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Seafish Insight: Fishing references by country in 2020 TIP report

Source: 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report

August 2020

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Overall highlights

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is the U.S. Government’s principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.

The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report 2020 was published on 25 June 2020. <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>

This year marks a major milestone. This is the 20th anniversary of the TIP report. Twenty years ago, the United States Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) mandating this report.

For the last 20 years, the TIP report has continuously documented the growing movement against human trafficking and provided a roadmap for governments to address the crime, laying out realistic and actionable policy priorities and insisting on continuous improvement. It has tracked the seriousness with which governments take this issue, not just in verbal commitments but also in concrete action. For two decades, the TIP Report has kept a spotlight focused on a crime many may have preferred to ignore. It is a standard-bearer for the principles enshrined in the TVPA and the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol (Palermo Protocol - an international framework to tackle trafficking, established in 2000).

Seafish Insight:

A quick analysis of the 2020 TIP report shows:

- 190 countries are mentioned in the TIP report.
- Each country is ranked according to a number of criteria (see description on page 5). The narrative for each country looks at prosecution, protection and prevention and describes how a government has or has not addressed the relevant TVPA minimum standards during the reporting period.
 - Tier 1 – 34 countries
 - Tier 2 – 89 countries
 - Tier 2 Watch List - 45 countries
 - Tier 3 – 19 countries
 - Special case – 3 countries
- Fish or fishing is mentioned in association with forced labour in 50 of the 190 countries in 2020 (49 countries in 2017 – 2019, 51 in 2016).
- Countries that have been singled out specifically with regards to fishing include Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Korea (Republic of), Taiwan and Thailand.

This is an analysis of the fishing references in the 2020 Trafficking in Persons report. It is not necessarily the view of Seafish. It is an information service provided by Seafish for industry and key stakeholders.

About the TIP rankings

The TIP report is released annually by the U.S. Department of State, and offers a summary of the laws and enforcement efforts of various countries with respect to human trafficking. Specifically, it ranks countries based on a '3P paradigm' of prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and preventing crime. Scoring on these elements is then collated to give each country a ranking:

- **Tier 1:** Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.
- **Tier 2:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
- **Tier 2 Watch List:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:
 - a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
 - b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials;
 - c) or the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.
- **Tier 3:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. No tier ranking is permanent. Every country, including the United States, can do more. All countries must maintain and continually increase efforts to combat trafficking.
- Countries on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years may be downgraded to Tier 3 automatically if no improvements are demonstrated. This could result in restrictions on non-humanitarian and non-trade-related foreign assistance from the U.S., at the discretion of the President.

Fishing references by country (alphabetical and verbatim)

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Bangladesh	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffickers force adults and children to labour in the shrimp and fish processing industries, aluminium and garment factories, brick kilns, dry fish production, • Rohingya girls and boys are recruited from camps and forced to labour as shop hands, fishermen, rickshaw pullers, and domestic workers. Some Bangladeshi fishermen use debt-based coercion to exploit Rohingya men if they place their shelter on the fishermen's land. Some Rohingya men who fled to Bangladesh from Burma decades ago have been trapped in forced labour through debt-based coercion to Bangladeshi fishermen for decades.
Burma	Tier 3 	Same as 2019 and 2018, downgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Burma does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; therefore Burma remained on Tier 3. Media reports indicate the government increased attention to forced labour in the fishing industry following a highly publicised case in the Ayeyarwady region in late 2019; police arrested and charged 19 individuals in connection with the case, and their prosecutions were pending at the end of the reporting period. • In previous years, Burmese fishermen had no formal channels through which to seek employment in the Thai fishing industry, and instead relied exclusively on unregulated brokerage networks that exacerbated their indebtedness and vulnerability to coercion at sea. To address this issue, Burma signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Thailand during the reporting period to facilitate labour recruitment into the Thai fishing sector through a formalized, government-to-government hiring process. However, the MOU did not standardise or clarify the two countries' disparate laws and policies on eligible recruitment fees and minimum wages, constraining meaningful implementation. Further, most vessel owners were unaware of the new hiring system and continued to staff their crew through unregulated Thai and Burmese intermediaries charging high recruitment fees that continued to place Burmese fishermen at risk of debt-based coercion into forced labour. Some Burmese recruitment agencies avoided the hiring system altogether due to distrust of labour conditions in the Thai fishing sector and doubts concerning the capacity of the Thai authorities to enforce the MOU. • During the reporting period, the government cooperated with counterpart agencies in Cambodia and Laos to strategise and exchange views on addressing broader forced labour among migrant workers in Thailand. The government also partnered with an international organization to conduct an interagency training on fisheries crime focusing on corruption, document fraud, and other crimes that could be generative of

