

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010



**NGO**  
**SHIPBREAKING**  
**PLATFORM**



# Member Organisations

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform brings together 16 member organisations from nine different countries that work on issues related to shipbreaking, such as health, environment, human rights and labour rights issues. See map “Shipbreaking Around the World” (p.6) for details on their exact locations.

The Basel Action Network (BAN) confronts the issues of environmental justice at a macro level, preventing disproportionate dumping of the world's toxic waste and pollution on our global village's poorest residents.

[www.ban.org](http://www.ban.org)



Ban Asbestos is a network of local organisations monitoring anti-asbestos legislation where it exists and litigating for the abolition of asbestos where anti-asbestos legislation is lacking.

[www.banasbestosfrance.com](http://www.banasbestosfrance.com)

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) is an advocacy group that monitors and pursues the implementation of laws and regulations to protect the environment. It is considered a pioneer in public interest environmental litigation (PIEL).

[www.belabangla.org](http://www.belabangla.org)



The Bellona Foundation is a multi-disciplinary international environmental NGO based in Oslo, Norway. It is a recognised technology and solution oriented, environmental defender with offices on two continents.

[www.bellona.org](http://www.bellona.org)

The Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) endeavours to uphold the causes of working people and trade unions of Bangladesh. 13 major National Trade Union Federations are associated with BILS.

[www.bilsbd.org](http://www.bilsbd.org)



The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) includes 141 national human rights NGOs worldwide. FIDH has a generalist mandate and consequently works on all human rights be they civil, political, economic, social, or cultural rights.

[www.fidh.org](http://www.fidh.org)

The European Federation for Transport & Environment (T&E) is Europe's principal environmental organisation campaigning on sustainable transport. T&E's primary focus is on European policy to promote an environmentally sound approach to transport.

[www.transportenvironment.org](http://www.transportenvironment.org)



The International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) is an independent body dedicated to the worldwide eradication of the continuing use of asbestos and the minimisation of dangers from asbestos products already within society.

[www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk)

Greenpeace is an international non-governmental organisation working on global and environmental problems.

Greenpeace started its shipbreaking campaign by highlighting this environmental and human rights disaster in 1998.

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)



The Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHEF) is a specialized labour foundation established in 2003 by workers. It concentrates on issues affecting employment, income, economy, environment and the livelihoods of working people.

[www.oshebd.org](http://www.oshebd.org)

The North Sea Foundation, a Dutch NGO, is a lobbying organisation with a constructive approach enabling a practical influence to be exerted over the marine environmental policies of governments and user groups.

[www.noordzee.nl](http://www.noordzee.nl)



Toxics Link is an Indian NGO working for environmental justice and freedom from toxins. It provides information on the poisons in our environment and bodies and on clean and sustainable alternatives for countries worldwide.

[www.toxicslink.org](http://www.toxicslink.org)

The Prevention of Hazardous Shipbreaking Initiative is a coalition of environmental and labour rights NGOs based in Turkey. The group focuses on proper waste management and respect of labour rights at the shipbreaking sites in Aliaga.



Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) is an organisation that promotes social and sustainable development. It works on issues related to workers' rights as well as advocacy work to ensure human rights in the Bangladesh shipbreaking industry.

[www.shipbreakingbd.info](http://www.shipbreakingbd.info)  
[www.ypsa.org](http://www.ypsa.org)

The Corporate Accountability Desk – The Other Media coordinate a corporate accountability and environmental health desk that extends technical, logistics, legal and strategic support to communities that are fighting corporate crime.

[www.sipcotcuddalore.com](http://www.sipcotcuddalore.com)

Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) is composed of groups of lawyers working to protect areas of vital ecological importance through a unique combination of litigation, investigation, information dissemination, capacity building and supporting campaigns and movements.



## Message from the President

Thanks to the NGO Shipbreaking Platform and its member organisations, the human and environmental costs of shipbreaking are seeing the light of day and the demand is growing for sustainable solutions for end-of-life ships.

Pressure for change has never been stronger. During 2010 our member organisation, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), successfully defended a Supreme Court decision to prohibit the import of ships for dismantling unless they are decontaminated of asbestos and all other hazardous materials that are present in the structure of end-of-life ships. The courts will debate this ruling during 2011, and the Platform will continue to argue for substantive reforms: stopping the export of toxic materials to developing countries and getting shipbreaking off the beach and onto a safe working platform.

