Trafficking and Forced Labour of Thai Males in Deep-Sea Fishing

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First published: March 2011

Quantity: 3,000 Copies

Published by:
Mirror Foundation, Anti-Human Trafficking Center
8/12 Vipavadi-Rangsit Ave.
Ladyao, Chatuchak
Bangkok 10900
Acknowledgements

The study on the forced labour of Thai men in deep-sea fishing was supported by the International Labour Organization, several public and private agencies contributed assistance during the field work. Special thanks are due to agencies under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Labour and Royal Thai Police. Non-government organizations that extended invaluable help and information are the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation and the Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan).

In addition, labour brokers, boat managers, boat owners, the Fisheries Association of Thailand and the Thai Deep-Sea Fishing Association provided useful information.

What also has been highly appreciated is the information from victims who contacted Anti-Human Trafficking Center, thus making it possible for the research team to dive into the heart of the issue.

The research team wishes to thank the officials of ILO–IPEC Thailand for their help and advice. The team is most grateful to Associate Professor Saksri Boribarnbanpotkate for her contribution as technical advisor.

We hope that the findings of the study will be useful and become informative for a more focused effort to reduce human trafficking and forced labour in the fishing sector.

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Thai men are disappearing from the streets of Bangkok and ending up enslaved on fishing ships, sometimes for years. Boys are taken as well. Often new to an area and looking for work, they are befriended by a broker who offers them a different job or traps them in a false debt. They are forced to fish in deep seas, typically beyond Thai waters, with no pay and no freedom to leave the boat, unless they jump ship.

How long this has been going on is a guess. So are the numbers of men and boys enslaved. The number of boats going out from Thailand is considered a shady calculation because many boats are not properly registered.

In 2009, 25,138 medium- and large-sized fishing boats were registered with the Marine Department. Knowing that boats of that size require a crew of 5–40 workers but presuming a typical crew size of 10 and presuming that there are far more boats operating than what are registered, the Mirror Foundation researchers estimate there are at least 250,000 workers on Thai fishing boats. They don’t believe all of them are there against their will. But they worry the numbers are far greater than anyone imagines.

The Federation of Thai Industries estimates there is a shortage of 10,000 workers for jobs on fishing boats and in fish-processing factories (the information does not separate the need for fishermen and factory workers). A shortage of workers fuels the trafficking and forced labour of people to fill the gap.

Whatever the number of Thai males forced to work as slaves on fishing trawlers, they are only a portion of the overall victims. The Mirror researchers believe that most of the fishing boat crews are foreign migrants, typically smuggled over the border and then parcelled around to various boats. They are predominantly from Myanmar but also from Cambodia and occasionally from Lao PDR. Some are told they will be at sea for a few days or at most two to three months. Some are told there is a construction or factory job waiting for them, only to be taken directly to a pier.

What is certainly clear is that crimes are being committed against Thai males. Prior to mid 2008 they were crimes of forced labour of men and underage boys. Since mid 2008 and the enactment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, there are now crimes of human trafficking for labour exploitation on fishing boats.

1 Marine Department web site at http://www.md.go.th/eng_page/history_eng.php. However, there is some uncertainty about the number of boats, partly because so many go unregistered. According to a 2009 Food and Agriculture Organization report, “a census survey of marine fisheries in 2000 established a total of 58,119 fishing boats, of which 80 per cent were small-scale. The commercial boats thus numbered around 11,600.” That same report noted that in 2006, there were 12,552 registered fishing vessels. (FAO. August 2009. “National fishery sector overview: Thailand”. In Fishery and aquaculture country profile, pg 2, at ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/fcp/en/FI_CP_TH.pdf)

2 The 2010 Human Rights Watch report on the abuse of migrant workers in Thailand (From the Tiger to the Crocodile) notes that, “[a]ccording to the London-based International Transport Workers Federation, 250,000 Burmese migrant fishermen and women work in Thailand’s fishing industry, at sea and in fish-processing factories.”

3 Santi Vilassakdanont, President of Federation of Thai Industries, Post Today newspaper, 31 July 2008.
This report focuses mostly on the Thai situation. It reflects the findings from a study that the Mirror Foundation initiated to learn more about the increasing number of missing persons reports they were receiving on Thai males. However, the Mirror researchers have been drawn into raids that involved foreign migrants, and what they have learned has been included here. The report is offered as the basis for further research or programme response to human rights violations and crimes for labour exploitation.

1.1 Mirror Foundation study

In 2002, the Mirror Foundation set up a Missing Persons Center with a hotline, followed by an Anti-Human Trafficking Center in 2006 for reporting cases, suspicions or useful information. The hotline and centres were staffed with Thai speakers only, so cases that were received referred to missing Thai persons. Over a four-year period, there were 23 calls regarding men who had gone missing.

All the cases had the same scenario: A young to middle-aged man had left the provinces to go to Bangkok to find work and vanished without a trace.

But then came a report in 2007 of a Thai man who had escaped a fishing boat while at sea and swam to shore in Malaysia. He turned himself into the police, hoping to be deported home. It took him a couple months, but he was eventually sent back. His family had reported him missing to the Mirror Foundation, so they called again to inform them of his return.

When the Mirror staff talked with the returned man, he told them there were many others like him who had been tricked and forced to work on a fishing boat. At the time, a fishing boat had never entered anyone’s mind at the Mirror Foundation as a possibility for the missing Thai males.

Twenty-three calls in four years is not much. But missing middle-aged men sent up a red flag to the Mirror staff who had been chasing down other trafficking situations. The Mirror staff were aware that foreign migrants were trafficked onto fishing boats but they didn’t realize that Thai men and boys were being forced into the fishing labour as well. They wanted to know more.

In 2008, Mirror organized a study of fishing boat work. Over the course of four months, a team of researchers fanned out across six provinces and the Bangkok capital, interviewing victims, fishing crew, boat captains, police, provincial marine officers and other authorities, Thai fishing association officials and NGO workers. They read through newspaper reports and found a few related academic studies.

The Mirror study began in May and carried on through September 2008. With both financial and technical support from the International Labour Organization.

This report is the product of that half-year investigation. In addition to finding 55 Thai victims during the study (and interviewing 28 more who were deported as a group from Malaysia in 2009), the researchers learned firsthand how men from Myanmar were tricked into fishing boat work and heard reports of Cambodian and Lao migrants who were also deceived. During their research, Mirror worked with the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN) and police in Samut Sakhon in two raids that turned up 20 foreign migrants waiting
to be assigned to boats. In late 2009 they joined with LPN, the police and other agencies in another raid on a house where nearly 200 men, all from Myanmar, were locked up, awaiting departure to fishing boats; this report includes what Mirror learned from joining the interviews with the 51 men declared trafficking victims in that raid.

1.2 Impact of the study

Partly as a result of the Mirror Foundation’s work, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) set up a Subcommittee on Trafficking in the Fishing Sector in 2009 to develop public policy and measures to address the problems. The Mirror Foundation was invited for inputs in the provincial meetings in 19 provinces in the North, Northeast and the South. In addition, new regional networks and working procedures were developed, including a multidisciplinary network in the South that involves the provincial and central units of the MSDHS, the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation, the Royal Thai Consulate, the Royal Thai Navy, the Fishing Association of Thailand, the Transportation Company and other NGOs.

There has been an increase in evidence-based awareness campaigns, including a 45-second radio message that the Mirror Foundation produced in collaboration with the Provincial Operation Centres on the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (attached to the MSDHS) in 19 provinces. The Mirror Foundation also established an awareness-raising website (www.notforsale.in.th) on the trafficking of Thai men and boys for fishing.

1.3 Mirror Foundation

Based in Bangkok, the Mirror Foundation is a non-government organization that began by first working on community development and the promotion of volunteer services. It continues those services but has grown into an organization whose mission is to combat all forms of exploitation, forced child labour and human trafficking. The Mirror Foundation operates its community development activities in the hill tribe communities of Chiang Rai province. Its Volunteer Spirit project operates in the tsunami-affected areas in Phang-Nga in the South. Its Bangkok-based Missing Persons Center and Anti-Human Trafficking Center receive reports of missing children and adults and conducts surveys and campaigns to combat human trafficking and child exploitation.

All of its main projects mobilize and supervise volunteers to learn, address and contribute to social services. In addition, the Mirror Foundation produces local radio and television programmes and develops and maintains websites for NGOs and academics. It has been a forefront campaigner on child and youth participation, on granting nationality to stateless people, on putting a stop to the child-begging business and promoting volunteerism. The Mirror Foundation works with partner network organizations from the public and private sectors, including media and civil society, to reduce the magnitude of trafficking in persons in Thailand and in the Mekong subregion. Since 2004 when the Anti-Human Trafficking Center opened, the Mirror Foundation has worked with the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Children, Provincial Police Region 7 and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in helping deep-sea fishing workers who were victims of trafficking.
Thailand has more than 2,500 kilometres of coastline
2.1 The seafood demand – the export market

Thailand is one of the world’s primary suppliers of seafood products, both fresh and processed. The fisheries industry contributes significantly to Thailand’s economy. The industry provides employment to a large number of people in both the fishing and the processing sectors and in related industries, such as cooling, freezing, packaging, ice making and shipping.