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
			<p>or connected to forced labour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffickers force men to work domestically and abroad in fishing, manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, and construction. • NGOs continue to report instances of Burmese males transiting Thailand en route to Indonesia and Malaysia, where traffickers subject them to forced labour, primarily in fishing and other labour intensive industries. Recruitment agencies in Burma and other Southeast Asian countries lure fishermen with promises of high wages, charge fees and curtailment deposits to assign them fake identity and labour permit documents, and then send them to fish long hours in remote waters on vessels operating under complex multinational flagging and ownership arrangements. • Senior crew aboard vessels in the Thai and Taiwan fishing fleets subject some Burmese men to forced labour through debt-based coercion, passport confiscation, contract switching, wage garnishing and withholding, threats of physical or financial harm, or fraudulent recruitment; they also subject some to physical abuse and force them to remain aboard vessels in international waters for years at a time without coming ashore. Informal brokers also lure Burmese men onto offshore fishing and shrimping rafts in Burmese waters, where traffickers confine and physically abuse them to retain their labour for months at a time. There are some reports of boys subjected to forced labour in Burma's fishing industry as well.
Burundi	Tier 3 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both economic necessity and coercion push children and young adults into labour, including domestic service, forced labour on plantations or small farms throughout Burundi, in gold mines in several provinces around the country, in informal commerce in the streets of larger cities, in charcoal production, and in the fishing industry.....NGOs report that fishermen exploit some boys in the Lake Tanganyika fisheries in forced labour.
Cambodia	Tier 2 Watch List 	Same as 2019, downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodian adults and children migrate to other countries within the region and increasingly to the Middle East for work; traffickers force many to work on fishing vessels. • Traffickers continue to recruit significant numbers of Cambodian men and boys in Thailand to work on fishing boats and exploit them in forced labour on Thai-owned and -operated vessels in international waters. Cambodian victims escaping from their traffickers have been identified in Malaysia, Indonesia, Mauritius, Fiji, Senegal, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea. Cambodian men working on Thai-owned and -operated fishing vessels report deceptive recruitment tactics, severe physical abuse, underpayment or non-payment of wages, restricted access to medical care, and confinement at sea for years at a time without permission to come ashore.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although authorities reportedly increased overall attention to the fishing industry during the reporting period, service provider NGOs noted an acute lack of reintegration services and cultural stigma surrounding experience of forced labour at sea catalysed re-trafficking among fishermen returning home after escaping abuses.
Cameroon	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, but Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal elements force Cameroonian children to labour in artisanal gold mining, gravel quarries, fishing, animal breeding, and agriculture (on onion, cotton, tea, and cocoa plantations), as well as in urban transportation assisting bus drivers and in construction as errand boys, labourers, or night watchmen
Chad	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019 but Tier 2 Watch List in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Lake Chad region, community members exploit some children in catching, smoking, and selling fish
China PRC (People's Republic of China)	Tier 3 	Same as 2019, no mention of fishing in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observers reported insufficient oversight of the PRC's extensive fishing industry continued to leave PRC national and foreign seafarers at high risk of forced labour. African and Asian men reportedly experience conditions indicative of forced labour aboard Chinese-flagged fishing vessels operating in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans; men from other regions may be in forced labour aboard these vessels as well. Traffickers also subject undocumented PRC national seafarers to forced labour on board fishing vessels in Taiwan's Distant Water Fleet.
Comoros	Tier 3 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children on Anjouan, some of whom were abandoned by parents who left to seek economic opportunities in other countries, are vulnerable to forced labour, mostly in domestic service, roadside and market vending, baking, fishing, and agriculture
Congo	Removed from the list.		
Ecuador	Tier 2 	Same as 2018 and 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit Ecuadorian men, women, and children in sex trafficking and forced labour within the country, including in domestic service, begging, banana and palm plantations, floriculture, shrimp farming, fishing, sweatshops, street vending, mining, and other areas of the informal economy.
Fiji	Tier 2 Watch	Same as 2018 and 2019, downgraded from Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family members, taxi drivers, foreign tourists, businessmen, crew on foreign fishing vessels, and other traffickers have allegedly exploited victims from Thailand and

