



Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

Federal Higher Authority subordinated to the Ministry of
Transport and Digital Infrastructure

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation, P.O. Box 30 12 20 • 20305 Hamburg

Office building
Bernhard-Nocht-Str. 78
20359 Hamburg
Tel.: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 0
Fax: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 83 40
posteingang-bsu@bsh.de
www.bsu-bund.de

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+ 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 8321

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Press Release 2/16

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby gives notice that the Investigation Report 180/15 was published on 26 February 2016. The report deals with missing master of the MV HANJIN MIAMI in the Indian Ocean on 16 May 2015. Upon request the report will be forwarded. Alternatively this report – as well as all previous reports – is available on the website <http://www.bsu-bund.de> and can be downloaded.

Short version:

Marine casualty – missing master of MV HANJIN MIAMI

On 16 May 2015 the ship's owner informed the BSU's on-call service that the master of MV HANJIN MIAMI was missing on high seas, west of Sri Lanka, en route from Singapore to New York. At 1200, after the entire ship was searched three times, a reciprocal course was

steered. At 1236 the first distress call was sent. The master did not show up for breakfast and was last seen on the previous day at about 2000 at the aft edge of the superstructure, 306 nm far from the midday position, by two crew members.

MSCC Mumbai coordinated the search with the participation of several ships.

The investigation report was published by the BSU on 26 January 2016 and is available on www.bsu-bund.de.

Long version:

Marine casualty – missing master of MV HANJIN MIAMI in the Indian Ocean on 16 May 2015

On the morning of 16 May 2015, the master of the HANJIN MIAMI, en route from Singapore to New York, was reported missing on the high seas in the Indian Ocean. The entire ship was searched four times. The search revealed no concrete evidence of a criminal offence, suicide or an accident. All that was found was a primary key in the galley and a bag that could also be used for post in the vicinity of the port gangway. The vessel turned on a reciprocal course at 12001 midday. At this point, the HANJIN MIAMI was already 306 nm away from the position at which the crew last saw the master at about 2000 on the previous evening. The search involving Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC) Mumbai and Bremen, as well as several ships, was discontinued after three days and the voyage to the Suez Canal continued under the command of the chief officer. Two detective superintendents from the State criminal investigation department, a superintendent from the owner, a case worker from the seamen's mission in Alexandria, the substitute master, a technician to read data from the voyage data recorder (VDR), and a P&I lawyer from the transport insurer boarded in the Suez roadstead. The investigation revealed no further circumstantial evidence that would indicate the reason for the disappearance of the missing master.

The BSU investigation did not reveal any concrete evidence for a criminal offence, a suicide or an accident. The master was last seen between 2000 and 2030 on 15 May on the E-deck at the aft edge of the superstructure at the makeshift bar by several crew members. According to several witness accounts the master still wanted to send an important spare parts order for the chief engineer. The BSU was unable to establish the route he took to the bridge. It is unlikely that the master opted for the direct route through the superstructure because his primary key was found in the galley on the morning after. It is therefore possible that he wanted to take supper, which he still had not had, there. He must have left the superstructure afterwards because he did not arrive at the bridge. It is possible that he wanted to carry out one final inspection (round) outside.

Taking the direct route to Suez, the HANJIN MIAMI was situated on the boundary with the presumed piracy area. Consequently, the superstructure was already blacked out, the exterior doors locked, and night-time rounds had been ordered. Going around would have taken the master from the galley through the service corridor on B deck outside to one of the lifeboat stations, where it would be possible to go to the outboard edge without the protection of railing. One reason would be the noises caused by safety lines and lashing on the lifeboats and davits, for example. He may have slipped and fallen overboard while inspecting something there in the

dark. It is also conceivable that he had locked himself out of the superstructure because the outside door had been locked again from the inside in the meantime.

The BSU arrives at the conclusion that the cause of the disappearance of the master on high seas cannot be clarified. It might be possible that the master fell over board at one of the two lifeboat station during an inspection in the dark. The BSU considered this scenario the most likely after having analyzed the facts. There is no plausible evidence for a criminal offence or a suicide.

Volker Schellhammer
Director