Thailand is also one of the world’s top-ten fishing nations in terms of total catch. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its annual (*The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2008*), Thailand ranked third (behind China and Norway) in 2008 in the top-ten exporters of fish and fishery products, with a value of US$5 billion.

The most significant species of fish caught for export product are: threadfin bream, Indo-Pacific mackerel, coastal tuna, bigeye snapper, squids, sardines, round scad and anchovies. Other export products, which also derive from aquaculture, include fresh and frozen prawn (black tiger, white, pink and freshwater), processed shrimp (boiled, frozen breaded, stretched shrimp and shrimp stick) and surimi. Major export markets are the European Union countries, the United States, Japan, Canada, Singapore, Republic of Korea and Australia.

Shrimp and shrimp products contribute the most to export earnings, making Thailand one of the world’s three largest exporters (in 2007, export value was $1.75 billion). According to the FAO’s annual report on global fisheries and aquaculture, Thailand is the largest exporter of squid and cuttlefish (from the Gulf of Thailand).

Thailand is also one of the world’s major exporters of canned tuna, but it only captures a small portion of the tuna it needs, importing the bulk of the demand.

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6 Estimated employed population is 2 million, 40 per cent of them in fishing work and the other 60 per cent in the processing and supporting industries. FAO. August 2009. pg 8.


8 op. cit. FAO. August 2009, pg 2.

9 Pulverized white fish used to imitate other products. The most common surimi product in the Western market is artificial crab legs. It can be sold as “sea legs” and “krab” as well as seafood sticks, crab sticks, fish sticks or seafood extender.

10 op. cit. Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. 2000.


The fish caught by deep-sea trawlers are sorted when the catch is brought to a pier. What fish is not sold for export or for domestic processing is treated as “trash fish” and sold to factories producing animal feed. In 2006, according to the FAO, 55 per cent of the commercial fishing catch was used for food fish and 28 per cent for trash fish.\textsuperscript{13} The fish catch from several boats is often bundled together, which makes it difficult to track the fish caught by forced labour.

### 2.2 Commercial fishing boats

Commercial deep-sea fishing boats are either fully owned by Thais or as a joint venture between Thais and someone from a neighbouring country, such as Viet Nam, Indonesia or Malaysia.\textsuperscript{14} Some fishing boat fleets are owned by wealthy family businesses; a few of the family business tycoons are also Thai politicians.

These days, Thai men typically won’t seek out deep-sea fishing boat work, the Mirror researchers learned from their canvassing of workers in many of the country’s ports. It is tough, gruelling and poorly rewarded work. Men are gone to sea for months or even years at a time, earning around 4,000–6,000 baht (US$125–$188) a month in wages – when they work with an honest captain. The hours of actual work are nearly around the clock, every day of the week.

Technological advances in engines, fuel and boat designs, coupled with international treaties that allow foreign fishing fleets safe harbour have increased the efficiency of commercial operations and allowed fishing boats to stay at sea for months at a time. Fish can be cleaned on board and frozen for extended storage. To more efficiently harvest fish, large companies have developed the concept of multiple fishing boats and a “mother” boat for processing and storing fish. Big boats can go two weeks without needing to refuel; some boats refuel while out at sea.

Thailand’s marine fisheries consist of small-scale fishing and commercial fishing. The commercial boats weight at least 5 gross tonnes. Boats are classified by the type of net used: trawl, falling net, purse seine, encircling gillnet and large drift net; they differ in terms of fixed in one location, dragged along by a boat or left free to drift with the current.

Trawling involves dragging a cone-shaped net behind the boat, capturing fish as it goes. Along with unintentional catches, the damage to sea floor can be enormous. Gillnetting is a curtain of netting that fish swim into, becoming entangled by the gills when they try to back out. A purse seine is a net that encircles a school of fish, most typically tuna, and the bottom is closed like a drawstring and the trapped fish are pulled up onto the boat deck.\textsuperscript{15} “Dredging” is a framed mesh bag that is dragged along the sea bottom, scooping up scallops, clams and other shellfish. This method, of course, disturbs the ecosystem on the sea floor and catches unintended fish.

There are two types of trawlers used by Thai companies: a single trawler and a double trawler. The single trawler works alone with its net. The double trawler is actually two boats pulling one net between them. The “mother” boat (also called a “tour” boat) typically collects the fish haul every 15 days or once a month from boats. The mother boat then delivers the fish to a pier to unload.

Some 41 per cent of the registered Thai boats in 2006 were trawlers, followed by 25 per cent using the stick-held falling net. Trawlers and push netters are not allowed to fish within 3,000 meters from the shore.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} op. cit. FAO. August 2009. pg 2.
\textsuperscript{14} Royal Danish Embassy in Thailand (April 2007) \textit{The business opportunities in Thailand’s fishery industry}.
\textsuperscript{15} Environmental and animal rights organizations have decried this method, since it traps not only the target fish, but dolphins, sharks, sea turtles and other unintended catch.
\textsuperscript{16} op. cit. FAO. August 2009. pp 2-3.
**Registration of boats and crew member documentation**

Thai law requires that deep-sea fishing boats operate with a permit from the Marine Department as well as a registration permit and a license from the Department of Fisheries.

**Boat registration**

Each boat needs a registration permit from the Marine Department (until 2002, known as the Harbour Department), which monitors the coming and going of all boats in and out of the ports. The Immigration Department is responsible for monitoring all boats leaving Thai waters to ensure that the crew is properly documented. In practice, inspections rarely take place.

In addition to registering and inspecting boats, the Marine Department is supposed to (among many duties) control domestic and international waterway traffic to ensure convenience as well as safety, promote the economic and safe transport of goods by sea, promote water tourism on the major rivers and the sea, and protect the marine environment, including the coastline, against erosion.  

A boat captain is required to fax or send a form of departure to the provincial port authority and to the Marine Department. When the boat returns to port, the captain is supposed to again inform the Marine Department. According to informants for the study, rarely do boat captains notify the authorities of their going and coming. Failure to have a proper permit from the Marine Department results in a fine of 500–5,000 baht, which is regarded as light.

The second license, which is a license to catch fish, comes from the Department of Fisheries. Actually, three types of licenses are issued to fishermen and commercial companies: a fishing license, a fishing gear licence and a leasing-area license.

The Department of Fisheries, which is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, manages the fishing industry, covering fishing and fish processing. It thus monitors both the equipment used in fishing so that certain fish are not harmed. Failure to produce a Department of Fisheries license results in a fine of 2,000 baht and a possible jail term of one month.

The Department of Fisheries collects taxes and tariffs in the management of a steady fish supply for both national consumption and export. It also is supposed to oversee the implementation of various laws: the Fisheries Act (1947 revised in 1953 and 1985), the Wildlife Conservation and Production Act (1992), the Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act (1992), the Hazardous Substance Act (1992), among others. It conducts studies, research, and experiments as well as looks to find fishing grounds beyond Thai waters and promote fisheries cooperation with other countries as well as occupations relating to fisheries.

Both the permit and license need to be renewed on an annual basis, every 1 April.

To fish in foreign territory, a boat must have a license from the government of that country. Overseas fishing licenses vary in terms of their validity. Indonesia, for example, grants one-year licenses, or concessions, while Cambodia requires that it be renewed every 45 days. Although prices will vary, the Mirror researchers only received information about Indonesian fees: a license costs around US$65,000 per year, and processing fees can run beyond $30,000. The securing of a license is described as a heavily bribe-filled process, but no details were provided. Thai boat representatives typically hire someone in another country to make the arrangements.

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17 Marine Department website at http://www.md.go.th/eng_page/history_eng.php

The Deep-Sea Offshore Fishing Association in Thailand has around 300 boat-owning members. The association acts as broker on behalf of its members to secure their license from other governments to fish in their waters. The association also helps arrange the delivery of fuel, ice and fishermen.

Victims of forced fishing labour have reported that only when boats needed to renew their concession or other permits would it come to shore, but the crew would not be allowed off the boat. Alternatively, the crew would be transferred to another boat to wait while their boat renewed its documents.

A boat owner may register one or a few boats but actually be operating several more boats at the same time. The Marine Department in each province maintains a database of all registered boats. In one case of forced labour, the investigating police found that the boat owner had one license but operated 16 boats.

**Crew registration**

All fishing boat workers are required to have a seaman’s book, which requires either a Thai identity card or a passport to obtain. A foreign worker can legally obtain a seaman’s book if he has proper working papers. The Marine Department issues the book, which costs 500 baht, but only as a record of a worker’s skill. It is to be stamped when a boat leaves and returns to a dock. Anyone leaving Thai waters is required to have a passport, but of course no fishing boat worker does. Foreign immigration authorities recognize the seaman’s book as a kind of passport; if someone is caught without his seaman’s book in foreign waters, he will be arrested for illegal entry. Use of a fraudulent seaman’s book is subject to a one- to three-year prison term.

In interviews during the Mirror study, however, some victims said they never saw their seaman’s book, which the captain kept. Informants also noted that some immigration officers don’t like to stamp seaman’s books because they know they’re counterfeit and if caught, they would be responsible and possibly punished. In practice, Thais forced into working on a boat are often given a fake seaman’s book, typically with someone else’s name in it although the photo is changed to be that of the worker. Informants also noted that foreign crew members are given a Thai seaman’s book.