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
	List 	in 2016 and 2017	<p>China, as well as Fijian women and children, in sex trafficking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment agencies operating in victims' home countries, vessel owners, and other crew subject migrant fisherman from Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia, in forced labour on Fijian flagged fishing vessels or foreign flagged fishing vessels (mainly China- and Taiwan-flagged) transiting Fijian ports and waters. Victims of forced labour experience threats of violence, passport confiscation, debt-based coercion, excessive working hours, and abusive living and working conditions.
Gabon	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2019 and Tier 3 in 2018. Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers...force boys to work as street vendors, mechanics, or in microbus transportation assistants, and as labourers in the fishing sector.
Ghana	Tier 2 	Same as 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Ghana, and traffickers exploit victims from Ghana abroad. Traffickers subject Ghanaian boys and girls to forced labour within the country in inland and coastal fishing, domestic service, street hawking, begging, portering, artisanal gold mining, quarrying, herding, and agriculture, including cocoa, which represents one-quarter of the child labour in Ghana. Donor-funded research focused on the fishing industry on Lake Volta indicated that more than half of the children working on and around the lake were born in other communities and that many of these children are victims of forced labour, not allowed to attend school, given inadequate housing and clothing, and controlled by fishermen through intimidation, violence, and limited access to food. Girls perform work on shore such as cooking, cleaning fish, and preparing fish for market. A study of the prevalence of child trafficking in selected communities in the Volta and Central Regions indicated that traffickers had subjected children from nearly one-third of the 1,621 households surveyed to forced labour, primarily in inland fishing and forced labour in domestic work
Guinea	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 3 in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit boys in forced labour in begging, street vending and shoe shining, mining for gold and diamond, in herding, fishing, and agriculture, including farming and on coffee, cashew, and cocoa plantations.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Haiti	Tier 2 	Same as 2019, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017 and 2018, and Tier 3 in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haitian children working in construction, agriculture, fisheries, domestic work, begging, and street vending in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
Honduras	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children, including from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, particularly Miskito boys, are at risk for forced labour in the fishing, mining, construction and hospitality industries
India	Removed from the list.		
Indonesia	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society contacts reported protections were particularly lacking for male victims of forced labour in the fishing industry, in part due to poor coordination and lack of delineated roles and responsibilities among Indonesia's diffuse interagency anti-trafficking infrastructure. A general lack of adequate rehabilitative and re-integrative care, coupled with low awareness among village and local leaders, increased many victims' risk of re-trafficking, particularly among fishermen returning to their communities after experiencing forced labour at sea. The vast majority of fishermen recruitment agencies in the country were unlicensed, enabling authorities to claim plausible deniability of ongoing practices contributing to unlawful debt bondage among many migrant seafarers. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries reportedly continued to implement its regulations on human rights certification in the fisheries, including the requirement that Indonesian fishery businesses comply with international human rights standards to obtain a permit for fish capture. NGOs commented the government did not effectively implement these regulations. Underscoring NGO claims of insufficient oversight, central government records appeared to drastically underreport the number of Indonesians working in the global fishing industry when compared against analogous records maintained by another key destination country's authorities. Civil society groups noted many Indonesian and migrant fishermen were unaware of their rights and responsibilities and unprepared for the work in the absence of standardized, employer-paid pre-departure and post-arrival orientation and training. During the reporting year, the MFA negotiated with the central authorities of Mauritius, South Korea, and Taiwan to expand its pilot program to assist Indonesians working on foreign fishing vessels through dedicated centers to collect data and provide services

