



MERCY MISSION

UK Company#: 6850524



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DAY 51 Aboard the Captain Ali - Lack of Movement at the Ground Level

After the positive statement by the External Affairs Minister Hon. Mr. S.M.Krishna on Wednesday evening (24 June 2009) regarding the Mercy Mission ship the MV Captain Ali, Mercy Mission personnel, supporters, volunteers and the Tamil Diaspora as a whole were relieved that there was movement on the part of the Government of Sri Lanka and that the desperately needed humanitarian relief aboard the ship would be delivered to the 300,000 Tamil civilians in the internment camps in Sri Lanka.

As of Friday evening (26 June 2009) **Mercy Mission has yet to be formally notified** of the 24 June decision and statement by the Indian and Sri Lankan governments. There has also **not been ANY movement at the ground level** and the MV Captain Ali remains anchored five (5) miles off the Port of Chennai.

The situation on the ship is now critical. The crew and passengers have been onboard for 51 days without respite and in very harsh, stressful conditions. The passengers, Uthayanan Thavarajasingam and Kristijan Gudmundsson have **formally requested that the authorities allow them to disembark** and to take the next flight to London and Iceland.

We request that the Government of India to:

1. Allow the MV Captain Ali to enter Chennai Port and unload the humanitarian relief which will be kept "in transit" and handed over to the Indian Red Cross for transportation to Sri Lanka and distribution in the internment camps;
2. Allow the passengers to disembark and proceed to the nearest international airport where they will be able to fly to their home countries;

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Background:

Statement by External Affairs Minister Hon. Mr. S.M.Krishna

*"6. I also requested the delegation that as a humanitarian gesture, the Sri Lankan Government allow the ship Captain Ali to off load the relief items on board meant for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan delegation kindly agreed to our suggestion and these would now be **routed to Sri Lanka through the Indian Red Cross.**" (emphasis added)*

New Delhi

24 June, 2009

Link to statement: <http://meaindia.nic.in/cgi-bin/db2www/meaxpsite/coverpage.d2w/coverpg?sec=pb&filename=pressbriefing/2009/06/24pb01.htm>

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