

# GNT BULLETIN

## RAISING STANDARDS FOR DOCK WORKERS

January 2013

### NEWS round-up

**Dockers around the world are taking action as part of the GNT campaign to secure better standards in ports. Here's the latest news:**

**Dockers at the Port of Poti in Georgia have won a 30% pay rise from their employer, GNT APM.** 1200 workers there are in the process of establishing a union. They brought the port to a standstill last year by going on strike in a bid to secure higher wages and improvements in working conditions. The strike was called off after APM agreed to the wage increase and to talk to workers' reps about concerns over conditions and health and safety.



Meanwhile, workers at Oslo container terminal in Norway are fighting to achieve a new collective agreement with their employer APM. A national

Continued on page 2.....

### DOCKERS' SUCCESSES IN 2012



#### February - Port of Rotterdam

Dockers at the APM operated Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands secured a new collective bargaining agreement after a long running dispute including a series of strikes. One of the key elements of the new agreement was the guarantee of job security for workers at the existing port and also at the APM terminal being built in Rotterdam's new harbour, Maaslakte 2.

#### March - Port Botany and Auckland

Docker unions around the world showed solidarity during disputes at Port Botany in Australia and the Port of Auckland in NZ. In both cases unions returned to the negotiation table with overwhelming, far reaching and long term demonstrations of support.



#### April - Port of Aqaba

100 cargo handlers at the Port of Aqaba in Jordan received a substantial pay increase and health benefits after a new agreement was made with a major subcontractor for APM. This was a big step forward as port workers have only begun to be organised in the last 5 years and now have the influence to organise contract workers.



#### June 2012



Costa Rican dockers at the Ports of Limon and Moin showed their collective strength by staging industrial action against privatisation plans which would give GNT APM a monopoly. The union is currently in negotiations with the government over the proposals which were going to be pushed through without consultation before the union action.

#### August 2012



Latvian dockers in Liepaja successfully fought off attempts by their employer to undermine the union. Workers were accused of theft and suspended after failed attempts by management to breach the union's collective agreement by manipulating wages. The union managed to get these suspensions overturned.

#### September - Maritime Roundtable

Docker activists from around the world gathered in Morocco to share ideas, insights, experiences and organising tactics. Shortly after the MRT Moroccan trade unionist Said Elhairech, who was detained in prison for 5 months on unfounded treason charges, was freed.



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agreement covering dockworkers across the country has been in place for more than 30 years in Norway but workers are demanding a local CBA . APM has been trying to downgrade dockers' pay and benefits since taking over operations in Oslo two years ago. APM has also announced plans to extend the Oslo terminal and open a new operation in 2015 which some workers believe is an attempt to establish a non-unionised terminal.

Unions from ports around the world, including those in GNT terminals, have been showing their solidarity for dockers in the Maldives who are facing an anti union campaign by their employer, a government owned port. The campaign in support of the Maldives workers centres around a call to the president of the Maldives to take action so that the port company will enter into negotiation with the union. Find out more and get involved:  
<http://www.itfglobal.org/solidarity/solidarity-3620.cfm>

Get more on these stories and the rest of the news from ports and terminals around the world at:  
[www.gntdockers.org/news](http://www.gntdockers.org/news)

To send us your news and campaign updates email the GNT campaign team at: [gntdockers@itf.org.uk](mailto:gntdockers@itf.org.uk) or speak to the communications coordinator at your port.

Sign up to MyITF at [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org) for more campaign updates.



**YOUR PORT PIX**

Thousands of dockers worldwide have shown support for Auckland workers whose jobs came under threat at the start of 2012

**QUICK QUIZ**

Fill in the grid so that every number from 1 to 9 appears in any order in:

- \* Every vertical column
- \* Every horizontal line
- \* Every 3 by 3 subsection of the grid.

9						4	7
8				6	1		
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		8	1				2
6	7						1

**ASK THE GNT TEAM**

In each GNT bulletin you have the chance to ask a question about the GNT campaign or a related issue. Email [gntdockers@itf.org.uk](mailto:gntdockers@itf.org.uk) and your question could be featured in the next bulletin.

**Question:** Sometimes we hear a lot about particular disputes from our union but then the information stops coming and we're not sure what's happened.

**Answer:** High profile disputes like those going on in Port Botany in Australia and the Port of Auckland in NZ attract a lot of attention and the ITF will try to keep affiliates up to date on what's going on. Unions will be asked to show solidarity during disputes and pledge support which members should be made aware of. Each GNT port has a dedicated communications contact acting as a link between you and what's going on around the world in the GNT campaign. If you think you have the right skills to take on this role where you are get in touch: [gntdockers@itf.org.uk](mailto:gntdockers@itf.org.uk)  
 The best way to stay up to date on the latest developments is to get active and involved. Join the GNT network now: <http://www.itfglobal.org/dockers/gnt.cfm>



## MAERSK NETWORK 2012

Representatives from docker and seafarer unions across the world joined forces at the first ITF Maersk network meeting this month. Unions with workers in ports run by Maersk owned GNT APM and those from seafarer unions on Maersk shipping lines were at the meet in Cyprus.

