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Seafish Insight: Fishing references by country in 2021 TIP report

Source: 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report

July 2021

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Overall highlights

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is the U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.

The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report 2021 was published on 1 July 2021. https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/

The Trafficking in Persons Report, or the TIP Report, is an annual report issued by the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. It ranks governments based on their perceived efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking

This year's report sends a strong message to the world that global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and enduring discriminatory policies and practices, have a disproportionate effect on individuals already oppressed by other injustices. These challenges further compound existing vulnerabilities to exploitation, including human trafficking.

The TIP report documents the growing movement against human trafficking and provides a roadmap for governments to address the crime, laying out realistic and actionable policy priorities and insisting on continuous improvement. It has tracked the seriousness with which governments take this issue, not just in verbal commitments but also in concrete action. It is a standard-bearer for the principles enshrined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol (Palermo Protocol - an international framework to tackle trafficking, established in 2000).

A quick analysis of the 2021 TIP report shows:

- 187 countries are mentioned in the TIP report.
- Each country is ranked according to a number of criteria (see description on page 5). The narrative for each country looks at prosecution, protection and prevention and describes how a government has or has not addressed the relevant TVPA minimum standards during the reporting period.
    - Tier 1 – 28 countries
    - Tier 2 – 95 countries
    - Tier 2 Watch List - 45 countries
- Fish or fishing is mentioned is association with forced labour in 54 of the 187 countries in 2021 (50 countries in 2020, 49 from 2017 – 2019, 51 in 2016).
- Of the 54 countries where fishing is mentioned:
    - Tier 1 – 9 countries
    - Tier 2 – 24 countries
    - Tier 2 Watch – 18 countries
    - Tier 3 – 3 countries
- Countries that have been singled out specifically with regards to fishing include: Burma, Cambodia, China PRC, Indonesia, Korea (Republic of), Taiwan and Thailand.

This is an analysis of the fishing references in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons report. It is not necessarily the view of Seafish. It is an information service provided by Seafish for industry and key stakeholders.

About the TIP rankings

The TIP report is released annually by the U.S. Department of State. It offers a summary of the laws and enforcement efforts of various countries with respect to human trafficking. Specifically, it ranks countries based on a '3P paradigm' of prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and preventing crime. Scoring on these elements is then collated to give each country a ranking:

- **Tier 1:** Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

- **Tier 2:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

- **Tier 2 Watch List:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:
    - a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
    - b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials;
    - c) or the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

- **Tier 3:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. No tier ranking is permanent. Every country, including the United States, can do more. All countries must maintain and continually increase efforts to combat trafficking.

- Countries on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years may be downgraded to Tier 3 automatically if no improvements are demonstrated. This could result in restrictions on non-humanitarian and non-trade-related foreign assistance from the U.S., at the discretion of the President.

Fishing references by country (alphabetical and verbatim)

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Angola	Tier 2	New entry	• Traffickers exploit Angolans, including children as young as 12 years old, in forced labour in the brick making, domestic service, construction, agriculture, fisheries, and artisanal diamond mining sectors.
Australia	Tier 1	New entry	• Some fishing vessels that transit or dock at Australian ports use physical abuse to force men to perform labour.
Bangladesh	Tier 2 ⇔	Tier 2 same as 2020. Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019	• Traffickers force adults and children to work in the shrimp and fish processing industries, aluminium, tea, and garment factories, brick kilns, dry fish production, and shipbreaking • Rohingya girls and boys are recruited from camps and forced to labour as shop hands, fishers, rickshaw pullers, and domestic workers. Some Bangladeshi fishers use debt-based coercion to exploit Rohingya men if they place their shelter on the fisher's land. Some Rohingya men who fled to Bangladesh from Burma decades ago have been trapped in forced labour through debt-based coercion to Bangladeshi fishers for decades. • Some Bangladeshi fishers use debt-based coercion to exploit Rohingya men if they place their shelter on the fisher's land.
Burma	Tier 3 ⇔	Tier 3, same as 2018 – 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017	• The Government of Burma does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Burma remained on Tier 3. • In previous years, Burmese fishermen had no formal channels through which to seek employment in the Thai fishing industry, and instead relied exclusively on unregulated brokerage networks that exacerbated their indebtedness and vulnerability to coercion at sea. To address this issue, Burma maintained a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Thailand to facilitate labour recruitment into the Thai fishing sector through a formalized, government-to-government hiring process. However, the MOU did not standardize or clarify the two countries' disparate laws and policies on eligible recruitment fees and minimum wages, constraining meaningful implementation. king or forced labour in garment manufacturing and domestic service. NGOs continue to report instances of Burmese males transiting Thailand en route to Indonesia and Malaysia where traffickers subject them to forced labour, primarily in fishing and other labour-intensive industries. • Recruitment agencies in Burma and other Southeast Asian countries lure fishermen with promises of high wages, charge fees and curtailment deposits to assign them

