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2	UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
3	SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
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6	In the Matter of:
7	MARKEL CATCO REINSURANCE FUND LTD. Main Case No.
8	AND SIMON APPELL AND JOHN C. MCKENNA, 21-11733-1gb
9	Debtors.
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13	United States Bankruptcy Court
14	One Bowling Green
15	New York, New York
16	
17	March 16, 2022
18	10:06 AM
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22	BEFORE:
23	HON. LISA BECKERMAN
24	U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE
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    Motion to Approve /Motion for Entry of an Order Giving Full
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    Force and Effect to Bermuda Schemes of Arrangement
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ALSO PRESENT: JOHN C. MCKENNA, Director, Finance & Risk Services Ltd. SIMON APPELL, Managing Director, AlixPartners UK LLP MARK WAY, CEO Markel CATCo Investment Management Ltd.

MARKEL CATCO REINSURANCE FUND LTD., ET AL.

PROCEEDINGS

THE COURT: Good morning, this is Judge Beckerman.

Court is now in session. I'm going to go ahead and call the case. And when I do, I'm going to ask for attorneys to please put their appearances on the record. And then I'm going to ask, if you're addressing the Court further, if you identify yourself, please, for the record.

Case number 21-11733 Markel CATCo Reinsurance Fund Ltd., et al. May I have appearances of counsel?

MS. LAUKITIS: Good morning, Your Honor. Lisa

Laukitis from Skadden Arps on behalf of the debtors and the

foreign representatives. I'm joined today by my partner from

the UK, Peter Newman -- he's also admitted in the Southern

District -- and also by our colleagues, Justin Winerman and

Anthony Joseph.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Any further appearances of counsel?

Okay. I believe, Ms. Laukitis, the floor is yours. I believe that you are here today on the motion for entry of an order giving full force and effect to the Bermuda schemes of arrangement.

MS. LAUKITIS: Thank you, Your Honor. Yes, before we get started with the presentation, I wanted to introduce a few other people who are in the Zoom room today, whose efforts have been critical to the restructuring.

MARKEL CATCO REINSURANCE FUND LTD., ET AL.

First, Simon Appell of AlixPartners UK, who is one of the joint provisional liquidators and foreign representatives and one of the declarants in support of the enforcement motion. Second, Mr. John McKenna of Finance & Risk Services Ltd. He's another foreign representative. And finally, we have Kehinde George from the ASW law firm in Bermuda, who is our Bermuda counsel in the Bermuda proceedings, and she is another declarant in support of the enforcement motion, as she was for the recognition motion.

MS. LAUKITIS: Mr. Newman, my partner, was a declarant as well. And at this point, I would like to offer into evidence a number of declarations and affidavits, and I can list them out.

The first and second Appell declarations, which are located at docket numbers 5 and 31; the first and second George declarations, which are located at docket numbers 4 and 32; and the first and second Newman declarations, which are located at docket numbers 33 and 36.

And additionally, I would like to submit into evidence the certificate of no objection with respect to the enforcement motion, which was filed on March 11th and is located at docket number 37.

THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Laukitis, let's take those one at a time just in case anybody has any issues. I just note I believe the declarations 4 and 5 I had admitted into evidence

1	in connection with the recognition process, so
2	MS. LAUKITIS: You did.
3	THE COURT: I don't think that's necessary to do
4	that again. So obviously I can take judicial notice of them,
5	and I did note that they were cited to in your papers.
6	So let's start first with Mr. Appell's second
7	declaration, which is at docket number 31. Does anyone have
8	any objection to my admitting this declaration into evidence?
9	Okay. Hearing none, the declaration is admitted into
10	evidence.
11	(Second declarations of Mr. Appell was hereby received
12	into evidence as of this date.)
13	THE COURT: Does anyone wish to cross-examine Mr.
14	Appell with respect to his second declaration?
15	Okay. Hearing none, we'll move on to the next
16	declaration. With respect Ms. George's second declaration
17	that's docket number 32 is there any objection to my
18	admitting Kehinde George's second declaration into evidence?
19	Is there anybody who'd like to cross-examine Ms.
20	George with respect to her second declaration?
21	Okay. That will be admitted into evidence.
22	(Second declaration of Kehinde George was hereby received
23	into evidence as of this date.)
24	THE COURT: With respect to Mr. Newman's both first
25	declaration, at docket number 33, and his second declaration,

at docket number 36, does anyone have any objection to my admitting Mr. Peter Newman's first declaration, at docket number 33, and his second declaration, at docket number 36, into evidence?

