

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

March 2018 Vol. 16 No. 03

This issue highlights the hidden slavery among fishers at sea and the efforts of human rights' groups to expose and correct the abuse.



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- Society of the Holy Child Jesus

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Slavery at Sea

The fishing industry, virtually unregulated in many countries, is among the most important economic sectors in the world. It employs a high number of vulnerable migrant workers.

Due to a shortage of fishing crews, migrants are recruited by false promises. They are told they will receive a living-wage, but actually incur crippling debts that put them in a labor trafficking situation. Vulnerable people are thus deceived and/or kidnapped. Trafficking occurs at

all stages of the seafood supply chain, from catching the fish to processing and shipping it for export.

At sea, workers endure inhumane working hours, often working 18-20 hour days, seven days a week. Fishers can be held at sea for years on large fishing vessels because of a lack of regulation. They are forced to work in unsafe, hazardous, and life-threatening conditions, often on the verge of starvation, and facing a blatant disregard for their basic medical needs and injuries. They endure beatings and torture -- methods routinely used to ensure compliance. Disobeying orders or asking for a rest could result in death.

Meanwhile, on land men, women, and children are often enslaved in the seafood processing and canning facilities, where they too are subjected to long hours, horrendous and unsafe conditions, physical abuse, and neglect of injuries. These conditions, coupled with the global demand for cheap seafood, creates the lawless conditions under which forced labor and trafficking at sea continues to flourish. (<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/coalition-of-catholic-organizations-against-human-trafficking.cfm>)





Awareness

How Slave Labor Feeds the Seafood Supply Chain

Some fishing vessels operating in foreign waters employ slave labor to artificially reduce costs. A fish caught with slave labor enters the complex global supply chain, where it mingles with or is fed to legal seafood products and ends up on American plates.

1. Harvest •

Fishing vessels operating with slave labor stay at sea for years transshipping their product to larger vessels in exchange for fuel and supplies; by avoiding port they isolate victims on board.

2. Transport

The mothership mingles legal and illegal fish and brings a single load to shore.

3. Processing •

Illegally and legally caught fish processed together into fillets, pet food, or fish for aquaculture facilities. Forced labor practices have also been uncovered in processing facilities.

4. Transport

Processed and whole fish are sent across the globe. Approximately 90% of the fish Americans consume is processed abroad.

5. Wholesaler

Different lots of fish are often combined and divided multiple times as they change hands at wholesale facilities and distributed across the country or overseas once more.

