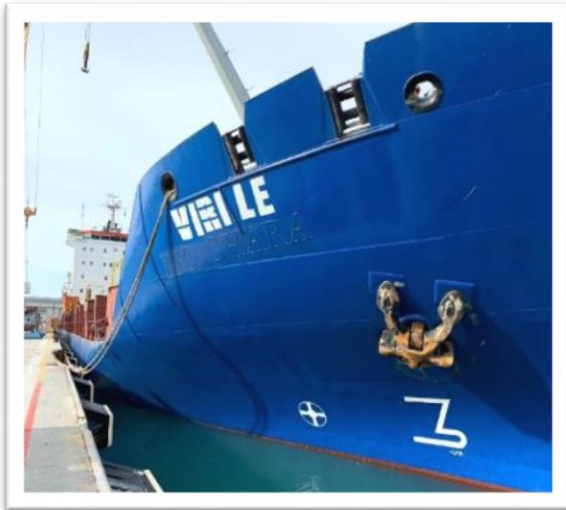


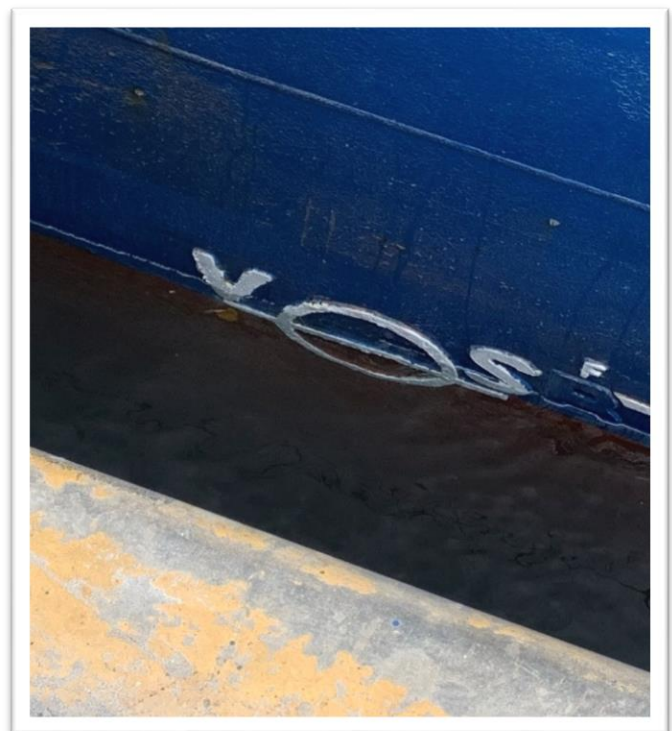


SHIP'S PARTICULARS	
Name	VIRILE
IMO	9012795
Flag	COMOROS
Type	GENERAL CARGO
GT	7361
Class	VERITAS REGISTER OF SHIPPING
RO	VERITAS REGISTER OF SHIPPING
IMO Company	5901913
Date Keel laid	24 October 1991



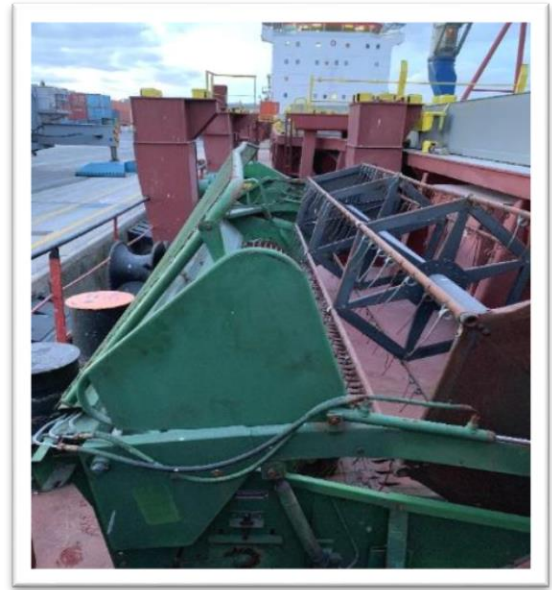
The general cargo ship “Virile” with IMO No. 9012795 flying the Comoros Flag, called Marina di Carrara - Italy, on 6 March 2019 to load various cargo (marble blocks, harvesters and other agricultural vehicles, bulldozers etc.) with an expected departure on 14 March at 07.00 PM. The vessel, with 18 crew members (1 oiler from Honduras, 4 deck and engine cadets from India and 13 crew members from Syria), was not eligible for inspection, according to the ship’s priority.