Okay. Would anybody like to cross-examine Mr. Newman, with respect to his two declarations, either the first declaration or the second declaration?

(First and second declarations of Peter Newman was hereby received into evidence as of this date.)

THE COURT: Okay. All right. And obviously, I also will admit into evidence the certificate of no objection. For the purposes of the record, it's already filed on the record, but I will go ahead and recognize that and take judicial notice of that as well.

(Certificate of no objection was hereby received into evidence as of this date.)

MS. LAUKITIS: Great. Thank you. With that, I'll move forward into my presentation. As you know, we're here for the enforcement motion, and we know that you think it's important to create a fulsome record at these hearings. So I will do a brief overview of the results of the scheme and some of the key aspects of it. But I'm happy to answer any questions that you have or go into as much detail as you would like.

I'm happy to report that the schemes in Bermuda

enjoyed nearly unanimous support, in fact, there was unanimous support in two of the classes and only one small creditor in the public fund ordinary share class voted against the schemes. Last Friday, we filed the voting results in the chairperson's report by supplemental declaration that was attached to the declaration of Peter Newman.

I'd like to recognize the company, the foreign representatives, Bermuda counsel, and the entire team for their tireless work to get where we are today, which is an uncontested hearing.

To quickly update you on how we got here since the recognition hearing, if you recall, at that hearing, counsel for two parties took issue with the scope of the injunctions in the recognition order, which you overruled at the hearing, and entered the recognition order in the form that we had proposed. Thereafter, both parties subsequently filed lawsuits in Florida against the debtor's former CEO, which the debtors believed were in violation of your court order. But we agreed with the parties to consensually stay the litigation by stipulation while we continued discussions. Those parties also took aim at certain aspects of the schemes, including the scope of the releases.

After hard-fought negotiations, the debtors, in consultation with the joint provisional liquidators, reached a resolution by which those parties are excluded from the

schemes, and reached a separate settlement to resolve their claims and objections to the schemes.

The settlement paved the way to where we are at this contested hearing, and it is a critical component of the overall buyout transaction. Thereafter, the Bermuda court issued the convening orders authorizing the scheme companies to convene the scheme meetings at which the scheme creditors voted on the schemes. And in connection with the convening orders, the Bermuda court also issued a judgment that, among other things, considered and set forth his basis for the propriety of the releases and injunctive relief sought under the schemes.

In that second Newman declaration, in addition to the voting results, we attached the convening orders and the judgment and highlighted the Bermuda court's views on the releases. In particular, in the judgment, following a two-day trial at the convening hearing that addressed, among other things, the scope of the releases, the court said: "I am satisfied that, A, the releases are necessary in order to give effect to the proposed arrangement between the scheme companies and the scheme creditors; B, that the releases are necessary for the schemes to achieve their purpose; and C, there is sufficient nexus between the relationship between the scheme creditor and the scheme company, on the one hand, and the release of investor claims against all of the released parties, on the other hand. Thus, I am satisfied that the releases fall

within the jurisdiction of Part VII of the Bermuda Companies

Act." So the Bermuda court specifically approved the

permissibility of the releases.

And as Your Honor noted in Huachen Energy, comity, and not permissibility, under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, is the driving factor regarding whether you should recognize and enforce the Bermuda court's approval of third-party releases in this foreign scheme.