6. Retail

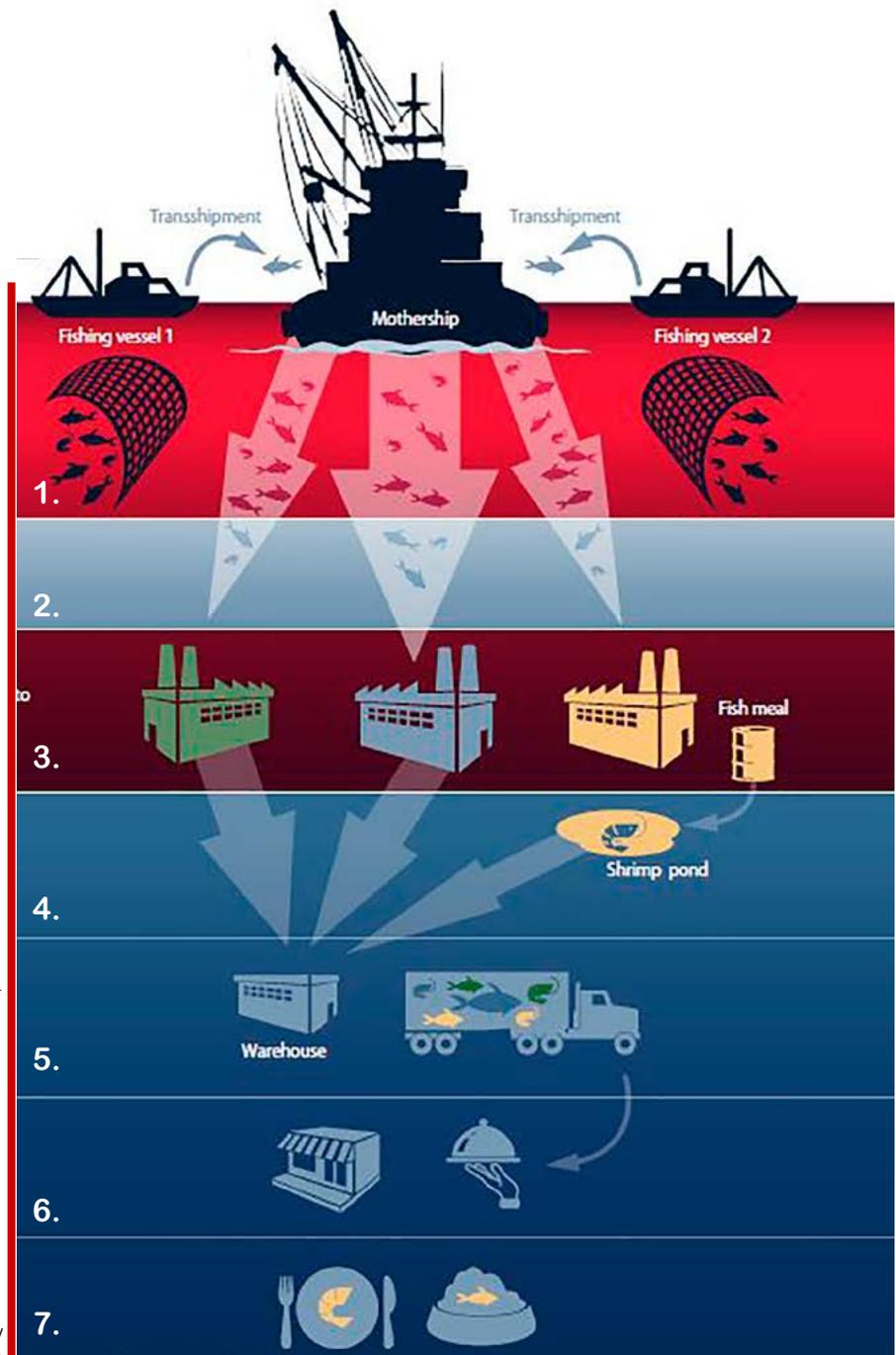
Eventually the processed fish ends up in a store or restaurant.

7. Dinner

Dinner for your family or pet.

(• Human Trafficking and abuse are most prevalent at steps 1 and 3 of this journey.)

(http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_214472/lang--en/index.htm)





Cambodian Fisher Repatriated from Mauritius

Mr. Theory (an alias), age 28, from Oddar Meanchey province in Cambodia, went to Thailand in April 2010 with approximately 25 women and 15 men from various provinces in Cambodia, all in search of job opportunities. Mr. Theory departed for Thailand voluntarily. He was not aware of the type of work he would be doing, and only knew that there was a job opportunity for him in Thailand. Neither he nor the other migrant workers obtained travel documents to enter Thailand and no one paid any money to cross the border.

After crossing the border, Mr. Theory and the others in his group traveled to Samut Prakan province where he met a Cambodian worker, who informed him about a job working on a Thai fishing vessel. Mr. Theory worked for seven days fixing the nets, before going out to sea. The vessel, which flew a Thai flag at the port and no flag at sea, departed from Thailand in April 2010 and did not return to land again until August 2012 when the vessel was seized by the Mauritian authorities and brought to shore.

There were a total of 27 fishers on the fishing vessel: 23 Cambodians and four Thais. Mr. Theory worked from 8 to 24 hours each day, depending on the tasks assigned to him, and did not have any days off. He and his fellow fishers worked longer hours when their fishing nets were damaged by coral and had to be fixed. The fishers worked even when they were sick or injured as the skipper did not permit them to take time off to rest.

Every three months the fishers would transfer the fish from their fishing

vessel onto a larger fishing vessel at sea. Mr. Theory reported that some of the workers on the larger fishing vessels did speak Thai. Mr. Theory and his fellow fishers were provided fish and rice, twice a day, and permitted 20 minutes for each meal. Although the food was generally enough, there was a lack of clean drinking water for the workers. One small barrel of water was provided for five to ten workers and it was not sufficient to keep the men hydrated.

