



## JNG-ITF Joint Statement 21.06.2020

The ITF and the Joint Negotiating Group, along with the International Chamber of Shipping have worked tirelessly since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic on finding solutions to the issue of crew changes.

The ITF's "Enough is enough" campaign is aimed at pushing the various government and authorities to relax crew change restrictions, far from being aimed at JNG and their Members.

ITF and JNG recognise that, when seafarers have finished their extended contracts, they are fatigued physically and/or mentally and feel that they are not fit to continue to safely perform their duties at the level required of a professional. The responsible action at this point is not to extend their contract and request repatriation.

This is not an incitement to go on strike! Their contract has finished and, once a ship is safely in harbour, they have the right not to extend. Of course, there will be circumstances where a seafarer is denied disembarkation, due to lack of flights and/or their replacement, but they cannot be compelled to work either.

The social partners have actively engaged with and received public support from the United Nations Secretary General and other UN agencies, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). We have supported our affiliated unions and our membership in discussions with their national governments and assisted with getting seafarers emergency medical treatment. We have worked together to find solutions to this humanitarian crisis via our affiliated national unions, local members and their agents.

In addition, we negotiated and agreed twice to an extension of the Seafarers' Employment Agreements covered under IBF CBAs and an additional 30 days implementation phase to allow governments time to put in place practical solutions for the facilitation of crew changes.

Along with European sister organisation, the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF), and the European Community Shipowners Association (ECSA), we have lobbied the European Commission to ease visa requirements within Schengen and our affiliates and members have done the same with their governments.

We arranged a meeting with major flag state authorities, the ILO and IMO to discuss crew change challenges and held meetings with ICAO and IATA to find solutions to the issue of flights.

We contacted other non-maritime non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and asked for support to help raise awareness around the crew changes issue and use their contacts and influence to lobby governments.

We have jointly pursued every diplomatic avenue available, but still crew changes remain a major

issue. Daily we receive desperate messages from anxious and fatigued crew who are convinced governments, including their own, have forgotten them. However, not once has the ITF publicly called out or put the blame on companies and employers. Still crew changes remain a major issue.

The “Guidance on Your Rights to Crew Change” issued by the ITF does not blame JNG. The guidance is made up of extracts from the ILO MLC 2006, as amended. In the early stages of the pandemic, the ILO issued a circular that spoke of *force majeure*, which at the time when the Covid-19 spread was raging was a necessary decision. Recently the ILO confirmed that *force majeure* can no longer be used as a blanket excuse for seafarers’ contract extensions, but these must be considered on case-by-case basis.

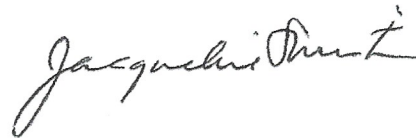
Our main concern is that failing to relieve fatigued, stressed and desperate crew, is only inviting accidents or major incidents which will damage the shipping industry and the reputation of those same seafarers who, throughout the pandemic, have professionally and responsibly carried on and continued working in order to keep the world’s global supply chain moving. We understand that the world’s communities are dependent on the goods transported by sea, but our seafarers onboard cannot bear the burden of this responsibility indefinitely. They have done their duty and now they deserve our support.

We will continue to support companies and use our networks and contacts with both the UN and other agencies and nationally to assist them. We appreciate that this is a difficult time for everyone and we want to work together on finding solutions.



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Joint Secretary JNG and IMEC CEO



Jacqueline Smith

Maritime Coordinator ITF