

Thailand Sea Fisheries and Protection of Sea Fishers under C.188

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Abstract

Thailand ratified C 188 in 2019 after being given a Yellow Card from EU on IUU fishing in 2015. One major aspect of illegality is related to the exploitation of Thai and migrant sea fishers. ARCM-ILO study in 2013 found three aspects of forced labor indicators practised among employers especially in the overseas fishing industry: wage withholding, lack of work contract, and inadequate and irregular rest hours. The government inaugurated the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015) to prevent IUU fishing, preserve aquatic resources and environment, and achieve good governance in management of sea resources and labor. It set up a Command Center for Combatting Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) to oversee the fishing and employment practices and address the forced labor situation. The interventions were successful and the yellow card was lifted in 2019. However, the complaints from vessel owners via National Fisheries Association of Thailand (NFAT) call for the revision of the Ordinance to relax the measures mainly on the on-board transfer of catches and sea fishers, and the cancellation of the required namelist of sea fishers together with seamen book and pay slip to be submitted at the port-out inspection. The CSOs criticized such call for relax as the deregulation and deviation from C.188 while the newly elected government agreed with the relaxation in the ongoing debates.

Speaker Profile

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