One of the informants in the Mirror research used to work for a fishing boat company and was responsible for having counterfeit seaman’s books made. But not all books are counterfeit; some are real and just passed around, with only the photo changing.

**Ports and provinces with fishery activities**

Thailand has more than 2,500 kilometers of coastline, most of it along the Gulf that runs out to the Pacific Ocean. That coastline runs through 25 provinces. The primary fishing boat ports are:

- Songkhla (the biggest)
- Pattani
- Samut Sakhon
- Trat
- Samut Prakan.

Fish processing factories are predominantly located in:

- Samut Sakhon
- Nakhon Prathom
- Samut Prakan
- Songkhla.
2.3 Where the boats fish

Thai-registered boats fish in many directions. Thailand has cooperative arrangements with Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Myanmar and Somalia. Boats have fished, and may continue to fish, in Australia, India, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Fish caught as a result of the cooperative arrangements typically are brought back to Thailand for sale on the domestic market or for processing.\(^{19}\)

Not all fishing boats with forced labour head to international waters. Many are fishing in the Gulf of Thailand and in the Andaman Sea. Of Thailand’s total marine catch, an estimated 60 per cent is caught in Thai waters (41 per cent in the Gulf of Thailand and 19 per cent in the Andaman Sea).

**Eastern seaboard**

Situated in Sattahip district in Chon Buri province, the Samae San pier looks just like another fishing pier dotted with several privately run fish markets. Most boats coming and going from Samae San keep to the Gulf of Thailand to fish. The Thais call these boats Nha Baan’, meaning “boats fishing in front of the house”. Sometimes they might sail into Cambodian waters. Each fishing cycle lasts from 15 to 60 days.

Over the past decade, the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN), a Thai NGO based in Samut Sakhon province engages in activities involving the rights and protection of foreign migrants and their families in several provinces. The LPN also has received complaints from foreign migrants that they were forced to work on fishing boats not far from Thailand’s shore line. The reports indicated many men were detained ashore before being resold to another fishing boat.

Over a three-month period in 2009, the Mirror researchers were included in the investigation and ultimately three raids on houses where there were suspicions of fishermen locked up. The LPN coordinated with the Department of Special Investigation, the Division for Suppressing Human Trafficking Offences, the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women, the Centre for the Protection of Children’s Rights, the Provincial Police Region 7 and the Marine Police to rescue workers in the Samae San area. In the first two raids, they rescued 10 foreign migrants. The third raid, which took place in Trang province, led to the discovery of nearly 200 foreign migrants; 51 of them were identified as trafficking victims.

**Southern seaboard**

In September 2009, the Mirror Foundation’s Anti-Human Trafficking Center received a request for help from a fishing boat worker who was Thai and who had escaped. He reported that there were many other workers trapped on the boat who also needed help. According to his statement, he and the others were sold to a fishing boat at the Songkhla fishing port. The boat went to fish in the Gulf of Thailand near Pattani province. The escaped worker, who was 45 at the time, said that he had worked on the boat for more than 18 months without pay. He was given no rest, even when ill. When he requested to be taken ashore, the captain refused. He finally opted to jump overboard when the boat was not too far out and was picked up by the Pattani Marine Police. The man said that the boat he worked on belonged to a company that had a fleet of five boats fishing nearby. When one boat went to shore, its crew would be sent to another boat at sea so that they could never go ashore and run away.

According to another informant, there are also boats operating in a similar manner – with forced labour – in Songkhla and Pattani provinces.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) op. cit. FAO. August 2009. pg 12.

\(^{20}\) The wife of a boat captain, whom she said did not use forced labour.
2.4 The traditional recruitment of fishermen

Prior to 1989, Thai fishing boats readily found crew among Thais from the country’s landlocked north-eastern region because significant income-earning options were limited. Economic expansion and with it the construction industry and proliferation of export factory production had yet to take off. If fishing boat workers at that time learned to save and live frugally, they would bring home hundreds of thousands of baht at the end of a trip. It was such a common employment journey that a popular song called “Sea-Going Trawler” ("Tang-ke"\(^{21}\)) memorialized the north-eastern workers who migrated for fishing boat work.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Thailand was also not yet the magnet for workers from neighbouring countries that it is now. Existing jobs were in great demand among Thais.\(^{22}\) However, in 1989 a wicked typhoon storm tormented the upper Gulf of Thailand for several hours and forever changed the allure of deep-sea fishing. Typhoon Gay hurled itself through the Gulf and across several districts in Prachup Khiri Khan and Chumphon provinces. Waves as high as five to ten meters capsized more than 391 boats\(^{23}\) and claimed hundreds of fishermen’s lives. Many others were reported missing.

**Labour shortages**

The experience sent many men home for good. The loss of life scared many more away from seeking out fishing work. However, the frightening incident coincided with Thailand’s changing economic fortunes and greater employment options were on offer, particularly in the physical construction accommodating the new “tiger economy” as well as in land-based factory assembly lines, many of them close to home. Importantly, the new jobs were not considered as dirty, demanding and dangerous as fishing and fish processing.

By the late 1990s, certain industries were so short on workers that the migrants from neighbouring countries who were increasingly making their way into Thailand were welcomed. The foreign migrants were hugely attractive to employers. Desperate for wages that were greater than anything available to them back home, they could be paid less, worked harder and most likely would not demand benefits, such as costly health and safety protection. The foreign migrants accepted the jobs and the conditions that Thais increasingly found unpleasant, such as fishing boat work and food processing.

For many years, Thailand’s fishery industry has not kept up with the demand. Even with the foreign migrant worker pool,\(^{24}\) the Federation of Thai Industries estimated in July 2008 a shortage of 10,000 workers\(^{25}\) for both fishing and fish processing. With such a high-value opportunity, fishing boat owners feel pressure to keep their boats from falling idle due to lack of crew.

Despite reduced growth due to smaller catches and higher fuel costs, the demand for labour has remained high. However, the harsh working conditions and the long time at sea are enough to deter most people from the work.

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21 The “Tang-ke” song was in the 1991 album “New Generation of the Poor”. It reflected Thai society at the time when workers moved from the agricultural sector in the North-East to the fisheries industry.

22 Information from interviews with marine officials.

23 Information taken from the *Matichon Daily* newspaper, 5 November 1989.

24 In some cases, brokers who work for industrial employers take migrant workers directly to industrial plants (Research findings on Employers and Migration of Migrant Burmese Workers, published by LPN ); many migrant workers also prefer other industries to the fishing and fish-processing industry.

This is an important factor that gives rise to brokers who set out to deceive workers and feed them to the deep-sea fishing industries on a regular basis.

In interviews with the Mirror researchers, some boat captains\textsuperscript{26} said that if they could choose, they preferred Thai workers because they could better communicate with them. Plus, they thought it was less likely that a Thai crew would conspire to plunder the boat.

\textbf{Fair recruitment}

A boat crew consists of the captain, a first mate, an engineer, a cook and then the fishermen. The first four positions are filled with Thais and are perceived as decently paid. There will be a line manager, typically someone who is from the largest nationality grouping of fishermen on board – if the fishermen are from different countries. Some captains pay an advance to encourage fishermen to join him; the wages typically are determined as a percentage of the overall catch. Although, paying a standardized monthly wage is becoming more common. Also, men willing to work on fishing boats are more likely to prefer those that stay within Thailand and return after short stints at sea.

Certainly there are fishing boat companies that pay fairly – although the wage is still regarded as low, at 3,000–6,000 baht a month – and provide relatively fair conditions. The fishermen might be paid with a proportion from the sale of the boat’s catch or they might receive a small proportion in addition to the standard wage. Some boat captains are regarded as decent, and locals living in the same community with them prefer to work with their boats. As far as the Mirror researchers could determine, there is no proper recruitment for fishing boat work done through licensed employment agencies.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{26} From the interview with former labour brokers and captains of fishing boats who went to catch fish in Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{27} The researchers did find one agency that used to be properly licensed but was stripped of its approval to operate, although it continued to supply fishing boat workers.
3 Trafficking and forced labour practices on Thai fishing boats: Study findings

3.1 Recruitment by deception

There came a point, when exactly is unclear, when Thai males were lured into fishing boat work by false pretences, scams and outright abduction. Based on interviews with and reports about victims and complaints received between 2003 and end 2009 by the Mirror Foundation (through the Missing Persons Center and the Anti-Human Trafficking Center) as well as interviews with other informants and a few newspaper stories, the following practices have been used to supply fishing boats with workers.

**Bounty brokers**

Because of the labour shortages, a group of non-registered brokers have evolved to recruit or provide fishing boat workers. They operate as recruitment companies and as individual brokers. A business operator or boat captain informs one of these agents how many crew members are needed, and they resort to whatever means to fill the order, thus becoming what is known as a “bounty broker”.28

As best as the Mirror researchers have determined, a “subbroker” earns 1,000–2,000 baht for each person he passes on to a “broker”, who in turn is paid 5,000–10,000 baht for each person he delivers to the bounty broker. The bounty broker actually delivers the victims to the boat and can receive 7,000–25,000 baht per person.29 The price of a victim varies, depending on their physical strength and age and where the boat is heading. (There may be a difference in the fee paid for Thai and foreign migrants, which only reflects the higher expenses incurred to transport the foreigners; ultimately, both may have the same value.)

