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MEDIA RELEASE

Department of Defence
(Defence Corporate Communication)
Private Bag X161
Pretoria
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MEDIA RELEASE BY SA NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE (SANDF) HEADQUARTERS PRETORIA: SA AIR FORCE IN DARING RESCUE OFF THE CAPE COAST

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Embargo: None

On Thursday 23 July 2009, Air Force Base Ysterplaat in Cape Town was alerted that a ship was in trouble off Cape Columbine, after the captain of a bulk sugar carrier, the Ioannis reported that his ship had sprung a leak, and appeared to be sinking.

Two SA Air Force Oryx helicopters from 22 Squadron at Air Force Base Ysterplaat were immediately despatched to the sinking ship, situated approximately 138 nautical miles North West of Cape Town. The two Oryx helicopters were airborne at 12:40 and arrived at the sinking ship at approximately 15:00 and immediately began the airlift. The last crew member was rescued off the ship just before it sank at approximately 17:00.

The twenty rescued seamen were safely evacuated to Saldanha Bay. This remarkable rescue mission under extreme circumstances is testament to the dedication and skill of pilots of the SA Air Force.

Ends.

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(Defence Media Liaison)
Pretoria**

Enquiries: **Colonel Bill Cowan
083 703 3147**