

## Human Rights at Sea

### **Seminar on 28 Feb 2019 at Hotel Leela, Andheri - E (Mumbai, Near International Airport)**

Civilisations have flourished on the backbone of water transport. As it stands today, every element of use by the human beings has a contribution of Maritime Transport, which is 70% of world's trade by value and 90% by weight.

Had there been no shipping half the world would have died of hunger and rest half due to cold. The Maritime Transport has evolved from the canoe stage to gigantic and most complicated ships capable of supporting a small or big nation's requirement. Ships are operated by Seafarers who endure the toughest conditions to move cargo from East to West, North to South, day and night, calm or rough sea to meet the needs of Humanity.

Human element started getting special attention in 1990s and lead to finalisation of Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) to protect "Rights of Seafarers". The subsequent incidences of 9/11, Somalian Piracy, 26/11 Mumbai Attacks, 1993 Mumbai blasts and the global economic slowdown coupled with Human migration / Exodus / Trafficking in or around Mediterranean Coast has exposed the Seafarer to a void world where he finds lack of effective support, lack of effective legislation and general empathy from World bodies.

The long-stretched downfall in global trade accompanied by excessive and stringent International regulations has lead to slump in shipping, leaving many Seafarers abandoned for no fault of theirs. This has found the Shipping in general and the Seafarers in particular as the culprit leading to imprisonment at port state jurisdiction with virtually no support. Ships on International trades are exposed to Drug trafficking, Human Trafficking, Transportation of explosives deliberately or without knowledge of Seafarers manning the vessel, eventually being charged at the port of call. Some of them are languishing in jail for months and years. A rough estimate indicates well over 2000 Seafarers being abandoned annually, more than 300 being imprisoned and by and large the nations have not been empathetic to their plight.

Limitation of legal regimes including the UNCLOS has exposed the Seafarers and one tends to ask whether "The Seafarers are denied of their Human Rights". The proposed Seminar shall deliberate the issue in a pragmatic manner and present the outcome to the Authorities and Government bodies to chalk out the plan for addressing and preserving the human rights of Seafarers.

Regards,



**Adv. Bal Desai**

Secretary General

Forum for Integrated National Security

**RSVP: [finshq@gmail.com](mailto:finshq@gmail.com) or Ph: +91-9930467030 / +91-9821052614**