Unrepresented and led into debt by employers, migrant workers in the shipbreaking yards have no voice and are victims of exploitation. On a mission in September 2010, the Secretariat met with labour leaders in India and Bangladesh. Together we laid the foundation for common demands to improve the safety and rights of the workers. Our strengthened partnerships with the unions have brought the Platform new contacts and sources for information on shipbreaking inside Pakistan, where ships are broken under equally dire and oppressive conditions.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform holds the governments of developed countries accountable for looking aside as end-of-life ships are broken under conditions they would never permit in their own countries. In May 2010, the Platform met with a newly formed European Commission to brief them on the shipbreaking issue and remind them of their responsibility to the existing EU waste and international waste shipment laws that govern European-owned ships.

The Platform also welcomes its newest member organisation, the Legal Initiative for Forests and Environment (LIFE). We look forward to the expertise and greater capacity that LIFE will bring to the Platform to challenge illegal shipbreaking practices in the Indian courts of justice!

In 2011, the Platform is setting out on a new corporate track to enlist commitments from shipping companies to keep their ships off the beach. We will urge their customers to only ship products with shipping companies that commit their ships to sustainable ship recycling. Another priority during the second half of 2011 is to counter a proposal to take ships out from under the jurisdiction of the Basel Convention, the most comprehensive international hazardous waste export law. At the same time, we will keep up the current momentum in the EU to enact sustainable legal solutions for European end-of-life ships. Our new photo exhibit BROKEN, launched in Brussels in November 2010, will provide, all throughout 2011, a powerful tool for conveying the human cost and exploitation of shipbreaking in all of these endeavors.

With much to be proud of and with resolve for the future, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform thanks all of our members and supporters for empowering the fight to reform the shipbreaking industry into one that respects the dignity of its workers and the integrity of its environment and surrounding communities.

**Helen Périvier**  
President, NGO Shipbreaking Platform

# ABOUT US



Shipbreaking is done directly on the tidal beaches of South Asia. Toxic materials found aboard the end-of-life vessels leak directly into the sand and the water, polluting the coastal zones.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform is a coalition of environmental, human and labour rights organisations working together to promote safe and environmentally sound ship recycling. The Platform was created in September 2005 after a few NGOs (non-governmental organisations) working on shipbreaking noticed that a broader base of support, both geographically and in orientation, was needed to challenge the political clout of the global shipping industry. Due to increased political momentum, in part generated by the Platform itself, the coalition quickly evolved from being a European Platform to a global one, including NGOs based in the largest shipbreaking countries, India and Bangladesh. The Platform is also recognised by the United Nations and the European Union as the pre-eminent international NGO advocacy organisation on shipbreaking. This year the Platform welcomed a new member organisation to the coalition, the Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) from India.

## MISSION

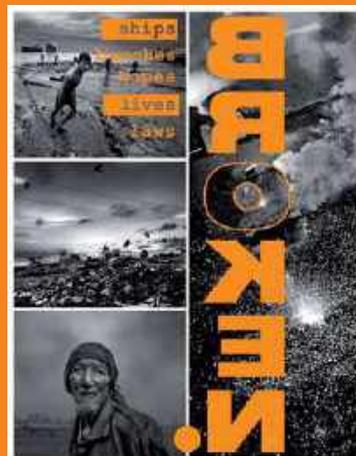
The NGO Shipbreaking Platform works to prevent the environmental, human and labour rights abuses of irresponsible shipbreaking practices and to ensure safe and environmentally sound recycling of end-of-life vessels worldwide, by:

- promoting regulation and action at national, regional and international levels;
- promoting the NGO Shipbreaking Platform's Clean & Safe Ship Recycling Standards at government and corporate levels;
- promoting clean shipbuilding;
- and strengthening the role of civil society in guaranteeing safe and environmentally sound shipbreaking.

## New features for

### OFF THE BEACH!

The Off the Beach! campaign continues to raise awareness and build support worldwide to get the shipbreaking activities off the beaches of South Asia. A brand-new photo exhibition, **BROKEN**, was presented in Brussels and a dedicated website was launched this year.



**BROKEN** is an international travelling photo exhibition which shows the devastating pollution and working conditions on the beaches of South Asia caused by shipbreaking. It features photographs by Saiful Huq Omi, an acclaimed Bangladeshi activist photographer.

Log on to our **new website** and sign our petition to help us get shipbreaking off the beach! On it you can also download our Off the Beach! report, follow the activities of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform on social media and learn about the four fatal flaws that make beaching a dangerous and dirty practice.

[www.offthebeach.org](http://www.offthebeach.org)



## Board Members

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform's board members are international experts in a wide range of sectors related to maritime policies, waste management, environmental law and occupational health. Their experience and know-how contribute immensely to the Platform's activities and successes.

