



Addressing Forced Labour and Child Labour in Fishing

ILO's Strategy



Forced labour and child labour in fishing



Key statistics

128,000 in forced labour

A very conservative estimate of the number of fishers in forced labour in 2021 published in the latest global estimates

ILO, IOM, Walk Free: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery 2022

Prevalence surveys currently underway in Indonesia, Ghana and South Africa to give a more accurate picture

70% of all children in child labour or 112 million are in agriculture.

Child labour takes place in family subsistence and smallholder farming, commercial plantations and other forms of commercial farming, agro-industrial complexes, **capture fisheries, aquaculture, postharvest fish processing** and forestry.





ILO's strategy



Key elements of the ILO strategy to address forced labour in fishing

Global level

- ▶ Foster political commitment to **ratify and implement relevant conventions (Convention 188 and Forced Labour Protocol 29)**
- ▶ Follow a “decent work approach” as opposed to enforcement only
- ▶ Focus on **vulnerable populations** (migrant fishers and local fishers on long trips at sea)
- ▶ Cover the **entire journey** of migrant fishers, including the establishment of Migrant Resource Centres that offer pre-departure trainings and Fishers’ Welfare Centres in Port States that offer psychosocial support and referrals in cases of abuse.
- ▶ Raise awareness through **global estimates and new survey methodologies**
- ▶ Capacity building and cooperation with **global social partners**
- ▶ Support the **advancement of use of digital technology** developed for remote detection



▶ 11 indicators / red flags of forced labour

- ▶ Abuse of vulnerability
- ▶ Deception
- ▶ Restriction of movement
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Physical and sexual violence
- ▶ Intimidation and threats
- ▶ Retention of identity documents
- ▶ Withholding of wages
- ▶ Debt bondage
- ▶ Abusive working and living conditions
- ▶ Excessive overtime



Forced labour indicators addressed by C188

▶ Withholding of wages

“Each Member, after consultation, shall adopt laws, regulations or other measures providing that fishers who are paid a wage are ensured a monthly or other regular payment.”

▶ Debt bondage

“Each Member shall, by means of laws, regulations or other measures: (...) require that no fees or other charges for recruitment or placement of fishers be borne directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, by the fisher” (...) “the food and water shall be provided by the fishing vessel owner at no cost to the fisher.”

▶ Abusive living and working conditions

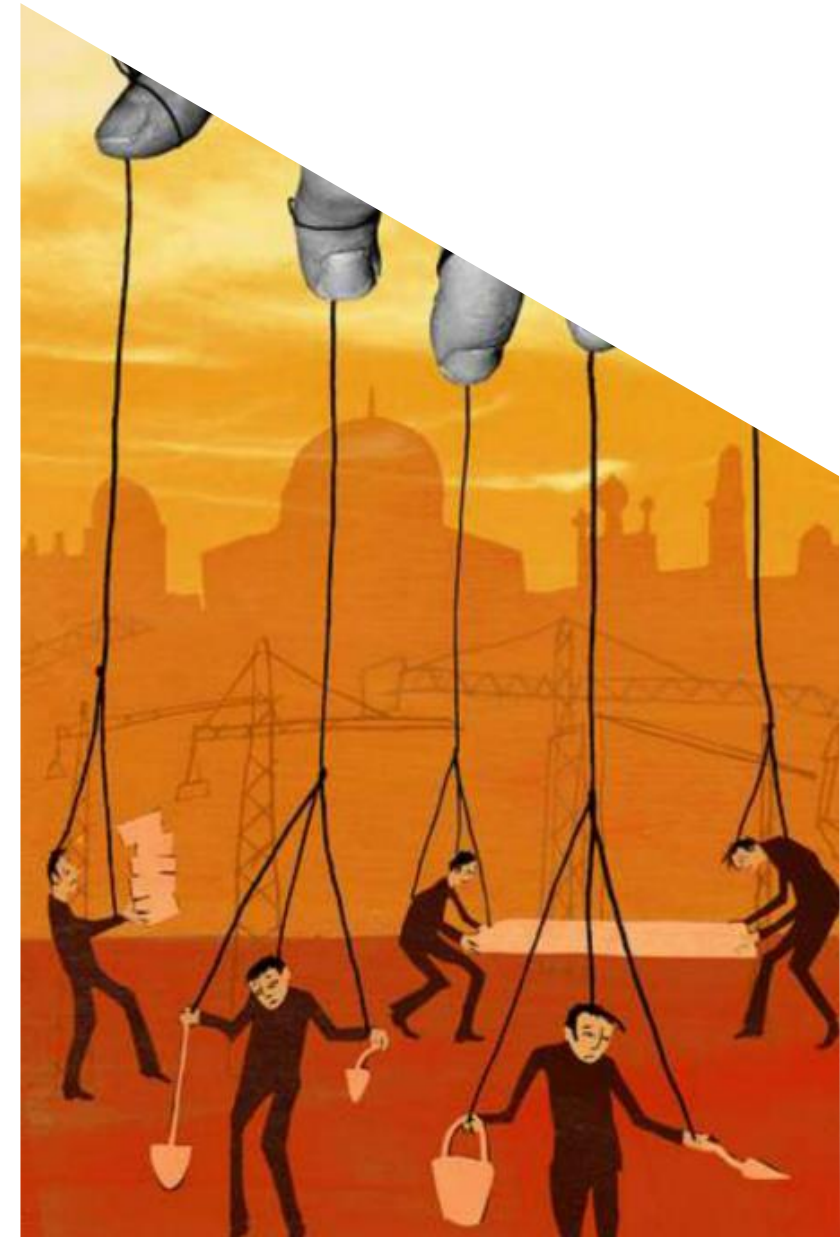
“Each Member shall adopt laws, regulations or other measures requiring that accommodation on board fishing vessels that fly its flag shall be of sufficient size and quality and appropriately equipped for the service of the vessel and the length of time fishers live on board.”