According to a confidential report of the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women, there are 28 known “gangs” (characterized as a loose network) that specialize in the trafficking of fishing boat workers. A bounty broker essentially runs each gang. One example given is a gang of four to five people headed by a 40-year-old man. Their methods entail drugging or intoxicating victims and then passing them to a gang of two to three people who are essentially the bounty broker.

The brokerage movement can consist of several stages of moving a victim from one place to another. Some are detained in houses for a few hours or up to several days, typically while waiting for other victims to be acquired. Four locations that victims or police showed the Mirror researchers were houses located in residential

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28 Bounty brokers are known also to send women to factories or into domestic service or poultry work.

29 A report in the *Matichon Daily* newspaper, 12 November 2007, on child workers from Buri Ram province who were sold to boat captains in Songkhla province noted they were paid 10,000–20,000 baht.
areas, both in Bangkok and near the ports. One house was opposite Sanam Luang park, one near the Mo Chit bus terminal, one in a row of townhouses and one in a housing estate. Some victims reported that the broker in charge of the house threatened them against escaping and some said they were beaten while kept waiting. They were typically locked inside a room with a guard stationed outside.

People who are deceived by the bounty broker network are sometimes referred to as “bounty workers”.

**Befriending victims**

To lure men and boys onto deep-sea fishing boats, a subbroker befriends someone who appears vulnerable. This practice (used for other types of employment as well as fishing) takes place in either transportation centres, such as the larger bus stations or the train station in Bangkok or in public areas that have become refuge spots for people out of work, such as parks. In the Mirror Research, often – but not always – the victims had just arrived in Bangkok and were looking for work. Some victims were working in the fishing port area already or had even just come off a boat and waiting for the fish to be sold in order to be paid (see annex 1 for a matrix of victims’ details).

The broker (in all reported Mirror cases, a man) makes general conversation, sometimes lying that he is also from the same province or town as the potential victim. In many instances, the broker speaks with the victim in the same dialect, thus making the latter trust him more easily. The process might take hours. The broker will, at some point, offer that he knows of a job that is paying well. Alternatively, the broker might talk on his mobile phone with a “colleague”, while telling the potential victim that he is talking with a potential employer with work to offer. He may even let the potential victim talk with the “employer” to negotiate the wages, thus lulling the person into a false sense of security.

Or the subbroker might be working as a taxi driver and offer to take the person around looking for a job.

After winning a victim’s trust, the broker takes him to a prearranged accommodation where the victim is detained before being forwarded to a fishing boat.

Some victims told the Mirror researchers they were actually offered fishing boat work and they accepted. But they were told they would only be sorting fish or that the boat was only going out for a night or a few days, or that the fishing boat would stay in Thai waters and return every few days. Once the boat was out to sea, many were transferred to a bigger boat that could fish beyond Thai territory. As for sorting, some victims thought it was work that would be done on land.

Brokers also target young men other than those newly arrived in Bangkok. “Mr. A”, for example, originally from Kanchanaburi, was working as a security guard at the Lumpini Park Night Plaza in Bangkok. On 21 July 2008, after finishing his shift, the 20-year-old went to sit in the Rommaninat park near Wat Suthat. A man was revealed later that he was listed as a known trafficker of fishery workers in Provincial Police Region 7 records.

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30 Interview with former job brokers and with victims sought help in June 2007 from the Anti-Human Trafficking Center.

31 Interview with a 15-year-old victim who was deceived at the Mo Chit bus terminal area. The case is pending in the Criminal Court.

32 Interview with a victim in March 2008.

33 Interview with the victim rescued by Songkhla Marine Station at Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan) on 30 July 2008.

34 A new piece of information on deception of fishery workers in Bangkok. Rommaninat Public Park is situated near Wat Suthat, opposite the City Hall of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

35 It was revealed later that he was listed as a known trafficker of fishery workers in Provincial Police Region 7 records.
with tattoos on his arms, but whose name Mr. A could not recall, approached him. They talked a while and
the man persuaded Mr. A to work with him, telling him he’d have a better deal than working as a guard, which
indeed is often perceived as boring. He told Mr. A that the work involved separating fish at a processing plant in
the Mahachai area (in Samut Sakhon province). It was an easy job with good wages, he said. The broker took
him in a taxi to a house in the Mahachai subdistrict. He was directed to a room to wait. The room was locked
from the outside and a fat man\textsuperscript{36} kept guard. He and two other men were soon joined by a fourth man. Around
midnight on the same day, the fat watchman and an assistant took all four men in a pickup truck to the Saphan
Lek pier and to a mother boat named Wutthichai Samut 7. Three other workers were already on board. As the
boat was heading out of the bay, the crew noticed a patrol boat and called for help. The police responded and
stopped the boat, rescuing all seven workers and arresting the captain. After being interviewed, the men were
sent to the privately run Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan) because there was no government
shelter for men at that time. The only assistance the men were given was bus fare to return home. Although
the captain was charged, it is unknown if the case was actually prosecuted.

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**Mr. I, a boy’s story**

Late in the evening of May 2008, Mr. I, who was 14 years old at the time, was sitting alone inside
Hualamphong railway station waiting for an early morning train to return to his home in Buri Ram
province. He had been working in a car-washing shop for two months and had 2,000 baht to take back
home. A man around 40 years of age befriended him and asked him to work with him as a security guard.
The boy declined. The man left but soon returned. This time he offered him a job to work in a pineapple
farm that paid well, he promised. The boy became interested and agreed. But then the man suggested
that, instead, Mr. I not work on the farm but on a fishing boat, which would pay him even more money
– 8,000 baht for only 15 days of work. Enticed by the high pay, the boy agreed. The man then took him
in a taxi to a house in Muang district in Samut Prakan province, about a 40-minute drive.

The next morning, the man gave Mr. I some items for daily personal care and some clothes. However,
Mr. I began to feel that he did not want the work. The man talked him into getting on the boat, which
was a big iron mother boat. He joined a crew of 20 others, most of them Cambodian, with a supervisor
from Roi Et province whose name he never knew.

As the boat was leaving the Saphan Pla pier, Mr. I decided he didn’t want to go. The boat captain
slapped him hard on the face. Gripped with fear, the boy agreed to work. Shortly after the boat left the
port, he learned from another crew member that he would be resold to another boat at sea. He thought
he had no choice but to jump overboard. He swam to a buoy and held onto it until an oil tanker passed
and heard his cries for help, about a half hour later. He was taken to the Marine Police.

Mr. I was referred to a government boys’ shelter but after a week he had no interest in staying. Sensing
he would likely escape, the staff released him to go home. Because he could not identify any of the
brokers or the captain, no charges were ever filed. After a couple months, he returned to Bangkok and
after a short stint with some agriculture work, he returned to the car-washing service where he had
previously worked.

\textsuperscript{36} It was revealed later that he was listed as a known trafficker of fishery workers in Provincial Police Region 7 records.
Misleading job vacancies

“Job vacancies” are posted (in Thai) at public transport stations and public parks. When a potential victim contacts the posted telephone number or address, he is told that the job has been filled. But then he is informed of another job with “equally good income”, although the other job is not specifically explained. For instance, in responding to a notice about a mechanic job, one victim was told the position was filled but there was a job available on a fishing boat. He would be sorting fish, he was told, returning to shore periodically. He needed work and it sounded easy. However, the boat where he was placed headed for Indonesian waters and didn’t return to Thailand for five years. Not knowing what would become of him, the man jumped overboard when the boat did finally go back to Thai waters. He was never paid.37

Around the Wongwian Yai traffic circle there are a variety of job brokers displaying available opportunities on boards. Some work in a shophouse space, some are merely a desk on the sidewalk. According to the Mirror researchers, five agents in that area specialize in fishing boat work. One Mirror researcher applied with each agent for the mechanic or security guard jobs listed on their placards. Each time the researcher was told the jobs were taken but he could sort fish and work in a fish-processing factory in Samut Sakhon – the only jobs available. While discussing with one agent, the researcher noticed several men waiting in the shophouse with their belongings to be taken to a fish-sorting area, he was told. The researcher was also told that if he was ready, he could travel straight away and start immediately. However, he was given no details about the job. “Oh there will be a job, don’t worry. Go get your belongings and come back,” the broker told the researcher.

Abducting victims

Of the 83 Thai victims that the Mirror researchers interviewed or had a case file for, six reported being drugged or knocked out and waking up on a fishing boat. One man, aged 40 years, was working as a security guard when he was attacked by a group of teenagers while off duty in Samut Prakan city. His teeth were bashed out and he was knocked unconscious. When he awoke, he was on a boat. Three victims, all security guards also, had either an alcoholic drink or a cup of coffee laced with a sleep-inducing substance.38 One of the guards has been taken from Samut Prakan province.39 In those three cases, in separate locations, a broker befriended the victim and offered him a drink. After the victims passed out, they were transported and sold to a fishing boat. The three security guards were later rescued from a boat in Songkhla province.

