



HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT & CASE STUDY

- Defending Maritime Human Rights -

The Human Impact of Denial of Crew Wages to Seafarers

MV Sharjah Moon IMO 7516503

Hamriyah Port, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Crew Evidence and Impact Statements

Report: 9 June 2017



“Many times I requested to company but they did not send my salary. Even my family do not have money for food but my company not responded. I am fully desperate. My mental and physical condition is too bad...”

“They didn’t care about the crew some crew trying to suicide themselves, but we rescued them. Since company not taking any action and we ran out of food, water, fuel ... Just request to whoever reading this to kindly help us.”

Disclaimer

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IMPORTANT NOTES

1. The following facts and supplied evidence is correct at the time of writing having been supplied by the Indian & Sri Lankan crew of the MV Sharjah Moon IMO 7516503 with explicit permission for Human Rights at Sea to publicly reproduce the facts and evidence in good faith.
2. The facts may alter following publication as the situation on-board changes.
3. Evidence has been supplied through the independent UK-based Indian NGO Justice Upheld.
4. The report has been redacted with blacked-out text [REDACTED] to protect the seafarers from actions of revenge, blacklisting or illegal pressure applied to either themselves, or their families. When crew anonymity has been waived, personal details are shown.

INTRODUCTION

- The crew of the MV Sharjah Moon docked without permission in Hamriyah Port¹, UAE due to dangerous conditions onboard the vessel and also to demand the payment of outstanding wages and sign off.
- The crew have been repeatedly denied access to fresh food and water, or contact with their families. As health problems increase on board, belated news of family losses has damaged the psychological health of the crew further, resulting in several potential suicide attempts.
- Despite the efforts of independent news outlets and the Indian Consul General in Dubai, the ship's owner and the company have refused to comment or take action to assist the sailors at the time of writing.

VESSEL INFORMATION

Name: MV Sharjah Moon
Type: Production Testing Vessel
IMO Number: 7516503
MSI: 470355000
Callsign: A6E2481
Former name(s):
- Blue Bird (Until March 2005)



Photo Credit: Vladimir Knyaz-2012

¹ <http://www.sharjahports.ae>



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- Lamnalco 18 (Until June 1993)
- Lamnalco Baker Bluebird (Until 1982)

Flag: Former UAE flag

Changed 26 May 16 to Zanzibar flag

Owner: Alco Shipping Services LLC UAE

Vessel location: Hamriyah Port, Sharjah, UAE

Crew composition:

- Master
- Chief Engineer
- Two Able Seamen
- Two Oilers
- Cook

THE CURRENT SITUATION²

- On 9 May 2017, the crew of the MV Sharjah Moon docked in to Hamriyah Port to contact the Indian Consulate in Dubai. Onboard are six Indian Nationals and one Sri Lankan National on the basis of the vessel being in grave and imminent danger.
- Currently, the **crew have been denied salaries for over 16 months**. Many of the crew have been sending requests to sign off weekly for over six months.
- The **crew's health situation has deteriorated**. The company has not provided fresh food and water for over a month despite repeated requests. The crew have also run out of fuel for cooking and heating, further aggravating the health conditions onboard.
- For much of the last 12 months, the crew have been denied contact with their families. Despite losing his father last year, one crew-member was not allowed to return home. The strain of this on-going trauma has put the individual in a fragile psychological and his crew are increasingly concerned for his welfare. The mother of another crew-member fell ill three months ago, but **the company has refused to pay any wages that could be sent home to assist, or allowed the crew member to make calls to his parents**.
- Once docked in Sharjah, the crew made contact with a local social worker who in turn was able to put them in contact with the Indian Consul General in Dubai.
- The Consul General visited the ship, but immediately became concerned about the safety of the crew, **noting that some are showing 'suicidal tendencies'**.
- While the Indian Consulate has now provided food and water to the sailors and has transferred one crew-member to hospital, they have been unable to contact the owner of Alco Shipping Services, the company to which the MV Sharjah Moon belongs. **As a result, the salaries of the crew are still unpaid.**

² Correct at the time of reporting.



