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**Blood Phosphate Importers Ravensdown Appear to Prefer Confrontation to Dialogue Alleges Port Union**

Agrochemical company Ravensdown is risking potentially disruptive direct action by refusing to allow port workers to register their protest at the importing of Blood Phosphate from the Western Sahara, says the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU).

‘Our understanding is that a ship chartered by Ravensdown, the *Federal Crimson,* carrying a cargo of blood phosphate mined in Western Sahara and being imported into New Zealand, was due to arrive in Lyttelton at the end of this week. Our sources tell us the ship is bound for Napier and then Lyttelton, ’ said RMTU South Island Organiser John Kerr.

‘We’ve had contact from activist groups in Christchurch who say are preparing potentially disruptive protests against the importation of Blood Phosphate to coincide with the arrival of this ship. Last month the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) passed a resolution condemning Morocco’s illegal occupation of Western Sahara and calling upon the New Zealand government to halt importation of phosphates from the area. As an affiliate to the CTU the RMTU made a request to Ravensdown, via Lyttelton Port management, for our members to be allowed to board the vessel and deliver a letter of protest. We believe that an orderly, peaceful protest in this manner would appease those committed to more radical, disruptive tactics. Ravensdown refused our request,’ he said.

‘Our fellow unionists in Australia, the Maritime Union of Australia, have used this method to register protests against Blood Phosphate imports, to us it seems a relatively mild and pragmatic way to exercise a fundamental democratic right without risking undue disruption. Unfortunately, Ravensdown appear to prefer confrontation to dialogue,’ he said.

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