▶ Excessive overtime

Fishing vessels regardless of size remaining at sea for more than three days, after consultation and for the purpose of limiting fatigue, establish the minimum hours of rest to be provided to fishers. Minimum hours of rest shall not be less than: (i) ten hours in any 24-hour period; and (ii) 77 hours in any seven-day period..

▶ Deception

“Fishers must have a written work agreement signed by both parties and in conformity with C188 and Annex II, a copy of which must be made available to the fisher and to other concerned parties. It is the fishing vessel operator’s responsibility to ensure that fishers have the required work agreement. The agreement is to set out certain specific particulars that cover information on the fisher, fishing vessel owners, method of payment, etc...”



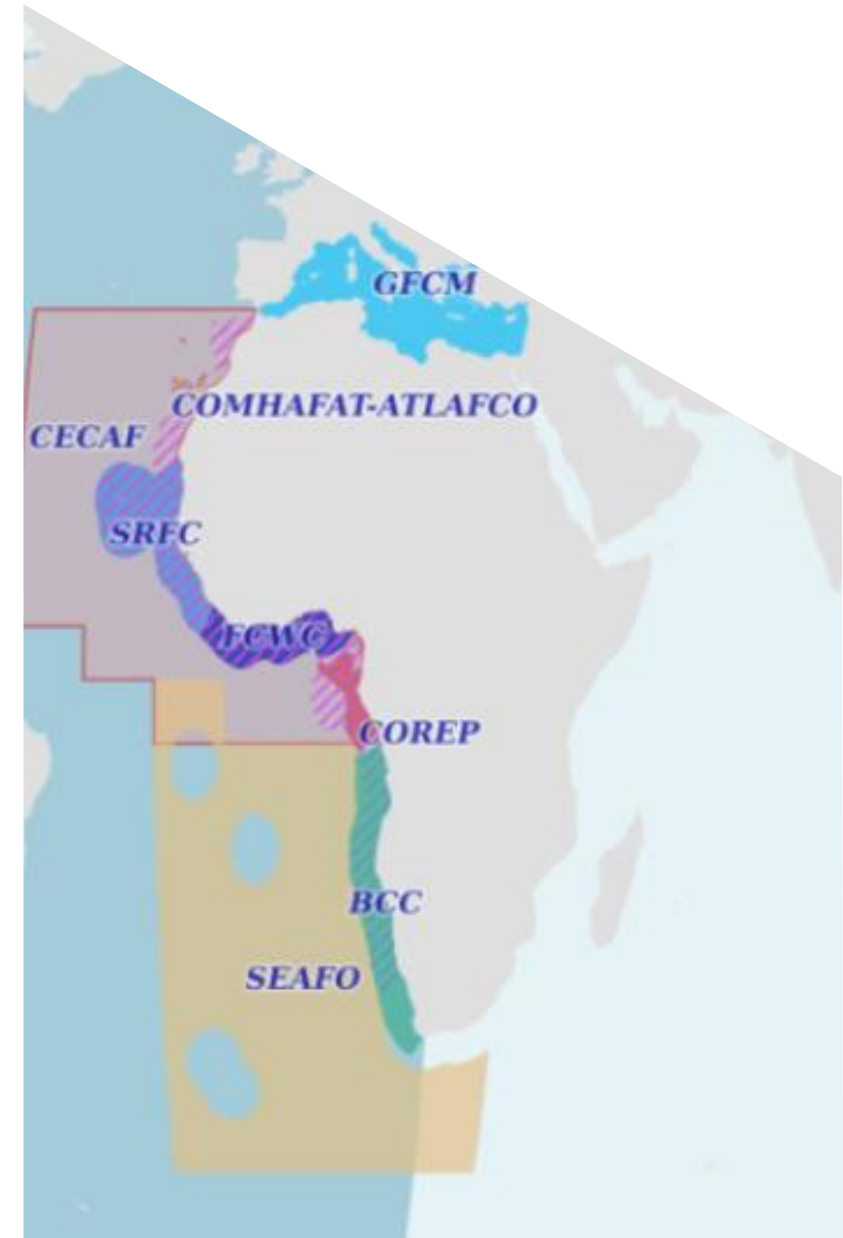
▶ Key elements of the ILO strategy to address forced labour in fishing

