



KENYA PORTS AUTHORITY BRIEF ON STRANDED BARGE VESSEL MOMBASA – AUGUST 8,2024

The Authority's attention has been drawn to reports appearing in a section of the media on a barge that ran aground in May this year and wishes to make clarification as follows:

On 21st May 2024 at approximately 1300 hours, a barge owned by Comarco, which was being towed by the Tug Northwind, ran aground off Leven Reef northwest of Buoy no. 1, while outbound from the Port of Mombasa to Port of Dar es Salaam.

The grounding of the barge which had 209 general cargo containers onboard, was attributed to the tow line parting due to very strong winds and current, causing the barge to drift into shallow waters.

Following the incident, the owner of the barge and tug, MS. Comarco, and the cargo owner, MS. I. Messina, made multiple unsuccessful attempts to salvage the vessel.

Consequently, MS. Comarco and MS. I. Messina on 28th May 2024, further sought the intervention of Kenya Ports Authority to refloat the stranded barge. The Authority subsequently initiated the salvage operations.

Despite several attempts over a two-week period using tugboats, the rescue efforts led by KPA, were hampered by adverse monsoon winds experienced between June and July 2024. Consequently, salvage operations were suspended to wait for the weather to subside.

The Authority conducted further structural and stability assessment with a view of transferring all the 209 containers using light draft vessel that can access the location. Following thorough preparations, the operations

commenced last Wednesday, resulting in the successful transfer of 96 containers to date.

It is anticipated that the exercise will be completed with all containers transferred and the barge 3651 refloated by Saturday, August 10, 2024, subject to weather conditions.

Fortunately, the stranded barge is located far off the North of the channel, thereby causing no disruptions to vessel traffic at the Port of Mombasa.

**Capt. William K. Ruto AFNI, MBS,
MANAGING DIRECTOR**