Human Rights at Sea

IMPACT REPORT
OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENT WORK IN THE MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF YEAR SIX
In a rapidly developing phase to this matter which should herald the abandonment of the remaining crew onboard the UAE flagged MV Tamim Aldar, the remaining four seafarers (two Indian, two Eritrean) are currently under tow. https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2019/07/01/abandoned-seafarer-podcast-testimony-to-conditions-enforced-on-mv-tamim-aldar/
One of the three remaining seafarers onboard the UAE flagged MV Tamim Aldar, owned by Dubai-based Eliteway Marine Services Ltd, provided Human Rights at Sea with an exclusive updated personal testimony to the continuing issue of their abandonment by Eliteway now seven nautical miles inside of UAE territorial waters.


10/07/19
Case Study
MV TAMIM ALDAR SEAFARER VIKAS MISHRA UPDATED ABANDONMENT TESTIMONY

5/07/19
Op-Ed
OP-ED: SEA-WATCH CAPTAIN FREED. A VICTORY FOR HUMANITARIAN RESCUE AT SEA

Captain Carole Rackete freed, but the European political controversy continues. The judicial decision delivered a much needed victory for both common sense and humanitarian acts of rescue at sea, thereby setting a precedent to be reflected on for all vessel Captains and policy makers alike.


18/07/19
News
HRAS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER BECOMES FIRST GE AD HOC

The Indian Government and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) are driving forward with the newly created ‘Human Rights at Sea’ agenda in quick time following the first national seminar on the topic held in Mumbai on 28 February 2019, and a historic NHRC meeting in New Delhi on Monday 8 July co-organised with the Forum for Integrated National Security (FINs) think-tank.


16/07/19
News
HRAS SHORTLISTED FOR SAFETY4SEA EUROPORT AWARDS

Human Rights at Sea is pleased to share the news that it has been shortlisted for the 2019 Safety4Sea Europort Awards in the category of ‘Initiative Award’ for its work raising global awareness of human rights abuses at sea through a series of case studies produced this year on abandonment of seafarers, aiming at creating awareness on human rights and labour abusive practices that crews may encounter worldwide.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2019/07/16/13312/

22/07/19
News
NORWEGIAN FLAG AND OWNERS STEP UP TO SUPPORT NEW HUMANITARIAN RESCUE VESSEL IN MEDITERRANEAN

The Norwegian Flag and Norwegian owners have stepped up to provide a new civil society humanitarian rescue vessel the Viking Ocean to be operated in the central Mediterranean reflecting a renewed joint partnership between SOS MEDITERRANEE and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) for the rescue of persons in distress at sea under the established international law requirements of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.


24/07/19
Case Study/ Internal Publication
PACIFIC FISHERIES ABUSES: TESTIMONY OF FIJIAN FISHING WIDOWS, MOTHER AND SISTER

In partnership with Fijian-based NGO, Pacific Dialogue, Human Rights at Sea publishes the fifth case study in the current series exposing the consequences and challenges for families of seafarers who have suffered and died as a result of human and labour rights abuses onboard Fijian-crewed fishing vessels.

Human Rights at Sea issues an independent review and briefing note on the current legal and policy protections for seafarers operating in United Arab Emirates (UAE) waters following on from the series of high-profile abandonment cases since late 2018 highlighted by the charity’s case studies and other leading international newspapers such as the Times of India and The Guardian.


Human Rights at Sea was contacted in desperation by a seafarer and Indian national 34-year-old Vikas Mishra from Jaunpur who had previously suffered 35 months and 13 days onboard the UAE flagged MV Tamim Aldar owned by Eliteway Marine Services Ltd without pay and seeing his family in what has been a widely and internationally reported matter. Since 8th August 2019, Vikas and his fellow crew members have been ashore in the UAE and in his case he has only received five months salary. To date, he is still owed over 30 months salary amounting to in-excess of USD 71,000.


As part of London International Shipping Week, Human Rights at Sea was pleased to co-sponsor alongside other key maritime organisations ASP Ship Management, GNS, Spinnaker Global, L & R Midland, TMC Marine and St Kitts & Nevis International Ship Registry the evening event held by The Propeller Club. The event will support funds for the Tall Ships Youth Trust and the Merseyside Adventure Sailing Trust.


