

COUNCIL  
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Agenda item 17(f)

C 120/17(f)/Add.1  
29 June 2018  
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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### (f) IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea

#### Note by the Secretary-General

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document reports on the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and the decision of the Panel of Judges on the recipient of the 2018 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea
<i>Strategic direction, if applicable:</i>	Other work
<i>Output:</i>	OW 12
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 13
<i>Related documents:</i>	C 120/17(f) and Circular Letter No.3781

#### Outcome of the Assessment Panel

1 As stated in paragraph 3 of document C 120/17(f), the Assessment Panel met at IMO Headquarters on 22 May 2018, chaired by the Secretary-General's nominee, the Director of the Legal Affairs and External Relations Division, to scrutinize the nominations (see annex to document C 120/17(f)) which had been received for this year's Awards. The Assessment Panel comprised representatives of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA), the International Salvage Union (ISU) and the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).

2 The Assessment Panel examined a total of 22 nominations, which had been received from 15 Member States and 2 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO and, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Award, submitted its proposals for the Award, Certificates of Commendation and Letters of Commendation, together with the rationale leading to its recommendations, for consideration by the Panel of Judges.

### **Outcome of the Panel of Judges**

3 The Panel of Judges met at IMO Headquarters on 29 June 2018, chaired by the Chair of the Council, to consider the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and to select the recipient of the Award. The Chairs of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Technical Cooperation Committee and the Facilitation Committee, as well as the Vice-Chairs of the Marine Environment Protection Committee and the Legal Committee were present at the meeting.

4 After carefully considering the rationale and recommendations of the Assessment Panel, the Panel of Judges decided to select:

#### ***For the Award***

5 Mr. Zhong Haifeng, Senior Diver of the Engineering Team of Guangzhou Salvage, nominated by China, as the recipient of the **2018 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea**.

6 On 27 November 2017, following a collision and the sinking of the bulk carrier M/V **Jin Ze Lun** in Guangzhou Port, Mr. Zhong was assigned to conduct the subsequent underwater search and rescue operation of 12 missing crew members. After some 36 hours of non-stop searching in difficult underwater conditions, including strong currents, six survivors were found to be trapped in the cargo hold.

7 Mr. Zhong instructed his team to replenish oxygen to the cabin and talked to the trapped survivors to calm them. Mr. Zhong then dived down to the cargo hold alongside a teammate, bringing with him scuba diving equipment to teach those trapped underneath how to use it in order to survive. In the afternoon of 28 November, Mr. Zhong dived down six times, personally rescuing three survivors in the space of one hour, despite becoming extremely exhausted.

8 The Panel was of the view that Mr. Zhong displayed tremendous leadership and decisiveness throughout the entire operation and agreed that by personally exerting tireless efforts under highly dangerous circumstances, Mr. Zhong demonstrated truly exceptional bravery and human spirit.

#### ***For Certificates of Commendation***

9 The Panel of Judges agreed that the following nominees (not in any order of merit) should also receive **Certificates of Commendation** citing their acts of bravery:

- The Master and crew of the bitumen tanker **Seapower**; the Master and crew of the petroleum/chemical tanker MTM **Tortola**; and the pilot and crew of the HMS Monmouth's Wildcat helicopter Black Jack, 815 Naval Air Squadron, Royal Navy, jointly nominated by Malta, Singapore and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the exemplary international effort, courage and tenacity displayed in the coordinated rescue operation of 13 crew members of the sunken tanker MT **RAMA 2**, in very adverse weather and sea conditions. Determined and tireless efforts by merchant vessels in the vicinity, coupled with the skills and persistence of a professional search and rescue winning team, enabled the successful rescue;

- The crews of the rescue helicopters Helimer 202 and Helimer 207 of the Spanish Maritime Safety Agency, nominated by Spain, for their courage and professionalism while risking their own lives to rescue 23 crew members from the general cargo ship **Cheshire**, which was laden with over 40,000 tonnes of fertilizer, on fire and adrift at sea. With dense toxic smoke filling the air, the helicopter crews navigated very hazardous flying conditions to make several successful attempts at rescuing all crew members, following which a huge explosion occurred on the vessel; and
- Captain Gaetano Gigliotti, on behalf of the officers and crew of the passenger ship **Carnival Elation**, nominated by the Cruise Lines International Association, for their courage, skill and determination demonstrated in the rescue of a survivor found, in complete darkness, in a liferaft whose fishing vessel, the **Captain Eddie**, had flooded and sunk due to storm force winds and seas. Only three days before the rescue, Captain Gigliotti navigated the **Elation** out of a dry dock, with still incomplete repair work, in order to look for shelter ahead of a hurricane's predicted passage.

