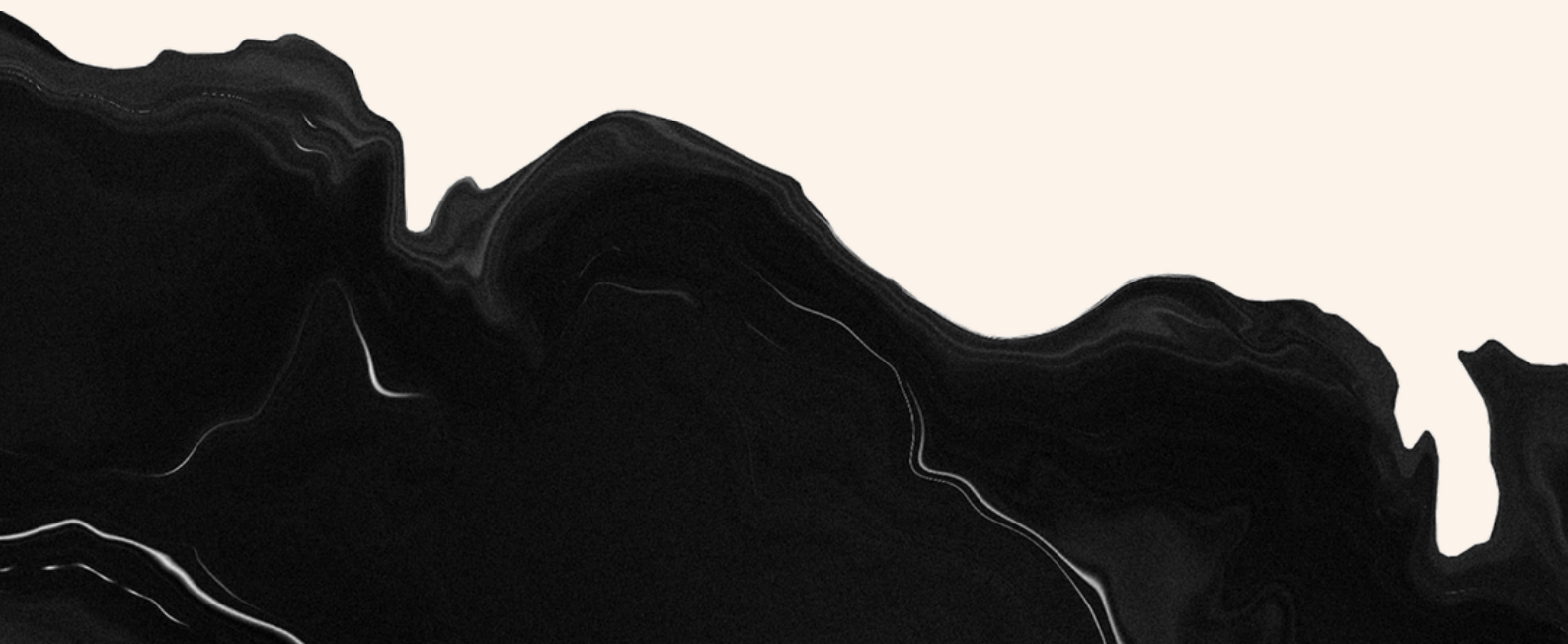




SHIPBREAKING QUARTERLY UPDATE

#1



VISION & MISSION

Vessels are recycled in facilities that ensure clean, safe, and just practices that provide workers with decent jobs. Vessels will be toxic-free and no longer cause harm to workers, local communities, or the environment at end-of-life.

To act as a catalyst for change by effectively advocating for clean, safe, and just ship recycling globally. This necessitates denouncing dirty and dangerous practices, such as the dumping of end-of-life vessels on the beaches of developing countries. Our commitment to finding sustainable global solutions is based on the respect of human and workers' rights and the principles of environmental justice, producer responsibility, 'polluter pays', and clean production.

APRIL 2026
SQU# 1

In this quarterly publication, we share important updates on global developments in ship recycling. It offers an overview of accidents, particularly those occurring on the beaches of South Asia, namely in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, alongside relevant media coverage, and recent research and relevant readings. Our goal is to raise public awareness of the many harmful impacts of shipbreaking in South Asia, highlighting efforts to strengthen the protection of workers' rights and the environment, as well as showcasing innovation and environmentally sound ship recycling practices.