### Marietta Harjono

is a senior campaigner in Greenpeace Netherlands and has been working on the shipbreaking issue since 1998. She now also coordinates Greenpeace's work on the Probo Koala/Trafigura case.



### Helen Périvier

is a qualified navigation officer and has ten years on ships serving as a maritime professional on environmental research, advocacy and education tours. She led the Greenpeace campaign on the European REACH chemicals legislation.



### Rizwana Hasan

is an advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and Executive Director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA). She received the Goldman Prize 2009 for her work on the shipbreaking issue.



### Jim Puckett

has been an environmental health and justice activist for 22 years. He is the founder of Earth Economics and the Basel Action Network program. He has represented civil society within the Basel Convention since its inception in 1989.



### Merijn Hougee

is project leader of Clean Shipping at the North Sea Foundation where he works on a market-oriented approach to create sustainability in the maritime sector. Since 2008, he has been equally working for the ProSea Foundation as a course leader, delivering sustainability training courses to naval cadets in the Netherlands.



### Annie Thébaud-Mony

is a sociologist, occupational health expert, and director of the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm). She also is the spokesperson for the Ban Asbestos Network in France.



## Our Publications



**“Off the Beach! Safe and Green Ship Dismantling”, 2009,**

is an inside look into the social and environmental consequences of the shipbreaking practice on the beaches of South Asia. The dangers of beaching are explored and solutions are proposed to improve ship recycling standards.



**“Fate of Shipbreaking Wastes in Turkey”, 2009,** is an in-depth technical report on the treatment of waste

generated by the shipbreaking industry in Turkey, as well as recommendations from the Platform on how to improve it.



**“Childbreaking Yards; Child Labour in the Ship Recycling Industry in Bangladesh”, 2008,** published by FIDH and

YPSA in cooperation with the Platform, gives a comprehensive description of child labour in Chittagong's shipbreaking yards.

# Message from Rizwana Hasan

Board Member and winner of the Goldman Prize

The activities that are carried out in Bangladesh in the name of shipbreaking continued to be challenged in the Courts of the country because of their non-compliance with the legal requirements on labour safety and environmental protection. As a result, only 107 ships were imported to Bangladesh for breaking in 2010, compared to the 214 ships imported in 2009. However, the breaking of these 107 ships has still resulted in the death of no less than 12 workers while crippling another 24.

Shipbreakers and their allies in the government are desperate to find ways to bring in more toxic ships into the Bangladeshi territory in clear deviation and defiance of the orders of the Court. They first changed the requirement of pre-cleaning of ships prior to their dumping in Bangladesh. The European ship owners and the exporters were very happy with this intervention from the government, although the ruling of the court remains unchanged.

The government then rendered the High Powered Technical Committee ineffective. The Ministry of Environment and Forest has set up few other committees to draft non-binding elaborate guidelines and to inspect the imported ships only to say that the '...inbuilt toxic materials can be disposed of safely if proper mitigation measures are taken'!

By keeping vacuum in the legal arena, the government has given the shipbreakers the most crucial support they needed to continue with "business as usual". Almost two years have passed since the Court directed a framing of the rules to bind the operation of the industry with strict legal conditions, but in vain. The government is not only delaying the finalization of the rules, it is instead diverting resources and energy to have non-binding documents like guidelines and policies drafted. The draft guidelines are detailed enough but the draft rule, as it exists now, is very evasive.

The flow of incidences clearly suggests that at least part of the government is blindly supporting the shipbreakers. To help their allies in the government to build an argument in favour of the industry and to make a political win over the situation, the shipbreakers have resorted to their usual practice of increasing the prices of iron and character assassinations of those fighting against their commercial interests.

With pressure coming from the international arena, the situation gets more worrying. In the recent past, the IMO representatives and a few diplomatic missions in Bangladesh were seen very active in establishing contacts with the government, of course, with illusionary promises of funds for change. The ship owners and the exporters can't afford to lose the territory of Bangladesh for their dumping purposes!

The fight thus is getting tougher! It has turned into a battle for establishing principles and truth against the commercial and self-profiting stake of a few in the dirty, killing industry of shipbreaking. With continued support from the Platform, the warriors in Bangladesh shall stand firm and persist on taking the ships off the beaches of South Asia!