### ***For Letters of Commendation***

10 The Panel further recommended that the following nominees (not in any order of merit) should receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their actions:

- Mr. Xu Junlin, Mr. Xu Zhentao, Mr. Lu Ping and Mr. Feng Yajun, members of the **Sanchi** Explosion Emergency Dispatch Squad, Shanghai Salvage Bureau, nominated by China, for their tremendous bravery and determination demonstrated while attempting to locate survivors on board the burning vessel, facing great danger from heavily toxic smoke and the constant threat of explosions. Sadly, they could only recover two bodies as the 32 crew members of the **Sanchi** did not survive the ordeal;
- Captain Guo Tianxin, Master of the rescue tugboat **Nan Hai Jiu 116**, Nan Hai Rescue Bureau, nominated by China, for his extraordinary courage, expertise and determination in rescuing 77 crew members from four stranded ships and preventing damage to an oil depot, which might otherwise have caused a serious marine pollution incident, during the severe Typhoon Hato;
- Captain KE Ashok Kumar and the crew of the M/V **Kodithala**, nominated by India, for the professionalism and exceptional skills displayed in the rescue of seven crew members of the MSV **Al Noor**, in the midst of very rough seas and severe winds caused by Cyclone Okchi;
- Captain Mahmoud Baghestani, Master of the oil tanker **Stream**, nominated by the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the great resolve and persistence he displayed while rescuing all five crew members of a capsized, and sinking, fishing vessel, in bad weather conditions and poor visibility;
- Captain Sumant Varma and the crew of the M/V **Dubai Knight**, nominated by Panama, for the outstanding professionalism and determination they displayed during the successful rescue of 22 fishermen from two separate vessels, amidst rough seas and cyclonic weather conditions brought on by Tropical Storm Mora;

- Captain Roman Rudenko, Master of the firefighting small craft **Chasovoy** of the Northern Branch of the FSBI (Marine Rescue Service), nominated by the Russian Federation, for his leadership and courage demonstrated whilst extinguishing a fire on board the docked vessel **Odyssey-1**. Captain Rudenko's tireless efforts prevented a potential environmental disaster, while ensuring the safety of the firefighters and shipyard alike;
- Captain Fredrik Krysén and the crew of the M/V **Undine**, nominated by Sweden, and separately by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), for the great professionalism, determination and ship-handling expertise displayed during the successful rescue of 13 crew members of the sinking M/V **Avatar**, who had abandoned ship and were drifting in a liferaft or on top of floating containers, in dangerous waters and bad weather; and
- Captain Maxim Kireev and Chief Officer Anatoliy Yarovoy of the general cargo **BBC ASIA**, nominated by ITF, for their courage and great determination in rescuing all four crew members of the yacht **SPICA**, whose steering system was damaged. During stormy weather and gale force winds, the **BBC ASIA** completed a highly dangerous, 15-hour towing operation to steer the yacht, with the crew aboard, to safety.

### Other matters addressed by the Panel of Judges

11 As in previous years, both Panels considered it appropriate to differentiate between the actions of professional rescuers and those of others who, in the normal course of their duties, would not be expected to risk their lives to rescue persons in distress at sea. In this respect, when considering the possibility of establishing two Award categories to recognize acts of bravery performed by professional rescuers separately from those of non-professional rescuers, the Panel of Judges concurred with the recommendation of the Assessment Panel that there was no need for two categories. In their view, it was the Panels' duty to assess whether professional rescuers had gone beyond the call of duty.

12 The Panel of Judges noted the reduced number of nominations compared to previous years and, taking into account the increasing number of submissions nominating acts of bravery involving extraordinary navigation skills in very difficult conditions, the Panel discussed potential amendments to the nomination criteria that might more widely accommodate exceptional acts of seamanship, as well as bravery. In their view, professional seamanship might involve exceptional bravery and these exemplary practices should be commended and promoted. As a result, the Panel of Judges proposes that the following paragraphs of the Guidelines for the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, annexed to Circular Letter No.3781, are amended as follows:

- "3 The Award will be conferred on individuals or groups of individuals who, at the risk to their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery in attempting to save life at sea or in attempting to prevent or mitigate damage to the marine environment. Such acts of bravery may also involve extraordinary seamanship skills in very difficult conditions or any other display of outstanding courage.
- 4 Except in the most extraordinary circumstances, the nominated rescues should occur at sea or those rescued should emanate from a vessel. The Award may also be granted posthumously."

**Action requested of the Council**

- 13 The Council is invited to:
- .1 take note of the information provided in this document;
  - .2 endorse the outcome of the Panel of Judges with respect to its recommendations for the Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, the Certificates of Commendation and the Letters of Commendation (paragraphs 5 to 10); and
  - .3 approve the amendments to the Guidelines for the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea (paragraph 12).
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