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
			<p>to fishermen in distress; for the second consecutive reporting period, no new centres were established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior vessel crew on board Chinese, Korean, Vanuatuan, Taiwan, Thai, Malaysian, and Philippines-flagged and/or owned fishing vessels operating in Indonesian, Thai, Sri Lankan, Mauritian, and Indian waters subject Indonesian fishermen to forced labour. Dozens of recruitment agencies in Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand lure fishermen with promises of high wages, charge fees and curtailment deposits to assign them fake identity and labour permit documents, and then send them to fish long hours in waters on vessels operating under complex multinational flagging and ownership arrangements. Some fishermen are unaware their recruitment agencies continue to withhold or withdraw funds from their salary for years. Crew on board these vessels have reported experiencing low or unpaid salaries and such coercive tactics as contract discrepancies, document retention, restricted communication, poor living and working conditions, threats of physical violence, and severe physical and sexual abuse. Boat captains and crews prohibit fishermen from leaving their vessels and reporting these abuses through threats of exposing their fake identities to the authorities, threats of blacklisting them from future fishing employment, and, in previous years, by detaining them on land in makeshift prisons. Forced to sail longer distances to adjust to dwindling fish stocks, some crews remain at sea for months or even years without returning to shore, compounding their invisibility and preserving abusive senior crews' impunity. • Most Indonesian fishermen work aboard vessels operating in Taiwan's highly vulnerable Distant Water Fleet; many are also fishing in Korea's distant water fleets. More than 7,000 Indonesian fishermen per year sign in and out of foreign vessels at the port in Cape Town, South Africa, and reportedly facing dire working conditions, particularly on vessels owned by citizens of Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. Traffickers also subject fishermen from other parts of Asia to forced labour on board fishing vessels in Indonesian waters; according to one recent study, these vessels account for nearly half of all migrant fishermen trafficked from Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. In Indonesian waters and elsewhere, some senior vessel crew force fishermen to engage in illegal fishing, poaching, smuggling, and illegal entry into national territories, making them vulnerable to criminalization.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Ireland	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, and Tier 1 in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Ireland does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. These efforts included increasing prosecutions and funding to NGOs for victim assistance.the amended working scheme for sea fishers increased their vulnerability to trafficking. Therefore Ireland was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List. • Although the national police submitted one notable labour trafficking investigation involving 21 sea fishers, 20 of whom received victim support services for trafficking victims from the government during the reporting period, to ODPP in 2019, ODPP informed victims that they had found no evidence of trafficking and would not prosecute. • During the reporting period and following a legal settlement with an NGO, the government amended its atypical working scheme for sea fishers to reduce their vulnerability to labour trafficking. • The government identified zero trafficking victims in the fishing industry for 2019, compared to 23 victims in 2018. NGOs asserted that foreign national sea fishers outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) were even more at risk because the government no longer identified victims; advised victims to adjust their residency status, as they no longer qualified for residence permits as trafficking victims; and failed to enforce the amended rules. The government did not report the number of victims repatriated, compared to 15 in 2018. Border police conducted interviews with three sea fishers and 115 children at airports but did not identify any trafficking victims. • Though inspectors reported conducting more than 1,500 inspections of at least 9,000 workers, including 39 joint inspections with the police, the government did not report identifying any trafficking victims as part of these inspections in 2019, or in 2018, or 2017. Civil society continued to raise concerns regarding the government's ongoing, chronic deficiencies providing assistance and protection to trafficking victims. • Though inspectors reported conducting more than 1,500 inspections of at least 9,000 workers, including 39 joint inspections with the police, the government did not report identifying any trafficking victims as part of these inspections in 2019, or in 2018, or 2017. Civil society continued to raise concerns regarding the government's ongoing, chronic deficiencies providing assistance and protection to trafficking victims.
Jamaica	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffickers exploit foreign nationals, including from South and East Asia, in forced labour in Jamaica and aboard foreign-flagged fishing vessels operating in Jamaican waters.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Japan	Tier 2 	Downgraded from Tier 1 in 2018 and 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of forced labour occur within the TITP, a government-run program originally designed to foster basic technical skills among foreign workers that has effectively become a guest-worker program. TITP participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, the Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam pay sending organizations in their home countries thousands of dollars in excessive worker-paid fees, deposits, or vague “commissions”— despite bilateral agreements between sending countries and Japan aimed at curbing the practice—to secure jobs in fishing, food processing, shellfish cultivation, ship building, construction, textile production, and manufacturing of electronic components, automobiles, and other large machinery.
Kenya	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the country, traffickers exploit children through forced labour in domestic service, agriculture, fishing, cattle herding, street vending, and begging.
Korea (Republic of)	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period; therefore South Korea remained on Tier 1. These efforts included investigating one case of labour trafficking on a fishing vessel....holding an interagency meeting to discuss labour trafficking on fishing vessels • The Korean Coast Guard (KCG) investigated one case involving labour trafficking in the fishing industry. A local NGO reported government efforts to investigate trafficking in the fishing industry were ineffective due to methods used to interview workers, which often involved preannounced visits that were also often conducted in locations such as the offices of labour unions where fishermen were not comfortable speaking openly. • The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) continued to operate a hotline for foreign crew members on South Korean fishing vessels. Nonetheless, observers reported interpreters were sometimes not available when migrants called government hotlines, and officials reported the MOF hotline had not received a call in two years. During the reporting period MOF issued regulations that mandated deep-sea fishing vessels to provide internet access to crew members by 2022 in order to receive financial support from the government. • MOF and MOEL conducted inspections of fishing vessels; MOF reported its inspections were mainly conducted with companies that owned vessels and inspectors rarely boarded vessels to speak with workers. The lack of adequate enforcement of the Seafarers Law’s prohibition of recruitment fees allowed recruiters to charge high fees that perpetuated debt bondage among migrant fishermen. • To increase oversight of recruitment agencies, the MOF created a requirement in