Here, especially given the nearly unanimous consent for the schemes, including the releases, and the uncontested nature of the releases to the schemes, and the fact that they are so integral that failure to enforce the releases would upend the schemes and prejudice the parties, and where the scheme creditors had a full and fair opportunity to vote on and be heard by the Bermuda court, we submit that enforcement of the releases under the schemes and the buy-out transaction is appropriate as an exercise of comity.

With respect to the voting, the scheme meetings were held on March 4th, as reflected in the Newman declaration, and as expected, with the groundwork having been laid, we obtained a very high level of creditor support. And again, copies of the voting results were included in the chairman's report attached to the Newman declaration.

The sanction hearings with respect to the schemes were held before Justice Mussenden of the Supreme Court of Bermuda

on March 11th, and Justice Mussenden also issued orders sanctioning the schemes on that date. Those orders were lodged with the Bermuda Registrar of Companies on March 15th, and copies of those sanction orders were filed with the court and are found a docket number 36.

So I'm happy to stand here today with a fully consensual motion, and no one has filed any formal or informal objections, and happy to answer any questions that Your Honor has, but otherwise, I would request that Your Honor enter the order as requested.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Laukitis. I have obviously read all the documents, including the latest declaration that was filed for Mr. Newman, which was helpful for updating me on what had been going on in the Bermuda court with respect to both the voting and the approval process.

I just have one quick question that I wasn't sure I had the right answer to which was, with respect to the settlement with the litigants that you referenced earlier, my reading of the documentation and also the pleadings that were filed is really that that was just -- it was settled among the parties. Obviously, it dealt with what will happen with the Florida litigation, eventually, assuming, obviously, the process continues here.

But I just wanted to confirm that -- I didn't see that that was something that had to be approved by the Court. It

was something that was able to be entered into by the parties without needing to be approved by the Bermuda court. I probably should have been more careful about what I was asking. Is that correct?

MS. LAUKITIS: Right. It was not specifically approved by the Bermuda court. It is, we would submit, part of the overall buyout transaction and the provisional liquidation proceedings, and the releases that are contained in that settlement are consensual between the parties and would be subject to the enforcement that is being requested to be approved by Your Honor. But it is not an actual part of the schemes. It was separated from the schemes, but still part of the liquidation.

THE COURT: Right. That's how I read it. I just wanted to make sure my understanding was correct. That's fine. I understand, obviously, that parties can agree consensually to releases. Those were included in the settlement agreement. And obviously, in that circumstance, there's obviously no issue if parties agree to that. That's fine. There's nothing about that that would be unusual either in the United States or, I'm sure, for that matter, in Bermuda, either, under normal corporate and litigation practice.

Okay. I don't have any other questions. I'm going just going to ask for the record, is there anybody else that would like to be heard with respect to this motion?

Okay. I'm prepared to issue my decision. The debtors here are Markel CATCo Reinsurance Fund Ltd., CatCo Reinsurance Opportunities Fund Ltd., Markel CATCo Investment Management Ltd. and Markel CatCo Re Ltd.

This Court previously entered an order, as was noted by Ms. Laukitis, on November the 4th 2021, granting recognition as a foreign main proceeding to the provisional liquidation proceedings that were commenced before the Supreme Court of Bermuda on September 27th, 2021, by filing winding up petitions. And I'll refer to those as the Bermuda proceedings.

The foreign representatives have filed a motion seeking entry of an order giving full force and effect to the Bermuda schemes of arrangement. As noted in support of the motion, there have been declarations submitted by Mr. Peter Newman, Mr. Simon Appell, and Ms. Kehinde George.

The Court notes that the debtors, Markel CATCO
Reinsurance Fund Ltd., which I'll refer to as the private fund,
and CatCo Reinsurance Opportunities Fund Ltd., I'll refer to as
the public fund, and collectively I'll refer to them as the
scheme creditors -- commenced schemes of arrangement in the
Bermuda court on October 27, 2021, by filing summonses for the
scheme companies, along with the initial supporting affidavit,
requesting a hearing for an order that the scheme companies
convene scheme meetings, and on October 28, 2021, issuing a
practice direction letter to all creditors or members affected

by the schemes.

