

Media Statement

DATE: Tuesday, 17 December 2024

TO: All Media

ATTENTION: News Editors /Transport Reporters / All Reporters

For immediate use

Minister Creecy Release a Preliminary Report on Lepanto Vessel Sinking Incident

PRETORIA: The Minister of Transport, Ms. Barbara Creecy has today released a Preliminary Report into the tragic sinking of the Fishing Vessel Lepanto that happened on 17 May 2024, where eleven crew members lost their lives.

The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) conducted an investigation and compiled a preliminary report into the incident, which is today being made public by the Minister.

The report has been redacted to comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act.) Accordingly, names and other personal information have been removed from this report.

The Minister generally accepts the conclusions of this report which are not final. The final report will come from the Marine Court of Enquiry which is legislated for in terms of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1951.

On 12 November 2024, Minister Creecy expressed her strong desire to release the final preliminary report before the end of 2024. The Minister has today fulfilled that promise she made to families who lost their loved ones, and to all South Africans.

As the festive season approaches the Minister's thoughts and prayers will be with the family members of the crew team who were declared deceased by the courts in October this year.

"My hope is that in releasing this report, we assist the families in a limited way in understanding what happened to their loved ones." said Minister Creecy.

In November 2024, the Minister instructed the Department to begin a process of establishing a Marine Court of Enquiry to further pursue an investigation and bring the report to finality.

The Marine Court of Enquiry is expected to be convened during the first quarter of 2025.

The Preliminary Report is annexed.

ISSUED BY: National Department of Transport

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