Two of the victims were teenage cousins who were overtaken in the public toilet room in the Mo Chit bus terminal. Fifteen-year-old “Mr. C”40 and his 16-year-old cousin had travelled by bus from their home in Buri Ram province in June 2003 to join some relatives already working at a construction site in Bangkok. They arrived at the Mo Chit bus terminal around 5 a.m. Both boys went to the toilet room inside the terminal building. They said someone came from behind each of them and covered their faces with a cloth apparently containing a substance that caused them to become heavily disoriented. They could still walk but were taken by someone’s hand to a car where they passed out. When they awoke, they were on a fishing boat at sea with two other men from Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province who had been abducted the same way. The boat captain told Mr. C

37 Information from an interview with a victim in 2003.
38 Information from Songkhla provincial Social Development and Human Security officers who assisted three security guards who were drugged and taken away from Samut Prakan province in 2007.
39 This information came from an officer in the Songkhla Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office.
40 When the boys did not show up at the construction job, one parent contacted the Missing Persons Information Center. They had disappeared without a trace. When they returned seven months later, Mr. C’s mother informed the Mirror Foundation. A Mirror researcher interviewed the boys on 11 May 2007 at their home.
that they were sold by a broker from Mahachai (in Samut Sakhon province) for 10,000 baht each. The four were forced to work on the boat for seven months in Malaysian waters. They had to work to pay off the bounty debt before the boat returned to Thailand. After landing, the captain gave each worker 3,000 baht.

**False debt**

Karaoke bars located in or near pier areas in Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon and Songkhla provinces appear to be common locales for scam operations.\(^41\) Six victims of the total 83 in the study ended up on a fishing boat because of a bar-bill scam in which they were presented with a highly inflated bill while drunk and woke up sober already on a boat. Not all had worked on a fishing boat previously. Those who had fished previously had sought out a karaoke bar (typically through the enticement of a female employee) once their boat docked to wait while the catch was sold and their payment calculated. They were befriended by a broker and encouraged to eat and drink heavily, sometimes for a few days. When they went to pay the bill, they found it severely exaggerated. Some victims explained that at the time they knew they had consumed the service and felt they needed to pay something. Although some suspected they had been cheated, feeling unempowered or ashamed, with families too poor to help them out, they thought they had no choice but to pay off the “debt” by agreeing to work on a fishing boat. One middle-aged man said his bill was 15,000 baht (the boat he was sent to stayed at sea for five years; he was resold four times).\(^42\) Men who just eat and drink typically had a bill less than 10,000 baht; those who also engaged in sex service had a bill for more.

Karaoke bars used for such deceptive purposes are known as “bounty shops”.\(^43\) They typically are temporary shanty-like structures that shift their location frequently. Some karaoke bars send female workers to boats that have just returned to encourage the fishermen to go to the bar.

**Smuggling across the borders – “Renting” workers**

The throng of desperate men and boys in Myanmar looking for work in Thailand are highly vulnerable to being routed to fishing boats. Some go “willingly”, thinking they will be at sea for a couple weeks at most each trip and paid at the end of it. For instance, one migrant worker told Human Rights Watch researchers of a teenage boy who had gone to the Ranong port to work on a fishing boat during a school break in order to earn his school fees. (Unfortunately, the story was about how the boy had been stopped by two Thai police officers and when he could not answer in Thai to them, they beat and kicked him, killing him.)\(^44\)

Most foreign migrants probably left their country thinking they were being taken to work in an industrial plant, construction site or in the agricultural sector in the border area but were shepherded to a boat. An ethnic minority man from southern Lao PDR told Human Rights Watch researchers that a labour broker approached him in 2007 about working on a farm in Thailand. After consenting to go, he was instead taken to a fishing boat that fished in the Gulf of Thailand. He had never been at sea and did not know how to swim. He did manage to escape a few months later.\(^45\)

\(^{41}\) Information from village health volunteers who worked with the fishing boat crew and female service workers in karaoke bars.

\(^{42}\) Interview with victim in October 2009, first in his home in Sakon Nakhon and then when brought to Bangkok to initiate a police report.

\(^{43}\) A “bounty shop” is a term used by the public agencies and NGOs for a karaoke bar that deceives workers. The revenue of these karaoke bars comes mostly from selling workers to fishing boats.


\(^{45}\) op, cit. HRW. 2010. pg 65.
Others were picked up after they reached Thailand. Some were locked in a fish-processing factory and working under exploitative conditions until they became “difficult” (protesting unfair treatment) and were “resold” to a fishing boat.46

Because the Mirror researchers focused only on cases reported to their organization for this study, they know very little about the foreign migrant situation. In addition, what they know only pertains to men from Myanmar. However, a human rights researcher also investigating the situation of fishing boat workers met Cambodian men who had been recruited in their villages and promised construction work once they got to Thailand. Instead, they were driven directly to a pier.47

The brokers handling (controlling) the foreign migrants are typically from the same country. Although a police officer told a Mirror researcher that he knew of at least one Thai bounty broker who had turned from hunting Thais to foreign migrant workers in 2009 after several Thai victims had escaped and reported their ordeal to the police.

Each broker may have 5–20 workers in their charge, parcelling them out to boats as needed. When the boats that only fish in the Gulf of Thailand come to shore every 15–60 days, the brokers will collect their workers at the pier and detain them in rented rooms. The workers will later be sent to work on the same or a different boat. On boats that leave Thai waters, the foreign victims, like the Thais, will remain on the same boat for an extended period of time or passed from boat to boat.

Whether the boats have reached the shore or are waiting to set sail, the workers will be kept in the rented rooms, two to five persons per room. The brokers will lock the room from the outside to prevent them from running away. The workers may have to work at least 6–12 months before they have paid off their bounty fee and are “set free” – they are then paid a small wage. These types of workers are described as near penniless and thus return to sea because they don’t know what else to do.

However, many of the workers are resold and are never paid for their work.

“Renting” a worker is apparently common practice for the short-term shift on a fishing boat. The controlling broker is given the workers’ wages and he decides whether they receive any payment. Foreign migrants are forced to pay off the debt incurred for the transport to a job in Thailand, even if it’s one they don’t want, at the rate of 15,000–30,000 baht per person.48 Alternatively, they have to pay the money spent on them when they are resold.

Most of the near-200 workers discovered in a raid in Trang province in November 2009 were “rented out” on a short-term basis for work within Thai waters. However, two of the 51 men identified as trafficking victims had just returned from a year spent fishing in Indonesia and only because the boat needed repair; they were waiting to go back to that boat. It had been their first fishing boat and this was their first time back on land. A few of the men had yet to go out at all, having recently arrived from Myanmar via Mae Sot and Three Pagodas Pass via a transit house in Samut Sakhon.

The case of the some 200 men came to light after one man, originally from Myanmar, had escaped the house and contacted the LPN for help. The LPN worked with the police and other agencies and NGOs to conduct the raid on the house, finding the men. After checking their documents, 51 were identified as trafficking victims in the control of a broker. Some of the others had worked off their broker’s fee debt and were receiving a wage,

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46 According to LPN, which has participated in raids on factories and interviewed many victims.
47 Interview with Phil Robertson, Deputy Director, Asia Division, Human Rights Watch, in Bangkok, 11 March 2010.
48 This is based on informants’ interviews and the interviews with 51 victims from Myanmar.
Trafficking and Forced Labour of Thai Males in Deep-Sea Fishing

albeit somewhat small. For instance, some workers signed receipts that they had received 4,000 baht a month but their broker took it and they were paid between 100 and 400 baht. Some had worked for two years and were just starting to be paid. Of the 51 victims, some had been working only one month, some for three months without pay. Fifteen of them were actually registered as migrant workers.

The police arrested the house owner, a Thai man, and a broker, who is a Myanmar national. The case was processed quickly. In January 2010, the Thai man was only fined 20,000 baht for harbouring undocumented foreign migrant workers, but the broker was convicted of trafficking and sentenced to four years in prison. The Thai owner of the boats the men from Myanmar were destined for reportedly was a family-owned company that is registered with the Marine Department as a supplier of ice, fuel and port maintenance and with the Ministry of Commerce as a processor of dried fish powder and reportedly had applied to the Ministry of Labour to hire more than 600 foreign migrant workers.49

Also in 2009, the Mirror researchers were shown a letter of complaint to the governor of Songkhla province and signed by around 50 Thai residents of a small fishing community. They were outraged at the police treatment of migrants from Cambodia and Myanmar who had been arrested for having no proper documentation to be in Thailand after having worked on a fishing boat. They were told that if their employer did not bail them out, they would be sold to another boat. Word of the treatment had passed around the close-knit community, and residents were taking a stand against it.

3.2 Areas vulnerable to bounty brokers

People who migrate to seek employment in the capital city or other economically vibrant provinces often lack knowledge about suitable and safe job locations. Many of the victims interviewed for this research did not know about the role of the Department of Employment or had never seen any warning instructions posted by public agencies at various bus and railway stations.

Bangkok

Sanam Luang: The large oval park opposite the Grand Palace in Bangkok serves as multipurpose fairground and retail space for hawkers. Encircled with large trees, the shade offers comfort to wanderers and homeless people who sleep nights on the grassy patches. It is also a transportation point for vans and buses. The local police are aware of three gangs/networks operating in the area that target male Thais for fishing work.50

Nine of the 83 victims included in the study said they were picked up in Sanam Luang through offers of a job or eating food that was drugged and knocked them out. However, the local police have no record of any case involving deception for fishing work.