Regional level

- ▶ Collaborate with Regional Fishery Bodies and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations to include the eradication of forced labour in regional policies

Examples:

- ▶ ICCAT adopted a non-binding Resolution on Core Principles on Labour Standards in ICCAT Fisheries at its last regular meeting in November 2023 **which specifically references forced labour**
- ▶ Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) has developed a draft Protocol on Labour Standards for Crew **and the Elimination of Forced Labour on Fishing Vessels** in the FCWC Region



▶ Key elements of the ILO strategy to address forced labour in fishing

National level

- ▶ Foster political commitment to ratify and implement relevant conventions (C188 and P29) through promotion of tripartite dialogue
- ▶ Conduct innovative surveys to measure forced labour in fishing in various countries
- ▶ Capacity building for port authorities to undertake inspections and follow up in cases of abuse and on coordination mechanisms
- ▶ Capacity building for workers' and employers' organisations to negotiate labour standards in fishing, provide fishers access to information and remedies, promote dialogues between all actors in the fishing supply chain
- ▶ Support the advancement and uptake of digital technology developed for remote detection



▶ Key elements of the ILO strategy to address child labour in fishing

- ▶ Conducting and sharing gender-sensitive **research, data, and good practices** on child labour and its root causes, as well as monitoring and impact evaluation
- ▶ Developing, implementing, evaluating and scaling up **tools and models of intervention to address child labour that are focused on prevention, effective policy responses and systems-level change**
- ▶ **Convening tripartite constituents and a broad range of other stakeholders** to develop consensus, mainstream tools and models, and encourage replication of good practices
- ▶ Work with governments and other stakeholders to ingrate **social protection as a means of addressing child labour** and child forced labour in their socioeconomic development programmes and action plans. This includes expanding **national health insurance schemes** by ensuring vulnerable households are registered.





Tools for addressing forced labour and child labour in fishing



▶ **New publication!**

Towards Freedom at Sea: The Detection of Forced Labour in Commercial Fishing

- ▶ Establishes the legal framework for addressing forced labour in fishing
- ▶ Gives step by step guidance on the detection of and response to forced labour in fishing
- ▶ Contains 9 tools including: indicators specific to fishing, vessel documentation review, standard checklist for on-board inspection, protocol for interviews with crew, detailed questionnaire for fishers, specific questionnaire on pay structure, protocol for follow up and referral



► **Upcoming publication!**

Update of the FAO-ILO Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

- Will take into account the impact of the evolving megatrends such as demographic transition, globalization, technological advancement and environmental degradation and climate change
- Will include a desk-based review of national policies and practices, legal frameworks, and programmes, including development cooperation initiatives, to identify good practices to address child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Will include an analysis of national labour and/or household surveys and other quantitative data sources as part of efforts to establish a knowledge base on the incidence of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Will contribute to the prevention and elimination of child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector by assisting governments and development partners to better recognize risks leading to child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, and to take action including in mainstreaming child labour considerations in relevant development and management policies, strategies and plans.
- Relevant to fishers' organizations, fish farmers, fishers and employers, and other stakeholders in both the formal and informal economy, as it guides the development of practical pathways to address child labour and provide support to stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.



▶ Additional slides if needed during Q&A

How does detection work at the national level?

Remote risk assessment

Suspicious activities	Forced labour indicators
Discrepancy between the size of the vessel and the number of crew on board	Abusive living and working conditions; Excessive overtime
Excessive number of days at sea	Restriction of movement; Isolation; Abusive living and working conditions
Licences, taxes and work agreements invalid or incomplete	
Change of port or transshipment	Isolation; Deception
Record of previous human rights abuses	All

How does detection work at the national level?

Remote risk assessment – analysis of documentation

Suspicious activities	Forced labour indicators
Discrepancies in the crew listed and the crew on board	Abuse of vulnerability
Lack of work agreements or work agreements in a language the crew do not speak	Deception; Abuse of vulnerability
Repetitive/uniform working hours recorded	Abusive living and working conditions; Excessive overtime
Repetitive salaries or discrepancies in salaries recorded and payment receipts	Deception; Withholding of wages
Lack of record of injuries, on board health issues	Abusive living and working conditions
Passports held by the captain	Retention of identity documents; Isolation

How does detection work at the national level?

Risk assessment on board: Inspection of accommodation and working areas

Suspicious activities	Forced labour indicators
Lack of SAFE drinking water and food	Abusive living and working conditions
Lack of adequate sleeping area (too cramped, no mattresses, etc.).	Abusive living and working conditions
Lack of safety equipment	Abusive living and working conditions