



CAPTAIN
PAUL WATSON
FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 21 2023

VICTORY FOR WHALES IN ICELAND

Iceland's Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries suspends whaling under mounting pressure hours after Captain Paul Watson Foundation's Flagship, M/Y John Paul DeJoria enters Icelandic territorial waters to defend Fin Whales.

MEDIA

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND - After a ten-day journey from New York, the international volunteer crew of Captain Paul Watson Foundation's new flagship, the 72 meter Marine Conservation Vessel *M/Y John Paul DeJoria*, crossed Iceland's Exclusive Economic Zone, ready to take on rogue whaler Kristjan Loftsson and his two whaling ships Hvalur 8 and 9. As the CPWF ship approached the twelve-mile territorial limit off Reykjavik, an unprecedented last minute decision was announced by Iceland's Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, Svandis Svavarsdottir: the whale hunt season has been suspended until August 31st.

The timing of the Minister's decision comes after years of campaigning since the sinking of half of Iceland's whaling fleet in 1986 by members of Captain Paul Watson's organization, and coincides with the release of a groundbreaking report by the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (MAST) which found that over 40% of whales hunted during last year's fin whale hunt suffered slow and painful deaths. Following the report, opposition to the whale hunt increased and put pressure on the Icelandic government to re-assess the decision to permit Hvalur hf to begin the whaling season. A professional council was tasked by the Icelandic Food Agency to determine if the whale hunt could meet the objectives of the law on animal welfare on June 19, and found that the methods used for hunting were not up to standard.

"The last thing the government of Iceland needed was a major confrontation in their waters over the controversy of illegal whaling," says Captain Paul Watson, Founder. "Our reputation precedes us - and if Loftsson was permitted to go whaling it would have put us on a collision course with the Icelandic Coast Guard, a confrontation that the Icelandic Coast Guard could not win, because win or lose it would put Iceland on trial over the fact that Loftsson's whaling ships are a violation of both the International Whaling Commission's Global Moratorium on whaling, and also the Icelandic Act on Animal Welfare [55/2013]."

As a result of this historic announcement, the Captain Paul Watson Foundation has offered to purchase both remaining whaling ships, Hvalur 8 and Hvalur 9, to use in on-going anti-whaling operations. If sold,

they will be renamed *Rod Coronado* and *David Howitt* in honor of the two men who successfully scuttled the Hvalur 6 and Hvalur 7 in 1986.

Kristjan Loftsson has so far not commented on the Ministerial decision though sources say he may press charges questioning the legality of Minister Svavarsdottir's decision. There has also been no reaction regarding CPWF's offer to buy the vessels. He nor his company are not answering phone calls from the press, as turbulence regarding this matter engulfs the government, with parties in the national government disagreeing with Minister Svavarsdottir's decision.

Fin whales are the second-largest whale species on earth, and are listed as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Previously, Hvalur hf. was allowed a catch quota of 209 fin whales, which would continue to place pressure on unreplenished stocks decimated during last century's commercial whaling era. This year, as a response to charges of inhumane killing practices, Hvalur hf. installed copper cored wire to its harpoon cannons to electrocute the whales after harpooning them — an untested and unproven technique with no basis in science in alleviating suffering in large whales.

"Not only would the whales bleed internally from the explosive harpoons if the hunt was allowed to go ahead, they would have also been electrocuted with high voltage while dying. If that isn't the essence of cruelty, I don't know what is. The ban will ensure no whales will suffer or die in Iceland this summer. Now Iceland can be a sanctuary for whales rather than a hunting ground," says Locky MacLean, Captain on board the *M/Y John Paul DeJoria*.

While speculation arises in Iceland around whether the decision holds legally, and the Commons of the Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn party in disagreement, The *M/Y John Paul DeJoria* will remain on station near Icelandic waters to assess the situation, confirm the ban holds, and stay vigilant, should Kristján Loftsson and Hvalur hf. regain permission to hunt or defy the ban.

The global moratorium on whaling was imposed in 1986 by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), yet Iceland, Norway, and Japan continue to partake in this controversial and illegal practice. Iceland's Animal Welfare Act was enacted in 2013.

[MEDIA](#)

###

ABOUT CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON FOUNDATION:

The Captain Paul Foundation is a non-profit marine conservation organization established in 2022 by Captain Paul Watson, a world renowned and respected leader in environmental issues, co-founder of Greenpeace, and founder of Sea Shepherd and Omar Todd, a tech entrepreneur. Its mission is to end the destruction of habitat and slaughter of wildlife in the world's oceans to conserve and protect ecosystems and species. Captain Paul Watson Foundation uses innovative direct-action tactics to investigate, document, and act when necessary to expose and confront illegal activities on the high seas. Visit www.paulwatsonfoundation.org for more information.

ABOUT OPERATION PAIAKAN:

Operation Paikan is focused on saving 169 endangered Fin whales from being slaughtered by Hvalur hf, an Icelandic whaling company operated by Kristján Loftsson. Despite the global moratorium on commercial whaling established by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Iceland continues to permit this, and Operation Paikan

has been established in response. Through the use of aggressive non-violence and direct intervention, the Captain Paul Watson Foundation intends to uphold international conservation law to save the lives of 169 fin whales.

For interviews or media inquiries on board in Icelandic waters please reach:

captain@paulwatson.com or Locky Maclean 1-628-252-0233 (Whatsapp) locky@neptunes.navy