However, on 14 March, a few hours before the commercial operations were completed, Marina di Carrara Port State Control office received a complaint by email regarding the long lasting non-payment of due wages by the captain and the shameful sanitary and safety conditions on board. The claimed issue was considered, according to the professional judgement, real and urgent and consequently the PSC team decided to board the ship to verify the safety conditions and the treatment of workers. An unexpected factor message was inserted in Thetis and a PSC inspection initiated.



Picture 1

The inspectors, who approached the ship, first noticed that all seafarers engaged in cargo operations were not wearing the appropriate PPE and additionally it was noted that the submersion of the Plimsoll Eye (see *Picture 1*) was due to the overloading of the ship and a wrong stowage of cargo (see *picture 2*, showing harvesters parts improperly stowed on deck walkways). The inspection became a “more detailed” one, focusing mainly on accommodation, sanitary facilities, quantity and quality of food, working and living conditions and other items falling under MLC 2006.

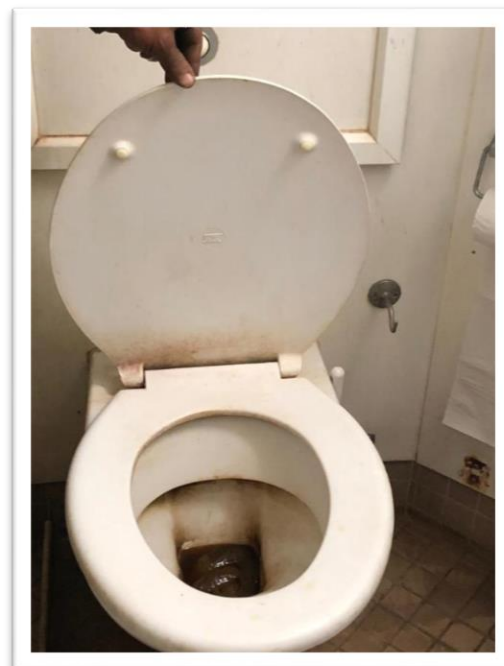


Picture 1

An unbelievable scenario was revealed to the inspectors. The ship’s conditions were so poor to impair the workers’ dignity itself; a mephitic smell all over the accommodation area, due to sanitary facilities without working flushes. Broken basins with water leakages next to electrical devices, inoperative or insufficient ventilation, dirty wool covers on mattresses instead of sheets. Dresses and sheets were washed in bins in the bathrooms and hanged out to dry inside the cabin due to the lack of a working washing machine and/or a tumble dryer. Rain and/or humidity penetrations inside crew quarters and cabins due to cracked windows.

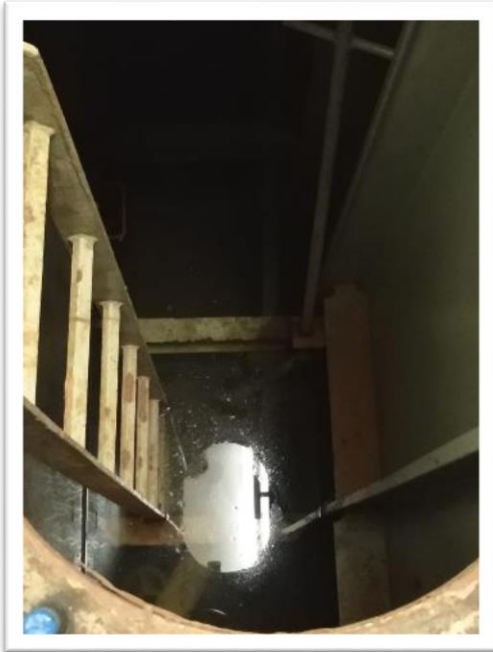


Picture 2: Cracked window inside 3rd Off. cabin



Picture 3: one of the case of organic residues due to inoperative flush

The presence of insects and filth was also found in the galley (where a dirty wool cover was used to prepare cheese), while in the provisions storage – either dry or refrigerated - the food was hardly present. The PSC Officers extended the inspections to other areas, founding serious deficiencies relating to the emergency equipment (EEBD empty, dismantled emergency generator etc.), holed fire line, leakages all over the engine room and other evidences of poor conditions regarding safety.