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
			<p>2019 that agencies submit expenses incurred during their recruitment of migrant fishermen; however, NGOs expressed concern that the government did not adequately investigate recruitment agencies. NGOs reported the government's restrictions on the ability of migrant workers employed under EPS to change employers increased their vulnerability to exploitation. The government asserted it would permit workers who report exploitation or labour violations to MOEL to change employers while MOEL investigated their claims. According to NGOs, however, MOEL reportedly did not adequately investigate workers' claims and instead workers spent months attempting to prove their exploitation to MOEL before receiving permission to change their place of employment. In addition, a local NGO noted that employers who exploited their workers often only received small fines or suspended sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 400,000 migrant workers, many employed under the government's Employment Permit System, work in fishing, agriculture, livestock, restaurants, and manufacturing; some of these workers face conditions indicative of forced labour. Boat owners, captains, and job brokers exploit foreign workers on fishing vessels registered and operated by South Koreans. South Korea is a transit point for Southeast Asian fishermen subjected to forced labour on fishing ships bound for Fiji and other ports in the Pacific. Foreign fishermen aboard small fishing vessels operating beyond the purview of the government or owners' cooperatives face exploitation, including forced labour, often through debt-based coercion.
Laos	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List 2019 and Tier 3 in 2018. Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit Lao men and boys in forced labour in Thailand's fishing, construction, and agricultural industries.
Madagascar	Tier 2 	Same as 2019, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017/2018, Tier 2 in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit Malagasy children, mostly from rural and coastal regions, and from impoverished families in urban areas, in child sex trafficking, and forced labour in domestic service, mining, fishing, and agriculture across the country.
Malawi	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2019. Tier 2 in 2016 – 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit children in forced labour in begging, small businesses, and potentially in the fishing industry.
Maldives	Tier 2 Watch List 	Same as 2019 - no fishing mentions in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers may have targeted migrant workers on fishing and cargo boats in Maldivian for forced labour.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Marshall Islands	Tier 2 Watch List 	Same as 2019, downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018, Tier 3 in 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government continued to take measures to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of vulnerable populations by prohibiting unauthorized visitors on board licensed foreign fishing vessels docked in Majuro and issuing immigration day passes for most crew members that mandate they return to their ship by the evening. Hotel and bar staff and family members recruit and transport women and girls and exploit them in sex trafficking with foreign construction workers and crew members of foreign fishing and transshipping vessels that dock in Majuro. Observers report commercial sexual activity involving foreign fishermen has increasingly moved from fishing vessels to local bars and hotels. Traffickers also exploit some of these foreign fishermen in conditions indicative of forced labour on ships in Marshallese waters. Traffickers compel foreign women, most of whom are long-term residents of RMI, into commercial sex in establishments frequented by crew members of Chinese and other foreign fishing vessels.
Mauritania	Tier 2 Watch List 	Upgraded from Tier 3 2017 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children of Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian descent working in the fisheries sector are vulnerable to forced labour.
Micronesia	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex traffickers exploit Micronesian women and girls through commercial sex with the crew members of docked Asian fishing vessels and on vessels in Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) territorial waters, or with foreign construction workers. Foreign migrants from Southeast Asian countries report working in conditions indicative of human trafficking on Asian fishing vessels in FSM or its territorial waters.
Mongolia	Tier 2 	Same as 2019, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese workers employed in Mongolia are vulnerable to trafficking as contract labourers in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, wholesale and retail trade, automobile maintenance, and mining.
Namibia	Tier 1 	Upgraded from Tier 2 2016 – 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers may subject children from less affluent neighbouring countries to sex trafficking and forced labour, including in street vending in Windhoek and other cities as well as in the fishing sector.
New Zealand	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign workers aboard foreign-flagged fishing vessels in New Zealand waters are at risk of forced labour.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Pakistan	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffickers also force men, women, and children to work to pay off exaggerated debts in other sectors in Sindh and Punjab and in Balochistan and KP in agriculture and brick kilns and, to a lesser extent, in fisheries, mining, and textile-, bangle-, and carpet making.
Palua	Tier 2 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign workers on fishing boats in Palauan waters also experience conditions indicative of human trafficking.
Papua New Guinea	Tier 3 	Same as 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2017, Tier 3 in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials did not seize any foreign vessels for trafficking or illegal fishing for the third consecutive year, despite reported prevalence of the crime. • Observers reported a law allowing officials to apprehend foreign fishermen for desertion in port may have dissuaded some victims of forced labour from escaping and reporting their abuses. • Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Malaysian, Vietnamese, and local men and boys seeking work on fishing vessels go into debt to pay recruitment fees, which vessel owners and senior crew leverage to compel them to continue working indefinitely through debt bondage in Papua New Guinea's exclusive economic zone and in other maritime territories, particularly in tuna fishing. • These fishermen may face little to no pay, contract switching, wage garnishing or withholding, harsh working and living conditions, restricted communication, and threats of physical violence as coercive tactics to retain their labour. Often with direct government support, companies reportedly compel these workers to carry out illegal logging and fishing activities, making them vulnerable to arrest.
Philippines	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 -2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An estimated 10 million Filipinos work outside the Philippines in nearly 170 countries, approximately three percent of whom work without a contract. The government processes approximately 2.3 million new or renewed contracts for Filipinos to work overseas each year. • A significant number of Filipino migrant workers become victims of sex trafficking or labour trafficking in numerous industries, including industrial fishing, shipping, construction, manufacturing, education, home health care, and agriculture, as well as in domestic work, janitorial service, and other hospitality-related jobs, particularly in the Middle East and Asia, but also in all other regions.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Seychelles	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 2 in 2017, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 19,000 migrant workers - including individuals from Bangladesh, India, China, Kenya, Madagascar, and other countries in South Asia - make up approximately 20 percent of the working population in the Seychelles and are primarily employed in fishing, farming, and construction; credible reports indicate traffickers subject migrant workers to forced labour in these sectors. NGOs report traffickers exploit migrant workers aboard foreign-flagged fishing vessels in Seychelles' territorial waters and ports to abuses indicative of forced labour, including non-payment of wages and physical abuse.
Sierra Leone	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit victims in fishing and agriculture, and sex trafficking or forced labour through customary practices, such as forced marriages.
Singapore	Tier 1 	Upgraded from Tier 2 in 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singapore law did not prescribe a minimum wage. Under the Employment Act, wages were negotiated and outlined in individual contracts of service. Requirements were less detailed for foreign domestic workers and fishing crews employed locally, who were covered under the EFMA, and for whom employers were legally required to provide a document containing employment terms such as monthly salary, number of rest days, and agency fees. Some fishing vessel captains of long-haul boats that transit or dock at Singaporean ports use physical abuse to force men to perform labour.
Solomon Islands	Tier 2 	Same as 2017 - 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour traffickers exploit men from Indonesia and Malaysia in the logging, fishing, and mining industries. Fishermen from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, North Korea, and Fiji have reported situations indicative of labour trafficking, including non-payment of wages, severe living conditions, violence, and limited food supply, on Taiwan-flagged fishing vessels in the Solomon Islands' territorial waters and ports. Some official corruption – especially in relation to facilitating irregular migration and involvement in the fishing and forestry sectors - may enable trafficking.
South Africa	Tier 2 	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Employment & Labor (DOEL) instituted mandatory trafficking training for all new labour inspectors, but the government did not comprehensively monitor or investigate forced child labour or the labour trafficking of adults in the agricultural, mining, construction, and fishing sectors. Traffickers exploit foreign male victims aboard fishing vessels in South Africa's territorial waters; NGOs estimated 10 to 15 victims of labour trafficking disembark each month in Cape Town.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2020)	Previous	
Suriname	Tier 2 	Same as 2019, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017 and 2018, Tier 3 in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult and child migrant workers in agriculture, retail shops, construction, and on fishing boats off Suriname's coast are at risk of trafficking.
Taiwan	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient staffing and inspection protocols continued to impede efforts to combat forced labour on Taiwan-flagged and -owned fishing vessels in the highly vulnerable Distant Water Fleet (DWF). • In December, a Kaohsiung court concluded prosecutions initiated in 2017 against 19 individuals for allegedly subjecting over 80 foreign fishermen to forced labour; seven of the defendants were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 to 18 months. • Labour rights groups alleged some low-level corruption among local officials impeded action against forced labour in the fishing industry. Authorities did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of officials complicit in human trafficking offenses. • The Fisheries Agency (FA) reported conducting random inspections on 198 fishing vessels at domestic ports, foreign ports, and for the second consecutive year, on the high seas (139 in 2018; unreported in 2017). Inspectors uncovered 88 violations relating to contract issues, excessive overtime, and wage discrepancies (120 in 2018); authorities referred six of these vessels to prosecutors for investigation into possible violations of the Human Trafficking Prevention Act (three in 2018). Despite some improvements, civil society groups continued to decry systemic shortcomings in Taiwan's maritime anti-trafficking law enforcement, exacerbated by DWF ships' ability to operate without using standard international registration systems and by the absence of a single electronic database containing vessel names, licenses, crew manifests, and authorized areas of operation. Division of responsibility for foreign fishermen between the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and the FA continued to hinder prosecution of maritime forced labour. • According to judicial officials, bureaucratic lags generated by complicated reporting hierarchies also impeded timely law enforcement response in maritime cases, allowing some alleged perpetrators to flee long before the competent authorities could begin formal investigations. In an effort to mitigate these delays, Taiwan's interagency anti-trafficking task force worked with the FA to produce a draft policy granting police the authority to initiate maritime forced labour investigations immediately upon receipt of complaints, rather than following lengthier bureaucratic approval processes. The policy remained in draft at the end of the reporting period