AT LEAST

4

*workers suffered an accident
while scrapping ships
worldwide*

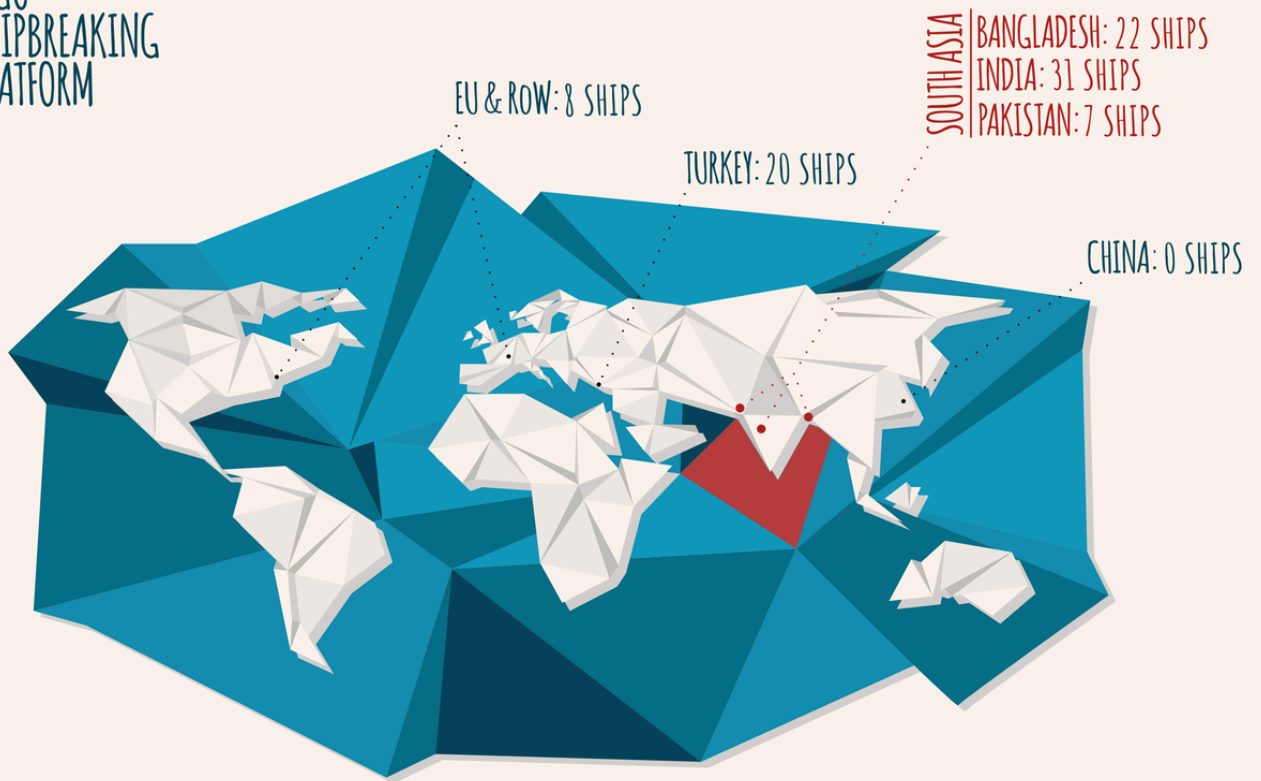


03

SHIPBREAKING RECORDS



NGO
SHIPBREAKING
PLATFORM



TOTAL
88 SHIPS DISMANTLED WORLDWIDE
JANUARY - MARCH 2026



ON THE BEACH

OFF THE BEACH

04

CASES AND INVESTIGATIONS

PAKISTAN: ALERT OVER IMPORT OF “DARK FLEET” VESSEL POSING SIGNIFICANT RISKS

On 9 March, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform alerted Basel Focal Points and government authorities in Pakistan to stop the import of the U.S.-sanctioned vessel VLCC CERES I (IMO 9229439). The vessel, under the name MALI, was anchored at the Karachi Port. Local reports indicated that the vessel was about to be beached at a yard in Gadani for scrapping. This vessel has been officially sanctioned by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for its role in the "dark fleet" transporting illicit oil. In 2024, the vessel was involved in a major collision and fire with another ship. There are serious concerns regarding residual oil and structural integrity, making it a "ticking time bomb" at risk of explosion or fire during dismantling operations. Information provided to the NGO Shipbreaking Platform by local sources give good reason to believe that the true amounts of hazardous waste still left on board the ship (e.g. asbestos, PCBs, toxic sludge) have not been declared in its Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM). A valid IHM is necessary for the vessel's approval to be imported to Pakistan legally. Pakistan is signatory to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal. Under this Convention, the trade of hazardous wastes that are likely contained within the structure of the CERES I is strictly controlled. In addition, a Prior Informed Consent (PIC) is required between exporting and importing countries. According to [Trade Winds](#), the Balochistan regional authorities have advised recyclers in Gadani not to buy the vessel, issuing a warning: "In the interest of all ship recyclers, it is hereby strictly advised that no ship recyclers should purchase this vessel for recycling purposes, as the entry of such vessels is strictly banned at Gadani ship recycling yard. Therefore, any violation of this directive will result in the concerned ship recyclers having to bear the legal consequences in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.". According to local sources, there is a high probability that the vessel will not be permitted to be beached. As of the end of March, the vessel CERES remains anchored at Karachi Port, awaiting further instructions.