The fishers demanded pay from the skipper occasionally but they were not persistent in doing so because of their precarious position at sea. It was not until approximately one year and five months into his work that Mr. Theory was informed by the skipper that he and the other workers would be paid THB4,000 per month for their work. The skipper also promised the fishers that they would be given a bonus of THB2,000 once the fishing vessel returned to Thailand.

While many fishers asked the skipper for permission to leave the fishing vessel, and according to Mr. Theory, "everyone wanted to leave," the skip-

per never agreed and none of the men attempted to escape because they were at sea and thought that no other fishing vessel would give them refuge even if they did try to escape. The skipper also threatened to withhold all of the fishers' pay if they tried to leave the fishing vessel.

In August 2012, Mauritian authorities seized the fishing vessel and brought it to Mauritius. After seven months in Mauritius, during which the men stayed but did not work on the fishing vessel, Mr. Theory and his fellow fishers were repatriated with the assistance of International Office of Migration (IOM). The first group of men arrived in Phnom Penh on 9 April 2013 and the second group arrived the day after. To date, Mr. Theory has not received any compensation for the approximately two years and six months he worked on the Thai fishing vessel.

Source: Interview with repatriated fisher in Phnom Penh, conducted and documented by

Andy Shen, ILO consultant, 11 April 2013

(Report: *Employment Practices and Working Conditions in Thailand's Fishing Sector*, pg. 76

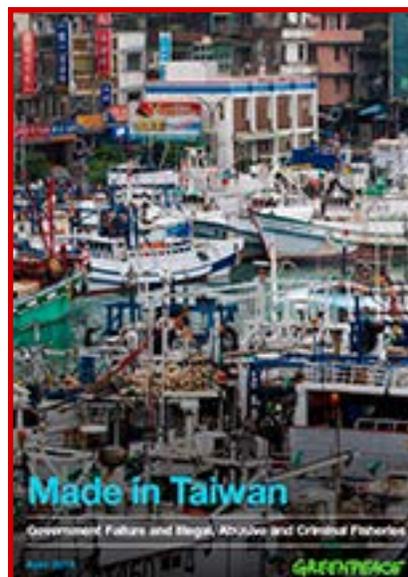
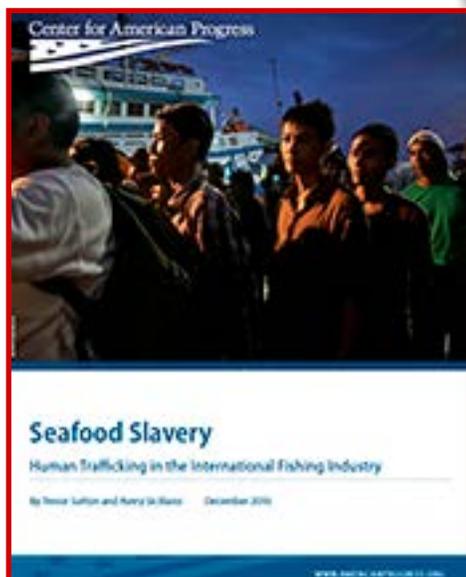
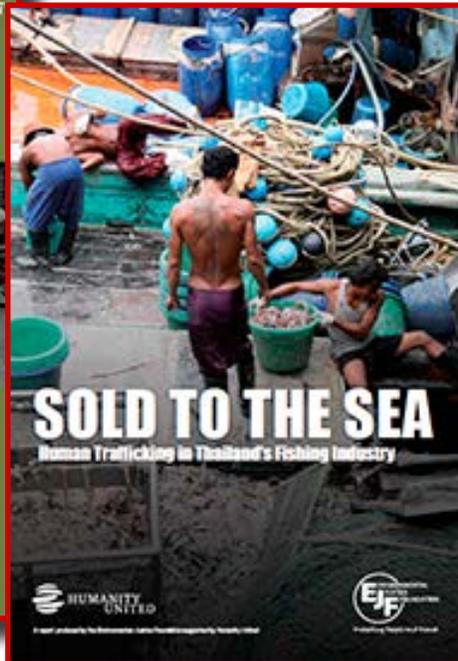
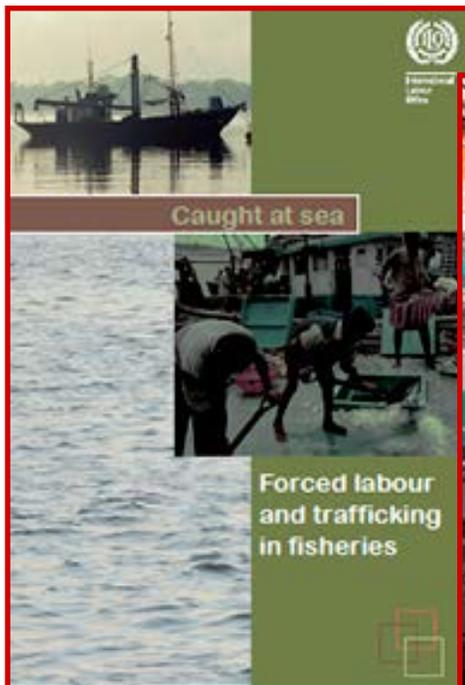
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_220596.pdf)





