where the prevention of seafarer fatigue is of special concern. Bulk carriers on tramp trading routes call at many more ports than other shipping sectors, piling added strain on an already fatigued workforce with no hope of crew change. A crew must be well rested to operate a ship in compliance with the voyage instructions from the charterers: to load and discharge the cargo, ballast and de-ballast, wash, dry and present cargo holds, open/close hatch covers and carry out the multitude of associated tasks to ensure safe operation of the vessel. It is very disappointing that dry cargo charterers do not understand or wish to take responsibility for the concept of the common venture which exists under a time-charter.

“INTERCARGO wishes to state unequivocally that this issue goes further than the charterer’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) or environmental, social and governance (ESG) responsibilities, and displays a clear lack of appreciation of one of the greatest humanitarian crises to affect the maritime sector.”

About INTERCARGO: International shipping is vital for the global economy and prosperity as it transports approximately 90% of world trade. The dry bulk sector is the largest shipping sector in terms of number of ships and deadweight. Dry bulk carriers account for 43% of the world fleet (in tonnage) and sail an estimated 55% of the global transport work. You are invited to view our video [Dry Bulk Shipping: Sustainably serving the world’s essential needs](#).

The International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO) is representing the interests of quality dry bulk shipowners, with close to 2,400 registered ships out of more than 11,000 ships in the global dry bulk fleet, corresponding to over 25% of the global dry bulk fleet basis deadweight. INTERCARGO convened for the first time in 1980 in London and has been participating with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) since 1993. INTERCARGO provides the forum where dry bulk shipowners, managers and operators are informed about, discuss and share concerns on key topics and regulatory challenges, especially in relation to safety, the environment and operational excellence. The Association takes forward its Members’ positions to the IMO, as well as to other shipping and international industry fora, having free and fair competition as a principle.