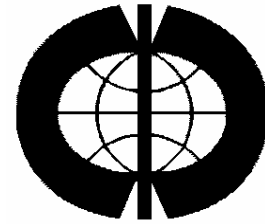


# INTERCARGO

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## News Release 04/10

### **Hazardous cargoes - three ships sunk; 44 deaths in 39 days**

#### **The Unanswered Questions and why seafarers should not be considered expendable.**

Three days after informing the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) about what it feels are the unacceptable hazards associated with Iron Ore fines loaded in wet weather conditions and Nickel Ore, Intercargo - the dry bulk shipowners association, has called on shippers / cargo interests to conduct an urgent review into the testing and safety processes involved in shipping the cargo following a spate of accidents and fatalities.

These cargoes are used in the steel industry and are exported from a number of countries including India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

At the same time, it has also called on shipowners to consider the risks associated with these cargoes - known officially as "cargoes which may liquefy", and for Governments and their Competent Authorities to re-check the safety processes at the port of loading before accepting the cargoes.

"We know that all shipowners of quality care about the safety of their seafarers and what has occurred in the last 39 days is completely unacceptable" says Rob Lomas, Secretary General of Intercargo.

All three sinkings - the Jian Fu Star (October 27th : 13 fatalities); the Nasco Diamond (November 10th : 21 fatalities) and the Hong Wei (3 December : 10 fatalities) reportedly carried :-

- the same cargo - Nickel Ore
- loaded in the same country – Indonesia,
- in Chinese operated and manned ships,
- under the Panamanian flag,
- sank in broadly the same location,
- and all were bound for the China for use in the Chinese steel industry,

Cargoes which may liquefy are loaded into bulk carriers but if not properly tested and certificated, may move as a slurry or a liquid if their moisture content is too great, causing stability problems, listing and eventual capsizing.

“Our association has had an opportunity to forewarn its members about these cargoes and has been very surprised to learn from owners that the rudimentary loading conditions in some of the exporting countries may have contributed to accidents” says Lomas.

“We know that many companies refuse to accept these cargoes because they are either not loaded in accordance with the international standards contained in the IMO IMSBC - the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code or when Masters sense that the testing and certification processes aimed at determining the moisture content of the cargo being offered for shipment lacks credibility. Masters have refused cargoes which appear to be highly suspect in terms of their moisture content vis à vis their Shippers Declaration certificate or where Masters have been refused their right to use an independent third party cargo surveyor.”

“Sadly, some shipowners may not have the relevant experience or knowledge in interpreting the IMSBC Code and may accept cargoes which are unsafe. But we need to receive the reassurances of the Competent Authorities in the exporting countries that their procedures and processes have integrity and transparency so that this message is received and most importantly, believed by the shipowners. Competent Authorities are key to ensuring that seafarer’s lives are not put in peril.

“At the very least, any exporting country which cannot meet these requirements or which refuses to allow independent third-party surveyors is likely to find maritime transport for these cargoes more difficult to source” says Lomas.

Ends.

#### **Notes to Editors**

- 1. Intercargo represents 160 Bulk Carrier owners (vessels engaged in the transport of dry bulk commodities such as coal, grain and iron ore) and associates. With Non Governmental Organisation status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Intercargo’s objective is the creation of a “safe, efficient and environmentally friendly” dry cargo sector.**
- 2. Intercargo, founded in 1980, works within the Round Table of international maritime associations comprising of BIMCO, the International Chamber of Shipping, Intercargo and Intertanko.**
- 3. The IMO is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.**
- 4. Intercargo publishes an annual “Benchmarking Bulk Carriers” report including casualty information. This shows that generally, the number of bulk carrier accidents peaked in the 1980s with a downward trend since then.**

#### **Further information**

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