Modern Slavery in the Fishing Industry

INTERPOL Project Scale

Seafish Seafood Ethics Common Language Group, 25 January 2017
INTERPOL’s Role:
Facilitating international law enforcement cooperation

Key Tools:
- Secure communication
- INTERPOL Notices
- Global databases
- Advanced investigative capabilities (e.g. forensic)
- Intelligence analysis
- Capacity development
The Problem

• Job-seekers
• Recruitment/crewing agencies
• Agents

• Vessels
• Factories/processing sites
• Aquaculture sites
• Ports

• Vessels
• Owners
• Beneficial owners
• Operators

• Wholesalers
• Brand names
• Restaurants
• Consumers
The Business Model

“Minimise Cost, Maximise Catch”

Recruitment, Contract, Pay and Conditions

- Crew are all sub-contractors
- Contract absent or not understood
- Multiple contracts, in different languages
- Agent demands collateral or excessive fees (often paid in advance)
- Actual destination differs from stated destination
- Irregular, incorrect or withheld salary
- Salary not paid directly to worker
- Passport and visa held by employer/other
- Evidence of debt bondage

Working and Living Conditions

- Long voyages
- Little or no time off/forced to work
- Living on the ship with no alternative
- Poor living conditions
- Inability to contact others, including family and friends
- Culture of violence
- Restricted freedom of movement
- Officer-crew language difficulties
- Transshipment
- Strong hierarchical environment
Indicators in the Fishing Industry

General Indicators

- IUU fishing or other criminality
- No crew logs, or altered crew logs
- Officers and crew language difficulties
- Evidence of transshipment
- Workers not age appropriate
- Strong hierarchical environment
- Ship not flagged locally
- Ship flag changes frequently
- Little training or qualifications
- Poor health and safety environment
- No training or health and safety regime
- Lack of structural regulation of vessels

- Predominantly foreign crew
- Non-transparent shared catch criteria
- Many agents/intermediaries involved
- Absence of travel and identification documents and work permits
Key Challenges

• **Awareness** – trafficking in persons may not be immediately obvious. Awareness of different indicators is necessary to identify potential victims

• **Enabling conditions** – a number of factors create the conditions within which trafficking and forced labour can flourish, e.g. IUU fishing, the global nature of the supply chain, cost-driven corporate business models, transshipment of crew and catch at sea, complex criminal networks and corporate structures

• **Identifying victims** – distinguishing victims among the complexities of the transnational fisheries supply chain. Victims may not be aware that they are victims, and labour and human rights violations may not be obvious or well documented

• **Differentiating between human trafficking, labour abuse and people smuggling** – labour abuse, while a possible indicator, does not necessarily entail that trafficking has occurred; trafficking for purposes of exploitation differs from people smuggling

• **Prosecution** – avoiding prosecuting the victim (taking a victim-centric approach)
The Response

Identifying individuals, companies, vessels, owners, operators and processing or aquaculture sites involved in trafficking/abuse

• Assisting member countries with the investigation of specific cases:
  – Specialist support, e.g. technical advice (fisheries and human trafficking); intelligence analysis; digital forensic support; investigative support teams
  – International communication and information collection/sharing
  – Exploiting INTERPOL’s tools and services

• Complementing the efforts of other organisations and taskforces

• Raising awareness

Share information about modern slavery in the fisheries industry with INTERPOL
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