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UPDATE (7 June 2017)

- **Master's personal update:** "We've been asking our company for salaries & sign off but our company neither gives salary nor sign off. Salaries are pending for 11 to 16 months. From last year July, we were at Sharjah anchorage & been through a lot of suffering as our company doesn't provides bunker, fresh water, provision timely. They only give 300 gallons fuel for a month, half of which is not even enough for a week if [the] generator is running 24 hours. Whenever out of fuel, we used wooden planks for cooking, slept on deck. Last fresh water we received was 15 Tons in quantity & in March month. Hull condition is vulnerable. AC Room, Forepeak store & steering room has holes. One of my crew, namely [REDACTED], has completed 32 months on board & has been asking for sign off from past eight months but our company only made false promises. Another crew, namely [REDACTED], lost his father last year and has also been asking for sign off & again false promises were made by company. From [the] past three to four months our company were not responding to the mails & calls. At the end of April, two of my crew wrote suicide letters & named me & my company guilty as they weren't getting any salaries & sign off. I informed company through mail, they didn't responded, calls were unanswered. Few hours later P.R.O. received the phone & verbally promised, within two days he'll arrange our sign off & salaries but after two days he wasn't responding to my calls. I do not have any choices left & on 09-05-2017 I brought my vessel inside Sharjah Hamriyah port without permission. I tried to call port authority to ask for emergency entry as we were in grave & imminent danger, but no answer from the other end of the radio. Later at port, I informed coastguard & local authorities about our pathetic situation."

STAKEHOLDERS

- Upon docking in Hamriyah Port the crew of the MV Sharjah Moon initially contacted social worker [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] was able to put the crew in contact with the Indian Consulate in Dubai, and specifically the Indian Consul General, Vipul³.
- The Indian Association Sharjah was able to assist the Indian consulate in taking one of the crew-members to hospital.
- The MV Sharjah Moon belongs to Alco Shipping Services LLC which is in turn owned by a Pakistani national, Syed Izaz Hassan. Both Alco Shipping Services and Syed Izard Hassan have been reported as not responding to the current issues.

³ <http://www.cgidubai.org/consul-general/>



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- The plight of the sailors has been covered by several news outlets, including the Gulf News: <http://m.gulfnews.com/news/uae/society/stranded-indian-sailor-wants-to-see-his-parents-1.2034787>

MONIES OWED

- Currently, there is no precise figure of the salaries owed available. However, the Indian Consulate estimates the figure at **United Arab Emirates Dirham Dh 200,000 or Euro €48450.78⁴**.
- On average, the crew have been **denied their salary for 16 months**.
- Many of the crew have dependents and families, **several in dire need of support**.

ISSUES

Unpaid salaries

- Despite their assistance with travel, and providing food and water, the Consulate has been unable to make any progress with the crew's pending salaries. Several of the crew-members have dependents in urgent need of financial support, and **all have been repeatedly requesting the payment of their overdue salaries for many months**. As Alco Shipping Services refuse to comment on the issue, progress on this issue appears unclear.

Flag change

- Evidence identifies a change in the **flagging of the vessel on the 26 May 2016 from UAE to the Zanzibar flag** as highlighted in the certificate of registry. The move away from the UAE flag during this contested matter may be viewed as an attempt to distance the issue from the UAE flag registry.

Crew mental health

- It is clear from the annexed crew statements that the **mental health and wellbeing of the crew is of grave concern**. Latest updates as of 7 June 2017 have highlighted mental instability, and at least two of the Indian crew have written suicide notes. The issue was picked up by the Indian Consul General.

⁴ Exchange rate current at 8 June 2017.



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Physical and psychological health concerns

- During his recent visit to the vessel, the Indian Consul General reported concerns that some of the crew-members were displaying suicidal tendencies due to what he described as **'their pathetic condition without proper food and water.'** This sentiment is echoed by the testimonies of the crew themselves, with some discussing **having to actively restrain crew-members from suicide attempts.** In particular, the crew blame their inability to help family suffering from illness or bereavement for their psychological concerns.
- In addition, several of crew-members are reporting physical health concerns. One sailor has kidney stones, and required hospitalising. **Hygiene on the ship has deteriorated due to the lack of supplies,** with many of the crew living mostly in the dark, sleeping on the deck, and only able to shower every 10-15 days.

Dependents

- Family dependency is a key and recurring concern for the crew. Five of the six crew members send their wages home to support their families, and a majority are the only financial providers for their immediate families. **Of particular concern has been the inability to provide support for medical fees for elderly parents and grandparents.** This problem has been further compounded by difficulties corresponding with their families. Several crew-members reported only received news intermittently, or being actively prohibited from phoning family members.

Illegal entry into Hamriyah Port

- Hamriyah Port is administered by the Department of Seaports and Customs, Government of Sharjah. While ordinarily the illegal entry into Hamriyah port would have resulted in legal action against the crew, the Indian Consulate has written to the Immigration department and Department of economic affairs in Sharjah to explain the situation. As a result, the local authorities have confirmed they will not be taking any actions against the crew.