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
			fake identity and labour permit documents, and then send them to fish long hours in remote waters on vessels operating under complex multinational flagging and ownership arrangements.
Burundi	Tier 2 Watch List	Improved from Tier 3 2016 - 2020	• Both economic necessity and coercion push children and young adults into labour, including domestic service, forced labour on plantations or small farms throughout Burundi, in gold mines in several provinces around the country, in informal commerce in the streets of larger cities, in charcoal production, and in the fishing industry….NGOs report that fishermen exploit some boys in the Lake Tanganyika fisheries
Cambodia	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2019 and 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 2016 – 2018	• Cambodian adults and children migrate to other countries within the region and increasingly to the Middle East for work; traffickers force many to work on fishing vessels, in agriculture, in construction, in factories, and in domestic service – often through debt-based coercion – or exploit them in sex trafficking. Traffickers continue to recruit significant numbers of Cambodian men and boys in Thailand to work on fishing boats and exploit them in forced labour on Thai-owned and -operated vessels in international waters. Cambodian victims escaping from their traffickers have been identified in Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, and South Africa. Cambodian men working on Thai-owned and -operated fishing vessels report deceptive recruitment tactics, severe physical abuse, underpayment or non-payment of wages, restricted access to medical care, and confinement at sea for years at a time without permission to come ashore.
Cameroon	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, but Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	• Criminal elements force Cameroonian children to work in artisanal gold mining, gravel quarries, fishing, animal breeding, and agriculture (on onion, cotton, tea, and cocoa plantations), as well as in urban transportation assisting bus drivers and in construction to run errands, work, or provide security. Media reporting indicates exploitation in Cameroon's fishing sector is widespread.
Chad	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019 but Tier 2 Watch List in 2018	• In the Lake Chad region, community members exploit some children in catching, smoking, and selling fish

