COVER NOTE TO THE INFOGRAPHIC: INFORMATION ABOUT FISHERIES OBSERVERS 1.0

JUNE 2021

Human rights apply at sea, as they do on land

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Glossary

APO  Association for Professional Observers
GTA  Global Tuna Alliance
IOBR  International Observer Bill of Rights
NGO  Non-Governmental Organization
PNA  the Parties of the Nauru Agreement
RFMO  Regional Fisheries management Organization
USCG  US Coastguard
WCPFC  Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WWF  World Wide Fund for Nature

Executive Summary

Fisheries observers play an important role in global and sustainable fisheries management. As part of ongoing work by Human Rights at Sea to further raise international awareness about the work of observers, the charitable NGO, in partnership with interested stakeholders, has produced this freely available infographic. The infographic provides background to, and key information about, the working environment for observers including how to become an observer, the duties, contractual safeguards, and the safety, security and well-being while working on-board a fishing vessel. The infographic is a live document and will be subject to updates.

Background

Fisheries observers play an important role in supporting sustainable fisheries management by providing scientific data but also by observing the vessel’s compliance with existing international instruments, policies and rules. This can potentially put observers in a delicate situation as they might be perceived as a threat to the vessels’ activities in terms of challenging conflicting catch data and awareness of unlawful activities that may be undertaken to supplement often meagre incomes. Following, the tragic and yet, unexplained death of Eritara Aati Kaierua in March 2021, a fisheries observer from Kiribati, the need to provide a safe and secure work environment for observers is now receiving global attention and justice for families in such circumstances is being pursued.

1  www.humanrightsatsea.org
Aim
The aim of the infographic is to provide an independent, iterative and accurate overview of key information concerning the role, safeguards, standards and the lawful working environment for fisheries observers.

Objectives
This infographic has three objectives:

1. To act as a means of increasing public awareness about fisheries observers, the role and working environment.

2. To provide iterative education materials that are easily understood by all within the supply chain.

3. To support and drive the ongoing discussion about the safety, security and well-being of fisheries observers at sea.

Stakeholders 1.0
This initial version of the infographic has been peer-reviewed by international experts and produced in collaboration with the Blue Marine Foundation⁵, the US Coastguard (USCG)⁶, WWF⁷, the Association for Professional Observers (APO)⁸, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)⁹, and the Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)¹⁰. It is expected that more stakeholders will become involved with the following iterations.

General Stakeholder Comments for consideration
This infographic is meant to be seen as a live document and presents the status quo as of May 2021. Moreover, this infographic targets a broad supply chain and state-level audience, thus, several of the information areas are presented in a simplified way to highlight the issue to lead to separate and more detailed discussions, as necessary. It is also important to note that relevant areas such as supply chain actions have not yet been addressed in the infographic, but otherwise warrant to be highlighted for due consideration.

⁵ https://www.bluemarinefoundation.com/
⁶ https://www.uscg.mil/
⁷ https://www.worldwildlife.org/
⁸ https://www.apo-observers.org/
⁹ https://www.pnatuna.com/
¹⁰ https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/
Global Tuna Alliance Points

• Review sourcing requirements for tuna and adopt aspirational timelines (e.g. sourcing X% of supply from vessels with 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) by 2020 increasing to 100% over Z timeframe).

• Advocate for Member States, regulatory authorities and their respective observer programs to work together and implement the IOBR at the RFMO level.

• Agree to add a sourcing requirement for tuna for enhanced observer safety. Until the time when all RFMOs implement the IOBR and WCPFC mandatory observer safety reforms. For example, adopt aspirational timelines (e.g. sourcing X% of supply from RFMOs which have implemented the IOBR and WCPFC mandatory observer safety reforms by 2020 increasing to 100% over Z timeframe).

If you want to learn more about supply chain actions, visit the Global Tuna Alliance website: https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/

Contact

For more information and to engage with the Human Rights at Sea Fisheries Observer project work, please contact: Bianca Haas | bianca.haas@humanrightsatsea.org or enquiries@humanrightsatsea.org

About

Established in April 2014, Human Rights at Sea is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and registered Charity No. 1161673 based in the United Kingdom. It has been established for the benefit of the international community concerning the explicit engagement in exposing and ending abuses at sea by acting as a global catalyst for change. The charity raises international awareness of human rights abuses at sea, delivers social justice through legal and policy development, and has a vision of ending human rights abuse at sea.

Website: www.humanrightsatsea.org
HRAS Fisheries Observer Research & Advocacy Programme: https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/fisheries-observer-research-advocacy/

Supported by
The mission of the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) is to conduct professional criminal investigations, engage in law enforcement information and intelligence collection, provide protective services, and establish and maintain law enforcement liaison directed at preserving the integrity of the Coast Guard, protecting the welfare of Coast Guard people, and supporting Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security maritime law enforcement and counterterrorism missions worldwide.

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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

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