Repatriation

- The crew-members had previously had their passports confiscated by Alco Shipping Services. While **Alco Shipping Services have thus far refused to assist the sailors, the Indian Consulate is reportedly getting ready to arrange tickets and transport for the crew's repatriation.** The Consulate dealt with a similar ship earlier in 2017, and are confident of securing the crew's return to India.



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Logistics

- By the time of the MV Sharjah Moon's arrival in Hamriyah Port, the crew had completely exhausted their supplies of fresh food and fresh water. These have both now been provided by the Indian Consulate in Dubai with assistance from the Indian Association in Sharjah. According to the crew's signed testimonials, both fresh food and water had been periodically not provided by the owners during their time onboard the MV Sharjah Moon.
- The vessel has also run out of fuel and wood to power the vessel's cooking facilities. As a result, the crew are only able to run the ship's generator for an hour a day. The night duties onboard have to be carried out completely in the dark due to lack of lighting facilities.
- **A lack of adequate shelter has forced the crew to sleep on the deck, despite the high temperatures currently averaging over 40 °C.**

Sign off

- Due to the deteriorating conditions on board, **many of the crew sought to sign off in October 2016**. At this point, many of the crew had already stayed with the vessel for over double the time they were initially contracted for. A series of personal issues with the families of the crew have increased the intensity of the sign off requests, which are now often sent multiple times a week. Thus far, none of the crew have had a response to a sign off request.

Vessel safety

- The crew have reported that they do not have working or useable life-saving equipment and that this has not been replaced on board.



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CREW IMPACT STATEMENTS

- **Statements have been redacted**
- The crew are seeking full payment of all monies owed, sign off, and repatriation. Currently there has been no official response from Alco Shipping Services LLC or the Company's owner.
- Some of the circumstances and concerns of the crew are highlighted by the following crew impact statements:

1. [REDACTED] – Master (Indian)

“After suffering a lot mentally I sent another sign off request on 10th March 2017, stating the harassing nature of the company. Mr. Hassan asked for vessel's inventory which I forwarded through mail. And from then on I was tortured mentally. My mails, calls, messages weren't answered.”

2. [REDACTED] – Chief Engineer (Sri Lankan)

“Our company didn't provide food, fuel, fresh water and etc. time to time correctly (sic) and crew member salary until 10 month pending (sic).”

“April 2017 we hadn't enough water, fuel and food - entire crew suffered lot. I'm was sick (sic) and suffered from hemoarhoid bleeding and blood sugar but company didn't take any action.”

“They didn't care about the crew some crew trying to suicide themselves, (sic) but we rescued them.”

“my father passed away due to heart attack on 16th March 2017, and I asked to attend my father funeral (sic) but they don't care about my father funeral. Also my daughter was in hospital due to dengue fever but company didn't take any action. After I inform to the company financially my family is in a big trouble (sic) I am didn't get any salary since August 2016 to up to now (sic). My house and land which under mortgage has given final notices.”

“Just request to whoever reading this to kindly help me”

3. [REDACTED] – Able Seaman (Indian)

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“working on board M.V. SHARJAH MOON as an AB since 03-07-2016. My Company no given me salary until now (sic).”

“First time me send (sic) salary request 20/10/2016. But me no given any response after me given sign off letter in Dec 2016 (sic).”

“My family suffering financial problem... Because in my family I am only person doing job.”

“On board my ship have too much problem (sic)... I am here same like hostage”

4. ██████████ – Able Seaman (Indian)

“[I] joined the vessel ... on 03/07/2016... My company did not give any salary from my joining date to until today.”

“I am here same like hostages (sic). I requested to company for sign off on 10/10/2016 but until today they not arrange (sic).”

“Company not provided fresh water time to time. I have to sleep on deck in ... this hot May June because this company not caring about crews (sic).”

5. ██████████ – Oiler (Indian)

“my contract is one year, on 19 September 2015 I completed my contract period, now ... 33 months running [over]. [I gave my] sign off letter on 10-Oct-2016... company not give any respond (sic)... now my salary 16 month pending.”

“Few months ago my mother hospitalized am given request for two month salary advance for her good medical treatment am sending letter also but company not given money.”

“I can not stay here more... On board this vessel [we] no have fresh water and food day by day we are struggling here.”

6. ██████████ – Oiler (Indian)

“My contract was one year, [however] I have completed 20 months but until today company didn't send me home.”



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“My father passed away 27 July 2016, but my family not told me. Late in August my one family friend told me about the tragic incident [and] after I gave sign off letter to my company. Company gave me hope that they will arrange my sign off as soon as possible. But until today they did not arrange. Many time I requested to company that please arrange my sign off but they every time speak this week, that month but until today that week and month not come (sic).”