Specific areas, cited by more than one victim, are the mini park around the sculpture of Goddess Earth squeezing water out of her hair, the area near Khlong Lot (both on the east side), the road behind the Supreme Court building and all along the oval periphery.

Mo Chit bus terminal: The departure building is a known target for human trafficking activity. The police are aware of two gangs/networks operating there to lure male Thais into fishing boat work.51 The outside building

50 Information from a 2008 confidential report on fishing labour deception by the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women.
51 According to a report of the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women, there are possibly two groups that operate there, deceiving men and boys into fishing work.
is lined with ticket-selling counters and tour company representatives who also deploy workers to walk around seeking customers. Brokers (and other criminals) disguise themselves as ticket sellers who can freely operate despite the presence of security guards, police and closed-circuit cameras. They target both people arriving from and returning home upcountry. According to victims’ accounts, they asked those leaving Bangkok if they had any money or new household items to take home. If the answer was no, they offered a job with a good income, suggesting that the person could thus return home loaded with money after working only for one or two months longer. Feeling as if they had failed for heading home with money, the men and boys consented to the offer, only to end up deceived.

Outside the arrival building, taxi drivers working within a broker’s gang/network wait for someone newly arrived who intends to look for work. Here there are no police on duty, only security guards of a private company with a concession to manage the taxis.

**Hua Lamphong railway station:** The train station in the heart of Bangkok is another transport centre with a large number of people coming and going. People from rural areas prefer the train to a bus. Outside the main terminal building is a large open area used by people as a resting and sleeping spot. The terminal hall closes at 10:30 p.m., and people waiting for an early train or who have no where to go are forced to wait outside. The night hours bring out the brokers and other criminals.

According to officers with the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women, the station is also popular with human traffickers. The local police are aware of one gang/network operating here that is looking for Thai males for fishing boat work. However, an officer with the Railway Police Division noted that a major clean-up of gang activity took place a few years ago. He insisted that, since then, there have not been any problems related to human trafficking. However, the Mirror Foundation’s Anti-Human Trafficking Center assisted a 14-year-old boy taken from the Hua Lamphong station by a broker in May 2008 and forced to work on a fishing boat. He luckily succeeded in escaping by jumping off the boat as it headed out to sea and was rescued a few hours later.

**Wongwian Yai:** Located a few kilometres west of the Chao Phraya River, Wongwian Yai is landmarked with a monument of King Taksin in the middle of a traffic circle. The area is a transport hub for buses and a depot for a train to Samut Sakhon. On both sides of the train station are rows of vendor stalls selling sundry products. Outside the station are taxi tricycles and motorcycles waiting for a fare. A nearby park attracts newcomers to town, homeless people and others seeking a respite. At night, people sleep in the park. The area is typically congested with people coming and going.

There are many privately run placement offices for jobs overseas as well as in Thailand around the traffic circle. As previously noted, Mirror’s research indicated five of them specialize in luring unsuspecting job seekers into fishing boat work. Four of the agents/brokers are located near the Ban Khaek intersection and the fifth is located on the Wongwian Yai traffic circle. During the Mirror researchers’ investigation of the area, one of those five agents sat in a chair on the side walk, calling out to passersby, “Hey, you want a job? Come here!”

The local police (there are four police stations in the area) seem to have no reports or knowledge of trafficking problems or deceitful recruitment for fishing boat work. When the researcher checked with the Department of Employment to see if the five fishing brokers were registered, he was told they are not. However, he was also told that if there is no complaint against them, there is no problem.

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52 Interview with the commander of the Railway Police Division in June 2008

53 On 27 June 2008, the Mirror Foundation coordinated with the Marine Police Division to help a boy aged 14 years from Buri Ram province who was tricked into working on a boat, though he escaped as it headed out of the Gulf of Thailand. The boy reported that he was deceived and taken away from the Hua Lamphong railway station area and forced onto the boat.

54 Information from the interviews with victims by Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center staff.
**Rommaninat public park:** Also known as Prison Museum Park, the area is located opposite the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration offices. The park is a resting area, popular with homeless or street people. It is typically a quiet area with little activity during the day.

Three men aged 20–39 who were rescued by Songkhla Marine Police on 11 July 2008 told the Mirror researchers that they had been deceived in Rommaninat park by the same broker, although on separate occasions.

**Vulnerable port areas**

“Mr. B” and his brother went directly to the Mahachai subdistrict of Samut Sakhon in April 2002 looking for work. Like many people in their Isan region, they were aware of employment opportunities in the port area. Also, like many who head to Mahachai hoping to find work with little money in their pocket, they spent their first days in the shrine park at the end of the main road near a small market that sells cheap food. A man approached the brothers as they sat in the park and told them about a job on a boat. He said that it was easy work, offered good wages and was not physically demanding. The 30-year-old Mr. B and his elder brother thought it sounded like a good deal. The broker took them on his motorcycle to meet the boat owner. The two brothers were told they would be taken to Songkhla province. They wanted to go to their rented room to pack their clothes. The boat owner said never mind, he would buy them new clothes. That evening, the broker took Mr. B, his brother and six other men (each persuaded in a similar manner) in a pickup truck to Si Phitak pier in Songkhla. However, the brothers were then separated. Mr. B and four of the other men were put on one boat and his brother and the other two went to a different boat. Once they were out at sea, the boat captain told Mr. B that he and his brother has been sold to the fishing boat owner for 6,000 baht each, and they would have to work a year to pay off the “debt”.

On the boat, Mr. B had to do heavy work and was often beaten by the foreman. Mr. B spent three years at sea without once going ashore. In that time, he was resold five times to other fishing boats. After three years he was released, with no pay. His brother returned a year later after jumping unnoticed onto a supply boat that returned to shore. He also was never paid.

According to victims’ reports, the more frequently mentioned places where deception practices were conducted in Samut Sakhon are:

- the public park and the Chaopho Lak Mueang (provincial pillar) shrine
- Mahachai market and the Namphu department store
- entertainment establishments along the railway near Khru canal, the Mahachai Housing Estate and around the kilometre 1 marker from the town centre
- the areas in front of Mahachai Hospital, the shrimp market and Suanson bus terminal
- the area in front of Samut Sakhon city pavilion.

Songkhla province has a large fishing port at which boats from other provinces dock. Reports of deception leading to forced labour on fishing boats have included reference to the following vulnerable areas:

- Hat Yai railway station
- karaoke bars near the fish-loading areas on Nakhon Nayok Road and along the banks of Songkhla Lake in Muang district.

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55 The family of the brothers reported them missing to the Missing Persons Center shortly after they disappeared in 2002. Mr. B reported his ordeal to the centre once he returned home.

56 Information from the Royal Thai Police and the Mirror Foundation.

57 Document of service users at Songkhla Stella Seafarers Maris Center and information from Songkhla Marine Police.
### 3.3 General profile of known victims

Among the 83 cases reported to the Anti-Human Trafficking Center and the Missing Persons Center, the victims, all male and all Thai, ranged in age from 14 to 55 years. Most of them came from the north-east and northern regions of the country. Many had just arrived (or within days of arriving) to Bangkok for the first time. The majority were looking for work; some were on their way home. Some had sat in the bus or train station for a long time because they had nowhere to go. Most victims were uneducated or had only a primary school education. They were looking for manual labour employment as unskilled workers.

The victims were generally poor and needed money to support a family. They were willing to take risks and try the work offered by the brokers, especially when offered “high wages” and other promises of easy labour. The victims wanted to believe they were getting lucky.

Renewing a concession document, refuelling or the rare repair would be the only times when the biggest boats that stay out for more than a year came to shore. In a rough storm, they likely will move closer to the shore. It is at these times when many victims found a chance to jump overboard and escape.

Of the 83 cases used for this study, 28 of them actually came to the researchers’ attention after they had finished their primary research. In April 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had informed the researchers that four men who had escaped from boats in Malaysia territory were being deported. The researchers travelled to Thailand’s southern tip, to the Songkhla international migration point in Sadao. The four were reported as having been flown from Kuching, where one of them had been detained for five months on charges of illegal entry. However, after the researchers joined the immigration officials in screening all deportees sent through the checkpoint, they found a total of 28 cases of men who had escaped from fishing boats.

Some of the men were related to cases that families had reported to the Mirror Foundation. The Thai embassy officials commented to the researchers that they are overwhelmed with undocumented Thai workers in Malaysia so they don’t always screen by particular types of work. (The researchers learned that another large group of fishing boat escapees who had been in police detention in Malaysia were returned at the end of 2009, but they were not informed at the time and thus didn’t get any details.)

Annex 1 contains a matrix of the details known for each of the 83 Thai cases reported to the Mirror researchers. The following is a brief summary:

- 15 were aged 18 or younger
- 29 were aged 19–29
- 27 were aged 30–39
- 9 were aged 40–49
- 3 were older than 50.
- 6 had not yet been on a boat
- 47 were forced less than 1 year to work on a boat
- 8 were forced 1–2 years
- 4 were forced 2–3 years
- 2 were forced 3–4 years
- 1 was forced 4–5 years
- 3 were forced more than 5 years

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58 Information from the interview with more than 30 victims by the Mirror Foundation.
• 1 worked 10 years
• 11 had no information about the duration on a boat.
• 15 were taken from Mo Chit bus station
• 15 were taken from Hua Lamphong train station
• 9 were taken from Sanam Luang
• 3 were taken from Romnmit park
• 1 was taken from Hat Yai
• 11 were taken from Samut Sakhon or Samut Prakan
• 29 had no information on where they were picked up or deceived.
• 7 had a secondary education
• 58 had a primary education
• 9 had no education
• 9 had no information about their education level.
• 5 were drugged or made unconscious before ending up on a boat
• 6 had a karaoke debt.

