



June/July 2022

## Seafood Ethics Common Language Group e-alert

### [Seafood Ethics Common Language Group](#)

See also: <https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/social-responsibility-in-seafood/>

### **UK news and reports**

#### **[Do rising costs mean increased risk? \(12 July 2022\)](#)**

Following the publication of its reports into the Joanna C and Nicola Faith tragedies, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch team highlights the safety lessons for the industry.

#### **[MCA launches digital Wellbeing at Sea Tool to support seafarer health and wellbeing \(12 July 2022\)](#)**

This is a digital survey that is completed by seafarers and provides practical advice on how to manage/improve wellbeing at sea. The anonymised data it collects is sent to managers to help them identify priority areas for improvement and highlight best practice.

#### **[Understanding seafarer suicide and its potential under-reporting \(12 July 2022\)](#)**

The UK Department for Transport (DfT) has published a report which discusses the mental health of seafarers and the impacts of suicide, the support available and the potential under-reporting of suicides in the sector in 2022.

#### **[Trawler owner claims GDPR breach over workers' claims \(30 June 2022\)](#)**

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/work/2022/06/30/trawler-owner-claims-gdpr-breach-over-workers-claims/>

A trawler boss is trying to stop Navy data on his vessel's movements being used as evidence in a pay claim by three migrant fishermen — claiming it was provided to their trade union in breach of GDPR.

#### **[Assessment of risks for those sleeping on 'dead ships' \(30 June 2022\)](#)**

A new amendment to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Marine Guidance Note MGN 425 (M+F) draws the attention of owners and crew, to the inherent dangers on vessels not properly equipped for overnight sleeping on-board. This MGN is particularly relevant to fishing vessel owners that allow any of their crew to sleep on-board their vessel when in port. Vessels tied up in port are not always "dead", but much of the guidance is still relevant.

#### **[Guardian article. 'You complain, you get fired': migrant crews on UK fishing boats speak out \(20 June 2022\)](#)**

Those on transit visas have no legal authority to 'enter' the UK without permission when they return to port. Consequently, they are tied to a single employer and forced to live onboard the vessel, leaving the worker reliant on the job for their accommodation, food etc. Migrants in the fishing industry say this loophole allows them to be exploited and mistreated. They add that boat owners use the confusion and ambiguities in immigration rules to threaten workers with deportation and to control them.

#### **[New guide launched to answer questions on ILO C. 188 \(10 June 2022\)](#)**

The Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) and The Fishermen's Mission have produced an easy-to-use guide that provides key elements of the UK legislation on the International Convention on Work in Fishing (C188). This new guide aims to inform and assist all those with an interest in commercial

fishing, from vessel owners and skippers to crew from all nations and those in the maritime charitable sector, to understand the legal welfare standards applicable to those working on fishing vessels.

### **Global news and reports**

#### **[Seafish summary of fishing references within the 2022 Annual Trafficking in Persons Report \(21 July 2021\)](#)**

The [Trafficking in Persons \(TIP\) Report](#) is the US Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. The 2022 TIP report covers 188 countries, and fish or fishing is mentioned in association with forced labour in 58 of those in 2022 (54 countries in 2021, 50 in 2020, 49 from 2017 – 2019, 51 in 2016). Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, China PRC, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Korea (Republic of), Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Vietnam have been singled out specifically with regards to fishing.

#### **[Seafood Social Risk Tool](#)**

The Seafood Social Risk Tool is now live on the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch website. Seafood Watch partnered with the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership and Liberty Shared to develop a tool that profiles seafood production systems around the world and identifies areas within those systems that are at higher risk of containing forced labour, human trafficking, and hazardous child labour (80 indicators). To date the tool covers a number of tuna fisheries.

#### **[Research paper. Illuminating the mechanisms to mitigate forced and child labour risks within Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\) certified fisheries \(September 2022\)](#)**

This collaborative paper provides an overview of labour risk management practices 'reported' by fisheries certified to the MSC Fisheries Standard. As well as a range of risk-mitigation tools, the paper discusses the benefits of having common principles that can be adapted to local contexts. It also highlights the challenge of addressing social issues that often come under the responsibility of the vessel's flag state rather than authorities where the fishing is taking place.

