

12 February 2010 - The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) reported today that 17 Filipino seafarers onboard Taiwanese-flag vessel FV Win Far 161 were released by Somali pirates from captivity yesterday afternoon (Philippine time).

The fishing vessel was hijacked on 6 April 2009 off the coast of Seychelles. It was the longest held vessel by Somali pirates with Filipino crew.

According to the DFA Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA), the Taiwan-based owner of the fishing vessel verified the report that FV Win Far and its Filipino crew were finally released on February 11.

The owner said that the Filipino crew are in good condition, and that the crew's repatriation to the Philippines is currently being arranged. Details for the repatriation are still being finalized.

There are 23 Filipinos who remain in the hands of Somali pirates - two onboard the Thai Union 3, three onboard the MV St. James Park, and 18 onboard the MV Navios Apollon.

The DFA continues to coordinate closely with the local manning agencies of the three vessels for the early and safe release of all Filipino seafarers. END