**Rizwana Hasan**

Executive Director, BELA

# WHAT IS SHIPBREAKING?



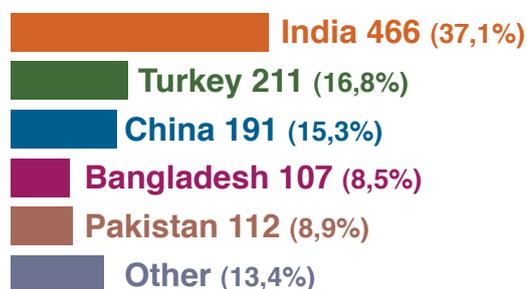
There is hardly any safety equipment available for the workers that manually break the ships on the beaches of South Asia. They work an average of 16 hours a day for less than 2 euros under the scorching sun. Child labour is also common, 1 in 6 workers is younger than 12.

After having sailed the world for 25 to 30 years, ships reach the end of their operational life. They are then sold and dismantled to recover the valuable steel that makes up 90% of their structure. However, not everything on the ship can be recycled—ships also contain large amounts of hazardous materials, such as asbestos, waste oils, heavy metals and PCBs which are not and cannot be contained or controlled when the ships are broken apart on beaches.

## An exploitative practice

Though safe and green facilities exist, they require more investment. Unscrupulous ship owners and cash buyers in search of maximum profits prefer to sell their ships to shipbreaking yards in South Asia. Today, 70 to 80 percent of end-of-life ships are simply run ashore on the tidal beaches of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, where environmental laws and labour rights are either weakly enforced or non-existent. There, the majority of the world's end-of-life fleet is broken apart manually by the poorest and most vulnerable workers of South Asia. The salary is often less than 2 euros a day and child labour is very common, 1 in 5 workers is less than 15 years old.

## SHIPS BROKEN IN 2010



**Total: 1256**

Source: "December 2010 monthly report" rounding up 2010 figures by Cotzias Shipping Group

South Asia is still in the lead of the shipbreaking industry. In Bangladesh, a court ruling in 2010 banning toxic ships has slowed the industry down at a national level. Turkey breaks ships on impermeable cemented beaches that do not have high tides like the South Asian beaches and where hazardous materials can be contained. In the race for steel recycling, there is also China that has moved all breaking operations off the beach and now does peer breaking. A small percentage of ships is also dismantled in facilities in Europe and USA, mainly using drydocks or alongside peers.

## Uncontrolled pollution

On South Asian tidal beaches there is no containment of the obsolete ships' pollutants which are absorbed by the extremely permeable sand. Tons of contaminants are accumulated on the yards and are then washed back into the sea. The 2010 World Bank report on shipbreaking in Bangladesh and Pakistan states that «environmental damages could worsen as a result to sea level rise» caused by climate change in the near future. The tide will go much further inland and will be washing out more and more of the pollutants that have accumulated on the beaches throughout the years. The pollution is already destroying the biodiversity of the region and the livelihoods of surrounding fishing communities.

## Dangerous working conditions

When ships are broken directly on beaches, other security issues arise. The sand cannot support heavy lifting or emergency response equipment, putting the workers' lives in constant danger. Workers rarely wear safety gear and can get killed or injured in accidents caused by explosions, crushed by falling metal plates or suffocated by the build-up of gases within the ship. This year alone, 39 workers died on the shipbreaking yards of South Asia. This number is actually lower than average due to the reduced shipbreaking activity brought on by a 2010 Bangladeshi court ruling banning toxic ships from being beached there. The workers also often suffer from fatal occupational diseases, such as lung cancer, due to their constant exposure to toxins. It has been estimated that the total death toll in the shipbreaking yards of South Asia in the past 30 years now runs into the thousands.

## Race to the bottom

Shipbreaking on the beach can never be accomplished in a manner which is environmentally sound and protective of human health and security. Safer and cleaner methods of shipbreaking already exist, but require more investment.

Until the global community shows leadership and moves toxic ships off the beach, the shipping and shipbreaking industries will continue to exploit the land and the lives of the poorest countries and the most vulnerable communities around the world.

Sources: FIDH, YPSA, NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, ed. «Childbreaking Yards: Child Labour in the Ship Recycling Industry in Bangladesh» 2008. Greenpeace, FIDH, ed. «End of Life Ships: the Human Cost of Breaking Ships» 2005. World Bank, ed. «Ship breaking and recycling industry in Bangladesh and Pakistan» 2010.