Awareness

Reports Exposing Slavery at Sea



Access Links
(top left to bottom right):

- Caught at Sea: 2013**
http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_214472/lang-en/index.htm
- Sold to the Sea: 2013**
<https://ejfoundation.org/reports/sold-to-the-sea-human-trafficking-in-thailands-fishing-industry>
- Employment Practices: 2014**
http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_220596/lang-en/index.htm
- Seafood Slavery: 2016**
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2016/12/15/295088/seafood-slavery/>
- Made in Taiwan: 2016**
<https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/made-in-taiwan-government-failure-and-illegal-abusive-and-criminal-fisheries/>



Awareness

Unlawful Fishing in Taiwan Waters

The Taiwanese fleet of longline tuna vessels is the largest in the world, supplying the world's largest seafood companies. But the industry has been fraught with illegal activities, both in fishing and labor practices. Nudged into action by a threatened ban on exports to the European Union, the Taiwanese government has been trying to address the issue of illegal fishing.

A year-long Greenpeace investigation found that Taiwan's tuna fishing industry is 'out of control' – citing evidence for persistent shark finning, illegal tuna fishing, and forced labor and human rights abuses at sea. But more importantly, the investigative report criticizes the Taiwanese government, stating that Taiwan *"knows these issues exist, [but] does little to address them despite domestic and international requirements."*

In October 2015, the European Union slapped Taiwan with a 'yellow card' for not taking sufficient measures to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, after holding a dialogue with Taiwan on the issue since 2012. In particular, it pointed to Taiwan's inadequate monitoring, control, and surveillance of long-distance fleets. The EU has been cracking down on illegal fishing since 2010. According to the EU, at least 15% of world catches were caught illegally, amounting to 10 billion euros (\$11.3 billion) per year.

Taiwan has been struggling to combat IUU fishing and implement effective regulation following international pressure on its longline tuna fleet in the 2000s. But monitoring and vessel licensing remained less stringent and effective on smaller, often family-run, longline vessels. While Taiwan was the

first in Asia to fully ban shark finning, not much has changed on the high seas due to ineffective enforcement and an inadequate deterrent of investigations and penalties. According to the Greenpeace report, the investigation in just one port, identified at least 16 illegal shark-finning cases in three months.

Over the course of the investigation, Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior caught a Taiwanese long-distance vessel in September 2015, the Sheun De Ching No. 888, illegally fishing for tuna. Upon boarding the vessel, Greenpeace discovered a load of shark fins that were detached from the shark's bodies (which presumably were thrown back into sea). Log books were window-dressed to misrepresent the vessel's catch. The Sheun De Ching No. 888 was only *"the tip of the iceberg,"* said Renee Chou, communication officer for Greenpeace's Taiwan office. *"It goes to show how difficult it is to control fishing in the High Seas."*

But that was not all. Like in the high-profile uncovering of the Thai fishing industry in 2014, the Greenpeace report documented that human rights abuses, forced labor, and human trafficking are equally existent in the Taiwanese longline fishing fleet. *"Thailand is unique in terms of the architectural depth and scale of the abuse where the entire fishing fleet was effectively being staffed by migrant labor, and hence the abuses were much more prevalent,"* says Steve Trent, executive director of the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF).

