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Action demanded for stranded Moroccan crews

Over 100 Moroccan seafarers on four vessels are facing shortages of food, fuel and pay in the port of Algeciras, Spain, following a drastic reduction of operations by Morocco's Comarit/Comanav Ferry company that has led to the laying up of 11 ships in Spanish, French and Moroccan ports. The company is known to be still functioning short of bankruptcy. Some 1800 ship and shore staff are affected.

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation), working with Morocco's Union Marocaine du Travail (UMT), is trying to help four crews stranded in Algeciras, who are now described as having reached their limits.

During inspections of the four vessels there (the Moroccan-flagged Ibn Batuta, Al Mansour, El Boughaz and Banasa) crewmembers have stated that some have not been paid for up to five months, some of their families are at risk of losing their homes, and provisions, fuel and water were nearly exhausted. Following union intervention sufficient diesel for crew needs for another four or five days has been put onboard.

The ITF and UMT are appealing for the company to pay all its crews, and for the Moroccan government's Maritime Authority and Transport Ministry to intervene to ensure that its obligations are honoured.

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