

LABOUR

Thailand ignoring slaves at sea, says EJF

Thailand is facing fresh allegations of using slave labour in its fishing industry with the launch of a new investigation into the sale, abuse and exploitation of migrant workers on Thai fishing ships.

The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), an environmental and human rights NGO, highlights the case of 15 Burmese men who had been rescued from boats in its report *Sold to the Sea: human trafficking in Thailand's fishing industry*. All of the men claim to have been deceived by labour brokers and forced to work up to 20 hours a day for months at a time with little or no pay on shrimping boats in Kantang, a city in the south of Thailand.

The men had been subjected to bonded labour, forced detention, and abuse and beatings by senior crew while working on ships operating in Thai waters, according to EJF.

Two of the men reported seeing fellow migrant workers tortured and executed for trying to escape, and witnessing the murder of at least five other men. Another man reported multiple murders and bodies being thrown out to sea with the crew forced to watch.

The report claims that while the men were in police custody, the owner of the boat that had held the men, as well as the broker who had sold the men to the ship, were given access to the rescued workers by local police.

Statements from the Burmese migrants also claim that Thai police profited from their further exploitation by forcing them to work on a rubber plantation allegedly owned by a senior official in the local force.

"We have been genuinely surprised by the levels of collusion by agents of the state, who instead of stopping these awful human rights abuses are ignoring and even benefiting from it," said Steve Trent, executive director of EJF.

"We were shocked by the extreme levels of violence inflicted on and witnessed by migrant men held as captive workers on these boats and how easy it was for us to conduct this investigation and

collect our evidence. This was all out in the open. This is not an isolated case, but indicative of the widespread acceptance and use of modern slavery in an industry that feeds a global appetite for seafood."

Thailand has been repeatedly accused of slavery and human trafficking in its shipping industry. A 2011 report by the International Organisation for Migration documented widespread trafficking within the fisheries sector in Thailand, with migrant fishermen being kept working on board for years without pay. A report in 2009 by the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking found that 59% of interviewed migrants trafficked aboard Thai fishing boats reported witnessing the murder of a fellow worker.

EJF is calling for Thailand to be downgraded to a tier three country in the upcoming US state department's Trafficking in Persons (Tip) report, which grades the scale and severity of people trafficking globally.

Thailand has been lobbying to retain its tier two status despite last year's Tip report concluding that Thailand has not shown evidence of increasing efforts to address human trafficking and is not in compliance with minimum standards for its elimination.

A relegation into tier three would rank Thailand among the countries with the worst records on human trafficking including Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It could lead to restrictions on US foreign assistance and access to global financial institutions such as the World Bank.

An International Labour Organization (ILO) report this month identified the fishing industry as one of the most open to coercive and deceptive labour practices due to the isolation, length of time at sea and transnational nature of the work, as well as the high percentage of migrant labour used.

Source: *The Guardian*
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/may/29/thailand-slaves-sea-burmese-migrants>

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ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Catchbox: The UK's first 'Community Supported Fishery'

Launched in March 2013, the Catchbox Co-operative is the United Kingdom's first 'Community Supported Fishery' (CSF) project. Community Supported Fisheries were initiated in the United States around six years ago based on the popular Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programmes developed in the 1980s. CSFs, like CSAs, are a kind of direct marketing scheme, designed to bring consumers and producers closer together; to cut out the middleman and put consumers directly in touch with the fishermen in their local harbours.

Catchbox is in the process of establishing itself as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), a legal entity that includes bona fide co-operatives that trade for the mutual benefit of their members. Catchbox describes itself as a co-operative connecting people with their local fishermen and fish in the

UK's southeast coastal towns of Brighton and Chichester. The scheme "aims to both encourage responsible fishing, sustainable consumption of a wider variety of fish, and help people get to know the fish in their seas".

To benefit from the Catchbox scheme, people first

consumers and the wider public to reconnect with the marine environment; to understand and regain respect for a traditional way of life that is often maligned or otherwise portrayed in a bad light.

One of the big challenges facing CSFs, in general, and the Catchbox, in particular, is commercial viability.

The pilot phase of Catchbox is supported by a grant from the UK's

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). SeaWeb, an international NGO set up by the Pew Charitable Trust in 1995, is leading the co-ordination of the pilot phase of Catchbox through the Seafood Choices programme. Other supporters include Co-Operatives UK and Brook Lyndhurst. Once it has completed the pilot phase, Catchbox will have to make it alone economically.

<http://www.catchbox.coop/>



have to become members by paying a £10 fee (Euro12 or US\$15). They must then pay for at least one kg worth of fish per fortnight. Members pay at the beginning of the fishing season for a share of a fisherman's catch and each week receive a set weight of fish, which varies according to season. Members may also chose between whole fish or fillets, on a weekly or fortnightly basis, and according to the size of their household.