# SHIPBREAKING AND



## Legend

### NGO Shipbreaking Platform Members

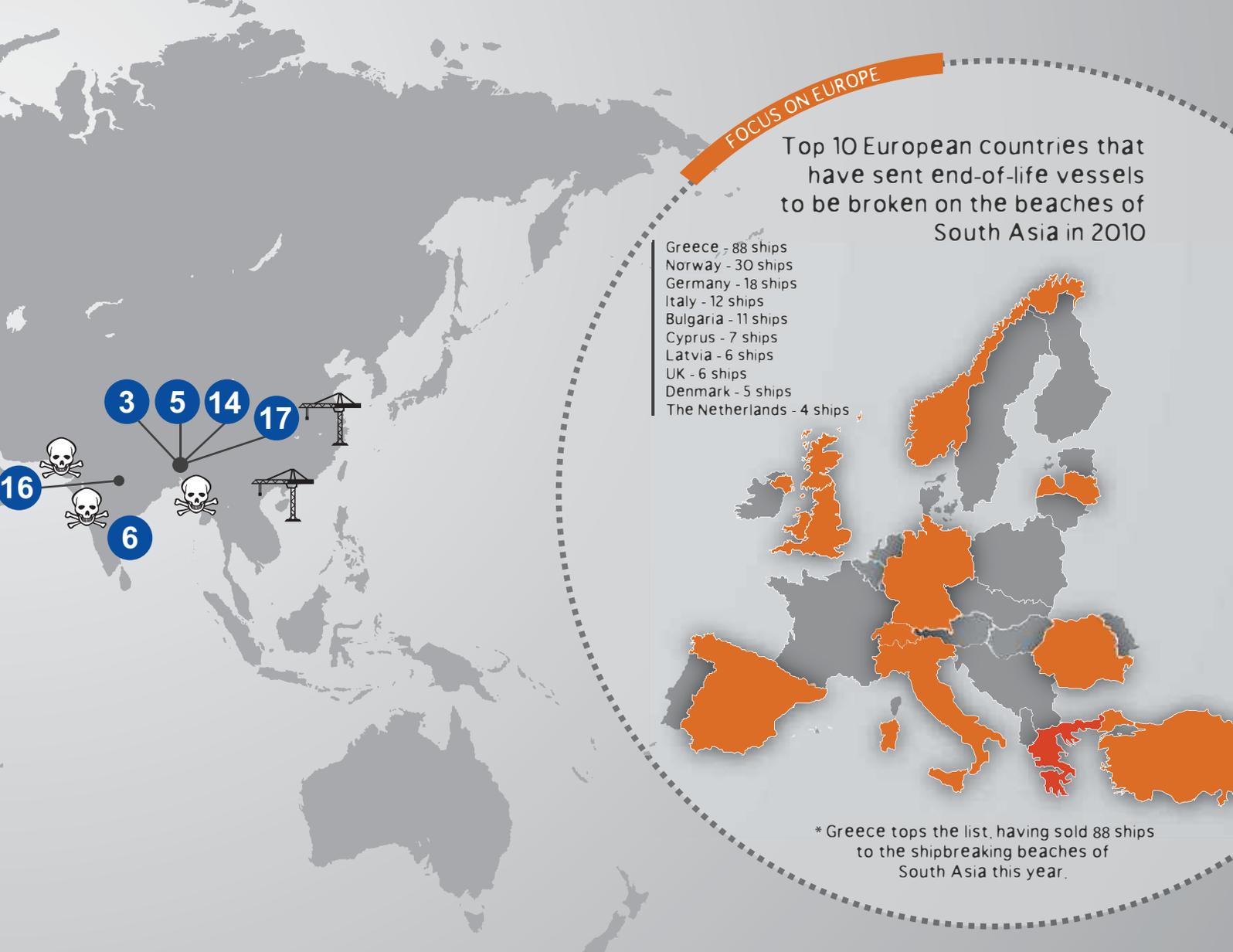
- 1 Basel Action Network (BAN)
- 2 Ban Asbestos
- 3 Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
- 4 Bellona Foundation
- 5 Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)
- 6 Corporate Accountability Desk – The Other Media
- 7 European Federation for Transport & Environment
- 8 International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)
- 9 Greenpeace
- 10 International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
- 11 Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE)
- 12 NGO Shipbreaking Platform Secretariat
- 13 North Sea Foundation
- 14 Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE)
- 15 Prevention of Hazardous Shipbreaking
- 16 Toxics Link
- 17 Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)

### Top 5 Flags Of Convenience

A flag of convenience ship is one that is registered in a country other than the country of ownership. Shipowners often wish to benefit from cheaper regulations and greater freedom to employ cheap labor. Many of the registries have ratified international conventions but lack the resources or the will to enforce them. This places the ship in a place for FOC open-registries with minimal accountability, least responsibility, and no oversight.

- 1 Panama: 42
- 2 Liberia: 36
- 3 St Kitts-Nevis: 22
- 4 Malta: 14
- 5 Comoros: 13

# ROUND THE WORLD



## Force (FOC)\* used for shipbreaking

...ne that flies the flag of a country other  
Ships are 'flagged out' when shipowners  
registration fees, low or no taxes and  
...ur because even if the states responsible  
international conventions, they often lack  
force them effectively. The entire market  
has become a bidding game for least  
...ility.