A joined up and connected network of unions who all ultimately have the same employer can be influential when it comes to bargaining, negotiations and of course solidarity action. Unions at the Maersk meeting were



talking about how to build up a positive relationship with APM which recognises the roles of workers, unions and the employer in working together to raise standards for port workers worldwide.

Here's what some of the participants had to say about why they think the Maersk network's important:

**"In the European countries and in Denmark in particular we have quite good conditions, but worldwide there are problems at the Maersk terminals and we have to get better standards all over the world in the Maersk terminals. We must help each other to raise these low standards."** Karsten Kristensen, 3F Denmark

**"We have to campaign, we have to work, we have to have good social dialogue, dialogue is very important, we have to pursue the company to make sure freedom of association and so that they are taking trade unions into conference for the better functioning of their terminals. We need mutual understanding and mutual trust. Those will be our achievements and our motive. Social dialogue and understanding each other."** P M Mohammed Haneef, All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation

## A DOCKER'S TRIBUTE

This poem was presented by Wouter Roosenburg, a member of ITF-affiliated union FNV Bondgenoten, during Workers Memorial in the Netherlands.

The poem is a tribute to Wouter's brother who was a docker. He died of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos in the port where he worked.

Tribute to the work of the dockers

Experience it again and again  
Like into the wood  
Deep in the graining  
Every time again in your body  
In your bent back  
Experience it again  
Think of the mood  
Write it down  
It's in my head  
How shall I tell it?  
What do I mean?  
Experience it again, time after time  
Every time a little different  
The laughter, the unity  
The pressure, The solidarity  
The work, sometimes good and then just bad  
I'm addicted to it  
Do you also feel where it's hidden?  
You diamond in the rough  
Pores full silted with dirt  
Oh man keep your mouth!  
Do you know what I mean?  
It's buried deep into our soul  
Working in the port

Many dock workers were exposed to asbestos in ports during the 50s and 60s when they unloaded it from vessels in sacks. Often clouds of dust escaped from the sacks and workers had no protective equipment. If there are health and safety issues which aren't being addressed at your port get in touch with the gnt team:

[gntdockers@itf.org.uk](mailto:gntdockers@itf.org.uk)

# INDUSTRY HEADLINES

A snapshot of the latest industry developments.....

**It's reported that GNT APM is pushing ahead with plans to build and operate a new deepsea port in Nigeria.** The site in Badagry will act as a maritime gateway from Lagos – Nigeria's premier city - and a transshipment hub to the rest of West Africa. Proposals put construction starting towards the end of next year and the port being finished in 2016. The planned container terminal at the site will be capable of handling around 1 million TEU.



**An Indian terminal owned and managed by GNT PSA** has handled its millionth container this month. Some equipment has recently been bought for Chennai International Terminal Pvt Ltd meaning it now has 7 super post panamax quay cranes with twin lifts and 18 rubber tyred gantry cranes. As a result handling capacity has been doubled to 1.1 million TEUs.

**GNT DP World is feeling the effects of a go-slow campaign by truck drivers in the Port of Cochin, India.** Normal operations have disrupted in Vallerpadam International Container Transshipment Terminal according to local shipping sources. Drivers are seeking an increase in their annual festival bonus entitlement in relation to Diwali. Negotiations between the union and DPW have so far failed to come to a suitable solution.

## YOU TOLD US

For this first 2013 edition of the GNT Bulletin we asked a selection of workers 'What made you proud to be a docker in 2012?' This is what you told us.....

"I've seen loads of reports this year and heard lots from my union about disputes where dockers have acted in solidarity with other unions. The issues that affect workers in disputes over casualisation/privatisation/outsourcing, they're relevant to all of us. It makes me proud that we can still be bothered to stand up for each other. And ultimately we're helping ourselves as well."

"I was at the Maritime Roundtable in Casablanca in September and I was proud to see dockers getting involved in shaping campaigns and working so closely with seafarers."

"I'm proud that as dockers we still stick up for what's right. The case of Said Elhairech in Morocco showed that. One of the reasons he ended up in jail was because he was helping stranded seafarers - that just shows the commitment dockers have to trade unions and the rights of workers, not just the workers from their own industry."

"I'm proud that we're starting to see a few more young faces at our union meetings. It's taken a long time and a lot of effort to get anyone under the age of 40 even into the union but we seem to be getting there very slowly. Without the new generation of workers being interested in what unions stand for then they just won't survive."

"This time last year I was the only woman involved in union activities in my terminal. Now I have managed to get a few more women involved so we have more of a say in what goes on with the union and I'm really proud of that."



**YOUR PORT PIX:** MRT participants rallied to secure the release of Moroccan trade unionist Said Elhairech.

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