But the Taiwanese fishing industry is fraught with abuse as well. *"They would beat everyone. They did not feed us regularly. They would pull you and hit you. With a bicycle pump*

until your head will bleed," states an account of an interview with a fisherman in the Greenpeace report. A lot of fishermen worked up to 22 hours each day, and would see little to nothing of the money they worked so hard for, the report indicated.

Taiwan has entered, or talked of entering, into Memoranda of Understanding with other countries in the region, such as Thailand, Japan, and the Philippines. Thailand's Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister said the agreement focuses on tuna fishing, where both countries will share information on fishing licenses, boat registration, and landfalls.

Regional cooperation would not only enhance effective enforcement, it would also address some of the tensions caused by fishing incidents. Indonesia, which has taken a tough and violent stance to combat IUU fishing, fired at a Taiwanese vessel suspected of illegally fishing for tuna within Indonesia's waters.

According to the *Environmental Justice Foundation* (EJF), regional cooperation is only as good as its weakest spot, as fishermen may move to different jurisdictions. The key to successful enforcement is to implement a digitized system where certificates and licenses are kept in a database so they can easily be shared and mined for data, as well as requiring vessels to digitize their log books and adopt robust and standardized vessel monitoring systems. *"Five to ten years ago it would be disproportionate to require these technologies to be installed, but now they cost only a few hundred dollars,"* EJF indicated. *"Bear in mind*



Awareness

Taiwan *cont. from pg. 5*

their catch is often worth millions of dollars.”

Effective enforcement is perhaps a bigger problem in Taiwan than its legal framework. After the discovery of the Sheun De Ching No. 888’s illegal fishing activities, the Fisheries Agency merely imposed a license suspension of 12 months and a fine of \$4,623 – insufficient to deter illegal fishing, Greenpeace argued. It “leaves the world with the impression that in Taiwanese fisheries, crime pays.”

There are a few very basic measures that would transform the reputation and the practical responses of the abuse that is taking place at sea, according to Greenpeace. “It is not rocket science, but what often lacks is political will.”

The IUU fishing and labor rights abuses go hand-in-hand, and cracking down on the former will have a positive effect on the latter.

The EU’s *yellow-carding* system may ultimately be effective in the Pacific region – as it forces countries to make strides in improving both the legal framework and their monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. It “is Europe at its best,” according to Greenpeace. The EU is “exporting best practice, showing leadership on a global scale; it is leveraging the power of the world’s largest market place to deliver sustainability and indeed improve human rights abuses.”

If Taiwan wants to keep one of their biggest export markets open, it is in their interest to comply with EU regulations and stay within the lines of the new more stringent laws.

(<https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/taiwans-illegal-fishing-is-out-of-control/>)

Seafood Slavery ‘Risk Tool’

The *Seafood Slavery Risk Tool* (*Risk Tool*), launched in June 2017, is a web based risk rating information resource primarily for those involved in the seafood industry. The tool aims to help businesses identify fisheries at high risk of human trafficking, forced labor, and hazardous child labor and encourages them to engage directly with suppliers to correct abuses. The tool has been jointly developed by *Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program*, *Liberty Asia*, and the *Sustainable Fisheries Partnership*, and rates fisheries as critical, high, moderate, or low risk, giving businesses insights into the possibility of human rights abuses in their supply chains.

The *Risk Tool* was developed to give the seafood/financial industries credible information about the likelihood that forced labor, human trafficking, or hazardous child labor are occurring on fishing boats in a specific fishery.

The *Risk Tool* is for information purposes only and should not be construed as providing business, commercial or investment advice or guidance. Users should not rely on the information and should seek separate advice and conduct their own due diligence.

About the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program

The mission of the nonprofit Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the ocean. The *Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program* empowers consumers and businesses to choose seafood that’s fished or farmed using responsible methods that protect sea life and habitats, now and for future generations. *Seafood Watch*’s widely recognized and respected science-based recommendations, indicating which seafood items are *Best Choices* or *Good Alternatives*, and which ones to *Avoid*, are available in its free app and at seafoodwatch.org.