#### **[The impact of traceability systems on labour rights in Thai fishing \(2022\)](#)**

Research led by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences assesses the impact of reformed traceability systems on Thai fishers' labour conditions.

#### **[Small-scale fishermen, workers not being paid their fair share of profits \(10 July 2022\)](#)**

The South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication in its latest report 'the exploitation of fishermen and labourers in the fisheries sector in South Asia' has stated that Pakistani small-scale fishermen and workers have not been able to obtain their fair share of the profits and benefits.

#### **[Launch of the new IUU Fishing Action Alliance \(28 June 2022\)](#)**

The UK, the USA and Canada have launched the IUU Fishing Action Alliance. This includes a commitment to better identify and address forced labour, unsafe working conditions, and other labour abuses in the fishing industry.

#### **[US Government Memorandum on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Associated Labor Abuses \(27 June 2022\)](#)**

Linked to the IUU Fishing Action Alliance and a wider range of commitments made by the US Government at the UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon, the White House has released a detailed memorandum signed by President Biden outlining actions it is taking to address IUU fishing and associated labour abuses.

**[New social and environmental reporting rules for large companies \(21 June 2022\)](#)**

EU Governments and MEPs have agreed on new social and environmental reporting rules for large companies, incl. non-EU firms with substantial activity in EU markets. From 2024, large companies will need to publicly disclose information on the way they operate and manage social and environmental risks. The requirements will apply to all large companies (with over 250 employees and a 40 million euro turnover).

**[Occupational health and safety added as fifth fundamental principle and right at work \(10 June 2022\)](#)**

This agreement by the International Labour Conference is the first extension of workers' fundamental human rights twenty-five years. This adds the right to a healthy and safe working environment to the four rights adopted in 1998 by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Namely 1. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. 2. The elimination of forced or compulsory labour. 3. The abolition of child labour. 4. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

**[European Parliament adopts resolution calling for EU import ban on products made with forced labour \(9 June 2022\)](#)**

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution calling for an import ban on products produced with forced labour from entering the EU market. This is an important milestone in ensuring that forced labour does not find a home in the supply chains of European companies.

**[Labour standards on fishing vessels: a problem in search of a home? \(2022\)](#)**

This article, published in the Melbourne Journal of International Law, examines the ways in which international and regional organisations have sought to address the problem of labour standards on fishing vessels. In light of the fragmented approach to date, the article turns its attention to the value of a multilateral, cooperative and coordinated approach that links global, regional and private initiatives.

**Get involved**

**[Maritime & Coastguard Agency \(MCA\) consultation on the future of the UK seafarer medical examination \(ENG1\) fee \(closes 11 August 2022\)](#)**

This consultation seeks stakeholder views on removing the statutory set fee for the seafarer medical and allowing the fee to be set by market forces.

**[Development and management of inspection systems of labour conditions on board fishing vessels \(Runs from 3 October to 4 November 2022. Application deadline is 25 September 2022\)](#)**

In 2022, the ILO and its Training Centre, will launch training activities to build capacity of all interested parties in the promotion of decent work in the fishing sector. This online training course is aimed at authorities involved in inspection of fishing vessels, fishing vessel owners, fisher organizations' representatives, and NGOs. The aim is to deepen understanding of the international instruments regulating work in fishing; identify the key elements for the development and management of effective and coordinated inspection systems; and acquire tools for the application and enforcement of decent living and working conditions on board fishing vessels in law and in practice.

*This is an amalgamation of the news alerts issued in June/July 2022.*

FishWise  
\$16,000  
Supplier details

**The boss of Scotland’s largest fishing industry body has responded to claims of migrant workers being abused and coerced under an “alpha male” culture at sea by urging those making them to produce proof.**

And a link to the mentioned video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq1y9MXdYJI&t=1s>

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/local/4539502/video-north-east-fishing-chief-defends-industry-against-claims-of-abuse-of-migrant-workers/>

**e seafarers’ charity Stella Maris recently supported new research, conducted by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab, which revealed evidence of poor treatment and lack of decent working conditions for some migrant workers on UK fishing vessels.**

Source

Source <https://www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/nusrat-ghnai-exploitation-uk-fishing-industry-foreign-https://www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/nusrat-ghnai-exploitation-uk-fishing-industry-foreign->

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Longitude

Longitude --  
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## **UK House of Lords Committee disappointed with UK Government's response to extensive human rights at sea recommendations**

UK

The UK House of Lords International Defence and Relations Committee Inquiry (1 March 2022) into the 1982 UNCLOS being 'Fit for Purpose in the 21st Century' continues to challenge the UK Government for its failures to respond to the Inquiry's recommendations, including explicit coverage of issues pertaining to human rights at sea.