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
China PRC (People's Republic of China)	Tier 3 ⇔	Same as 2019 and 2020. No mention of fishing in 2018	• The government did not report any measures to screen for or identify forced labour indicators among the thousands of vulnerable migrant seafarers employed on Chinese DWF vessels, nor within its extensive coastal offshore fishing fleet. • African and Asian men reportedly experience conditions indicative of forced labour aboard Chinese-flagged and Chinese-owned, foreign-flagged fishing vessels operating worldwide in China's DWF; men from other regions may be in forced labour aboard these vessels as well. • Many men from countries in Africa, Asia—especially Indonesia and the Philippines—and other regions employed on many of the 2,900 Chinese-flagged DWF fishing vessels operating worldwide experience contract discrepancies, excessive working hours, degrading living conditions, severe verbal and physical abuse, denial of access to health care, restricted communication, document retention, arbitrary garnishing or non-payment of wages, and other forced labour indicators, often while being forced to remain at sea for months or years at a time. • Chinese fishing operators in turn require DWF crewmembers to pay "guarantee money" that places them at further risk of debt-based coercion. Some DWF senior vessel crew also force these fishermen to engage in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and smuggling (including in areas under the jurisdiction of other coastal states) making many victims vulnerable to unjust civil and criminal liabilities in port countries. Some Chinese-owned fishing vessels reportedly operate in violation of UN sanctions off North Korea while evading detection by maritime authorities; the crew aboard are also vulnerable to forced labour in IUU fishing.
Comoros	Tier 3 ⇔	Same as 2016 – 2020	• Traffickers and employers on Anjouan may subject children, some of whom were abandoned by parents who left to seek economic opportunities in other countries, to forced labour, mostly in domestic service, roadside and market vending, baking, fishing, and agriculture.
Congo	Tier 2	Re-entry. No mention of fishing in 2020	• Individuals in the fishing industry and market shop owners were the primary exploiters of victims within the country.
Denmark	Tier 2	New entry	• A Danish fisherman exploited two Ghanaian sailors in forced labour for three years; courts acquitted the man of those charges and instead convicted him of usury, issuing a sentence of one year and six months' probation, 250 hours of community service, and a 3 million kroner ($494,640) fine.
Ecuador	Tier 2 ⇔	Same as 2018 - 2020	• Traffickers exploit Ecuadorian men, women, and children in sex trafficking and forced labour within the country, including in domestic service, begging, banana and palm plantations, floriculture, shrimp farming, fishing, sweatshops, street vending, mining, and other areas of the informal economy.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Fiji	Tier 2	Improved from Tier 2 Watch List 2018 to 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	• Family members, taxi drivers, foreign tourists, businessmen, crew on foreign fishing vessels, and other traffickers have allegedly exploited victims from Thailand and China, as well as Fijian women and children, in sex trafficking. • Recruitment agencies operating in victims' home countries, vessel owners, and other crew exploit migrant fisherman from Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia, in forced labour on Fijian flagged fishing vessels, or foreign flagged fishing vessels (mainly China- and Taiwan-flagged) transiting Fijian ports and waters. Victims of forced labour experience threats of violence, passport confiscation, debt-based coercion, excessive working hours, and abusive living and working conditions.
France	Tier 1	New entry	• Labour trafficking most frequently occurs in domestic work, followed by construction, small commerce, agriculture, fishing, and livestock;
Gabon	Tier 2	Same as 2020. Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2019. Tier 3 in 2018. Tier 2 Watch List 2016 & 2017	• Traffickers…force boys to work as street vendors, mechanics, microbus transportation assistants, and laborers in the fishing sector.
Ghana	Tier 2	Same as 2018 – 2021. Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	• Traffickers exploit Ghanaian children in forced labour within the country in inland and coastal fishing, domestic service, street hawking, begging, portering, artisanal gold mining, quarrying, herding, and agriculture, especially cocoa. • Organized traffickers who target vulnerable parents and communities facilitate child trafficking in the fishing industry in Ghana and other West African countries.
Guinea	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 3 in 2016 and 2017	• Traffickers exploit boys in forced labour in begging, street vending and shoe shining, mining for gold and diamond, in herding, fishing, and agriculture, including farming and on coffee, cashew, and cocoa plantations.
Haiti	Tier 2 Watch List	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2019 and 2020. Tier 2 Watch List in 2017 and 2018, and Tier 3 in 2016	• Haitian children working in construction, agriculture, fisheries, domestic work, begging, and street vending in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Indonesia	Tier 2	Same as 2016 - 2020	• The Government of Indonesia does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. • In Indonesia, labour traffickers exploit women, men, and children in fishing, fish processing, and construction; on oil palm and other plantations; and in mining and manufacturing. • The government did not effectively implement its existing regulations over the fishing sector, which allowed forced labour to persist. Underscoring NGO claims of insufficient oversight, central government records appeared to drastically underreport the number of Indonesians working in the global fishing industry when compared against analogous records maintained by another key destination country's authorities. • The Ministry Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and the MFA continued to deconflict roles and responsibilities with regard to oversight of recruitment and labour practices in the fishing sector. • Civil society groups noted many Indonesian and migrant fishermen were unaware of their rights and responsibilities and unprepared for the work in the absence of standardized, employer paid pre-departure and post-arrival orientation and