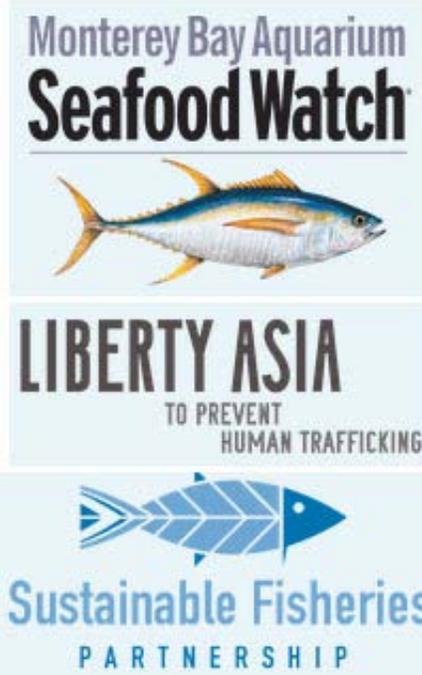
About Liberty Asia

Liberty Asia is a global organization that aims to prevent human trafficking through legal advocacy, technological interventions,

and strategic collaborations with NGOs, corporations, and financial institutions in Southeast Asia. Liberty Asia facilitates the sharing of information, expertise, and best practices with anti-trafficking stakeholders through online platforms; gathers and channels intelligence on slavery to the private sector; champions legal reform and improves the understanding of victim identification, protection, and procedures; builds a stable communications backbone for Asia hotlines to scale-up their capacity to support more victims and returnees; and provides slavery education and training to enact change in all sectors of society. Information at: www.libertyasia.org/

About the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

Founded in 2006, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to rebuilding depleted fish stocks and reducing the environmental and social impacts of fishing and fish farming worldwide by engaging stakeholders (communities, NGOs, government, etc.) and seafood businesses in every part of the supply chain. The organization works to improve fisheries through fishery improvement projects (FIPs) and aquaculture improvement projects (AIPs), which are multi-stakeholder bodies that seek to advance the sustainability of fishing and fish farming operations. SFP also supports Supply Chain Roundtables that allow seafood suppliers to work in a pre-competitive environment to promote improvement throughout the supply chain. Information at: www.sustainablefish.org





Advocacy

Consumer Power

In a recent *International Labour Organization* (ILO) report, it specifically mentions the presence and risks of slavery in the garment, medical, electronics, and seafood supply chains. The most common way we encounter slavery is through the companies from whom we buy products.

Hence, one of the most powerful ways to help end slavery and exploitation is through advocacy – calling on companies to do all they can to ensure that workers in their supply chain are protected, and calling on governments to hold those companies accountable.

The problem can feel insurmountable. But advocates remain committed to working towards a world free from slavery and exploitation.

Consumers Advocate for Fishers

According to CCOAHT, consumers are not receiving enough information needed to make **moral purchasing decisions**.

Therefore the *Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking* (CCOAHT) is asking seafood producers, distributors and seafood retailers to make public their efforts to fight human trafficking in their product supply chains by labeling their packaged products with supply chain information.

CCOAHT, which is administered by the *Migration and Refugee Services* of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), consists of over 30 national and international Catholic agencies working to eliminate the

plight of trafficked victims. Its pursuit of **ethical consumerism** seeks to echo the Vatican's commitment to free its own supply chains of slave labor.

To support the request for slave-free seafood labels, CCOAHT distributed a survey to its networks, asking consumers if slave-free labeling would affect purchases. Over 2,200 people responded and the results showed that 99% of consumers want companies to take steps to engage in ethical business practices, 98% want their packaged seafood to be labeled, and 97% said labels would influence their purchasing decisions.



“Catholics are becoming increasingly aware of the collective power they possess as consumers to press for positive change in the lives of those who catch our fish. As my CCOAHT colleagues have remarked, ‘we are asking the seafood industry to do better. The companies that do will be supported by consumers’”, said Hilary Chester, Director of Anti-Trafficking at the USCCB.

The consumer survey built upon a 2016 Lenten postcard campaign organized by CCOAHT. Members' networks mailed 15,000 postcards to U.S. seafood retailers, to U.S. seafood retailers, *Starkist* and *COSTCO*, urging them to examine their supply chains and commit to a product free of slave labor. CCOAHT members will highlight consumer survey data in upcoming dialogues with seafood supply chain shareholders.

