

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/whale-watch/whaling-delegates-fed-up-with-japanese-20100113-m6zo.html>

## **Whaling delegates 'fed up' with Japanese**

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MARATHON diplomatic talks the Rudd Government is relying on to avert legal action over whaling are going nowhere, according to an insider.

Japan wanted to continue "scientific" whaling in exchange for a token cut in the number of whales it kills, Jose Truda Palazzo, Brazil's former representative on the International Whaling Commission told *The Age*.

"This is the worst possible deal, as it not only lets the slaughter in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary continue, but also legitimises the Japanese abuse of right," he said.

In reply, anti-whaling nations such as Australia must refuse to yield ground, he said.

The Rudd Government is under pressure from the Coalition and the Greens to bring international legal action against Japan following hostilities between whalers and Sea Shepherd protesters in the Southern Ocean that led to the sinking of the support vessel *Ady Gil*.

Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said on Tuesday that legal action was an option, but that diplomatic efforts had not yet been exhausted.

Now, in a rare view of the IWC's closed meetings, Mr Truda Palazzo said many delegates were fed up with Japan's refusal to co-operate.

"[Japan] just sits there and says nothing until someone comes up with a specific proposal either to shut down scientific whaling or reduce numbers caught," he said.

"Then they say, 'It is not acceptable to us', and shut up again. Two years of this is starting to get on people's nerves."

There have been 10 rounds of IWC emergency meetings to find a solution to the deadlock since 2007, most closed to non-government organisations and the media. The next is due later this month in Honolulu.

Mr Truda Palazzo is speaking out now after being dropped from his country's IWC delegation for criticising President Luiz Da Silva's domestic environmental policies.

Mr Truda Palazzo said Japan was proposing a cut of 200 to 500 whales from its scientific quota, which now takes 1535 whales in the Antarctic and North Pacific.

"While foreign affairs lawyers seem to be reluctant, I hear many IWC commissioners hoping strongly that Australia takes Japan to the International Court of Justice," Mr Truda Palazzo said.

But this view contrasts with the official statement in December by IWC chairman Cristian Maquieira, who said he was pleased with progress after the last round of talks in Seattle.

"Discussions are ongoing and I believe they could serve as a basis of a way forward for the IWC that will more effectively conserve whales and manage the whaling that is happening in our oceans," Mr Maquieira said.

In Japan's only public comment, IWC commissioner Akira Nakamae rejected suggestions its failure to reach agreement by last June's deadline was due to his country's intransigence.

"We were meant to make some kind of compromise ... but some parties are not making any concession, and then making it almost impossible to carry out scientific whaling," he told the IWC's annual meeting.

The Rudd Government is refusing to comment on the talks, or allow media access to its special envoy on whale conservation, Sandy Hollway.

Mr Hollway's work has cost taxpayers more than \$500,000 so far, according to Senate budget estimates obtained by Liberal senator Simon Birmingham.