The schemes themselves provide for the scheme creditors, which are all persons, other than excluded creditors, that are beneficially interested in the shares issued by the private fund, and the ordinary shares and C shares issued by the public fund, to receive a buyout which was proposed by Markel Corporation.

Pursuant to the buyout transaction, the scheme creditors will receive a return of the net asset value of the private fund, as well as a pro-rata share of forty-four million to be provided by Markel Corporation. Markel Corporation will also contribute twenty-five to thirty million to cover legal and other costs of the transaction. It also agreed to contribute 14.8 million for the early consent fee for certain scheme creditors that agreed to timely support the transaction, a work fee for certain other investors involved in the negotiation and development of the proposal, and twenty million, minus any insurance proceeds, to fund a settlement with certain investors.

Certain of the funds will be paid by wholly-owned Markel Corporation subsidiaries, that I'll refer to as the funding companies, pursuant to a loan agreement which is secured by a security package of the assets of the reinsurer and also a wholly-owned subsidiary of Markel Corporation.

Pursuant to the schemes, each of the scheme creditors,

the private fund, the public fund, the manager, the reinsurer, the funding companies, the adverse development cover provider, and Markel Corporation will become party to a deed that is governed by Bermuda law, called the deed of release, pursuant to which such parties will grant releases of any investor claims that they have or may have against the scheme companies and certain related entities and individuals, including indemnified persons.

The deed of release also provides that the deed parties agree not to commence or take any actions against the parties that will benefit from the releases contained in the deed of release arising from any claims that are released under the deed of release. This is referred to in the papers as the agreement not to sue.

As Ms. Laukitis noted, on December 7th and December 8th, 2021, the Honorable Mr. Justice Larry Mussenden of the Supreme Court of Bermuda held a hearing on the applications by the scheme companies for orders convening meetings of their respective investors to vote on the schemes, known as the convening hearing.

On February 25th, 2022, the Bermuda court issued a judgment in support of the convening orders. In the judgment, as Ms. Laukitis noted in her presentation, the Bermuda court, among other things, made the findings that she recited, that it was satisfied that the releases were necessary in order to give

effect to the proposed arrangement between the scheme companies and the scheme creditors, that they were necessary for the schemes to achieve their purpose, and that there is a sufficient nexus between the relationship between the scheme creditors and the scheme company, on the one hand, and the release of the investor claims against all the released parties on the other hand. Thus, Justice Mussenden determined that the releases fell within the jurisdiction of Part VII of the Bermuda Companies Act.

As described in the motion, the scheme companies provided notice to the scheme creditors of various events during the scheme process. First, the scheme companies provided notice of the scheme meetings and the sanction hearing on February 18th, 2022, in accordance with the convening orders.

On February 28th, 2022, the public fund issued a further notification by the London Stock Exchange Regulatory News Service, announcement of the sanction hearing, and a deadline for submission of voting instructions with respect to the scheme meetings.

A further RNS notice was issued on March 7th, 2022, announcing the results of the scheme meetings. On March 1st, 2022, Centaur Fund Services (Bermuda) Limited, the registrar of the private fund, notified the private fund scheme creditors of the sanction hearing by email, along with subsequent email

confirming that it was sent to all private fund scheme creditors. So this notice was provided to the scheme creditors. I note, from the Court's perspective, this notice seems like it was adequate and sufficient notice.

On February the 3rd 2022, the manager, acting in its own behalf, and private fund entered into the settlement, that Ms. Laukitis outlined in her presentation, with certain litigation claimants. The settlement resolves the litigation and provides for payment to the litigation claimants of the current net asset value of their shares in the private fund and an additional payment of twenty million funded by Markel Corporation, and the managers D&O insurance, and will not reduce the payment to the other scheme creditors.

The settlement agreement contains contractual releases as was just discussed on the record. The scheme meetings were held on March 4th, 2022. At the scheme meetings, the schemes were approved by the overwhelming votes in each class, as Ms. Laukitis outlined in her presentation. On March 11, 2022, the Bermuda court held a sanction hearing and approved the schemes.