training. During the reporting period, after media reports emerged of Indonesian forced labour on Chinese-flagged fishing vessels, the government instituted a ban on Indonesian fishermen working aboard Chinese flagged vessels, vessels operated by Chinese companies, and South Korean- and Taiwanese-flagged vessels operating outside of their Exclusive Economic Zones. • Senior vessel crew on board Chinese, Korean, Vanuatuan, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysian, Italian, and Philippines-flagged and/or owned fishing vessels operating in Indonesian, Thai, Sri Lankan, Mauritian, and Indian waters subject Indonesian fishermen to forced labour. • Dozens of recruitment agencies in Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand lure fishermen with promises of high wages, charge fees and curtailment deposits to assign them fake identity and labour permit documents, and then send them to fish long hours in waters on vessels operating under complex multinational flagging and ownership arrangements. Some fishermen are unaware their recruitment agencies continue to withhold or withdraw funds from their salary for years. • Most Indonesian fishermen work aboard vessels operating in Taiwan's highly vulnerable distant water fleet; many are also fishing in Korea's distant water fleets.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Ireland	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, and Tier 1 in 2016 and 2017	• The Government of Ireland does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. These efforts included designating an independent human trafficking national rapporteur and establishing a formal national anti-trafficking forum composed of interagency and civil society stakeholders. • Since the government amended its atypical working scheme for sea fishers in 2019, it has identified zero trafficking victims in the fishing industry, compared to 23 victims in 2018. Some experts also continued to raise serious concerns and asserted that foreign national sea fishers outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) were at even greater risk following the amendment of the scheme because the government failed to enforce the amended rules of the scheme, no longer identified victims, and had begun revoking the status and associated protections against previously identified trafficking victims within this sector. • Traffickers exploit victims of forced labour in domestic work, the restaurant industry, cannabis cultivation, nail salons, food processing, waste management, fishing, seasonal agriculture, and car washing services. Undocumented workers in the fishing industry and domestic workers, particularly au pairs, are vulnerable to trafficking.
Jamaica	Tier 2	Same as 2016 - 2020	• There have been reports of forced labour of foreign nationals aboard foreign-flagged fishing vessels operating in Jamaican waters.
Japan	Tier 2	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 1 in 2018 and 2019	• Cases of forced labour continue within the TITP, a government-run program originally designed to foster basic technical skills among foreign workers that has effectively become a guest-worker program. TITP participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam pay sending organizations in their home countries thousands of dollars in excessive worker paid fees, deposits, or vague “commissions”—despite bilateral agreements between sending countries and Japan aimed at curbing the practice—to secure jobs in fishing, food processing, shellfish cultivation, ship building, construction, textile production, and manufacturing of electronic components, automobiles, and other large machinery.
Kenya	Tier 2	Same as 2016 - 2020	• Within the country, traffickers exploit children through forced labour in domestic service, agriculture, fishing, cattle herding, street vending, and begging.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Korea (Republic of)	Tier 1 ⇔	Same as 2016 - 2020	• The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore South Korea remained on Tier 1. • The government maintained law enforcement efforts, but continued to make inadequate efforts to prosecute labour traffickers, especially in the fishing industry. • While the government reported investigating four cases of labour trafficking involving Korean victims with intellectual disabilities in 2020, it did not identify any cases of labour trafficking on Korean flagged fishing vessels, despite ongoing reports that forced labour • of migrant fishermen remained widespread in Korea's distant and coastal water fishing fleets. • NGO experts reported the government did not implement adequate or frequent inspections of fishing vessels, which resulted in minimal regulation and impunity for boat captains and others who exploited migrant workers, including in forced labour. The government's efforts to investigate trafficking in the fishing industry were also ineffective due to its interview methods of workers, which often involved preannounced visits and were conducted in locations such as the offices of labour unions where fishermen were not comfortable speaking openly. • Article 167(3) of the Seafarer's Act prohibited forced labour on fishing vessels, but the government has reportedly never used this provision to convict trafficking on Korean-flagged vessels. The government also did not report prosecuting any cases involving the exploitation of migrant workers in forced labour in other industries, despite widespread reports from NGOs that this continued to occur. • While the Labor Standards Act applied to all seafarers and prohibited discrimination on the grounds of nationality, the annual Ministerial Notification on the Minimum Wage of Seafarers only set a minimum wage for Korean crewmembers. This allowed employment and fisheries associations, as well as the National Distant Water Fisheries Trade Union, to ultimately decide the minimum wage of migrant fishermen. These wages were not made public, but one NGO reported the minimum wage for migrant fishermen was ten times less than the minimum wage of Korean fishermen and that migrant workers often did not receive holiday or overtime pay. • South Korea is a transit point for Southeast Asian fishermen subjected to forced labour on fishing ships bound for Fiji and other ports in the Pacific. There are ongoing reports of widespread abuse, including forced labour, of migrant workers in the Korean fishing fleet, one of the world's largest distant water fishing fleets. • According to one study, Korean longline fishing vessels spend the longest amount of