## Shipbreaking yards



Shipbreaking beaches



Ship dismantling areas  
(where beaching is not practiced)

# PLATFORM HIGHLIGHTS



© Maro Kouri

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform team travelled to Bangladesh and visited the shipbreaking yards of Chittagong. It was able to assess the situation of the shipbreaking industry on the ground and personally meet with the yard workers and the fishermen from the region.

## ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform works at an international level to promote safe and environmentally sound ship recycling and raise awareness on the realities of the current shipbreaking practices. The Platform uses both creative means and political advocacy to work towards its goals and promote its messages. This year the Platform has been actively organising campaigns, sponsoring petitions, participating in policy workshops organised by the United Nations, taking part in stakeholder meetings, attending key industry conferences, building coalitions, doing research on the field and online, while remaining a major news source on shipbreaking issues.

### The Off the Beach! campaign

This year the NGO Shipbreaking Platform developed its Off the Beach! Campaign to gain widespread support for the shipbreaking cause and to encourage stakeholders to adopt cleaner and safer methods of ship recycling.

Two brand-new features have brought a new dimension to the already successful campaign that was launched in May 2009. In 2010, a prize-winning travelling photo exhibition, BROKEN, was created in Brussels. Shortly after the launch of the exhibition, a new website featuring a petition went live to strengthen public support and call for the global community to get shipbreaking off the beach.



Launch of the BROKEN photo exhibition at the Halles Saint-Géry on 9 November 2010.

The **BROKEN** exhibition, featuring photographs by Saiful Huq Omi, shows the devastating reality of the shipbreaking industry on the beaches of Bangladesh. It has won the Bervelt Foundation Prize 2010. The launch of BROKEN was organised in November 2010 at the Halles Saint-Géry, a famous cultural venue in the centre of Brussels, and followed the Platform's Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 2010. Saiful Huq Omi was present and gave an opening speech, as well as our Goldman Prize winning board member, Rizwana Hasan.



The NGO Shipbreaking Platform team, after the AGM, at the BROKEN launch with Saiful Huq Omi, the photographer, and Katarina Winslow, the curator and designer of the exhibition.

At the time, Belgium held the presidency of the Council of the European Union. Launching the exhibition in the capital of Europe was the perfect opportunity to shed light on the shipbreaking industry. The Platform then called on the European Union, whose member states own 40% of the world's fleet, to stop European-owned and European-flagged ships from being broken on the beaches of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Hundreds of European citizens who support the Platform's message signed a petition available at the venue.

The exhibition was so successful that it has since become a travelling one that has been invited to feature in different capitals of the world. The Platform will publish information about the exhibition's next stops on its websites.

The new **Off the Beach! campaign website** featuring the petition to get shipbreaking activities off the beach can be found on [www.offthebeach.org](http://www.offthebeach.org). New features of the campaign will soon be added, including an advocacy video and other educational material in the making.

The **corporate track** of the campaign is currently being developed as well. The Platform plans to use this tool to mobilise support from progressive cargo owners, ship

owners, ship recycling yard owners and financial institutions to use non-beach facilities and to commit to the Platform's Safe & Green Standards. This part of the campaign will be launched in 2011.

### Information and research

This year, in a proactive move to directly inform the media, policy makers, industry, civil society and the general public on the latest shipbreaking news, the Platform has launched its first e-newsletter, Breaking News. It gives updates on the big developments and hot news stories on shipbreaking. Subscribe to the newsletter on [www.shipbreakingplatform.org](http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org)

The **official NGO Shipbreaking Platform website** has also changed and new features have been added, such as "Meet the People" and "Ships in the Spotlight". It is regularly updated with the latest press releases, in-house articles on the major shipbreaking stories and important documents.

The Platform also often publishes opinion pieces and other articles in the international press and is cited by the world's most renowned shipping journals. This year, the Platform has received extensive media coverage in 3 continents and about 12 different countries. Our press releases are regularly covered by influential shipping journals such as Lloyd's List and important media, such as CNN, Baird Maritime, Steel Guru, Tradewinds, The Ecologist, AFP, Financial Express Bd, France 24 and the Huffington Post.

The Platform is also actively **tracking vessels and collecting data** on shipbreaking by using various databases, reports, contacts on the ground in Bangladesh, India and around the world as well as other reliable sources. The Platform has been alerting the concerned governments when toxic vessels have left their ports to be sold for breaking in South Asia.

