



Neptune's Pirates

IMMEDIATE RELEASE [Updated 22:00hrs on 21st July 2024]

CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON AMBUSHED AND ARRESTED IN GREENLAND

Danish police operating in Greenland have arrested renowned environmental hero and star of “Whale Wars” on a secret Interpol arrest warrant from Japan.

Videos and Photos

NUUK, GREENLAND – 21st July 2024

On the morning of Sunday, July 21st, Captain Paul Watson, co-founder of marine conservation Greenpeace, founder of Sea Shepherd and the Captain Paul Watson Foundation (CPWF), was arrested when over a dozen Danish police and SWAT team members boarded the M/Y John Paul DeJoria as soon as it made port in Nuuk, Greenland.

Captain Watson, on board his 72-meter flagship the M/Y JOHN PAUL DEJORIA stopped to refuel in Greenland with 25 volunteer crew while heading to the North-West Passage and then down into the Pacific on ‘Operation Kangei Maru’ - a mission to intercept and block Japan’s newly launched factory whaling ship.

“We came here, and arrested Paul Watson due to an international arrest order from Japan”, stated the leader of the Danish federal police boarding party of 14 officers at the time of the arrest. The crew were given no further information at the time of the arrest.

Following a closed court hearing this evening (21st July) in Nuuk – the arrest is in relation to a new and undisclosed Interpol notice from Japan issued in March 2024 – and is not the former public Red Notice issued for Captain Watson in relation to previous anti-whaling interventions in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in Antarctic waters when Japan’s Antarctic research whaling program JARPA was declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2014.

“We’re completely shocked, as the public Red Notice had disappeared a few months ago. We implore the Danish government to release Captain Watson and not entertain this politically motivated request”, stated Locky MacLean, Ship Operation’s Director for CPWF.

Captain Paul Watson Foundation UK AKA Neptune’s Pirates UK

Formerly known as ‘Sea Shepherd UK’ - July 2005 to June 2023

Charity Commission registration number: 1110501 Companies House registration: 05474362

Registered Address: 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX, United Kingdom

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Website: neptunespirates.uk & paulwatsonfoundation.uk





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Operating in breach of the ICJ ruling for several years, Japan eventually ceased Antarctic high seas whaling in 2016, and now only hunts whales within its territorial waters. CPWF believes the purpose of the Kangei Maru is to resume whaling in the Southern Ocean and North Pacific as early as December 2024, and the reactivation of the Red Notice against Captain Watson is politically motivated and coincides with the launch of a newly built factory whale processing vessel.

Captain Paul Watson remains detained at a correctional facility in Greenland for at least 2 or 3 days at which time the Judge in Greenland will decide if he is to be moved instead to Denmark. No further court decisions are expected until at least the 15th August when a preliminary hearing date has been set. The Danish Ministry of Justice now has time to investigate if there is a case to extradite Paul to Japan.

No bail has been given to Paul under the reasoning that he escaped house arrest in Germany in 2012. Paul has chosen to appeal against the notice and is being advised by a local lawyer in Greenland and has also been appointed a Danish lawyer. Initial comments by the judge include that Paul may face up to 15 years in prison in Japan if extradited.

“Japan has again abused the INTERPOL system in order to stop the anti-whaling campaigns of Captain Paul Watson who was on route to challenge Japan’s new factory whaling vessel ‘Kangei Maru’ in the Pacific and Antarctic to hunt Fin and Minke whales in violation of the IWC Moratorium on Commercial Whaling and other Treaties. What charges Paul is now facing from Japan will be revealed shortly no doubt – and it is clear they fear his return to challenge their despicable whaling fleet after many successful campaigns prior to 2016. We must all unite to oppose and block Japan’s request and persuade Denmark, an EU country which is legally obliged to protect whales – to not extradite Paul to an unfair trial and certain imprisonment in Japan. Please follow our website and social media for detail how you can help and #FREEMPAULWATSON” - Rob Read, COO at Captain Paul Watson Foundation UK.

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Notes to media:

[Video footage and photos here](#)

Images Credit: CPWF

ABOUT CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL:

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The Captain Paul Foundation, founded in 2022 by esteemed environmental and conservation activist Paul Watson, co-founder of Greenpeace, and founder of Sea Shepherd, alongside tech entrepreneur Omar Todd, is a US-based non-profit dedicated to marine conservation. Committed to halting habitat destruction and wildlife slaughter in the world's oceans, the foundation aims to safeguard marine ecosystems and species. It uses innovative direct-action tactics to expose and confront illegal activities at sea. Visit www.paulwatsonfoundation.org for more information.

CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON FOUNDATION UK:

We are a marine conservation charity on a mission to defend marine wildlife around the globe.

Our ethos:

- Our campaigns will be solely for the benefit of marine animals who are our clients.
- Our investigations will be followed by action, whether that be physical or legal intervention.
- We will never be subject to restrictive agreements with governments, our media and opinions will never be censored, and our crew will go where needed, even if they are unwelcome.