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
			time at sea, travel the furthest distances, and have the longest daily fishing hours when compared with the world's 25 largest longline fishing fleets. Recruitment agencies and job brokers often charge fishermen excessive recruitment fees, sometimes as much as $13,000 for Indonesian and Vietnamese fisherman working on vessels in coastal waters, increasing their vulnerability to debt-based coercion. Migrant fishermen on distant water vessels often have the first three months of their wages withheld to serve as a "deposit" that they are unable to receive back until the completion of their contract.
Laos	Tier 2	Same as 2021. Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2019 and Tier 3 in 2018. Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	• Traffickers exploit Lao men and boys in forced labour in Thailand's fishing, construction, and agricultural industries.
Madagascar	Tier 2	Same as 2019 and 2020, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017/2018, Tier 2 in 2016	• Traffickers exploit Malagasy children, mostly from rural and coastal regions, and from impoverished families in urban areas, in child sex trafficking, and forced labour in domestic service, mining, fishing, and agriculture across the country.
Malawi	Tier 2	Same as 2020. Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2019. Tier 2 2016 – 2019	• Traffickers exploit children in forced labour in begging, small businesses, and potentially in the fishing industry.
Maldives	Tier 2	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List 2019 & 2020. No fishing mentions 2018	• Traffickers may have targeted migrant workers on fishing and cargo boats in Maldivian for forced labour.
Marshall Islands	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2019 and 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018, Tier 3 in 2017	• The government continued to take measures to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of vulnerable populations by prohibiting unauthorized visitors on board licensed foreign fishing vessels docked in Majuro; unlike prior reporting periods, the government did not issue immigration day passes for crewmembers due to pandemic restrictions. In the previous reporting period, the government created a digital registry system to track the movement of passengers from the country's main ports increasing oversight of individuals entering and exiting the country. • Hotel and bar staff and family members recruit and transport women and girls and exploit them in sex trafficking with foreign construction workers and crewmembers of foreign fishing and transshipping vessels that dock in Majuro. • Traffickers also exploit some of these foreign fishermen in conditions indicative of forced labour on ships in Marshallese waters.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Mauritania	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Upgraded from Tier 3 2017 - 2019	• Children of Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian descent working in the fisheries sector are vulnerable to forced labour. • Traffickers also exploit Senegalese children in fishing and drug production.
Micronesia	Tier 2	Same as 2016 - 2020	• Sex traffickers exploit Micronesian women and girls through commercial sex with the crew members of docked Asian fishing vessels and on vessels in Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) territorial waters, or with foreign construction workers. Foreign migrants from Southeast Asian countries report working in conditions indicative of human trafficking on Asian fishing vessels in FSM or its territorial waters.
Mongolia	Tier 2	Same as 2019 and 2020, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	• Chinese workers employed in Mongolia are vulnerable to trafficking as contract labourers in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, wholesale and retail trade, automobile maintenance, and mining.
Namibia	Tier 1	Same as 2020. Upgraded from Tier 2 2016 – 2019	• Traffickers may subject children from less affluent neighbouring countries to sex trafficking and forced labour, including in street vending in Windhoek and other cities as well as in the fishing sector.
Pakistan	Tier 2 Watch List	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016 and 2017	• Traffickers also force men, women, and children to work to pay off exaggerated debts in other sectors in Sindh and Punjab and in Balochistan and KP in agriculture and brick kilns and, to a lesser extent, in fisheries, mining, and textile-, bangle-, and carpet making.
Palua	Tier 2 Watch List	Downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2020	• Foreign workers on fishing boats in Palauan waters also experience conditions indicative of human trafficking.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Papua New Guinea	Tier 2 Watch List	Tier 3 2018 – 2020, Tier 2 Watch List in 2017, Tier 3 in 2016	• Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Malaysian, Vietnamese, and local men and boys seeking work on fishing vessels go into debt to pay recruitment fees, which vessel owners and senior crew manipulate to coerce them to continue working indefinitely through debt bondage in Papua New Guinea's exclusive economic zone and in other maritime territories, particularly in tuna fishing. These fishermen may face little to no pay, contract switching, wage garnishing or withholding, harsh working and living conditions, restricted communication, and threats of physical violence as coercive tactics to retain their labour.
Philippines	Tier 1	Same as 2016 -2020	• The government did not prioritize identifying forced labour on fishing vessels and employed notably few inspectors dedicated to conduct inspections on fishing vessels. Labour inspections were suspended during community-wide quarantines related to the pandemic from March through May 2020; full inspections resumed from August onwards. • A significant number of Filipino migrant workers become victims of sex trafficking or labour trafficking in numerous industries, including industrial fishing, • Traffickers increasingly exploit migrants in forced labour among Poland's growing Ukrainian, Belarusian, Filipino, and Vietnamese populations, particularly in agriculture, restaurants, construction, domestic work, and the garment and fish processing industries.
