



PRESS RELEASE

SHIPPING COMPANY ANNOUNCES END TO INVOLVEMENT IN WESTERN SAHARA PHOSPHATE TRADE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bir Lehlu, Western Sahara (21 June 2017) – The Isle of Man-based bulk shipping company LT Uglund has announced that it will end its involvement in the transport of phosphate rock from the illegally occupied territory of Western Sahara. The Frente POLISARIO welcomed the decision, which came days after LT Uglund had been named in a report published by Western Sahara Resource Watch – ‘Carriers of Conflict’ – describing the companies that own and operate vessels transporting phosphate rock from Western Sahara.

On 20 June, Lars T. Uglund, chairman of LT Uglund, told the Norwegian business newspaper *Finansavisen* that “In the future we will exclude Western Sahara from those areas which want to make shipments. We will not undertake more transports from there until the issue has been settled.” Last year, Western Sahara Resource Watch reported that the company's vessel, *Molly Manx*, shipped an estimated 54,000 tons of phosphate rock to New Zealand fertilizer producing company Ravensdown.

LT Uglund’s announcement is the latest in a string of victories for the Frente POLISARIO in its efforts to protect the natural resources of the Saharawi people. In December 2016, the European Court of Justice joined the ICJ, the UN and the African Union in upholding the unequivocal position that Morocco has no sovereignty over Western Sahara. The court further determined that any agreement pertaining to the territory and natural resources of Western Sahara would require the consent of the Saharawi people who are represented by the Frente POLISARIO as established in UN resolution 34/37 (1979).

On 15 June, the South African High Court in Port Elizabeth ruled that the bulk carrier *NM Cherry Blossom* – carrying 54,000 tons of phosphate rock from Western Sahara – had been rightfully detained in South Africa, paving the way for a civil trial on the question of ownership rights to the cargo.

“This is yet another sign that the days of business as usual are over when it comes to the plunder of Western Sahara’s natural resources,” said the Saharawi government official responsible for resource matters, Emhamed Khadad. “We’re seeing a major momentum shift as companies are waking up to the fact that there will be consequences all over the world for those involved in the illegal exploitation of our natural resources.”

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