Country	Rating		Commentary
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taiwan’s Labour Standards Act did not protect fishing workers hired overseas, who instead fell under the jurisdiction of the FA. The FA maintained regulations that standardized fishing workers’ employment contracts, set a minimum wage with direct payment options, provided medical and life insurance, unified working hours and rest time, and established access to new complaint mechanisms. However, NGOs remained concerned that the minimum compensation established in these regulations remained below Taiwan’s broader minimum wage and that senior vessel crew continued to delay or withhold salary remittance in violation of contractual pay schedules, leaving some foreign fishing workers vulnerable to debt-based coercion. • Documented and undocumented Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, and Vietnamese fishermen working on Taiwan-owned and –flagged fishing vessels experience non- or under-payment of wages, long working hours, physical abuse, lack of food or medical care, denial of sleep and substandard safety equipment, and poor living conditions while indebted to complex, multinational brokerage networks. Migrant fishermen have reported senior crew members employ such coercive tactics as threats of physical violence, beatings, withholding of food and water, retention of identity documents, wage deductions, and non-contractual compulsory sharing of vessel operational costs to retain their labour. These abuses are particularly prevalent in Taiwan’s DWF, comprising approximately 1,400 Taiwan-owned and -flagged fishing vessels operating thousands of miles from Taiwan and without adequate oversight. • Senior crew force migrant workers to fish illegal stock, including threatened, endangered, and protected species, placing them at higher risk of criminal repercussions. Many ships remain at sea for years at a time, selectively disabling their transponders and stopping at “refrigeration mother ships” or remote, uninhabited islands to resupply, transfer victims to other ships, and offload illegally caught fish while avoiding detection by law enforcement. According to FA estimates, approximately 8,000 Filipinos and more than 20,000 Indonesians work onboard DWF vessels. Men and women from Taiwan engaged in telephone scams overseas reportedly present indicators of trafficking.
Tanzania	Tier 2 Watch List 	Same as 2019, downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanzanian fishermen work on fishing vessels with indicators of trafficking. In 2017, an NGO reported 14 Indonesian trafficking victims were identified aboard a Malaysian-flagged fishing vessel, and in 2018, another NGO reported that 12 Tanzanian trafficking victims were identified aboard a Chinese-flagged fishing vessel, both in Tanzanian territorial waters.