Reflecting ongoing human rights research work throughout the maritime environment and associated supply chains today Human Rights at Sea publishes their baseline field report for the Koli fishing community who live and work at sea in Mumbai, India.


Human Rights at Sea publishes new briefing note reviewing the report of the UN Independent Expert and special rapporteur on human rights and international solidarity with implications for human rights at sea.

The 10th October is World Mental Health Day with this year’s focus being on suicide prevention. Human Rights at Sea in partnership with author and mental health coach, Gillian Higgins, publishes a briefing note: ‘Mindfulness for the Maritime Industry’. A 2019 report identified that seafarers are amongst occupational groups with the highest risk of stress, a factor known to impact on mental health including the tragedy of seafarer deaths. Human Rights at Sea’s briefing note on ‘Mindfulness for the Maritime Industry’ discusses the importance of mental health and suicide prevention within the maritime industry.

In Taipei, NGO Human Rights at Sea was invited by the Indian National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to engage in discussions on the future of human rights protections within the Indian Sub-Continent across the Indian regional maritime and business-related space.

Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) publishes a short independent legal briefing note on proposed amendments to the draft agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction to include International Human Rights Law.

In Taipei, NGO Human Rights at Sea attends the 11th International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) world conference as a guest civil society NGO alongside the ICMA membership over the period 21-25th October 2019.

Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) publishes its fifth annual report ‘Delivering Impact and Influence’ covering the scope and scale of all the reporting period of the charity’s activities between 1 June 2018 and 31 May 2019 continuing to assure transparency in all areas of its national and international work. The report identified that seafarers are amongst occupational groups with the highest risk of stress, a factor known to impact on mental health including the tragedy of seafarer deaths.

Human Rights at Sea publishes a new baseline study in relation to the Taiwanese coastal and deep water fishing industry responding to ongoing field reporting of systemic human rights abuses for national and migrant crews despite current efforts to curb abuse reflecting international human rights and fisheries standards.

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### NOV 2019

**04/11/19**
**News**
**TAIWANESE EXECUTIVE YUAN EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA**

On invitation, Human Rights at Sea met with the Taiwanese Executive Yuan during several rounds of wider meetings last week in the capital Taipei concerning the work of the charity in Asia and the development of the soft-law Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea.


### DEC 2019

**07/12/19**
**Case Study**
**LABOUR DISPUTES AND POWER IMBALANCES IN THE TAIWANESE FISHING INDUSTRY**

The first stage of the inaugural UK Fisheries Sector Human Rights and Social Welfare Baseline Project has started as part of new joint work between Human Rights at Sea and The Fishermen’s Mission.


**10/12/19**
**News**
**GENEVA DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA ON-LINE PLATFORM LAUNCHED ON WORLD HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

This is the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a key date in the calendar for human rights defenders to profile their valuable, challenging and often dangerous work helping to uphold and develop human rights provisions, policies, effective remedies and standards globally.


### JAN 2020

**02/01/20**
**Briefing Note**
**ENDING EXPLOITATIVE RECRUITMENT FEES FOR SEAFARERS AND FISHERS**

Human Rights at Sea publishes its briefing note on exploitative recruitment fees in the maritime sector and calls for an end to such burdensome fees for workers in a call to action.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/01/02/ending-exploitative-recruitment-fees-for-seafarers-and-fishers/
Human Rights at Sea publishes a redacted example of testimony and background facts from a recent case highlighted to the charity and other welfare entities concerning bullying and harassment towards an experienced Indian Chief Engineer by a Turkish Master on Marshall Islands flagged vessel. [NB: It should be noted that the nationalities involved do not themselves exacerbate the core issue of bullying and harassment].


The Mekong Club, a leader uniting and mobilising the private sector for a common cause to disrupt and end modern slavery, and Human Rights at Sea, are joining together to present a public webinar: International Migration to Malaysia & Taiwan: Challenges and Promising Practices’. This is part of the Mekong Club’s series lead on ‘Responsible Recruitment & Migrant Workers’.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/03/04/a-challenging-review-of-maritime-industry-support-for-business-and-human-rights/

The public release of the inaugural South Western Fish Producer Organisation (SWFPO) Ltd Business and Human Rights Audit dated 10 January 2019 through the Human Rights at Sea independent platform. Commenced in late 2018 and submitted in January 2019, the comprehensive report was commissioned by SWFPO to develop levels of business awareness and standards relating to human rights provisions and protections within their fisheries supply chain.