An important feature of the scheme is its educational dimension. It will encourage


FISHERIES STATISTICS

Child Labour

Child labour is a major concern in many parts of the world and it is estimated that there are some 215 mn child labourers worldwide. Aggregate data indicate that about 60 per cent of child labourers—that is, over 129 mn children—work in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture. While there are limited disaggregated data on child labour specifically related to fisheries and aquaculture, case-specific evidence points to significant numbers. Children engage in a wide variety of activities in capture fishing, aquaculture and all associated operations (processing, marketing and other post-harvest activities), as well as in upstream industries, including net making and boatbuilding.

Children also perform household chores in their fishing and fish-farming families and communities. When child labour is used as cheap labour to cut fishing costs, not only is it harmful to the children, it may also have a negative effect on the sustainability of the fishery activity. Child labour appears to be particularly widespread in the small- and medium-scale sectors of the informal economy where decent work is poorly organized or absent.

Although there is a widely ratified international legal framework to address child labour, comprising International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and other agreements, laws are effective only if they are applied and enforced, with incentives to ensure compliance. Addressing child labour is rarely high on the national agenda of social dialogue, legislation review and institution building. Its elimination is difficult because it is part of production systems, is nested in the context of poverty and relates closely to social injustices. Communities and institutions are often not fully aware of the negative

Supply and demand determinants of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture	
Supply factors ('push' factors)	Demand factors ('pull' factors)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of poverty and need to supplement household income. • Lack of access to adequate schools and childcare, particularly in remote areas (insufficient number of schools, geographical distance, poor quality and non-relevant curricula). • Interruption of education or childcare due to migration. • Inadequate or insufficient information on behalf of parents (for example, perceived irrelevance of education or poor awareness of hazards of certain work). • Lack of financial services allowing the household to redistribute expenses and income over time. • Incompatible attitudes, values and norms: children's participation in fisheries and aquaculture considered a way of life and necessary to pass on skills (fishing, net making/repair, fish processing and trading). • Necessity to cope with shocks such as a natural disaster or the loss of a household breadwinner (accident at sea, HIV/AIDS). • Children's interest in proving their skills and making a contribution to the family income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Cultural perception of masculinity and desire to earn income, making boys want to go to sea to fish at an early age. — Girls wanting to make money work in fish processing and marketing. • High child-adult ratio (demographic factors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for cheap labour: children are often paid less than adults (or unpaid) and have weaker negotiating power with regard to terms and conditions of work. • Insufficient availability of adult labour at peak (fishing) seasons. • Need for substitution of adults in household chores and labour when parents are working, sometimes away from home. • Demand for special skills and perception that children's fingers are nimble or their (smaller) bodies better for certain tasks, such as net repairs and diving deep distances to hook/unhook the nets from fishing boats. • Existence of certain attitudes and perception that children, in particular girls, are more docile workers. • Consideration that certain tasks are children's responsibility (for example, feeding fish or fetching water).
	
<p>Source: Adapted from FAO/IFAD/ILO, 2010; ILO/IPEC-SIMPOC, 2007; ILO, 2002.</p>	

individual and collective social and economic consequences of child labour. Practical and realistic pathways for improving the current situation and community engagement and buy-in are essential for successful results.

More information on child labour is needed to raise awareness at all levels. A critical first step towards eliminating child labour—in particular, its worst forms—is to understand what constitutes hazardous work and what tasks and occupations are acceptable for children above the minimum legal age for employment. Not all activities performed by children are child labour. Convention on Minimum Age, 1973 (No. 138), and Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182) define child labour

on the basis of a child's age, the hours and conditions of work, activities performed and hazards involved. Child labour is work that interferes with compulsory schooling and damages health and personal development.

Concerted efforts are needed to effectively address child labour with multi-stakeholder participation and involving governments, development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), employers' and workers' associations and other socio-professional organizations, the private sector and communities (including children and youth). By applying holistic, participatory, integrated and feasible approaches, a better life for millions of children can be created.

Source : www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3318e/i3318e.pdf

Excerpts from "Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture", produced by FAO and ILO, 2013

VERBATIM

...it is high time to recall that there is an alternative, and that it is staring us in the face: the small-scale fisheries. They survived, albeit with difficulties, while industrial fisheries grew in the absence of checks or balances.

— FROM DANIEL PAULY'S FOREWORD TO "WORLD SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: CONTEMPORARY VISIONS"

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

ICSF's Documentation Centre (dc.icsf.net) has a range of information resources that are regularly updated. A selection:

Publications

Caught at Sea: Forced Labour and Trafficking in Fisheries. ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (DECLARATION/SAP-FL), Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR). - Geneva: ILO, 2013.