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Thailand	Tier 2 	Same as 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 Watch list in 2016 and 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government reported investigating 76 potential cases of labour trafficking—including four cases involving the fishing sector—compared to 43 in 2018. • Recent research reported fewer migrant workers, including those employed in the fishing industry, who were recruited in their home countries paid recruitment fees prior to starting their employment in Thailand. However, many employers and brokers, who bore the upfront costs associated with bringing workers to Thailand, indebted workers to pay these fees through illegal salary deductions, often without workers' knowledge. • The lack of a requirement that employment contracts be written in both Thai and migrant workers' languages, and a lack of clear guidance to measure work and rest hours for workers aboard fishing vessels heightened their risk of trafficking. Employers rarely provided workers a contract to keep or in their language, and research indicated migrant fishermen were less likely to have signed a contract in their own language than in previous years. • In November 2019, the government passed the Fishery Workers Protection Act to increase protections for fishermen, including by requiring health and safety protections, medical care at sea, rest periods, and other protections; however, it was not fully enforced by the end of the reporting period because the government had not approved seven out of 11 subordinate laws. • Labour traffickers exploit Thai and migrant workers in commercial fishing and related industries, the poultry industry, manufacturing, agriculture, domestic work, and street begging. • Vessel owners, brokers, and senior vessel crew traffickers subject Thai, Burmese, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Indonesian men and boys to forced labour on Thai and foreign-owned fishing boats. Some are paid little or irregularly, incur debts from brokers and employers, work as much as 18 to 20 hours per day for seven days a week, and without adequate food, water or medical supplies. Some boat captains threaten, beat, and drug fishermen to work longer. Some trafficking victims in the fishing sector had difficulty returning home due to isolated workplaces, unpaid wages, and the lack of legitimate identity documents or safe means to travel. Employers in fishing and seafood processing often made confusing wage deductions for documentation fees, advances, and other charges, making it difficult for workers to account for their wages accurately. Various research published in 2019 and 2020 found that between 14 and 18% of migrant fishermen were exploited in forced labour in the Thai fishing industry, indicating traffickers exploited thousands of workers on fishing vessels. •