Seychelles	Tier 2	Upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2020. Tier 2 in 2019, Tier 2 Watch List in 2018, Tier 2 in 2017, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016	• Nearly 17,000 migrant workers — including individuals from Bangladesh, India, China, Kenya, Madagascar, and other countries in South Asia — make up approximately 20 percent of the working population in Seychelles and are primarily employed in fishing, farming, and construction; credible reports indicate traffickers subject migrant workers to forced labour in these sectors. • NGOs report traffickers exploit migrant workers aboard foreign-flagged fishing vessels in Seychelles' territorial waters and ports using abuses indicative of forced labour, including non-payment of wages and physical abuse.
Sierra Leone	Tier 2	Same as 2020. Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	• Traffickers exploit victims in fishing and agriculture, and sex trafficking or forced labour through customary practices, such as forced marriages.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Singapore	Tier 1	Same as 2020. Tier 2 in 2016 - 2019	• Singapore law did not prescribe a minimum wage. Under the Employment Act, wages were negotiated and outlined in individual contracts of service. Requirements were less detailed for foreign domestic workers and fishing crews employed locally, who were covered under the EFMA, and for whom employers were legally required to provide a document containing employment terms such as monthly salary, number of rest days, and agency fees. • Some fishing vessel captains of long-haul boats that transit or dock at Singaporean ports use physical abuse to force men to perform labour.
Solomon Islands	Tier 2	Same as 2017 - 2020, Tier 2 Watch List in 2016	• In a nationally syndicated address about the pandemic, Prime Minister Sogavare raised concern about human trafficking in the fishing sector and committed his government to efforts, in partnership with international organizations, to develop a policy framework to eliminate modern slavery and sexual exploitation on national and foreign fishing vessels operating in Solomon Islands' waters. • An international organization, in cooperation with the government, conducted a research study focused on trafficking in the fishing industry; the report was under pre-publication review at the end of the reporting period. • Labour traffickers exploit men from Indonesia and Malaysia in the logging, fishing, palm oil, and mining industries. Fishermen from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, North Korea, and Fiji report situations indicative of labour trafficking, including non-payment of wages, dire living conditions, violence, and limited food supply, on Taiwan-flagged fishing vessels in Solomon Islands' territorial waters and ports. • Some official corruption—especially in relation to facilitating irregular migration and involvement in the fishing and forestry sectors—may enable trafficking.
South Africa	Tier 2 Watch List	Downgraded from Tier 2 in 2020. Tier 2 Watch List in 2018 and 2019, Tier 2 in 2016 and 2017	• In part due to the pandemic, the government did not comprehensively monitor or investigate forced child labour or the labour trafficking of adults in the agricultural, mining, construction, and fishing sectors. • Traffickers force adults and children, particularly those from poor and rural areas and migrants, into labour in domestic service, mining, begging, street vending, food services, criminal activities, agriculture, and the fishing sector. • Traffickers exploit foreign male victims aboard fishing vessels in South Africa's territorial waters.
Suriname	Tier 2	Same as 2019 and 2020, upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2017 and 2018, Tier 3 in 2016	• Adult and child migrant workers in agriculture, retail shops, construction, and on fishing boats off Suriname's coast are at risk of trafficking.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Taiwan	Tier 1	Same as 2016 - 2020	• Insufficient staffing and inspection protocols continued to impede efforts to combat forced labour on Taiwan-flagged and -owned fishing vessels in the highly vulnerable Distant Water Fleet (DWF). Taiwan authorities' lack of specific labour laws ensuring the rights of migrant domestic caregivers left thousands vulnerable to exploitation in forced labour. • In previous years, labour rights groups alleged some low-level corruption among local government officials impeded action against forced labour in the fishing industry, although no such allegations were reported in 2020. • In December, authorities charged another licensed brokerage agency in Yilan under the HTPCA for falsely reporting migrant fishermen as "missing," and for registering others under falsified employment rosters to facilitate their work in separate positions in the informal economy. • The FA reported conducting random inspections on 124 fishing vessels, including 102 at domestic ports, 20 at foreign ports, and two on the high seas, interviewing a total of 658 crewmembers (compared with 199 inspections—82 at domestic ports, 74 at foreign ports, and 43 on the high seas, interviewing a total of 720 crew—in 2019). Inspectors uncovered 141 violations relating to contract issues, excessive overtime, and wage discrepancies (88 in 2019); authorities referred eight cases to prosecutors—six involving Taiwan-flagged DWF vessels and two involving Taiwan-owned, foreign-flagged vessels; six remained under investigation, and inspectors did not report whether the referrals were the result of the aforementioned inspections (three referred under the HTPCA in 2019; three in 2018). • Implementation of monitoring and referral procedures remained insufficient to adequately identify and provide services to forced labour victims among the foreign crewmembers aboard Taiwan-flagged and -owned and Taiwan-flagged, foreign-owned fishing vessels. • Taiwan's Labor Standards Act did not protect fishing workers hired to work aboard DWF vessels, who instead fell under the jurisdiction of the FA. The FA maintained regulations that standardized fishing workers' employment contracts, set a minimum wage with direct payment options, provided medical and life insurance, unified working hours and rest time, and established access to new complaint mechanisms. However, NGOs remained concerned that the minimum compensation established in these regulations remained below Taiwan's broader minimum wage, and that senior vessel crew continued to delay or withhold salary remittance in violation of contractual pay schedules, leaving some foreign fishing workers vulnerable to debt-based coercion.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
