



## LIBERIAN REGISTRY

LIBERIAN INTERNATIONAL SHIP & CORPORATE REGISTRY

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++++ PRESS RELEASE +++++

### Update: Hijacking of KERALA

Liberia continues its active investigation of the hijacking of the Liberian flagged product tanker, KERALA, IMO No.: 9390927, at Luanda, Angola on 18 January 2014.

Liberia, in cooperation with the vessel owners, requested the attendance in Tema, Ghana of an INTERPOL led multi-national Incident Response Team. These authorities, supported and helped by the Ghanaian authorities undertook a crime scene investigation onboard the vessel. A representative of the Liberian Flag Administration also attended onboard in Tema to observe the collection of forensic evidence by the authorities. All parties were given full access to the vessel's documents, officers and crew.

**Although the investigation is still on-going, the evidence gathered thus far by the INTERPOL Incident Response Team has allowed the Liberian Registry to conclude that the vessel was hijacked by pirates.**

During the hijacking, the pirates disabled the vessels AIS and other communication equipment so the vessel could not be tracked from shore or satellite. During this period, the pirates painted over the identifying features of the vessel, including funnel, name and IMO number and undertook 3 separate ship-to-ship transfers of cargo amounting to a theft of approximately 12,271.5mt of cargo.

The owners of KERALA regained contact with the vessel on 26 January 2014, shortly after the pirates had disembarked. The vessel immediately set a course for the safety of the port of Tema, Ghana, as a port of refuge.

All crew members received immediate medical treatment on arrival at Tema. During the hijacking, one crew member was stabbed by the pirates and others were beaten.

Liberia will continue working with the authorities in Ghana, Nigeria and Angola and elsewhere in the region in order to bring to justice the perpetrators of this crime to justice. Liberia remains committed to fighting piracy in all of its forms wherever it may occur in the world.

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