

## Groups Say No to Toxic Ship Dumping at the Beaches of Bangladesh: Demand Return of Phased-Out Single Hulled Oil-Tanker

2006-05-02 18:05:35 Shipbreaking

2 May 2006 - A global coalition of environmental, and human rights organisations called today for an immediate rejection of the plan to scrap the Greek owned single-hulled oil tanker – the Alfaship by Bangladesh and for European countries to take full responsibility for ensuring its immediate return to Europe for pre-decontamination. On February 15, of this year, France was forced to return the asbestos and PCB laden Clemenceau, and on that same day Bangladeshi agreed to forbid the import of the SS Norway (formerly SS France) – a large asbestos laden passenger liner that was slated to be scrapped in the Bangladesh beaches at Chittagong. Both schemes were halted due to application of the Basel Convention which demands strict controls on the export of hazardous wastes such as wastes containing asbestos or PCBs and due to the glaring fact that conditions in South Asian shipbreaking beaches are an occupational and environmental health disaster.

“Just like with the Clemenceau, just like the SS Norway, we in South Asia say NO to any more dumping of toxic ships that have not first been pre-cleaned of asbestos and PCBs in OECD countries,” said Rizwana Hassan of the Bangladesh Environmental Law Association (BELA). “Such dumping is illegal, immoral and is not consistent with the global aims of sustainable development and human and labour rights, -- we will no longer tolerate it.” The Alfaship is a Category 1 single hull oil tanker which, due to European and International Maritime Organization legislation is forced to leave the oil market by 2010 along with 2,200 other such tankers and has already been banned from European waters last year (2005). Based on studies produced by the European Commission and the Classification Society Organisation DNV it is all but certain that the Alfaship and other of the single-hulled tankers due to their age, contain PCBs, asbestos, and residual fuels or oils in their structure and as residual material. Therefore, like the SS Norway, the Alfaship – as long as not fully decontaminated - is to be considered hazardous waste as defined in the Basel Convention and the European Waste Shipment Regulation (259/93/EEC) and as such must be subject to the controls of this legislation. The EU Waste Shipment Regulation calls for a full ban on export of hazardous wastes from Europe to developing countries. “This is one of the first of thousands of single-hulled oil tankers which the rich developed countries have agreed are too deadly to ply their waters and therefore must be scrapped,” said Ingvild Jenssen, coordinator of the NGO Platform. “It is unconscionable that we in the rich countries will improve our environment at the expense of developing countries and therefore we are demanding that all such toxic ships first be pre-decontaminated in developed countries prior to export.” According to the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, responsibility for enforcing the Basel Convention falls on Port States (the port in which the vessel is located when it is known to be destined for scrapping), Owner States (states with jurisdiction over the owner) and Flag States as well as transit and importing States. The NGO Platform is calling on the Bangladeshi government to initiate the chain of responsibility by immediately rejecting the ship until and unless it is first pre-cleaned.