**UK government and UN commit to protect seafarers and help stabilise global shipping market**

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Marking the International Day of the Seafarer, the UK government has today (25 June 2020) announced it will host the first international summit on the impact of COVID-19 on crew changes next month, bringing together UN, political and business leaders from across the globe.

Led by UK Maritime Minister Kelly Tolhurst, the event will take place virtually and will be an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on the global shipping industry, and what governments and industry must do to protect the welfare of crew workers around the world.

Due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on countries around the globe, with many shutting down borders, it is now estimated there are more than 1.2 million seafarers at sea at any one time and currently 200,000 seafarers due to change over, including up to 2,000 from the UK.

“Seafarers have worked tirelessly during this pandemic to ensure people across the globe can access the essential food, medicine and supplies we all need, but thousands have been left with no way of coming ashore when faced with border restrictions,” said Maritime Minister Kelly Tolhurst.

Many crews have had their contracts extended but this is not a long-term solution, with many seafarers on board a ship for months despite having had no contact with coronavirus and posing no risk.

Setting an example, the UK government has helped more than 7,000 crew get home back to their loved ones across the world, regardless of nationality or circumstance.