[Source: Human Rights at Sea](#)

### **Despite NGOs's calls, Taiwan remains Tier 1 in U.S. trafficking report**

TAIWAN, U.S.

At this time of great geopolitical discourse around Taiwan and China, the U.S. Department of State has ranked Taiwan in the top position (Tier 1) in its Trafficking in Persons Report.

[Source: Atuna](#)

[Landings from well-managed stocks on the rise](#)

UNITED NATIONS – FAO

According to the FAO's State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report for 2022, the volume by weight of fisheries landings worldwide from biologically sustainable stocks has risen to 82.5% – a 4% increase since the previous assessment.

[Source: Fisker Forum](#)

**NOAA Fisheries announces new initiative to end illegal labour practices in the seafood industry (19 July 2022)**

[https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-announces-new-initiative-end-illegal-labor-practices-seafood-industry?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-announces-new-initiative-end-illegal-labor-practices-seafood-industry?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

NOAA Fisheries has announced a new public-private initiative—the Collaborative Accelerator for Lawful Maritime Conditions in Seafood, also called CALM-CS—which will promote legal and safe working conditions, including combating forced labour, in the fishing and seafood industry.

**Webinar. Human Rights Due Diligence: The Role and Process of Procurement. 7 September 2022. 12.30pm to 1.30pm.**

<https://www.ardeainternational.com/education/free-webinar-human-rights-due-diligence-the-role-and-process-of-procurement/>

This webinar, run by Ardea International, will cover the role and process of procurement in supporting organisations to manage their human rights and environmental compliance risks, and demonstrate how a responsible business approach delivers for all supply chain stakeholders.

## [Human Rights at Sea, WWF raise joint concerns on human rights to WCPFC](#)

[BY EMMA DESROCHERS | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR](#)

### **GSA releases update to Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (25 July 2022)**

<https://www.globalseafood.org/blog/rfvs-issue-2-released/>

The Global Seafood Alliance (GSA) has published an update of the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS), part of the GSA Best Seafood Practices (BSP) certification program. There are a number of new requirements in the new RFVS Issue 2.0 including the development and incorporation of a zero-tolerance policy for managing instances of serious human rights atrocities affecting crew members, as well as zero tolerance for the use of illegal child labour. Lastly, support/tender vessels can be included, audited, and certified as part of the group/fleet assessment process.

Currently, 27 vessels that cover 610 crew members across the world are RFVS-certified under the RFVS Issue 1.1 and will not be subject to the new requirements until their certifications expire, three years after initial certification date. The first vessel to RFVS Issue 1.1 was certified in January 2021, less than a year out from the first significant update to RFVS in June 2020. Two fleets are in the process of getting certified to the new issue.



**Launching the new  
Stronger Together**

12 July 2022

## **Launching the new Stronger Together – recording now available**

On 12th July we launched the new Stronger Together in an online webinar. The relaunch brings the RRT, alongside Clearview and Fast Forward into Stronger Together's ownership formalising their status as not-for-profit.

Stronger Together will continue to have a specialism in tackling modern slavery, within a wider vision of "A world where all workers are recruited responsibly and have fair work free from exploitation".

This enables Stronger Together to extend its mission to working together with organisations to embed responsible recruitment and employment practices and mitigate labour exploitation in operations and supply chains.

[Access and share the recording](#)

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## [Human Rights at Sea and WWF joint concerns raised around fishing crew protections in WCPFC](#)

ASIA PACIFIC

Human Rights at Sea and WWF have come together to raise their joint concerns around ongoing legal and human rights challenges needing to be considered for the intersessional work on labour standards of crews on fishing vessels in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

[Source: Human Rights At Sea](#)

## [MP Adds Voice to Calls to Ban the Use of Transit Visas for Foreign Crew Members](#)

Nusrat Ghani MP supports barring the use of transit visas for bringing in foreign crew for UK fishing boats, and providing them with better social and labour protections.