The motion here today seeks relief from this Court under Sections 1521(a), 1507(a), and 105(a) of the Bankruptcy Code. Pursuant to Section 1521(a), which authorizes the Court to grant any appropriate relief to the foreign representatives, the foreign representatives are seeking recognition and enforcement of the liens provided for in connection with the

loans that will be funding the buyout transaction.

The lenders who are providing those loans have requested that an order of this Court enforcing the loans and the security of the loans be granted so that the loans and the security can be enforced in the United States. Courts have held that the exercise of comity and additional assistance contemplated in Section 1507 may include recognizing and enforcing various foreign orders, including orders that enforce foreign plans for confirmation and orders that enforce schemes of arrangement. See In re Avanti Communications Group PLC, 582 B.R. 603, 616 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y.).

As this Court has previously noted, and as Ms.

Laukitis had noted in her presentation, in a prior case before me, nonconsensual -- Huachen Energy Co. Ltd., nonconsensual third-party releases, and what constitutes consent for third-party releases given in connection with a scheme or a plan of reorganization are still controversial under the United States Bankruptcy Code. Any releases would be under our laws for plans, especially in light of the recent decision with Purdue, which is currently on appeal to the Second Circuit, and also the decision that was rendered in the Eastern District of Virginia recently.

However, as I noted in that case, this Court is not being asked in this case to approve nonconsensual third-party releases under the United States Bankruptcy Code in connection

with a plan of reorganization, but instead is being asked to determine whether recognition of the Bermuda court's decision is a proper exercise of comity in a case under Chapter 15 in connection with the sanctioned schemes that were approved by the Bermuda court.

As I noted, basically, principles of enforcement of foreign judgments and comity in the Chapter 15 cases strongly counsel approvement of enforcement in the United States of third-party nondebtor release and injunction provisions, even if those provisions could not be entered in a plenary Chapter 11 case.

And I note here, for the record, because there's no carveouts for certain things we would see typically in our Chapter 11 cases for releases, such as gross negligence, willful misconduct, and fraud in certain circumstances, there might be an issue if this were done in a United States Chapter 11 plan, in addition to the issue of nonconsensual third-party releases, as a whole, and whether those are appropriate or legal, or satisfies our Second Circuit principles, if that were before me today, but it is not. There would also be the issue of the scope of the releases.

But obviously, under Bermuda law, the Court has clearly ruled that those are permissible under Bermuda law, both with respect to the statute and also with respect to the cases that have been cited in the motion and the declaration

that was that was filed by Ms. George as well.

Extending comity to the releases and the injunction and other parts of the scheme sanction orders, and the schemes themselves, does not affect the just treatment of creditors, the protection of creditors in the United States against prejudice or inconvenience, prevention of preferential or fraudulent disposition of property of the debtor, disposition of proceeds substantially in accordance with Bankruptcy Code priorities, or the opportunity for a fresh start.

Moreover, this Court has previously held, in numerous cases, that Bermuda liquidation and scheme proceedings should be afforded comity. See In re Digicel Group One, case number 20-11207, (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. June 17, 2020), as well as many of the other cases that were cited in the motion.

Releases here are clearly integral parts of the schemes. The Bermuda court itself has found that they are an integral part of the schemes. The deed of the release and the settlement agreement will enable the buyout transaction to proceed as the threat of litigation being brought against the scheme companies or the parties indemnified by the scheme companies will now be eliminated by virtue of the released provisions, the scope of the deed of release, and the agreement not to sue.

Markel Corporation is only willing to provide funding for the buyout transaction on the condition that the deed of

release and the settlement agreement are enforced and that this Court enters an order agreeing to enforce that. This is because the repayment of the buyout amount funded by the loans depends on an orderly runoff of the reinsurer and the reinsurer's assets.

The court may grant relief under 1521 if the interests of creditors and other interested parties, including the debtor, are sufficiently protected. See Section 1522(a) of the Bankruptcy Code.

