Slavery at Sea: Civil society activities challenging abuses in international supply chains

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA (EHRAS) COURSE
UNIVERSITY OF MILANO-BICOCCA EU ERASMUS+ JEAN MONNET SCHEME

DAVID HAMMOND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Questions?

Muscle memory...
Vision

To end human rights abuse at sea
Aspiration

Global development and adoption of the ‘human rights at sea’ concept and narrative

- A lex specialis

&

The application of international human rights law at sea
Where does Human Rights at Sea fit?

- Labour Law
- Maritime Law
- Human Rights Law
- Human Rights at Sea
- Law of the Sea
- IHL

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The Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea

Four Fundamental Principles

1. Human rights are universal; they apply at sea, as they do on land.
2. All persons at sea, without any distinction, are entitled to their human rights.
3. There are no maritime specific reasons for denying human rights at sea.
4. All human rights established under both treaty and customary international law must be respected at sea.
Modern Slavery at Sea
Modern Slavery: Civil Society work

- Change: achieved through likeminded groups covering environmental, ecological, labour and human rights perspectives
- Unified and collective globally-focused advocacy and related lobbying activities
- Dominantly policy and legislative focused
- Emerging focus on worker voice and worker engagement
- In reality - a small international network
- All informed - for major projects and initiatives
- Powerful when unified
- Use web, national and international media and social media for awareness raising and maintaining the narrative
- *But* – many in competition with each other for limited funding resources and/or profiling = duplication of effort reduces effectiveness
Modern Slavery

40 million people are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery worldwide:
• 1 in 4 of them are children
• Almost three quarters (71%) are women and girls

UK definition

Modern slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation.

Signs of Modern Slavery

• Appear to be under the control of someone else and are reluctant to interact with others
• Do not have personal identification on them
• Have few personal belongings, wear the same clothes every day, or wear unsuitable clothes for work
• May not be able to move around freely

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Modern Slavery: Most Common Forms

**Human trafficking.** The use of violence, threats or coercion to transport, recruit or harbour people in order to exploit them for purposes such as forced prostitution, labour, criminality, marriage or organ removal.

**Forced labour.** Any work or services people are forced to do against their will under threat of punishment.

**Debt bondage/bonded labour.** The world’s most widespread form of slavery. People trapped in poverty borrow money and are forced to work to pay off the debt, losing control over both their employment conditions and the debt.

**Descent–based slavery.** Most traditional form, where people are treated as property, and their “slave” status was passed down the maternal line.

**Slavery of children.** When a child is exploited for someone else’s gain. This can include child trafficking, child soldiers, child marriage and child domestic slavery.

**Forced and early marriage.** When someone is married against their will and cannot leave. Most child marriages can be considered slavery.
General risks of Modern Slavery faced by Seafarers

- Abandonment: ILO Database (Est 2004)
- Wages withheld: Consequences of indentured servitude & debt bondage
- Seaman’s Record Books withheld: Failure to gain new employment
- Vindictive behavior by owners, manning agents and flag States

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ILO Forced Labour Indicators

1. Abuse of vulnerability
2. Deception
3. Restriction of movement
4. Isolation
5. Physical and sexual violence
6. Intimidation and threats
7. Retention of identity documents
8. Withholding of wages
9. Debt bondage
10. Abusive working and living conditions
11. Excessive overtime

Slavery and trafficking continue in Thai fishing industry, claim activists

Environmental Justice Foundation says abuses in Thai seafood sector persist despite government insistence that new legal measures are working.
Exposure of the Exploitation
Global Tuna Alliance Briefing

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Slavery at Sea

40M
people held in slavery, globally

76%
of migrant workers in the Thai fishing industry held in slavery conditions

$1.3M
total compensation won by victims of human rights abuses against a fisheries company in 2016.
ITF Fisheries

Links:  
https://justiceforfishers.org  

Without enforceable rights in the workplace and the strength that comes from being represented by a union, labour rights violations and the mistreatment of fishers will continue. The ITF has committed to campaign to improve the wages, working conditions and labour rights of all fishers irrespective of where they come from or what type of boat that they work on.
MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Reader,

This year’s Trafficking in Persons Report sends a strong message to the world that global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and relating discriminatory policies and practices, have a disproportionate effect on individuals already oppressed by other injustices. These challenges further compound existing vulnerabilities and exploitations, including human trafficking. We must break this insidious cycle of discrimination and injustices if we hope to one day eliminate human trafficking.