### Conferences and meetings

One of the Platform's main objectives is to raise awareness concerning the environmental and human rights abuses linked to shipbreaking. In this view, the Platform has been invited to hold university lectures and has also presented its views at a number of industry conferences around the world, increasing support for the Platform's demands amongst progressive stakeholders. The Platform is now being approached for advice on dismantling methods and best practices by various companies. The industry conferences the Platform attended in 2010 include the Tradewinds Ship Recycling Forum, the Lloyd's List Ship Recycling Conference, the LSLC Workshop on the Politics of Ship Recycling, and the ACI Conference on Ship Recycling.

The Platform has also remained active at the Basel Convention meetings. It reaches out to nations around the world to not accept that Basel cede any of its competence on toxic ships to the Hong Kong Convention, considered a big step backwards in the long-term battle to get end-of-life ships off the beach.

## SUCCESSES IN THE SHIPBREAKING COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA

### Bangladesh bans breaking on beaches

In March 2009, the High Court gave a ruling allowing only toxic waste-free ships to lawfully enter Bangladesh due to the country's obligations as Party to the Basel Convention that places strict controls on all imports of hazardous waste. This groundbreaking ruling won by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), a Platform member, was acclaimed by environmentalists worldwide. Unfortunately, the ruling was not strictly implemented in 2009 and ship-breaking yards continued their activities on the beaches.

It was only in 2010, after another petition by BELA was heard, that the court decided to finally reaffirm its earlier judgment and stop the import of any obsolete vessels that have not been pre-cleaned of toxic materials such as asbestos, heavy metals and PCBs. As a result of this ruling, in 2010, most shipbreaking activities came to a standstill. Reports of deaths and injuries on the job became scarce. By putting this new measure into effect, the Bangladeshi government is finally being compliant with international law and national regulations on waste imports.



Since the ruling banning toxic ships from being beached has been implemented, the deaths on the shipbreaking yards of Bangladesh have been reduced by more than half. They have gone from 26 in 2009, to 12 in 2010.

The Platform applauds this move by Bangladesh and now urges India and Pakistan to take similar action, or risk ending up being burdened by the world's toxic wastes and becoming the dumping ground for a growing end-of-life fleet.

## South Asian meetings

### Trade Unions

In September 2010, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform travelled to India and Bangladesh with one of the main objectives being to participate in round table discussions with the local trade unions of these two shipbreaking countries. The aim of these meetings was to put together a common statement denouncing the pollution and labour rights abuses committed by the Indian and Bangladeshi shipbreaking industries.

In India, the Platform met with various renowned trade unions and labour movements in New Delhi. Participants included, among others, the New Trade Union Initiative, the International Metalworkers Federation Asia Office, the All India Trade Union Congress, the Centre for India Trade Union and Youth for Safe Food. In Bangladesh, Platform member, Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies helped facilitate the trade union meetings that were organised in Dhaka and in Chittagong. Participants in these meetings included the Bangladesh Trade Union Centre

and the Shipbreakers Union Forum. The common statement was received very well during the meetings and an additional demand to have the right to organise workers was added.



The NGO Shipbreaking Platform's Trade Union meeting in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

It was decided that a South Asian trade union meeting would be organised in 2011 with representatives from the trade unions of all the shipbreaking countries, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, to further discuss the common statement on shipbreaking.

### Other meetings

While in India and Bangladesh, the Platform took the opportunity to meet with the European Union delegations in place in the countries' capitals. They also met with the other Platform member organisations, Toxics Link, BELA, YPSA, and BILS.

## Visiting the shipbreaking yards of Bangladesh

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform team was able to see the shipbreaking yards of Bangladesh while in Chittagong. The visit was done undercover with the help of the neighbouring fishermen. It was too dangerous to gain access to the yards by foot because of the risk of being brutalised by 'goons' payed by the shipbreaking yard owners. The Platform found a fisherman boat to sail amongst the beached ships at high tide and was able to get close to the devastating working and environmental conditions found there. The NGO Shipbreaking Platform was accompanied by a photographer, Maro Kouri, and a local cameraman that captured images of these appalling yards on tape. The Platform plans to use this footage to show the reality that many refuse to see.

The shipbreaking yard the Platform visited was established in 2009 in a plot where some 30,000 mangrove trees were illegally cut to make room for new yards. It was a Bangladeshi Parliamentarian, owner of



Helen Périvier, President of the Platform, Grazia Cioci, Acting Director, Muhammed Ali (Shahin), Bangladesh Platform Coordinator and Paola Tejada-Lalinde, Communication Officer, on the fishing boat that took them amongst the beached ships of the shipbreaking yards of Chittagong at high tide in September 2010.