Victims were taken primarily to:
• Paknam pier, Samut Prakan province
• Mahachai pier, Samut Sakhon province
• Songkhla pier, Songkhla province
• Pattani pier, Pattani province

Among the 51 cases of victims from Myanmar, (identified in the November 2009 raid) many of the victims came from villages that were one to days time from Mae Sot or Three Pagodas Pass. Only 15 of them had a registration card to work in Thailand.

Of the 51:
• 22 were aged 18–25
• 23 were aged 36–40
• 6 were aged 41–60.
• 8 had worked for less than 3 months on a boat (and received a total of 1,000 baht)
• 19 had worked between 3 and 6 months
• 7 had worked between 7 and 12 months
• 2 had worked more than 1 year
• 15 were waiting to work for the first time.
• 7 persons were paid less than 1,000 baht (time period undisclosed)
• 7 persons were paid 1,000–2,000 baht
• 6 persons were paid 2,000–4,000 baht
• 30 persons were never paid.
• one man worked from 20 October until 10 November and was paid 200 baht
• one man worked from 9 August 2009 until 16 November 2009 and was paid 2,700 baht
• one man worked from 13 October until 23 November and was paid 800 baht.


3.4 Treatment on the boats

Based on various accounts, the victims were not aware or had no idea that they were being deceived until they were on a boat. The men rarely knew where they were. The boat captain and first mate kept a tight rein on all activities on the boat. Generally, they fished all day and every day. There were no fixed hours for resting.

The routine was generally the same every day, every week. The workers would drag the net out of the water and bring up the fish. They would sort the fish, throwing back what they don’t need and putting what they keep on ice in containers. If the net was torn, they would have to repair it before throwing it back into the water. That work took two to three hours (or longer, depending on the type of net). When finished, they could rest one to two hours. Then they were awakened to repeat the process, throughout the day and the night. No one ever slept more than a couple hours at a time, except if they were too sick.

The victims in the Mirror research included boys younger than 18 and one who was 14, which is against Thai law, at least for deep-sea fishing. They were treated the same as adults, assigned to carry heavy loads and pull the nets in and out of the boat. Along with boat cleaning and maintenance, some boys had to swim to tie the buoys to the nets.

Many workers struggled with seasickness and were typically given only Paracetamol. According to victims, three to four crew members were often replaced because of the seasickness.

They ate two meals a day, one at noon and the other at night. They generally ate rice with fish, although they had vegetables briefly after a supply boat made a visit. When the fresh water ran out, they boiled sea water. Victims talked of many workers having liver problems.

None of the victims reported ever seeing anyone thrown overboard for being too sick to work. The treatment varied; on some boats the sick were forced to work and on other boats they were allowed to rest longer.

However, as reported in newspapers and by the Burma Human Rights Documentation Unit, in June 2006, the owner of the Phraphasnavee fishing fleet of six boats did not want to pay 77 of its fishermen; they were transferred to a boat with no food, petrol or water and abandoned in the ocean in Indonesian territory. Over the three months that the boat drifted, 39 of the men died. Their bodies were thrown into the sea. The 38 who survived, including both foreign migrants and Thai workers, were eventually rescued. In September 2008, Thailand’s Labour Court ordered the owner to pay a total of 4.9 million baht ($140,450) to the survivors as compensation. Nothing was awarded for the families of the dead men because, as the court ruled, there was no photographic evidence that the deaths took place. However, there were then delays in paying the survivors’ their compensation because they were told that 20 of them had to be present together for the money to be withdrawn.\(^9\)

There were reports from victims in the Mirror study of workers fighting with a captain. Beatings also were reported by many victims. Mr. D, for example, told the Mirror researchers that he was sometimes beaten and was threatened that he would be thrown overboard when he had an argument with the boat captain.\(^6\) One victim told the Mirror researchers that he had been thrown overboard after pretending to have been knocked unconscious in a fight with the captain’s son (see Mr. K’s story).

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6 A victim who sought assistance from the Anti-Human Trafficking Center, the Mirror Foundation in May 2008.
A fisherman from Cambodia told Human Rights Watch researchers that he had a fight with the captain on board a boat in the Gulf of Thailand, off the coast of Trad province in August 2008. The captain accused the man of disobedience and hit him with a metal pipe. After he fought back, the captain radioed other captains for help. Some arrived and beat the Cambodian man severely. When the boat returned to its dock in Trad, the captain called the police and told them the man was drunk and had tried to steal the boat. The police also beat him with wooden batons until he lost consciousness.\(^{61}\)

Among the 83 known Thai victims in the Mirror study, at least 19 spent more than one year on a boat against their will. The only chance to go ashore was when their boat refuelled or to renew its licenses or concession document.

A 39-year-old man from Khon Kaen province was presented with an offer when he arrived at Hua Lamphong train station in Bangkok in 2003 to work on a fishing boat for 5,000 baht a month. The boat would go to sea for a month at a time, he was told. It seemed reasonable to him. However, after a few days at sea, he was transferred to a trawler that headed to Indonesian waters. And so began his nightmare. After a year he was resold to another boat for 10,000 baht. That boat was caught by Indonesian authorities for fishing illegally and the crew was detained for three months, until the boat owner bailed them out. He was then sold to a boat in Samut Prakan that fished in the Gulf of Thailand. Worried that the man might escape after he asked to go ashore, the captain sold him to a boat headed to Malaysia. The Burmese supervisor on that boat beat him occasionally. Then he was sold to another boat while in Malaysian territory. After three months he managed to escape when the boat refuelled and he swam to Sarawak, where he was detained for four months for illegal entry and was caned one stroke. After five years of working day and night, he returned home, never once having been paid and having been kept poorly fed.\(^{62}\)

In an interview with a \textit{Bangkok Post} reporter, five freed workers, including two Cambodians, recounted their ordeal of imprisonment on ships. “They worked tirelessly on board and the captains treated them cruelly. Some were beaten brutally with hammers and metal bars because they could not meet the captain’s work demands. “I worked almost 24 hours a day. I had to continuously fix fishing nets for three straight days. Very exhausted, my head flopped down to sleep,” recalled one of the men, ‘Sombat’, who was abducted when he was 21 and worked on a trawler for 15 months.”\(^{63}\)

Sombat told the newspaper reporter that one elderly victim’s body was found in a fishing net after he fell into the sea. “I was almost dead as well,” he recalled. “The captain used a knife to slit my throat because I finished my lunch late. The blood flowed out and I knelt down begging for my life.” A long scar crosses his neck. Twice the man jumped overboard. The first time he was recaptured. The second time he floated for half a day on a bag used to store fish before reaching a Malaysian village. He hid for three days, eating papayas and bananas while his trawler boat re-fuelled near the village. Sombat fears for his life, worried that the boat owner will seek revenge for his going to the authorities and to the media. None of the workers were ever paid, according to Sombat.

Surapong Kongchantuk,\(^{64}\) a human rights expert and member of the Lawyers Council of Thailand’s Human Rights Sub-Committee on Ethnic Minorities, Stateless, Migrant Workers and Displaced Persons, made the

\(^{61}\) op, cit. HRW. 2010. pg 49 and interview with Phil Robertson, HRW, on 16 September 2008.

\(^{62}\) First interviewed by Mirror researchers on 2 April 2008 when he was repatriated to Thailand with other illegal entry detainees, including 27 Thai trafficking victims. The Mirror Foundation is helping him seek legal redress.

\(^{63}\) Bamrung Amnatcharoenrit. 31 May 2009. “Lured into life on a slave ship”. \textit{The Bangkok Post}, Spectrum section

\(^{64}\) Surapong Kongchantuk is director of the Center for Karen Studies and Development; editorial date not included, at www.statelessperson.com/www/?q=node/2633www.karencenter.com
following observations on the conditions and nature of justice in responding to a particular case, in a website piece entitled “Outside Thai Waters: Human Trafficking and Human Killing”:65

1. The employers did not observe the 1998 Labour Protection Act, which in principle should apply to every worker, whether Thai or Burmese, whether registered or non-registered. They did not pay wages owed for regular time, overtime, days off or work on public holidays. They also terminated employment even when a worker had done nothing wrong in order to avoid paying owed compensation.

2. The employers did not pay emoluments or bonuses in accordance with the custom.

3. The employers did not have migrant workers legally registered to work; instead, they gave them false identity cards bearing the names of Thai fishermen.

4. The employers did not notify immigration officers of the entry and exit of their boats, both in Thailand and in Indonesia.

5. The employers did not notify provincial Marine Department offices of the use of their boats.

6. The employers engaged children younger than 18 years on overseas fishing trips.

7. The employers used the illegal brokerage process to procure the crew, make payments and do other activities.

8. The employers did not submit the registration of crew members or paid wages to local labour inspectors, as required by law.