Taiwan Puts Protections in Place

In January 2017, the *Act for Distant Water Fisheries* took effect amid international pressure on the seafood industry to crack down on trafficking and labor abuses for migrants. The Act specifies new protections for migrant workers, including insurance, health-care, wages, and limited working hours, and requires foreign fishermen to be hired through legitimate brokers.

Among the key features of additional Taiwanese draft bills is the requirement that all vessels install a vessel monitoring system and report back daily on catches, keep a digital log book, and obtain a permit before landing their catch. In addition, penalties for IUU activities were to be substantially increased.

A problem, according to a Greenpeace spokesperson, is that the new legislation may *“motivate fishermen to just register in other countries to avoid the new more stringent laws.”* But the EU is also aware of this danger and Taiwan's Fisheries Agency will have to find a way to prevent this.

What Business Can Do:

1. Does it know where the seafood it purchases is coming from?
2. Does the company have a clear agreement or policy covering human rights standards in place with suppliers and business partners?
3. Has the company conducted a risk assessment in the last year?
4. How will the company further investigate potential high risk seafood purchases from suppliers or business partners?
5. Does the company have a plan for how it will respond to a human rights issue or violation, including a Corrective Action Plan?

If a supplier or business partner is found to be in violation of a human rights agreement, it is important the company stays engaged and works to

Business Action *cont. pg.8*



Action

Business Action

cont. from pg. 7

implement a Corrective Action Plan. If a company immediately walks away, then those human rights violations will continue and possibly be driven further underground. In the event the company identifies human rights violations, it should look at engaging with on-the-ground organizations and stakeholders who can assist with implementing a Corrective Action Plan.

Companies are encouraged to use the *Seafood Slavery Risk Tool* to assist in getting answers to these questions.

Go to:

<http://www.seafoodslaveryrisk.org>

Consumer Action:

Write to Companies

Tell company executives you, as a consumer, are concerned about slavery in fishing supply chains and that you want to know their products are slave-free.

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P.O. Box 308
Mt. Olive, NJ 07828

Chris Lischewski, President and CEO
Bumble Bee Seafoods
P.O. Box 85362
San Diego, CA 92186

Mr. Andrew Choe, President and CEO
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225 North Shore Drive, Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking
Resource Center
1.888.3737.888
Text "BeFree" (233733)

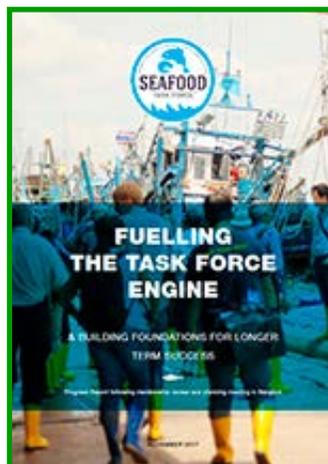
Read About Positive Actions Being Taken to Prevent Slavery at Sea

Fueling the Task Force Engine & Building Foundations for Longer Term Success 2017

<http://www.seafoodtaskforce.global/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Seafood-Task-Force-Multi-Stakeholder-Report-Nov-2017.pdf>

Fishers First - Good Practices to End Labour Exploitation at Sea 2016

http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_515365/lang--en/index.htm



Informative Web Sites: (Each contains information related to human trafficking)

Seafood from Slaves: (2016 Pulitzer prize-winning investigative report by the Associated Press)

<https://www.ap.org/explore/seafood-from-slaves/>

Sea Food Watch

<http://www.seafoodwatch.org/>

Apostleship of the Sea
<http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/>

USCCB

www.usccb.org/stopslavery

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

<http://www.msc.org>

Friend of the Sea

<http://www.friendofthesea.org>

Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS)

<http://www.rfs.seafish.org>

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

<http://www.sustainablefish.org>

Ecofish

<http://www.ecofish.com>

Fair-fish

<http://www.fair-fish.ch>

FishWise

<http://www.fishwise.org>

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among USCSAHT members, organizations and concerned persons, collaborating to eliminate all forms of human trafficking.

To access back issues, go to:
<http://www.stopenslavement.org/past-issues-chronological.html>
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