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IMEC Adds To Industry Pressure On “Hebei Spirit” Judgement

IMEC members today added pressure on the Korean Government by expressing “astonishment and desperate disappointment” at the outcome of the recent appeals court decision in the case of the two Indian officers involved in the “Hebei Spirit” case.

Speaking today after the decision was announced, the IMEC Chairman, Ian Sherwood, said: “Maritime professionals, whether still at sea, or now working ashore with companies or with organisations, such as IMEC, will find this decision inexplicable. They will also feel great sympathy for the officers and their families and wish to support them in any way they can. I can only say on behalf of IMEC members that we are astonished and desperately disappointed at the Appeal Court decision.”

IMEC considers, however, that the absolute priority must now be to secure the release of the two officers as quickly as possible. IMEC remains doubtful whether public statements in the international maritime press criticising the Korean Government or the national legal system in Korea are the best way to achieve a speedy settlement of the case and considers that other measures might be more successful.

Ian Sherwood said: “If, as has been suggested, the professional advice that has been provided to the Court is inadequate or deficient in many respects, then it should be the responsibility of the industry to correct this situation. Surely it would be possible for all of the international maritime organisations that have expressed their concerns over this

case to send senior representatives to Korea to explain the technical details to the proper authorities to assist with the appeal process that we understand is currently in progress. I would certainly expect IMEC to be prepared to send a senior expert if this would help the situation.”

Ian Sherwood also said, “This is the time to get the men home. Recriminations can wait until later once they officers have been re-united with their families.”

Editors' note

The International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC) is an employers organisation based in London. IMEC represents over 120 companies located all over the world that operate almost 6,500 ships and employ over 157,000 seafarers of all nationalities. The members are individual shipping companies, both owners and managers, large and small, operating all types of ships, including dry bulk, container, cruise liners, livestock carriers, reefers and tankers. The ships they operate are registered in more than 40 different countries.

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