“My family are going through financial problem because in my family I am only person who is doing [a] job. So I requested to company at least please send my salary (sic). Many times I requested to company but they did not send my salary. Even [when] my family do not have money for food but my company not responded.”

“I am fully desperate. My mental and physical condition is too bad (sic),”

7. ██████████ – Cook (Indian)

“On my vessel lot of problems (sic). My company no give salary. I have sent salary request 4 to 5 times. But company no give me salary.”

“I cooked food on wood because no electricity. And without water I cannot [do] cooking. That is why I give sign off in April 2017.”

“My family is also in lot of problems (sic). They do not have money. They are dependent on me.”



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Annex 1 Crew Statement – Chief Engineer [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Dear Sir, Madam,

My self I am [REDACTED] from Sri Lanka I was joined Alco Shipping Services Vessel M.V Sharjha Moon 10th March 2016 as a chief engineer vessel anchored 12 nautical mile far from shore. Our company didn't provide food, fuel, fresh water and etc. time to time correctly and crew member salary until 10 month pending. The time has comes was are informed our company and UAE coast guard, but they never give good respond for us. April 2017 we had enough water, fuel and food entire crew suffered lot. I'm was sick and suffered from haemorrhoid bleeding and blood sugar but company didn't take any action. They didn't care about the crew some crew trying to suicide themselves, but we rescued them. Since company not taking any action and the ran out of food, water, fuel, we had to reach the vessel to nearest port and entering harbour, my father passed away due to heart attack on 16th March 2017, and I asked to attend my father funeral but they don't care about my father funeral. Also my daughter was in hospital due to dengue fever but company didn't take any action. After I inform to the company financially my family is in a big trouble I am didn't get any salary since August 2016 to up to now. My house and land which under mortgage has given final notices. Just request to whoever reading this to kindly help me and repatriate me with my salary.

Thank you

Sincerely

[REDACTED]



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Annex 2 Crew Statement – AB [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Respected Madam/Sir,

Date 01/06/2017

My Self [REDACTED], working on board M.V. SHARJAH MOON as an AB since 03-07-2016. My Company no given me salary until now. First time me send salary request 20/10/2016. But me no given any response after me given sign off letter in Dec 2016. But until now he no given me sign off. I have very difficult problem in my home. My family are suffering financial problems, because in my family I am only person doing job. I requested for company many time about salary or sin off. But he has not given any response. On board my ship have too much problem. Company no given food or bunker. I am here same like hostage. In my contract, vessels registry is U.A.E. But when I joined I found out it is Zanzibar registered.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



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Annex 3 Crew Statement – AB [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Respected Sir/Madam

01/06/2017

My self [REDACTED] joined the vessel M.V Sharjah Moon of Alco Shipping Services LLC on 03/07/2016 an AB to till date.

My company did not give any salary from my joining date to until today. I am here same like hostages. My company not given enough banker any time for generator. So I have to do duty in night in blackout. I requested to company for sign off on 10/10/2016 but until today they not arrange.

Company not provided fresh water time to time. I have to sleep on deck in like this hot May June because this company not caring about crews. In my contract vessel's registry is U.A.E. but when I joined, I found it is Zanzibar registered. They employers cheated me.



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Annex 4 Crew Statement - Oiler [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Respected Sir/ Madam

Date: 01-06-2017

Myself [REDACTED]. I joined the vessel named MV Sharjah Moon under the Alco Shipping Services LLC, Ajman, UAE. Am working as a oiler on 18 September 2014, my contract is one year, on 19 September 2015 am completed my contract period, now my 33 month running. Am given sign off letter on 10-Oct-2016. Now 7 months ago until not company not give any respond, now my salary 16 month pending. Few months ago my mother hospitalized am given request for two month salary advance for her good medical treatment am sending letter also but company not given money. Am the one person who earn money on my family. With out money my family struggling now. Am taking financial money for family purposes. This company make me too many financial problem also. I can not stay here more. On board this vessel no have fresh water and food day by day we are struggling here.

Thank you

Your Sincerely

[REDACTED]



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Annex 5 Crew Statement - Oiler [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Date – 01/06/2017

Respected MADAM/Sir

My self [REDACTED], joined the vessel M.T. OCEAN GRACE OF Alco Shipping Services, on 11/10/2015 as an oiler, later I got transferred to M.V. SHARJAH MOON on 15/03/2016 to till date.

