

**Wayne Butson, New Zealand Convenor
International Transport Workers Federation
c/o Rail and Maritime Transport Union
PO Box 1103
Wellington 6140**



**Ambassador Lee Joon-Gyu
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
11th Floor, ASB Bank Tower
2 Hunter Street
Wellington 6011
New Zealand**

Wednesday 3 December 2008

Dear Ambassador,

As New Zealand convenor of the International Transport Workers' Federation, I am writing on behalf of our New Zealand affiliates to express our strongest concerns about the case of the Captain Jasprit Chawla and Chief Officer Syam Chetan, ex-crew of the MT Hebei Spirit.

Captain Chawla and Chief Officer Chetan, members of the ITF's Indian affiliate, were found innocent of any negligence following the catastrophic oil spill from the Hebei Spirit on 7th December 2007. However, since the court judgment in January this year, a finding which the ITF fully supports – the men have remained in Korea awaiting an appeal case and are now waiting for the decision of the court.

The ITF understands this remains a desperately serious matter for the thousands of people living or working in the area of the oil spill, who have needed compensation and help. However, we strongly believe that the two seafarers have been unfairly caught up in efforts to address the crisis caused by the incident.

We understand that the upcoming decision from the appeal case, scheduled for 10th December, will provide an opportunity for the courts to reconsider, and release Captain Chawla and Chief Officer Chetan.

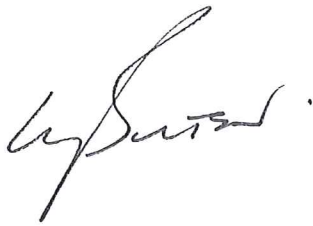
The New Zealand ITF affiliate unions therefore respectfully urges you to communicate with the relevant authorities in Korea to ask that the judges to consider all the evidence – from international experts, as well as information from the Korean maritime safety committee. We would also ask you to impress upon them that the acquittal of these men would send a very positive message to the world's seafarers that Korea's justice system continues to be both fair and independent.

Please be assured that ITF affiliated unions in New Zealand remain ready to assist you in any way it can to communicate with the media, with seafarers and with the shipping industry, any positive developments in this case. We are also determined to campaign against the criminalisation of seafarers in all corners of the world, and would urge you, as Korea's representatives, to join us in this just cause.

I am sure you will join me in eagerly awaiting a positive outcome to this case.

With many thanks for your valuable attention, I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Butson', with a small dot at the end of the line.

Wayne Butson
International Transport Workers' Federation Convenor, New Zealand

This letter is endorsed by the following New Zealand affiliates of the ITF:

Trevor Hanson, General Secretary, Maritime Union of New Zealand
Robert Reid, President, National Distribution Union
Andrew Little, National Secretary, Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union
Helen McAra, National Secretary, Merchant Service Guild
George Ryde, National Secretary, Aviation and Marine Engineers Association