05

ACCIDENTS

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform collects data on accidents in ship recycling yards worldwide. In Turkey and South Asia, accidents are reported based on local sources and media reports. In South Asia, as the sector suffers from a serious lack of transparency and lack of published official data, many incidents likely go unreported, particularly in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, where authorities and industry do not publish data. Moreover, the absence of data on occupational diseases, both in South Asia and in Turkey, including cancer, further exacerbates the lack of accountability as workers are exposed to toxics unknowingly daily.

BANGLADESH

On 1 January, Abdul Khalek (34) and Md. Shaiful Islam (38), both security guards, lost their lives during the beaching of the vessel SEAPEAK ASIA (IMO 9236420), owned by Seapeak, at K.R. Ship Recycling Yard at night, despite night shifts being prohibited by Bangladeshi law. The body of one worker and the severed body parts of another were recovered on the coast. Local sources and NGOs report that the incident was a workplace accident, contradicting the initial attempt by the yard owner to deny responsibility by claiming that the deaths resulted from a robbery at the yard and an external attack. Industrial Police Inspector Nahid Hasan Mridha stated that preliminary findings indicated the deaths were likely caused by an accident during the beaching operation at night and that there was no initial evidence to suggest a robbery. According to IndustriALL, compensation of 1.1 million BDT (approximately 7600 euros) was paid to each family after negotiations with the yard owner. In the case of the SEAPEAK ASIA, the vessel's rapid flag changes, from Spain to the Bahamas in September, and again in December to St Kitts and Nevis, appear as a scheme to evade the EU Ship Recycling Regulation, which requires EU-flagged ships to be scrapped only in EU-approved yards. No yards in South Asia are on the EU List.

On 5 March, an iron plate fell on Rabul (22), injuring his leg. Rabul was working as a cutter man inside a ship at Janata Steel. The yard has received compliance with the Hong Kong Convention. It was not possible to identify the ship.

06

TURKEY

On 11 January, Salih Ataman (49) died at Blade ship recycling yard in Aliğa, Turkey, when a massive hook detached from a crane and fell on him. Salih Ataman was dismantling the Discoverer Americas, a drillship owned by US-based Transocean Ltd. In the last four months, three tragic fatal accidents took place in Aliğa. Despite repeated warnings by civil society organisations, inadequate occupational safety measures, insufficient inspections, and weak enforcement of labour and environmental regulations continue to threaten the lives of workers and cause accidents that could have been prevented.

DEVELOPMENTS AROUND THE GLOBE

BANGLADESH

TOXIC COLONIALISM IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

Inside Climate News, a US media outlet, published an article in February highlighting the persistent environmental and human harms of the shipbreaking industry in Chattogram, Bangladesh. The report presents the industry as an example of toxic trade and environmental colonialism, where waste problems are exported from wealthy nations to the Global South under the justification that the industry provides employment for local communities. Photographer Spencer Call, present at that time in Bangladesh, documented the conditions on the ground and described the surrounding area as follows: *“The villages surrounding the area are oddly reminiscent of communities that have just endured battle.”* Spencer Call added that *“a disproportionate number of men bear permanent injuries,”* many relying on crutches or wheelchairs after losing their limbs.

INDIA

NEW MARITIME HUB IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA

India aims to bolster the nation’s maritime industry, attract private investment and position India as a global leader in shipbuilding and ship recycling. Therefore, the government is supporting the effort through budget allocations, including a ₹25,000-crore (approx. €2.31 billion) Maritime Development Fund and incentives for shipbuilding capacity development, research and innovation, and skills-building. In this context, the port of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, on the Eastern coast of India, is being developed as an energy-efficient maritime hub entirely powered by solar and other renewable sources, including building up of recycling capacity within the port.