The Bermuda scheme process here sufficiently protects creditors and the debtor. As I noted before, adequate notice was given to the scheme creditors in advance of both the convening hearing, the scheme meetings, and the sanction hearing, as well as all the proceedings that have taken place before me. The schemes classify similarly situated creditors together. The scheme creditors were given an opportunity to raise any issues with the schemes, with the Bermuda court, both in the convening hearing and the sanction hearing.

Accordingly, this Court finds that the scheme creditors are sufficiently protected. Accordingly, this Court will provide additional assistance in the form of recognizing and enforcing the releases that are contained in the schemes and the deed of release as well as the settlement agreement.

Creditors had a full and fair opportunity to vote on the schemes and to be heard by the Bermuda court. Under

Bermuda law, the scheme creditors are bound by the schemes because of the overwhelming -- and as Ms. Laukitis noted, in two classes unanimous -- vote in favor of the schemes. The standard for the Bermuda approval by each class of the schemes has been met because at least seventy-five percent, in value, vote of each class voted in favor of it. And as Ms. Laukitis noted, two classes unanimously.

The Bermuda court also expressly held that the proposed releases fall within the jurisdiction of Part VII of the Bermuda Companies Act and are appropriate and necessary to the transactions.

The failure of this Court to enforce the releases contained in the schemes and the deed of release and the settlement would prejudice the released parties and the debtors. Principles of comity permit a United States bankruptcy court to recognize and enforce the schemes. In re Sino-Forest Corp., 501 B.R. 655 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 2013). See also In re Avanti, 582 B.R. 617. And see also the cases cited in the motion at paragraphs 49, 50, 69, and paragraph 73 of the motion.

For all of those reasons, the Court will grant the motion, as requested by the foreign representatives, and enter an order in enforcing of enforcement of the schemes, the deed of release, and of the settlement agreement, as requested in the motion.

MS. LAUKITIS: Thank you, Your Honor. And I want to thank you and your chambers for your time and assistance throughout this case. It's very much appreciated.

I do have one request, which is if the order could possibly be entered today or as soon as possible. The entry of the order is a condition precedent to the closing of the buyout transaction, and the closing is scheduled to begin on Monday, the 21st, and to continue through the 24th. And as part of the closing, the settlement is being funded, in part, by insurers who have required two business days between the entry of the order and the funding of the settlement. So it would be very helpful for us, to get the process rolling, if we could have the order entered as soon as possible.

THE COURT: Okay. I don't see why that would be a problem. We have another hearing at 2 today, but I don't see why, if you submit it, that won't be possible. We have a break, so I can just --

MS. LAUKITIS: Thank you.

THE COURT: -- read through it and authorize it.

MS. LAUKITIS: Thanks very much. I have nothing further.

THE COURT: Okay. Is there anything else that any other parties would like to be heard with respect to the Markel CatCo matter today?

And if not, congratulations. I'm glad that this

1	turned out to be a successful process in the Bermuda
2	proceedings. And it was an interesting and unique way of
3	dealing with a restructuring problem and one that actually I'm
4	sure people will be interested in looking at, and perhaps
5	utilizing the methodology in the future, because obviously it
6	allowed parties to move forward without having years of
7	litigation that would have taken place otherwise. So it
8	certainly does appear to be a well thought out and uncommon but
9	creative use of various provisions in Bermuda law, as well as
10	obviously just overall restructuring proceedings.
11	MS. LAUKITIS: Thank you, Your Honor.
12	THE COURT: Okay. With that, unless there's anything
13	else I wish you all a good day, and court is now adjourned.
14	MS. LAUKITIS: Thanks.
15	(Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at 10:35 AM)
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CERTIFICATION I, Sharona Shapiro, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. Shanna Shaphe Sharona Shapiro (CET-492) AAERT Certified Electronic Transcriber eScribers 352 Seventh Ave., Suite #604 New York, NY 10001 Date: March 17, 2022

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