



## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

**14 January 2010**

### **HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE SHIPMENT THREATENS COASTAL COMMUNITIES**

The first return shipment of foreign nuclear waste from Britain is due to occur in the next few days with the shipment of highly radioactive waste from the Sellafield Plant to customers in Japan. These nuclear shipments raise critical security, safety and environmental concerns and subject coastal communities to unnecessary risks.

The NDA's commercial transport subsidiary, International Nuclear Services (INS), will be responsible for the shipment, which will leave from Barrow, northwest England. The vessels will be carrying 28 stainless steel containers of vitrified radioactive waste and are expected to arrive in Japan by the end of March. This is the first in a series of nuclear waste transports to Japan, which are expected to involve between 850 and 1000 containers and take up to 10 years to complete.

The long distance transportation of nuclear waste is unnecessary and represents a needless threat to the marine and coastal environment. An incident involving the release of radioactive material into the marine environment would have severe consequences and with an increase in piracy and terrorist attacks the use of unescorted vessels increases the vulnerability of these shipments.

KIMO continues to campaign for an end to the dangerous and unnecessary practice of transporting radioactive material by air and sea, as set out in KIMO Resolution 1/96. KIMO's key concerns include the lack of emergency planning for a marine incident involving radioactive material; the questionable integrity of the flasks used to transport nuclear fuel, particularly during ship borne fires as these tend to last longer and reach more intense temperatures than those simulated in flask tests; the use of substandard ships and equipment for nuclear transportation; and the unresolved question of liability and compensation in the event of a marine incident involving nuclear material.

A KIMO International Spokesperson stated:

*"The shipment of radioactive material from Japan to the UK and back for reprocessing not only has resulted in the pollution of UK waters with radioactive discharges from Sellafield but puts at risk coastal communities through unnecessary transportation. Given the current increase in piracy and terrorist attacks and taking into account the ease in which Greenpeace activists boarded another INS vessel, the Atlantic Osprey, last year we feel that these shipments are unnecessary and that the waste should be stored at the point of production."*

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Notes to editors:

A copy of KIMO Resolution 1/96 on the Transportation of Nuclear Waste by Air and Sea can be found at <http://www.kimointernational.org/KIMOResolutions.aspx>