Picture 5: bugs, insects and oily traces on the surface.



Picture 4: One of the EEBD found empty.

At a later time the PSC Officers decided to interview the crew, choosing different nationalities to get more information without creating too much suspicion.

However, not one of the seafarers revealed himself. The inspection was completed after a 5-hours check. A total of 18 deficiencies were found, of which 13 were considered grounds for detention.

At a later stage, having regard to the overall condition of the crew, the local ITF Office was called by the Marina di Carrara PSC team, that still had vivid memories of the "ALI B" case (<https://www.parismou.org/gc-ali-b-caught-net>) where the synergistic collaboration between PSC and ITF led to a happy ending for many crew members.



The ITF came on board the day after, but despite ITF's offer of assistance and support, no one in this case openly denounced the real living conditions on board the ship.

At the time, when it seemed like no one wanted to be the whistleblower, videos, emails and phone calls came in at the Italian coast guard of Marina di Carrara. It was then decided to call in the entire crew for additional interviews in the more protected and confidential environment of in the Italian Coast Guard building.

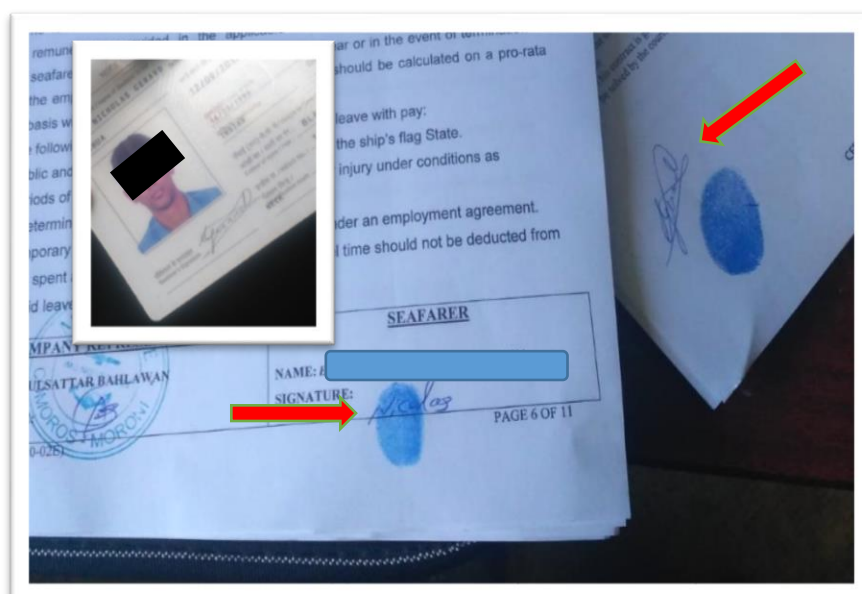


Picture 6: Em.cy Generator

Finally, without the fear of revenge, the Indian and Honduran seafarers described to the PSCOs and ITF inspectors the bad treatment they had to accept because of their nationality, and their need to pass the period on board as a cadet in order to continue in their maritime career.

Thanks to those declarations and the comparisons with the records of rest/work hours and S.E.A., that were checked during the inspection, it showed that the seafarer's signatures were fake.

Moreover, a double regime of contract appeared to be adopted: one according to MLC 2006 ready to be showed to the inspectors/officers (1200 euros/month) and the real one under the unacceptable minimum of wages (200 euros/month). In addition, most of the log books were found tampered with.



Picture 7: arrows showing two different Signatures for the same seafarer. On the left side, the fake one. Compare with the original one in the passport.

In order to protect the involved seafarers, all of the five sailors were signed off under the auspices of PSC and ITF Officer. They got their due 4 months wages plus the expenses for their repatriation back home (for a total amount of more than 25.000 euros). The declarations of the seafarers of the ship and the synergy between PSC Officers and ITF Inspectors were fundamental for the successful outcome and restoration of the correct working conditions on board and the guarantee of the ship's departure under safe conditions.



After the Flag's re-inspection and the endorsement of the statutory certificates, the M/V VIRILE, was cast off to Saida on 21 March 2019 with all 13 Syrian crew members. All the deficiencies were rectified.