07

READINGS AND INTERVIEWS

Work-Related Migration to the Alang Ship-Breaking Industry from Other Parts of India: An Overview of Health-Related Issue - Raja Singh and Arthur L. Frank
2025

This study focuses on migration and health risks among shipbreaking workers in Alang shipbreaking yard in India, highlighting that many workers at Alang are migrants from other states than Gujarat, and that they are likely to develop asbestos-related diseases, such as mesothelioma, years or decades after exposure, often after returning to their home villages. Because India lacks a national migrant worker database, tracking these long-term health outcomes has been difficult. To address this, the study used data obtained through the Right to Information Act (2005) to identify where workers in 2019 came from. It found that most migrants originated from districts in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar. Although the Indian Supreme Court has mandated that medical records of workers in asbestos-related industries be maintained for at least 15 years after employment ends, specifically to account for long-latency diseases, this requirement has not been effectively implemented in practice. The lack of compliance further weakens the ability to monitor occupational health outcomes and ensure accountability. The article further reinforces the importance of identifying the source districts from where workers came from for public health planning as it can help monitor and better understand the long-term development of asbestos-related diseases and guide policies for monitoring, prevention, and healthcare support in the regions where workers eventually return.

From Sanctions to the Scrapyard: Confronting a Growing Environmental Threat - Gonzalo Saiz Erausquin, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies RUSI
8 January 2026

The article argues that sanctions targeting the so-called “shadow fleet” of vessels used to transport illicit oil are inadvertently creating a growing environmental risk. As these ships age and become commercially and legally constrained by sanctions, they are increasingly difficult to sell, insure, or recycle through compliant channels.

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This leaves many vessels effectively stranded, continuing to operate despite poor condition or facing uncertain and potentially unsafe end-of-life outcomes. The result is a dual threat: on the one hand, these ageing tankers remain in service longer than they should, heightening the risk of accidents, spills, and pollution; on the other, the absence of viable, regulated recycling pathways increases the likelihood that they will be abandoned or dismantled under substandard conditions. The article suggests that sanctions alone are insufficient to resolve the problem and may, in fact, exacerbate it if not paired with practical solutions. It concludes that policymakers must address the full lifecycle of these vessels by enabling safe and environmentally sound recycling options or risk the accumulation of a deteriorating fleet that poses significant long-term dangers to both people and the environment.

Study on flag State responsibilities and 'open registers' for vessel registration - European Commission

12 January 2026

The European Commission has published an up-to-date analysis of the economic dynamics and the effects of the use of so-called “open registers”, often called “flags of convenience” (FoC), for sea-going vessels. This analysis focuses on understanding their impacts on economic, social, environmental and security policy objectives of the European Union (EU) and relevant international frameworks. The study highlights how FoCs rely on opaque ownership structures, weak oversight, and poor enforcement of international rules, enabling harmful practices that directly contradict EU standards, global commitments, and put responsible flag States at an unfair disadvantage. Serious concerns related to how FoCs facilitate pollution and illegal dumping, the exploitation of seafarers and shipbreaking workers, and contribute to tax avoidance and illegal fishing, are raised in the report. Environmental NGOs, including the NGO Shipbreaking Platform, WWF, Opportunity Green, Oceana, and Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), call the EU to act without delay to discourage, disincentivise or remove those structures that enable such practices and to secure the long-term sustainability, integrity, and credibility of EU maritime governance.

The study's findings expose severe governance failures at the end of a ship's life. Flags such as St Kitts and Nevis, Comoros, Palau and Tuvalu are widely used for last voyages to the shipbreaking beaches in South Asia, to circumvent EU regulations on the scrapping of toxic ships. The Commission has already recognised flag-swapping as the key obstacle to implementing the Ship Recycling Regulation. Yet, no further action has been taken to fix this issue and hold shipowners accountable.

NGO Shipbreaking Platform

09

Shipbreaking yards are under-explored hotspots for pollution, finds**Turkish study - European Commission**

4 February 2026

A new study published by the European Commission in February explores how recovering steel from ship parts (such as engines, deck cranes, pumps and switchboards) in shipbreaking can contribute to environmental contamination with POPs. The study focuses on a 30-kilometre stretch of coastline in Aliğa, western Turkey, the fourth largest shipbreaking nation in the world, revealing that coastal sediments contained significant concentrations of PCBs and PBDEs, of up to 4,750 and 5,053 nanograms per gram of sediment (ng/g), respectively. The researcher contrasted these findings with previous research on PCBs in sediments in the same area. Compared to studies carried out a decade ago, the concentrations of six indicator PCBs had risen (from 125–669 ng/g to 152–1,591 ng/g), reflecting an increase in shipbreaking activity in the area and a rise in associated waste management operations. To mitigate ecological risks and protect marine ecosystems, the author calls for urgently improved waste management practices for POP-containing materials; more robust remediation strategies for polluted sediments; strictly enforced cross-country environmental regulation; and immediate intervention via systematic monitoring and best management practices.

