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Suicide by Supernumerary from a passenger vessel off Bahamas

1. What happened?

In the early hours of 01st January 2010, an Indian supernumerary committed suicide, by jumping overboard from a passenger vessel. The vessel was en route from Miami to the Bahamas and in the territorial waters of the Bahamas, at the time of the incident. A search was carried out by the US Coast Guard but her body was not found.

2. How it happened?

2.1 The passenger vessel was on a voyage from Miami, U.S.A to the Bahamas. In the early hours of 01st January 2010, the supernumerary jumped overboard from the passenger vessel, when the ship was in the territorial waters of the Bahamas. According to media reports, a search was conducted by the US Coast Guard, using search vessels and helicopters, but the supernumerary could not be located.

3. The supernumerary was the wife of an Indian national who was a crew member on the passenger vessel. Two and half hours before the incident, the supernumerary had sent an email to her brother, detailing the maltreatment she had been receiving at the hands of her husband.

4. Why it happened?

4.1 The Supernumerary most probably committed suicide due to great emotional stress caused by the maltreatment and reported physical abuse at the hands of her husband, although the veracity of the contents of the email of the supernumerary have not been confirmed.

4.2 Emotional stress caused by mental and physical abuse can be aggravated in a marine/foreign environment due to a lack of emotional support from friends and family.

5. Lessons learnt

Mental and physical abuse on board should be reported to the Master immediately. Masters to whom such abuse is reported, must take necessary, affirmative action, if required.



(Capt. Harish Khatri)
Dy. Director General of Shipping [Tech]