## ["Don't get trapped": One worker's warning about what really happens in the fishing industry](#)

INDONESIA

A fisher shares his story of forced labour in the high seas and how he's taking action to help protect the rights of migrant workers in the fishing industry.

[Source: Greenpeace](#)

Wednesday, 1 June 2022

<https://www.globalseafood.org/blog/fishing-vessels/>

What happens on board fishing vessels?

Note: Each step in the seafood production chain has its own importance, but they work together to create the best quality products for consumers. In the #SeafoodWithStandards campaign throughout 2022, the Global Seafood Alliance (GSA) is highlighting each stop along the production chain to pull back the curtain and explain what happens there. The next stop is fishing vessels, which connect fisheries to seafood processing plants.

REPORT ON WOMEN IN SCOTTISH FISHING INDUSTRY PUBLISHED

22 June 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/women-scottish-fisheries-literature-review-experiences-challenges-opportunities-women-working-scottish-fishing-industry/>

A new report exploring the real-life experiences, challenges and opportunities of women working in the Scottish fishing industry has been published, reports Paul Scott.

The 'Women in Scottish Fisheries' review was carried out last year by PhD student Katja Hržić, during a three-month internship at the Scottish government's Marine Analytical Unit.

The review centres on the perceived and lived challenges for women in Scottish fisheries, and what opportunities have supported women in fishing communities in Scotland and beyond. It also examines other factors that contribute to the experiences of women in fisheries.

## **NGOs accuse US of playing geopolitics in Trafficking in Persons national rankings**

By

*Mark Godfrey*

August 1, 2022

**SHARE**



Non-governmental organizations and fishing industry groups have had sharply differing reactions to the latest edition of the U.S. government's Trafficking in Persons (TIP), which was published 19 July, 2022.

[The latest edition of TIP](#), published annually by the U.S. State Department, kept Taiwan at Tier One status while upgrading Thailand and Ireland to Tier Two, despite claims of labor abuse in the fishing industries of all three states. Those rankings dismayed some fisheries-focused NGOs, who said geopolitical considerations are blunting Washington's ability to curb labor abuses in global fisheries.

Taiwan received a Tier 1 ranking [in the 2021 report](#) on the basis that "Taiwan authorities fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking," according to last year's TIP report, publication of which is a requirement of America's Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). It retained that top ranking in this year's report, which Lennon Ying-Dah Wong, director of migrant worker policy at the Taiwan-based Serve the People Association, said was due to Taiwan's close political relationship with Washington at a time of increased Sino-U.S. tensions.

"Most of the discrimination, forced labor, human trafficking, and violations of human and labor rights of migrant workers has not changed at all," Wong said. "A small raise in the minimum wage for domestic workers and distant water fishermen – who have been excluded from the Labor Standard Act and the general minimum wage until now – cannot make up for their ongoing exploitation that the Tier 1 grading fails to recognize. Geopolitics should be separate from human rights."

Several campaign groups operating under the Seafood Working Group umbrella have blasted the TIP maintenance of Taiwan's top ranking at a time when the U.S. has vowed to tackle labor abuses in the global seafood supply chain. Yi-Hsiang Shih, the secretary general of the Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR), said the U.S. Department of State's decision to maintain Taiwan's Tier 1 ranking was a mistake.

"It not only fails to reflect the severity of human trafficking and forced labor in Taiwan, but also fails to effectively encourage the Taiwanese government to take further action against human trafficking," Shih said.

Taiwan Tuna Association Manager Tony Lin told SeafoodSource Taiwan's ranking reflects [the implementation of reform efforts](#), including [a seven-point plan created by the industry](#) to improve conditions for trawler workers. That plan includes the introduction of a USD 550 (EUR 540) minimum monthly salary as well as annual inspections of vessels and subsidized medical insurance, though Lin did not provide a timeline for when the plan would be put into place. Additionally, Lin said Taiwan's government is teaming with the industry to push for the creation of fishery improvement programs and eventually Marine Stewardship Council certification of Taiwan's fleet.