Subject to official government advice, the charity continues its national and international work focusing on its delivery through remote working, though it will temporarily scale back field research.https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/03/15/hras-covid19-update/

24/03/20
Internal Publication / White Paper
WHITE PAPER ISSUED FOR INNOVATIVE USE OF ARBITRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ON UN INTERNATIONAL DAY

On the UN International Day for the Right to The Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims, the UK-based charity Human Rights at Sea, in partnership with global law firm Shearman & Sterling LLP is today launching a jointly developed legal project to facilitate the resolution of disputes concerning human rights abuses at sea using international arbitration. The project’s principal aim is to provide victims of human rights abuses at sea with access to an effective remedy, while at the same time combating impunity for the perpetrators of such abuses.


25/03/20
Covid 19 Update /Case Study
COVID-19: SOCIAL EXCLUSION FOR RETURNING SEAFARERS STRAINS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Challenges seafarers are facing during the current COVID-19 crisis includes emerging issues relating to unexpected social exclusion when some seafarers return home. With express permission, the charity discloses one of the cases submitted with the request by the VLGC Captain previously under Anglo-Eastern ship management, to share it publicly to highlight the personal issues he has faced following his sign-off. It will also highlight wider issues around the urgent need for better individual awareness in relation to COVID-19.


29/03/20
Op.Ed
COVID-19: FACT SUPPRESSION OR CARELESS UNDER-REPORTING OF SEAFARERS STRUGGLES?

CEO David Hammond shares his thoughts and position from recent evidence presented to the charitable NGO for what appears to be an unexplained under reporting of the detail of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on displaced and abandoned* seafarers (*general ‘abandonment’ not commercial maritime definition), as well as their suffering families.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/03/29/covid-19-fact-suppression-or-careless-under-reporting-of-seafarers-struggles/

07/04/20
News
RIGHTSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA JOIN FORCES TO HELP IMPROVE WELFARE FOR SEAFARERS AROUND THE WORLD

RightShip, the world’s leading maritime risk due diligence and environmental assessment organisation, and Human Rights at Sea, have signed a new long-term partnership agreement to help improve seafarer welfare, the organisations have announced today. Under the agreement, RightShip and Human Rights at Sea will partner to continuously raise awareness of implementation and accountability of human rights provisions throughout the maritime environment with local, national and international stakeholders and regulators, and the maritime industry as a whole.

Human Rights at Sea highlights the plight of up to 1000 Indian fishermen stranded in and around Kish Island, Iran, without work and pay since 24 February, and who were running very short on staple foods which it is reported will only last for several more days. As highlighted in the short video (3:21) supplied to Human Rights at Sea by welfare advocate Mrs. Shaheen Sayyed, the English-speaking spokesperson exposes the plight of hundreds of fishers.


Seafarers who have been in direct contact with Human Rights at Sea are increasingly calling for greater levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be made more widely available, not just for themselves, but for those maritime workers who come onboard their vessels including surveyors, agents, pilots and stevedores, by way of example. This includes face masks and gloves.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/04/13/greater-access-to-ppe-called-for-by-concerned-seafarers/

The development of the Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea has seen its exposure in European Institutions, as well as in European fisheries forums. Most recently, a presentation given by Ment van der Zwan at the Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) at the PelAC meeting (04-03-2020) in Den Haag, The Netherlands, for the Working Group II meeting, opened with the four fundamental principles of the Geneva Declaration as part of the focus on social protection of fishers.


A steady stream of contact from concerned seafarers continues to flow into Human Rights at Sea. In the majority of cases, the issues raised highlight facts and concerns which seafarers feel are being under-reported rendering them invisible and without a voice. Notably, virtually all seafarers who communicate with the charity do not want to be identified due to their worries about retribution for speaking up.

The Seafarers Welfare Board for New Zealand (SWB) commends for reading, reflection and discussion, the recently published report from Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) titled, New Zealand: Under-Funding of Seafarers’ Welfare Services and Poor MLC Compliance.


Following the recent highlighting to Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) of concerns from seafarers about lack of access to, and availability of, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while serving on vessels transiting global shipping lanes, the charitable NGO has engaged with the maritime industry most recently speaking with the Thome Group about their actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This follows recent HRAS articles challenging the PPE issue.