One obsolete ship after another are beached along the coast as far as the eye can see. 70 to 80% of the world's fleet are broken apart on the beaches of South Asia.

the yard, that illegally ordered these trees, which had been financed with UN money, to be chopped down. These trees had been planted to protect the coastal communities from the monsoon season's typhoons that have now been left vulnerable to natural disasters.

The desolate landscapes are overwhelming and impressive. One obsolete ship after another are beached along the coast as far as the eye can see. Though breaking was prohibited at the time the Platform was visiting, authorities turned a blind eye and breaking continued, although at a reduced pace. The Platform saw workers working without safety gear, cutting off pieces of the ship that simply fell, splashing into the water, without any

precaution taken. The view of the beach was apocalyptic, dirty pieces of rusted steel, petrol leaking out of the ships and all sorts of other pollutants covered the sand. These once pristine beaches had become a dumping ground, a graveyard, for the toxic ships sent by western countries.

Fishermen boats sailed in and out between the ships, trying to continue their work as usual. The fishing communities' livelihoods have suffered greatly from this industry. The biggest and tastiest fish that they had once sold for the best price left these polluted waters for cleaner ones and the fish that remain have all been exposed to toxic materials. Also, since the ships are beached without notice, the fishermen are not warned and their fishing nets get ripped. They have become poorer since the shipbreaking activities have started. Their children bathe and play and their wives wash the clothes in this polluted water while they inhale the asbestos that is released from the ships on the beaches.

The shipbreaking industry has been allowed to perpetuate a human disaster that can no longer be ignored. If it is not stopped, the damage done to these areas will be beyond repair and the consequences for the environment and people alike will be devastating.

## Call to action

**The NGO Shipbreaking Platform calls upon the United Nations, the European Union and national governments to set an industry standard that will get dangerous shipbreaking activity off the beach and support a safe and pollution free working environment.**



Many fish and crustacean have disappeared from the waters on the coasts of Chittagong due to the pollution the shipbreaking industry has generated. Children bathe in polluted water and play in asbestos-filled air and women wash their clothes in contaminated water and eat toxic laden fish. Shipbreaking has left the fishing communities poor and vulnerable.

# Financial statements 2010 (audited)

The Platform is grateful for the generous support it has received from its members, the agencies and the charitable organisations mentioned below.

## Shipbreaking Platform Balance Sheet – 31 December 2010

### INCOME

	Accumulated results end of previous year	2.147,20
	Contributions from member organisations	45.200,00
	Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs Senternovem	2.000,00
	Fondation Jacqueline Bervelt	2.500,00
	Patagonia Trust	9.545,02
	The Sigrid Rausing Trust	43.353,64
	Miscellaneous / Financial Income	815,69
	European Commission DG Environment	106.414,88
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>211.976,43</b>

### EXPENDITURE

	<b>Activities</b>	
	Travel	13.708,95
	Annual General Assembly	7.561,18
	Photo Exhibit	12.797,95
	Consultants / Research	11.899,99
	Regional Branches	15.800,00
	<b>Total Activities</b>	<b>61.768,07</b>
	<b>Administrative / General Costs</b>	
	Rental costs	4.406,28
	Office costs	1.832,20
	Communication costs	3.761,83
	External costs	2.162,00
	Other costs	2.606,95
	<b>Total Administrative /General Costs</b>	<b>14.769,26</b>
	<b>Staff / Personnel Costs</b>	
	<b>Total Staff / Personnel Costs</b>	<b>135.439,09</b>
	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>211.976,42</b>
	<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>0,01</b>



# CONTACTS

## **Brussels Secretariat**

Ingvild Jenssen  
Director

e-mail: [ingvild@shipbreakingplatform.org](mailto:ingvild@shipbreakingplatform.org)

Grazia Cioci  
Senior Policy Advisor / Acting Director  
e-mail: [grazia@shipbreakingplatform.org](mailto:grazia@shipbreakingplatform.org)

Paola Tejada-Lalinde  
Communication Officer  
e-mail: [paola@shipbreakingplatform.org](mailto:paola@shipbreakingplatform.org)

## **Contact person in Bangladesh**

Muhammed Ali (Shahin)  
e-mail: [yposa@shipbreakingbd.info](mailto:yposa@shipbreakingbd.info)



**NGO  
SHIPBREAKING  
PLATFORM**

Rue de la Linière, 11  
BE-1060 Bruxelles  
Tél.: +32 2 6094 419  
[www.shipbreakingplatform.org](http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org)  
[www.offthebeach.org](http://www.offthebeach.org)