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Timor Leste	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers exploit foreign fishing crews in forced labour on foreign-flagged vessels that transit Timor-Leste waters.
Uganda	Tier 2 Watch List 	Downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ugandan children as young as seven are exploited in forced labour in agriculture, fishing, forestry, cattle herding, mining, stone quarrying, brick making, carpentry, steel manufacturing, street vending, bars, restaurants, and domestic service.
United Kingdom	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers force adults and children to work in agriculture, cannabis cultivation, construction, food processing, factories, domestic service, nail salons, food services, the hospitality industry, and car washes, as well as on fishing boats.
United States of America	Tier 1 	Same as 2016 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOJ continued to engage in extensive interagency consultations to clarify legal and jurisdictional challenges to addressing forced labour in fishing in international waters
Uruguay	Tier 2 	Same as 2017 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign workers, mainly from Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Argentina, are exploited in forced labour in construction, domestic service, cleaning services, elderly care, wholesale stores, textile industries, agriculture, fishing, and lumber processing. Since 2013, an average of one dead crewmember per month has been associated with Taiwan- and Chinese-flagged fishing vessels docked at the Montevideo port and in Uruguay's waters. Foreign workers aboard these vessels are subjected to abuses indicative of forced labour, including unpaid wages, confiscated identification, and physical abuse, and there are anecdotal reports of murder at sea.
Vanuatu	Tier 2	New entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers target low skilled foreign workers in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, mining, fishing, logging, construction, and domestic service. Foreign fishermen working on board Vanuatuan-flagged, Taiwan owned vessels have experienced indicators of forced labour, including deceptive recruitment practices, abuse of vulnerability, excessive overtime, withholding of wages, physical and sexual violence, and abusive living and working conditions on board
Vietnam	Tier 2 Watch List 	Same as 2019, downgraded from Tier 2 2016 -2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffickers subject victims to forced labour in construction, fishing, agriculture, mining, maritime industries, logging, and manufacturing, primarily in Taiwan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Laos, Japan, and to a lesser extent, some parts of Europe and the UK (including in nail salons and on cannabis farms

Seafish work on social responsibility

For further information see:

- **Seafish ethics in seafood web page.**
See: <https://www.seafish.org/article/ethics-in-seafood>
- **Seafish fact sheet. Social responsibility in seafood – Seafish role. April 2019.**
See: https://seafish.org/media/SeafishRole_SocialResponsibilityinSeafood_201904.pdf
- **Tools for Ethical Seafood Sourcing (TESS).** TESS is an online tool signposting users to numerous online resources and initiatives that support socially responsible business practices.
See: <http://www.seafish.org/tess/>
- **Assessment of ethical issues in UK seafood supply chains.**
See: <https://www.seafish.org/article/assessment-of-ethical-issues>

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