Captain Paul Watson Foundation UK, founded as Sea Shepherd UK in 2005, is a registered marine conservation charity in England and Wales (registration number 1110501). Neptune's Pirates UK also operates under the name 'Neptune's Pirates UK' and uses the unique and highly successful non-violent direct-action philosophy of Paul Watson to save marine wildlife. Our charity operates independently, managing our own campaigns and fleet of vessels - while also collaborating with Captain Paul Watson Foundation (International) and other like-minded organisations on campaigns for marine wildlife across the Atlantic region. Visit www.neptunespirates.uk for more details.

"If the Ocean dies, we die" – Captain Paul Watson

INTERPOL RED NOTICE

The case of Captain Paul Watson listed on previous Red Notices from Japan has been determined as an example of abuse of the Interpol system.

A previous report from the European Parliament's Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee: "Abusive Manipulation of INTERPOL Procedures: The Need for More Stringent Legal Safeguards." The Committee recommends measures to prevent the misuse of INTERPOL Red Notices.

Summary of the facts: Paul Watson, subject to two arrest warrants issued by Japan (for his opposition to illegal whaling in Antarctica) and Costa Rica (for his intervention against illegal shark finning), has been listed on Interpol's Red Notice, alongside war criminals, serial killers, and some political opponents persecuted for their ideas and activism. Interpol has recently looked into the abusive use of the Red Notice by certain countries. Paul Watson's Interpol notices were cited as an example.

*** LEGAL ISSUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

"Red Notices" are part of an international notice system established by INTERPOL, allowing police in member countries to cooperate in arresting and extraditing individuals wanted by national or international jurisdictions.

"The sharp increase in these notices over the past 10 years and their misuse by some member states for political purposes, aimed at suppressing freedom of expression or persecuting political opponents abroad, represents a serious problem for this system," highlighted Bernd Fabritius (Germany, EPP/CD).

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"The abusive manipulation of INTERPOL procedures raises the issue of judicial responsibility, both for the states involved in such practices—whether by sending abusive requests to Interpol or by executing them—and for the Organization itself, insofar as it is held accountable for aiding states guilty of human rights violations," he said while presenting his report "Misuse of the INTERPOL System: The Need for More Stringent Legal Safeguards" to the PACE Legal Affairs Committee today in Paris.

"Individuals targeted cannot successfully challenge Red Notices before any national or international court. In some cases, people are arrested and extradited to countries where they cannot expect a fair trial and risk torture without even knowing they are the subject of an INTERPOL notice. As the misuse of Red Notices can be detrimental to innocent people's lives—they hinder an individual's freedom of movement, restrict employment and business opportunities, and damage reputations—it is important that the system's weaknesses are identified and measures are taken to prevent and more effectively address these abuses," he added.

In a draft resolution adopted today, the Legal Affairs Committee consequently calls for measures to ensure that Red Notices are requested by a National Central Bureau (NCB) and disseminated by INTERPOL only when there are serious grounds to suspect the person concerned.

It emphasizes that individuals targeted must be able to contest the validity of Red Notices through fair procedures, in line with national and international human rights guarantees. Welcoming the recent reform of INTERPOL's Commission for the Control of Files, the committee calls for the full implementation of this reform, particularly ensuring sufficient resources are allocated to handle the growing and increasingly complex number of cases. It is important that available resources for verifications focus on Red Notice requests from NCBs with a strong history of abusive requests.

Finally, it called for the creation of a compensation fund for victims of abusive or unjustified Red Notices, funded by member states in proportion to the number of unjustified Red Notices requested by their NCBs, in accordance with the principle of causal responsibility ("polluter pays").

These reforms aim to strengthen INTERPOL's credibility to protect its important mission of combating serious transnational crime, including terrorism; they will also enhance the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, not only for individuals targeted by the misuse of Red Notices but also for victims of criminals who remain free due to the malfunctioning of international police cooperation, the committee concluded.

The Paul Watson case was among those cited by Interpol as an example of abusive manipulation. Page 12 of the report:

53. Captain Paul Watson, a Canadian environmental activist, was arrested in Frankfurt based on a Red Notice requested by Costa Rica 10 years after an incident in 2002 when his ship, the "Sea Shepherd," intervened at the request of the Guatemalan government to oppose shark fin poaching by a Costa Rican fishing boat. Shortly after this incident, he was acquitted by a Costa Rican court on charges of attempted homicide and assault on Costa Rican fishermen. The Costa Rican court was clearly convinced of Watson's innocence thanks to extensive footage filmed during the incident, later featured in the documentary "Sharkwater." But according to his lawyer, Captain Watson is still or once again the subject of a Red Notice based on these same facts.

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Link: [assembly.coe.int](<https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23524&lang=en>)

MEDIA ENQUIRES

For further information or interviews, please contact

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