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p r e s s r e l e a s e

greenpeace to confront spanish whalers

the greenpeace ship, rainbow warrior, left the port of leixos (portugal) at 11 o'clock this morning after a 48 hour stopover, to begin its non-violent campaign against spanish whaling ships hunting off the coast of cape finisterre.

alerted that the spanish authorities were intending to seize their ship as soon as it entered spanish territorial waters, greenpeace did not go to la coruna, as planned, to join the demonstration organized by local environmentalists opposed to whaling, and stopped over in portugal in order not to put their campaign at risk. the authorities banned the peaceful demonstration which was to take place at la coruna, 50 minutes before it was to begin, but the demonstrators were nevertheless able to read a message from the greenpeace crew.

the spanish whaling zone is situated in international waters between 50 and 100 miles west of cape finisterre. a greenpeace spokesman declared that the crew of the rainbow warrior would oppose the whaling ships for as long as possible, placing their zodiacs in the line of fire of the harpoons.

in 1973 during greenpeace's previous voyage in spain, the spanish navy intervened to put a stop to the non-violent action of the crew after it had prevented a whaling ship from killing whales for 3 days.

'whatever happens', a greenpeace spokesman declared, 'we are prepared to defend our right to demonstrate peacefully our opposition to the destruction of the great whales in international waters. whales are migratory marine mammals which do not belong to those who possess the technology necessary for their exploitation. they form part of the common heritage of mankind, which we are determined to defend by all non-violent means possible'.

the crew of the greenpeace ship is composed of 19 people of 9 different nationalities, and is accompanied by several television crews as well as by representatives of the written press from several countries.

for further information contact: greenpeace, 31 rue du mail, paris, france - tel. 01-233 3696.

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