			• Documented and undocumented Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, and Vietnamese fishermen working on Taiwan-owned and -flagged and Taiwan-owned, foreign-flagged fishing vessels experience non or under-payment of wages, long working hours, physical abuse, • lack of food or medical care, denial of sleep and substandard safety equipment, and poor living conditions while indebted to complex, multinational brokerage networks through the continued imposition of recruitment fees and deposits. Migrant fishermen have reported senior crewmembers employ such coercive tactics as threats of physical violence, beatings, withholding of food and water, retention of identity documents, wage deductions, and non-contractual compulsory sharing of vessel operational costs to retain their labour. These abuses are particularly prevalent in Taiwan's DWF, comprising 1,140 Taiwan owned and -flagged fishing vessels, as well as on 230 Taiwan-owned, foreign-flagged fishing vessels operating thousands of miles from Taiwan and without adequate oversight. According to FA estimates, approximately 8,000 Filipinos and more than 20,000 Indonesians work onboard DWF vessels.
Tanzania	Tier 2 Watch List ⇔	Same as 2019 and 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 in 2018	• Tanzanian fishermen work on fishing vessels with indicators of trafficking. In 2017, an NGO reported 14 Indonesian trafficking victims were identified aboard a Malaysian-flagged fishing vessel, and in 2018, another NGO reported that 12 Tanzanian trafficking victims were identified aboard a Chinese-flagged fishing vessel, both in Tanzanian territorial waters.
Thailand	Tier 2 Watch List ⇩	Downgraded from Tier 2 2018 - 2020, Tier 2 Watch list in 2016 and 2017	• Thai authorities have never reported identifying a victim of labour trafficking as a result of fishing vessel inspections conducted at ports. • The government reported investigating 14 potential cases of labour trafficking—including two cases involving the fishing sector—a significant decrease compared to 77 in 2019. • NGOs reported inconsistent interviewing practices during vessel inspections continued to result in ineffective efforts to identify labour trafficking victims among migrant fishermen. • In 2020, the government reported conducting labour inspections of 55,818 fishing vessels (44,322 in 2019) and identifying 19 vessels in violation of labour laws (20 in 2019). In addition, it conducted at-sea inspections of 842 vessels, but found only one case involving labour violations, which involved employing workers without seaman's books. in 2020 there were 63 missing fishermen, compared with 29 in 2019.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
			• Workers in the seafood processing and fishing sectors increasingly faced forced overtime as a result of increasing demand for shelf-stable seafood during the pandemic, as well as unsafe working conditions. • Vessel owners, brokers, and senior vessel crew subject Thai, Burmese, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Indonesian men and boys to forced labour on Thai and foreign-owned fishing boats.
Timor Leste	Tier 2 Watch List ⇔	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2019	• The government acknowledged possible trafficking violations in the fishing industry in Timor-Leste's coastal waters and exclusive economic zone to the south; however, the government lacked the vessels, training, and human resources to patrol, inspect, and interdict vessels in its waters and investigate possible trafficking violations on these vessels. • Traffickers exploit foreign fishing crews in forced labour on foreign-flagged vessels that transit Timor-Leste waters.
Uganda	Tier 2 Watch List ⇔	Same as 2020. Downgraded from Tier 2 2016 - 2019	• Ugandan children as young as seven are exploited in forced labour in agriculture, fishing, forestry, cattle herding, mining, stone quarrying, brick making, carpentry, steel manufacturing, street vending, bars, restaurants, and domestic service.
United Kingdom	Tier 1 ⇔	Same as 2016 - 2020	• Traffickers force adults and children to work in agriculture, cannabis cultivation, construction, food processing, factories, domestic service, nail salons, food services, the hospitality industry, and car washes, as well as on fishing boats.
United States of America	Tier 1 ⇔	Same as 2016 - 2020	• DOJ convened an interagency task force that, after consulting external stakeholders, submitted to Congress a report that examined the US government's legal and regulatory authorities to address forced labour in fishing in international waters, and the legal and jurisdictional challenges preventing it from acting effectively, and made recommendations to address gaps in the legal and regulatory framework.
Uruguay	Tier 2 ⇔	Same as 2017 - 2020	• Foreign workers, mainly from Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Argentina, are exploited in forced labour in construction, domestic service, cleaning services, elderly care, wholesale stores, textile industries, agriculture, fishing, and lumber processing. • From 2018 to 2020, 17 crew member deaths were associated with Taiwan-, Chinese-, and other foreign-flagged fishing vessels docked at the Montevideo port and in Uruguay's waters; before 2018, observers reported an average of 11 crewmember deaths per year. Foreign workers aboard these vessels are subjected to abuses indicative of forced labour, including unpaid wages, confiscated identification documents, and physical abuse, and there are anecdotal reports of murder at sea.

