

Kenyans stranded in SL headed home

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Kenyan crewmembers of a Taiwanese ship that had been stranded in Sri Lanka for the last 10 months finally headed home.

Six Kenyans and two Chinese of the fishing vessel FV TAI YUAN 227 had been stranded in the Colombo Port since January 23, when they sailed to Colombo after Somali pirates freed them.

On Saturday the Mombasa-based Seafarers Assistance Programme (SAP) announced they were on their way back.

Andrew Mwangura, a director with SAP, said that he had received a call on Thursday from the crew saying they were at the Colombo airport heading to Kenya.

Mwangura said the men sailed for ten days from Somalia to Colombo.

After being dumped in Colombo, the crew reported their ordeal to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Inspector at the Port of Colombo, Ranjan Perera, who is also secretary of the National Union of Seafarers of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Perera told Mwangura that the ITF's London office was trying to find ways of helping the abandoned crew.

"The Taiwanese ship owner is bankrupt and the ship had been taken to a court of law in Colombo," he said.

Pirates held the ship in May last year. (standardmedia.co.ke)