Op-Ed: HKC Certification Can't Substitute for the Basel Convention - Dr.

Ishtiaque Ahmed

30 March 2026

In this Maritime Executive article, Dr. Ishtiaque Ahmed reinforces the argument that the Basel Convention Prior Informed Consent (PIC) system is not equivalent to the Hong Kong Convention's (HKC) International Ready for Recycling Certificate (IRRC). Dr. Ahmed points out the following main arguments:

- First, the Basel Convention establishes a direct, formal, and accountable process of state-to-state consent prior to any transboundary movement of hazardous waste. By contrast, the HKC is primarily concerned with technical compliance—such as maintaining an inventory of hazardous materials, ensuring facility authorization, and upholding operational safety—rather than regulating the movement of ships through intergovernmental approval.

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- Second, the practical interpretation of the HKC certification system raises additional concerns. The IRRC is issued by, or on behalf of, the flag state to confirm that a ship is ready for recycling in accordance with HKC requirements. However, it is not an instrument of intergovernmental consent. Rather, it is a regulatory certification intended to facilitate a ship's entry into a recycling facility. It does not constitute a negotiated or acknowledged agreement between states. Treating the IRRC as equivalent to Basel consent effectively reduces a bilateral legal process to a unilateral administrative act. Moreover, in some cases—particularly where ships fly non-Party flags—competent authorities appear willing to facilitate or accept IRRC issuance through national mechanisms, further distorting legal boundaries.
- Third, this practice creates a fundamental conflict: the same state may act both as recipient and as the authority legitimizing the movement. This is precisely the scenario the Basel Convention's PIC system was designed to prevent. While the IRRC is directed toward ship recycling facilities—private entities—Basel consent operates strictly within the realm of public international law, governing agreements between states rather than between a state and private operators.

The path forward requires clarity rather than conflation. If the international community wishes to create a unified regime for ship recycling, it must do so explicitly, through negotiated amendments or new agreements that reconcile these frameworks. Until then, the existing legal obligations under Basel remain in force. Basel's rule is clear and strict: hazardous waste cannot cross borders without the prior informed consent of both the exporting and importing states. The IRRC under the Hong Kong Convention, however well intended, does not and cannot replace that requirement.

Dr. Ishtiaque Ahmed, Professor and Chair of the Department of Law at North South University in Bangladesh,

OUR REPORTS

NGO Shipbreaking Platform

[Scrap steel at sea: How ship recycling can help decarbonise European steel production?\(2025\)](#)

[Ship Recycling in Turkey: Challenges and Future Direction \(2024\)](#)

[“Trading Lives for Profit: How the Shipping Industry Circumvents Regulations to Scrap Toxic Ships on Bangladesh’s Beaches” - In collaboration with Human Rights Watch \(2023\)](#)

[Breaking Out: Anchoring Circular Innovation for ship recycling. \(2022\)](#)

[The Toxic Tide - Data and figures \(2022\)](#)

[Contradiction in terms: European Union must align its waste ship exports with international law and green deal \(2020\)](#)

[Study Report on Child Labour in the Shipbreaking Sector in Bangladesh \(2019\)](#)

[Behind the Hypocrisy of Better Beaches \(2019\)](#)

[Recycling Outlook. Decommissioning of North Sea Floating Oil & Gas Units. \(2019\)](#)



Since 2009, around **8221** ships were scrapped in South Asia, causing at least **480** deaths and **575** injuries. The figures on accidents are likely to be much higher. Occupational diseases are not even registered in these statistics and are not officially monitored.

WE ARE NOW CALLING FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP INJURED WORKERS AND ASBESTOS VICTIMS IN BANGLADESH. CHECK OUT OUR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR MORE INFORMATION BY CLICKING [HERE](#) OR ON THE IMAGE BELOW.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

HELP PROVIDING TREATMENT TO
INJURED WORKERS AND ASBESTOS VICTIMS
IN BANGLADESH



DONATE NOW



To ensure that safe and clean ship recycling becomes the norm, and not the exception, the Platform will continue to inform policy makers, financial and corporate leaders, as well as researchers and journalists. With a broad base of support both in orientation and geographically, including membership in ship owning as well as shipbreaking countries, the Platform plays an important role in promoting solutions that encompass the respect of human rights, corporate responsibility and environmental justice.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

**IF YOU SHARE OUR VISION PLEASE MAKE A DONATION
TO SUPPORT OUR WORK OR CONTACT US TO FIND OUT
HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER!**

**SUPPORT
OUR WORK**



ABOUT THIS REPORT

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