Country	Rating		Commentary
	Current (2021)	Previous	
Vanuatu	Tier 2 ⇔	Same as 2020. New entry in 2020.	• Traffickers target low skilled foreign workers in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, mining, fishing, logging, construction, and domestic service. • Foreign fishermen working on board Vanuatuan-flagged, Taiwan owned vessels have experienced indicators of forced labour, including deceptive recruitment practices, abuse of vulnerability, excessive overtime, withholding of wages, physical and sexual violence, and abusive living and working conditions on board. • Forced labour and child sex trafficking occur on fishing vessels in Vanuatu.
Vietnam	Tier 2 Watch List ⇔	Same as 2019 and 2020, downgraded from Tier 2 2016 -2018	• Traffickers subject victims to forced labour in construction, fishing, agriculture, mining, maritime industries, logging, and manufacturing, primarily in Taiwan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Laos, Japan, and to a lesser extent, some parts of Europe and the UK (including in nail salons and on cannabis farms

Seafish work on social responsibility

For further information see:

- **Seafish social responsibility in seafood web page.**
  See: https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/social-responsibility-in-seafood/

- **Seafish fact sheet. Social responsibility in seafood – Seafish role. April 2019.**
  See: https://www.seafish.org/document/?id=82FED629-E4A3-4178-A674-02726E406B41

- **Tools for Ethical Seafood Sourcing (TESS).** TESS is an online tool signposting users to numerous online resources and initiatives that support socially responsible business practices.
  See: http://www.seafish.org/tess/

- **Assessment of worker welfare issues in UK seafood supply chains.**
  See: https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/social-responsibility-in-seafood/assessment-of-worker-welfare-issues/

- **Country profiles**
  See: https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/social-responsibility-in-seafood/assessment-of-worker-welfare-issues/#z-country-profiles-2

For more information please contact:

Karen Green
Industry Issues and Communications

T: 01480 431500
M: 07515 993499
E: karen.green@seafish.co.uk

Seafish
Origin Way
Europarc
Grimsby
N Lincs
DN37 9TZ

www.seafish.org

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