Human Rights at Sea issues an insight from one seafarer who approached the organisation for urgent assistance, and who remains stranded in a foreign State unable to get home while now relying on welfare handouts.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/14/stranded-in-tunisia-with-an-uncertain-future-a-seafarers-insight/

Human Rights at Sea today publishes its latest case study and family impact report in the unfolding tragic case of the missing Third Officer Cristito M. Acosta employed by Teekay Shipping who disappeared without trace from onboard the Bahamian flagged MV Jiaolong Spirit, IMO No. 9379208 on 23 April 2020.

https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/19/missing-teekay-officers-family-case-study-published-as-investigation-commences/
**24/05/20**

**Webinar**

**WEBINAR: 24 JUNE - ARBITRATION AS A MEANS OF EFFECTIVE REMEDY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AT SEA**


**26/05/20**

**News**

**GLOBAL ARBITRATION REVIEW ARTICLE ON INNOVATIVE ARBITRATION DEVELOPMENT**

Shearman & Sterling LLP into assessing whether or not arbitration could become an effective remedy for human rights abuses at sea. The first White Paper on the topic has been issued in both English and French, including the first version of a proposed victim-oriented and victim-initiated methodology. [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/26/global-arbitration-review-article-on-innovative-arbitration-development/](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/26/global-arbitration-review-article-on-innovative-arbitration-development/)

**27/05/20**

**Case Study**

**SEAFARERS CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19: THE CASE OF MV GULF SKY**

Human Rights at Sea was contacted in mid-May by the Master of the MV Gulf Sky (IMO 150377) flying the flag of the Commonwealth of Dominica currently anchored off Port Khor Fakkan Anch, UAE, who on behalf of the crew, raised serious concerns about the welfare of the seafarers and their financial hardships. Following the Master and crew’s request, the Charity conducted an investigation, and in this Case Study reports on the findings as disclosed on a voluntary basis at the time of writing by all stakeholders involved and who have responded to the charity’s enquiries. [https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/27/seafarers-challenges-during-covid-19-the-case-of-mv-gulf-sky/](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2020/05/27/seafarers-challenges-during-covid-19-the-case-of-mv-gulf-sky/)

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**Coverage of Human Rights at Sea work in Year Six**

**Seven Countries Visited by Human Rights at Sea in Year Six**

1. Hong Kong
2. Fiji
3. India
4. N. Ireland
5. UAE
6. Switzerland
7. Taiwan
8. France
9. UK
10. Fiji
11. N. Ireland
12. UAE
13. Switzerland
14. Taiwan
15. France
16. UK
17. Fiji
Who We Are

BACKGROUND

Human Rights at Sea was established in April 2014. It was founded as an initiative to explore issues of maritime human rights development, review associated policies and legislation, and to undertake independent investigation of abuses at sea. It rapidly grew beyond all expectations and for reasons of governance it became a registered charity under the UK Charity Commission in 2015.

Today, the charity is an established, regulated and independent registered non-profit organisation based on the south coast of the United Kingdom. It undertakes Research, Advocacy, Investigation and Lobbying specifically for human rights issues in the maritime environment, including contributing to support for the human element that underpins the global maritime and fishing industries.

The charity works internationally with all individuals, commercial and maritime community organisations that have similar objectives as ourselves, including all the principal maritime welfare organisations.

OUR MISSION

To explicitly raise awareness, implementation and accountability of human rights provisions throughout the maritime environment, especially where they are currently absent, ignored or being abused.

STAY IN CONTACT

We welcome any questions, comments or suggestions. Please send your feedback to:
Human Rights at Sea, VBS Langstone Technology Park, Langstone Road, Havant, PO9 1SA, UK
Email: enquiries@humanrightsatsea.org
www.humanrightsatsea.org

As an independent charity, Human Rights at Sea relies on public donations, commercial philanthropy and grant support to continue delivering its work globally. Was this publication of use to you? Would you have paid a consultant to provide the same information? If so, please consider a donation to us, or engage directly with us.

www.justgiving.com/hras/donate

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

All of our publications are printed on FSC certified paper so you can be confident that we aren’t harming the world’s forests. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting responsible forestry all over the world to ensure they meet the highest environmental and social standards by protecting wildlife habitat and respecting the rights of indigenous local communities.