The U.S. Department of State strives to advance around the world the security, prosperity, and values that U.S. citizens share. We know recent events have led our country to grapple with complex treatment and racism here at home that has reverberated around the world. As a government and society, we strive to correct past wrongs and advance racial equity in our United States and abroad. We commit to bringing this dedication to our efforts to fight human trafficking as well. We will work to use our resources, engagement with governments, advisors, and the private sector to build a new effective anti-trafficking strategy rooted in equity. This must include coming to terms with our role in helping perpetuate violence and dehumanized people, and we must work to right those past wrongs.

Systemic discrimination creates inequities between communities, whether the discrimination targets perceptions of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, or any other social identities. It manifests in societal exclusion and prejudices against these communities, which help perpetuate an imbalance of opportunity and support. These inequities underlie our goal of combating human trafficking and combating traffickers. We have seen, for instance, how deeply held racial biases and stereotypes disproportionately influence outcomes for those in our criminal justice system as they tend to racially disparate assumptions about who is identified as a trafficker and who is identified as a victim. This is not a new truth, but it is a sobering, unacceptable reality.

Through this report, we call on governments to join the United States in improving our collective efforts to comprehensively address human trafficking. Doing so requires us to mitigate harmful practices and policies that cause socioeconomic or political vulnerabilities that traffickers often prey on. Part of this work requires us to acknowledge we will never be able to understand the full scope of what is needed without the expertise of those affected by systemic inequity. Representation and diversity of experience and thought matter. Therefore, governments, including the United States, must foster an inclusive environment that allows for a thriving, diverse workforce at all levels.

I have said before, building a “more perfect union” is both an acknowledgment of our imperfections and a commitment to continue striving toward progress in a transparent way. I believe that is true here. I look forward to the work ahead, knowing there is much still to accomplish, and we will be more successful when we work together to achieve the goals of combating human trafficking and creating a more fair, equitable world.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Anti-human trafficking.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT
JUNE 2021

NGO / IO: Seafood Working Group

- Educate, engage, and hold governments and corporations accountable for ensuring internationally-recognized labor standards and to adopt and progressively implement new standards where there are gaps.
- Promote advocacy agendas that are grounded in the priorities of workers, trade unions and worker-led organizations on the frontlines.
- Foster cooperation to find solutions to labor, social, and environmental issues in the seafood industry through consensus-building, collaboration and partnership.
- Promote best practices to end illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfishing, and ensure good governance of oceans and protection of oceans and marine life.

Link: https://laborrights.org/action-center/seafood-working-group
Slavery: Treatment of migrants and refugees

Please, I don’t want to leave my wife.

Link: https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/dead-sea
Follow our work

Human Rights at Sea (HRAS)
A Global Catalyst for addressing human rights abuse at sea and delivering justice by policy and legislative change.
Non-profit Organizations · HAVANT, Hampshire · 3,660 followers

Nigel & 17 other connections work here · 18 employees

Linkedin:  https://www.linkedin.com/company/human-rights-at-sea
Twitter:  @hratsea
Facebook:  https://www.facebook.com/humanrightsatsea
Useful links to get started

**Background.** For up-to-date information about our work: [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/news](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/news)

**Geneva Declaration:** [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/GDHRAS](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/GDHRAS)

**Arbitration project:** [https://hrasarb.com](https://hrasarb.com)

**Maritime Levy project:** [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/Maritime-Levy-Campaign](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/Maritime-Levy-Campaign)

**Fisheries Observer deaths:** Investigation report: [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Eritara_Aati_Kaierua_Kiribati_Independent_Case_Review_19_May_21_SP%20%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Eritara_Aati_Kaierua_Kiribati_Independent_Case_Review_19_May_21_SP%20%20%281%29.pdf)

**Stamping on Seafarers' Rights during the COVID-19 Pandemic report:** [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Stamping-on-Seafarers-Rights_REPORT_10DEC21_SP_0.pdf](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Stamping-on-Seafarers-Rights_REPORT_10DEC21_SP_0.pdf)

**Stowaways Briefing Note:** Background, Drivers & Human Consequences report: [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Insight-Briefing-Note_Stowaways_APRIL_2021_SP_LOCKED.pdf](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2021-12/HRAS_Insight-Briefing-Note_Stowaways_APRIL_2021_SP_LOCKED.pdf)


**Podcast: Human Rights at Sea:** [https://open.spotify.com/episode/3UccfYlSgpkZSMIXK3uWk?si=yiB93ophSHKDCl15CZwc4A&nd=1](https://open.spotify.com/episode/3UccfYlSgpkZSMIXK3uWk?si=yiB93ophSHKDCl15CZwc4A&nd=1)


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