This report examines recent literature on forced labour and human trafficking in the fisheries sector, with a focus on fishing vessels engaged in commercial marine fisheries. The report considers institutional and legal frameworks as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives that have the potential to impact fishers' safety and working conditions. Valuable input was received from the participants at an ILO consultation in Turin, Italy, in September 2012. The main questions answered in this report are: What do we know about forced labour and human trafficking in the fisheries sector (Chapter 1)? Which institutional and legal frameworks exist to combat this problem (Chapter 2)? Finally, what are the main issues that will inform our discussion on how to move forward (Conclusion)?

Source : http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_214472.pdf

Beginners' Guide to the Reform of EU Fish Subsidies

The European Union (EU) fisheries policy may seem complicated, but it is actually pretty simple: we must fish less now so we can fish more tomorrow. The infographic in this publication from Fish for the Future explains the Common Fisheries Policy in five minutes.

Important discussions are taking place in the European Parliament right now and there are divisions between Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across all national delegations and political groups.

Fish For the Future is a cross-party group of MEPs who want to end overfishing and rebuild fish stocks. They are fighting against those who prefer the short-term benefit of allowing fishermen to catch the last remaining fish over ensuring European fishermen a long-term future.

Source : <http://fishforthefutureeu.wordpress.com/>

Videos/CDs

Unacceptable Levels: Pollution Just Got Personal

Pollution is not just what you can see littered in the ditches by the side of the road. It is also the hazardous chemicals you can't see in the air we breathe, the water we drink and wash in, the food we eat, and the ground we play on. In all of our blood and urine, hazardous chemicals can be measured by the dozens. How do they get there? That's a story worth watching. This movie shows just how 'up-close and personal' pollution can be.

Source : www.unacceptablelevels.com

FLASHBACK

Don't forget fishworkers

A widely reported conference on the conservation and management of highly migratory stocks like tuna, and of straddling stocks species like cod that lie both within and beyond exclusive economic zones was held at New York from 12 to 30 July 1993.

The Conference was of concern to artisanal and small-scale fishworkers for various reasons. The inter-relationship of species implies that excessive harvest of any one species could sometimes affect the catch potential of others, irrespective of juridical boundaries.



The situation is worsened by burgeoning international fisheries agreements to access the under-exploited waters of the South. In Senegal, for example, the artisanal fishworkers' organisation, Collectif National des Pecheurs Artisanaux du Senegal (CNPS), has been lobbying against the fisheries agreements under the Lome Convention of the European Community. Further, overexploitation of stocks can lead to the migration of fishing fleet into inshore waters. This could threaten the lives and livelihood of artisanal and small-scale fishworkers in the North and the South.

However, the plight of victims of distant water fishing nations received scant attention at the Conference. The Conference made no mention of the importance of human rights aboard fishing vessels of countries known to operate with workers from the South, who are often employed on highly exploitative terms and conditions. Without making amends for this, and without recognizing the vulnerability of artisanal and small-scale fishing communities, there cannot be any responsible fishing.

Discussing fisheries is a very complex matter because fish is, at one and the same time, food, commodity and species. Despite well-documented difficulties, and the near impossibility of obtaining reliable data on straddling and migratory stocks, the Conference is still underpinned on traditional concepts of resource management, which have so far not prevented overfishing anywhere in the world.

— from the Comment in SAMUDRA Report No. 8, November 1993

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity)
19-23 August 2013, New York, US

Sub-Committee on Aquaculture
7-11 October 2013, Russian Fed., St. Petersburg

National Governance of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

14 - 25 October 2013, Turin, Italy

The International Training Centre of the ILO, in collaboration with SafeWork (the ILO programme which promotes OSH) is organizing this course in Turin to acquaint participants with international guidelines and principles of the ILO and the experience of consolidated and successful national OSH systems and programmes.

WEBSITES

igssf.icsf.net

The development and adoption of the International Guidelines on Small-scale Fisheries could play a role in addressing fisheries-related issues, using a human-rights-based approach.

This ICSF website provides links to gender and small-scale fisheries (SSF), and various legal frameworks relevant to SSF, including judgements in favour of SSF both at national and international levels.

PUBLICATIONS

Billion-Dollar Fish: The Untold Story of Alaska Pollock by Kevin M. Bailey. The University of Chicago Press, 288 pages. 2013. ISBN 978-02-260-2234-5

This book traces the origins and explosive growth of the commercial pollock fishery in the United States since World War II to its subsequent crash and eventual recovery. The author focuses on the interplay between fish population dynamics and ocean ecology.