My contract was one year, how I have completed 20 months but until today company didn't send me home. My company cleared my salary until December 2015. My father passed away 27 July 2016 but my family not told me. Late in August my one family friend told me about the tragic incident after I gave sign off letter to my company. Company gave me hope that they will arrange my sign off as soon as possible. But until today they did not arrange. Many time I requested to company that please arrange my sign off but they everytime speak this week, that month but until today that week and month not come. My family are going through financial problem because in my family I am only person who is doing my job. So I requested to company at least please send my salary. Many times I requested to company but they did not send my salary. Even my family do not have money for food but my company not responded. I am fully desperate. My mental and physical condition is too bad, suffering from kidney stone. From July 2016 my vessel has been at anchorage.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]



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Annex 6 Crew Statement - Cook [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

Respected Madam/Sir,

My Self [REDACTED] working on board M.V SHARJAH MOON as a cook since 03-07-2016. On my vessel lot of problems. My company no give salary. I have sent salary request 4 to 5 times. But company no give me salary. Company no give any bunks and fresh water. I cooked food on wood because no electricity. And without water I can not cook. That is why I give sign off in April 2017. My family is also in lot of problems. They do not have money. They are dependent on me. Just request to whoever reading this to kindly help me and repatriate me with my salary.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



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Annex 7 Crew Statement - Master [REDACTED]

NB: This statement has been transcribed. Original statements are held by Human Rights at Sea.

05-June-2017

STATEMENT

I [REDACTED], master of the vessel M V Sharjah Moon, IMO 7516503, Zanzibar registry, owned by Alco Shipping Services, joined the vessel on 20th May 2016 and was told its UAE registered but when I took handover from the outgoing master on 16th June 2016, I came to know that it's been switched to Zanzibar on 26th May 2016. I cleared things with the then port Captain Mr. Shaukat who assured that it is due to the age of the vessel & will not affect anything.

My vessel's port clearance arrived on 04th July 2016 and I was told to depart on 10th July 2016 to Iran. I asked my port captain for our passports & ship certificates, to be onboard prior departure, which was held by the company. On 10th July I received a call from the port captain explaining that I should depart from the port & will receive everything said at Sharjah anchorage via next available craft, as port clearance is issued & will be cancelled if I don't do so. I agreed on what he said & on 12th July 2016 I casted off from port and dropped anchor at the outer anchorage of UAE waters.

I spoke to port captain next day regarding passports & vessel certificates, soon he replied & ordered to drop anchor 12 miles far from the shore. From that day onwards, my vessel remained at anchorage only, never went to any port.

After being at sea for two months, I got fed up with the false stories made by the port captain & on 22nd Sept 2016 I sent the sign off letter to him asking to be relieved within a month.

A few days later he left the company & told to communicate with his reliever, Mr. Kashif, who then told to talk to the owner Mr. Syed Izaz Hassan, as he's being new in the company's operation & will take time to settle.

From late September the quantity of bunker is reduced to 300 gallons, provision, fresh water has been provided at irregular intervals, salary & sign off requests weren't considered, and there's no engine & deck requisitions provided for the maintenance of the vessel.

On 2nd Feb & 3rd Feb 2017, the crewmembers encountered the roughest weather this year so far, keeping the forecast in mind I asked my company earlier for sufficient bunker but found negative response from their end. On 3rd afternoon the vessel started dragging & I let

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another anchor go, speed reduced but was sufficient enough to run the vessel aground, sea water was entering through the main & auxiliary engines exhaust, informed Mr. Hassan, hold the vessel he replied and disconnected the phone. After dragging (2.5 miles from coast) for around 8 hours

the weather begins to calm & we somehow survived that day. Seven vessels ran aground that day.

On 4th Feb 2017 I received 300 I.G. bunker and after 10 days, I again asked for bunker as I've been through grave danger lately and ended up with negative response.

After suffering a lot mentally I sent another sign off request on 10th March 2017, stating the harassing nature of the company. Mr. Hassan asked for vessel's inventory which I forwarded through mail. And from then on I was tortured mentally. My mails, calls, messages weren't answered. Bunker was provided after 48 days span.

The P.R.O. Mr. Abu Imran twice received my calls, I explained the scenario onboard & he promised to settle the salaries & arrange the sign off within few days & later he also stopped answering my calls.

After being stranded for 11 long months, crewmembers were mentally & physically fallen sick. On 09th May 2017, 0600 hrs Local Time, I called Sharjah Port Control on VHF Ch16 & Ch72 for emergency entry as we were out of food & water, but there wasn't any reply. Out of choices, I docked my vessel in to Sharjah Hamriyah Port, UAE to seek help from local authorities and Indian Embassy.

No company official has visited the vessel since then. Provision, drinking water & fresh water has been provided by the Consulate General of India.

████████████████████

Master

M. V. Sharjah Moon

Supported by:



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