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MEDIA RELEASE

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RESEARCH VESSEL DAMAGED IN SEA SHEPHERD ATTACK

Eco-terrorist group Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has rammed and damaged one of the Japanese research fleet's vessels operating in the Antarctic, immediately after it received generous support and seamanship from the Japanese research fleet to help rescue two missing activists.

"Two vessels belonging to Sea Shepherd attacked the Kaiko Maru, one of our research vessels dedicated to non-lethal sighting research," Dr Hiroshi Hatanaka, the Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research, said today.

"The Robert Hunter rammed the Kaiko Maru. Afterwards, both the Robert Hunter and the Farley Mowat came to the either side of the Kaiko Maru stopping her from continuing. This was done in the same manner employed by pirates."

"Sea Shepherd threw smoke pots onto the Kaiko Maru and released ropes and nets to entangle her screw. Its propeller has been damaged by them. The vessel is stranded at the moment and has already put out several distress calls."

"Yesterday, we reiterated our concerns for the safety of our crew and scientists in the Antarctic. Unfortunately, these concerns are now a reality," Dr Hatanaka said.

"Sea Shepherd is conducting a campaign of outright destruction and terrorism. We have serious concerns that someone will be injured or killed in its destructive terrorism."

"Sea Shepherd is not an environmental group. It is a terrorist vigilante group that operates outside of the law. Their two vessels are currently sailing flagless after England and Belize didn't want to be associated with eco-terrorism and de-registered them," Dr Hatanaka said.

The ICR will provide further comment when full details of the illegal attack on our vessels are known.

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Note: The ICR will release video footage and/or photographs of the incident as they are received from the Antarctic.

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