“We respect NGO initiatives, but Taiwan is moving forward and I believe the U.S. sees it too,” Lin said.

Campaigners in Thailand have likewise criticized that country’s Tier 2 ranking in the latest TIP. The 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report [dropped Thailand](#) from Tier 2 to the Tier 2 Watchlist citing its lack of progress on fighting human trafficking, but it was moved back to Tier 2 status this year.

“The upgrade to Tier 2 was not warranted, as Thailand still restricts migrant workers’ fundamental rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. All humans are entitled to the right to form a trade union or association in order to collectively bargain, irrespective of their nationality,” Migrant Workers Rights Network Thailand Coordinator Suthasinee Kaewleklai said.

Foundation for Education and Development Director Htoo Chit said Thai seafood firms have taken advantage of migrants from Myanmar escaping political turmoil, denying them of their rights and forcing them to work under abusive conditions for little pay.

“The Thai government has turned a blind eye to trafficking and maintained unsafe migration channels,” Chit said. “We need the U.S. to keep up an international campaign to help Myanmar people and other migrants win full rights under the law.”

Ireland, meanwhile, has been taken off the Tier 2 Watchlist in the latest rankings, [having been downgraded in 2020](#) due in part to labor issues in the country’s fishery fleet, which has come to rely on workers from Asia and Africa. The methodology of the U.S. State Department’s TIP report is such that Ireland and any other country can only be kept on the Tier 2 Watchlist for a maximum of two years, after which it either has to be upgraded to Tier 2 or downgraded further to Tier 3.

Speaking on the TIP 2022 report, Irish Justice Minister Helen McEntee said all allegations of human trafficking in the fishing industry are fully investigated by police. Complaints submitted to Ireland’s chief prosecutor, the Director of Public Prosecutions, did not meet the necessary threshold of evidence to show human trafficking, which is higher than the threshold for showing exploitative work practices.

Michael O’Brien, the Dublin-based representative of the International Transport Workers Federation, a union that has publicized allegations of migrant worker abuse in Ireland’s fishing fleet, said Ireland has not pushed hard enough to stamp out the problems that landed it on the Tier 2 Watchlist in 2020.

“There is significant institutional resistance on the part of the Irish state in combating trafficking for labor exploitation of fishers and other workers,” O’Brien told SeafoodSource. “Under the current anti-trafficking legislation, there has been only one successful prosecution, which was a case of trafficking for sexual exploitation.”

O’Brien said the Irish state prosecutor declined to prosecute any vessel owner for trafficking, even though 35 immigrant fishery workers were granted federal protection following claims of abuse by their employers.

“Incredibly, [the chief prosecutor] claimed that the fishers did not meet the threshold because they could have supposedly extricated themselves from their situation at any time. This ignores the enormous power the vessel owners have over the fishers,” O’Brien said.

A special visa scheme for foreign fishery workers “completely ties the legal status of the fisher to their exclusive employment relationship with the vessel owner,” O’Brien said. “This creates an enormous barrier to the fisher escaping their situation.”

[https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/ngos-accuse-us-of-playing-geopolitics-in-trafficking-in-persons-national-rankings?utm\\_source=marketo&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&utm\\_content=newsletter&mkt\\_tok=NzU2LUZXS0wNjEAAAGF-eb7FWunI0DGwMTPMKn3EHZ7BrAmBt2HvK3SpivvJFcodj6gf7kSkFPuC-OKzRT1KE8Tm3mm8LiRYoiA\\_LKVYUzHC88D66WOEMMj1XPYz8yALA](https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/ngos-accuse-us-of-playing-geopolitics-in-trafficking-in-persons-national-rankings?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_content=newsletter&mkt_tok=NzU2LUZXS0wNjEAAAGF-eb7FWunI0DGwMTPMKn3EHZ7BrAmBt2HvK3SpivvJFcodj6gf7kSkFPuC-OKzRT1KE8Tm3mm8LiRYoiA_LKVYUzHC88D66WOEMMj1XPYz8yALA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mc7D-6lgqyY>