9. Some government officials and agencies were corrupt and neglected their duties.

10. The laws are out of date. They do not reflect the current reality and are in conflict with other laws. For example, Section 2 in the Labour Ministerial Regulation No. 10 says that the protection of workers shall not be enforced on crew members who are stationed outside the Kingdom for a stretch of one year or more.

11. Migrant workers were treated differently than Thai citizens. Their rights were often violated. They were arrested and could not access protection of their rights. For instance, when a crew member arrived to testify in court, he was arrested by the police and forced to leave the country.

12. The heir of a deceased crew member did not receive compensation and other payments as stipulated by the law because there were difficulties in producing personal identity documents.

13. The action in the court and justice system took a long time. Many of the migrant workers could not stay to contest the case because of their status and limited right to stay in Thailand.

14. Thai society still has a negative attitude toward migrant workers.

15. The policy (restrictions) guidelines for employment of migrant workers are not in line with the business practice and reality of needing workers.

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65 www.statelessperson.com
Mr. V’s story

Mr. V was a 52-year-old cockle farmer in Samut Prakan. After receiving a payment on 13 May 2008, he went to a karaoke bar where he met with Mr. Dong, who encouraged him to drink a lot of alcohol and buy sexual services from a bar girl. When he was very drunk, Mr. Dong took Mr. V to a room and locked him in. The following morning, Mr. V was sold to a fishing boat that was about to leave for Malaysian waters. The captain told him he had to work to repay his debt of 15,000 baht.

Mr. V worked 20–22 hours a day sorting fish, pouring ice and repairing fishing nets. He received no pay and was often abused by the captain and his assistant. There were no rest days. Seven months later, on 15 December 2008, while the boat was heading to shore in Malaysia to refuel, Mr. V jumped overboard. On land he sought help from the Malaysian police but was charged with illegal entry and detained for nearly four months before being deported to Thailand through the Sadao checkpoint in Songkhla on 3 April 2009.

The Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office in Songkhla and the Mirror Anti-Human Trafficking Center jointly investigated the case, determining Mr. V a trafficking victim. He was referred to a public shelter in Pathum Thani for support to recover and to file a case against the broker from the karaoke bar. The trial remained ongoing as of April 2010.

Mr. K’s story

In 2006, Mr. K, then 27, had gone to Bangkok seeking employment. He was lounging in Sanam Luang (Khlong Lot side) when a man whose name he could not recall befriended him and persuaded him to work on a fishing boat. The man had described it as an easy job with a monthly income of several thousand baht. He was taken in a minivan, which had been parked near Khlong Lot, to Songkhla province with four other men. They arrived at a Songkhla fishing pier near the Songkhla Marine Police station. Mr. K was sent to work on a single-trawler boat headed for Malaysian waters. The boat captain and his son supervised the crew. After leaving Songkhla, the boat took about three days to reach the Malaysian waters.

Mr. K worked on the fishing boat for three years, without receiving any pay. There were no rest days, no medical supplies on board. He slept about three to four hours each day. He ate two meals a day. When he worked too slowly or could not do as he was told, he would be beaten by the captain and his son. They would hit him on the body with a seine cable. If he resisted, they would threaten him with a gun.

In July 2009, Mr. K was too sick to work. Unhappy, the captain and his son hit him on the face with a steel pipe and slammed his head against the bow. He feigned unconsciousness and was thrown overboard.

Mr. K swam in the sea for one night. He was rescued by a Vietnamese fisherman passing by. He was taken to shore in Viet Nam where he sought assistance from the Vietnamese authorities. After staying in a Vietnamese detention centre for one month, he was assisted by the Thai Consulate and returned to Thailand towards the end of August 2009.

He could identify the broker among photos the police maintain on known or suspected brokers. He also knew the name of the captain and his son. A case was filed, although only an arrest warrant was issued for the broker. The police are currently hunting for the broker, claiming they need the broker to make a link to the captain and his son.

Mr. K was interviewed on 28 September 2009 at his home in northern Lampang province.
In 2004, Thirawat Maisuwannakul, a graduate student in the Faculty of Law at Bangkok’s Thurakij Bundith University, produced his masters’ research titled Labour Protection in Marine Fishery Businesses: A Comparison Between International Labour Standards and International Laws. He argued that the labour protection law and Ministerial Regulation No. 10 need revising regarding fishing work because they are not in line with ILO Conventions and Recommendations. Specifically, he said, they require nothing in terms of health inspections, skills training for crew members, employment contracts, appropriate hours of work, welfare protection and occupational safety. These conclusions were reached even before the ILO consolidated existing international labour standards for fishers on these very issues into the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and Recommendation (R. 199).

Thirawat further noted the need for a separate law that would provide protection to fishing workers. He argued that the nature of fishing work differs from jobs on land. While the 1998 Labour Protection Act touches upon protection of workers in the marine fishery sector, Ministerial Regulation No. 10 (1998), issued in pursuance of the law, carries no sanctions. As a result, it is hard to pursue compliance with standards for the protection of fishing workers. Thus a separate act for protecting fishing workers is needed, he wrote.

4.1 Protection of fisheries workers – national laws

The Thai men and boys who were tricked and forced into working on fishing boats they could not freely leave, as described in chapter 3, were victims of crimes – not simply violations of the labour law (as were the foreign migrants, many of whom were moved across borders for the purpose of forced labour). Forced labour and trafficking of persons for labour exploitation on fishing boats violate Thai national law and the Government’s commitments under various ILO and other human rights treaties. Article 38 of Thailand’s Constitution (2007) also prohibits forced labour.

Specifically, there are three national laws that offer some protection to fishing boat workers, be they Thai or foreign. Although in April 2007, the Thai female employer of a domestic worker was sentenced to more than ten years’ imprisonment in the first-ever conviction under the country’s 1951 Anti-Slavery Law. The victim had worked for the employer for four years without pay and was physically abused.66

At the time of the study, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008)67 had not yet come into force (it did so in June 2008). Its enactment, replacing another anti-trafficking law, marked a significant breakthrough because

66 Found at Humantrafficking.org, adapted from “Of human bondage: After 50 years, the anti-slavery law is finally being enforced.” Bangkok Post. Outlook, 8 May 2007, at www.humantrafficking.org/updates/633

67 Translation by an officer within Thailand’s Office of the Attorney General, available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,LEGAL,,,THA,4a546ab42,0.html
it defined trafficking for both labour and sexual exploitation – the previous trafficking law referred only to sexual exploitation. Also, while the previous law only covered women and children; the new law also covers trafficking of men. It subjects violators to heavier penalties, especially government officials, politicians and office holders, than what the Labour Protection Act required.

Within the law, forced labour or service is defined as “compelling a person to work or provide service by putting such person in fear of injury to life, body, liberty or property of such person or another person by means of intimidation, use of force, or by any other means, thus putting such person in a situation of being unable to resist.” Specifically, the law states:

“Section 4: “Exploitation’ means …slavery, causing another person to be a beggar, forced labour or service… ‘Forced labour or service’ means compelling the other person to work or provide service by putting such person in fear of injury to life, body, liberty, reputation or property, of such person or another person, by means of intimidation, use of force, or any other means causing such person to be in a state of being unable to resist.”

“Section 6: Whoever, for the purpose of exploitation, does any of the following acts:
(1) procuring, buying, selling, disposing of, taking away from or sending to a place, detaining or confining, harbouring, receiving any person, by means of threat or use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or giving money or benefits to the parent or guardian of a person in such a way that the parent and guardian consents to allowing the offender to exploit such person under their care;
(2) procuring, buying, selling, disposing of, taking from or sending to a place, detaining or confining, harbouring, or receiving a child is guilty of trafficking in persons.”

“Section 7: Whoever commits any of the following acts, shall be punished likewise as the offender of an offence of trafficking in persons:
(1) supporting the commission of an offence of trafficking in persons;
(2) aiding by contributing property, procuring a meeting place or lodge, for the offender of trafficking in persons…”

“Section 52: Whoever commits an offence of trafficking in persons shall be liable to the punishment of an imprisonment from four years to ten years and a fine from eighty thousand baht to two hundred thousand baht.”

Although the passage of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act brought the law and practices into compliance with the UN standards, many informants told the Mirror researchers that weak enforcement remains a major problem. The 2010 Human Rights Watch Report makes the same conclusion.68

The Labour Protection Act (1998) allows for compensatory damages from an employer in cases of forced labour. However, in the accompanying Ministerial Regulation No. 10, Clauses 1, 2 and 4 touch upon protection and hiring of fisheries workers but also limit the protection rights of some deep-sea fishing workers:

“Clause 1. The labour protection for sea fishery work other than as prescribed in this Ministerial Regulation shall be as agreed upon by the Employer and Employees. Except the labour protection under the following provisions, the Employer and Employees shall comply with the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998): Sections 7 to 21 of Chapter 1 – General Provisions, Sections 100 to 107 of Chapter 8 Occupational Safety, Health and Environments, Sections 123 to 125 of Chapter 12 – Lodgment and Consideration of Complaints, Sections 134 and 135 of Chapter 13 – Employee Welfare Fund, Sections 139 to 142 of Chapter 14 – Labor Inspectors and Sections 143 of Chapter 15 – Delivery Notices.”

“Clause 2. This Ministerial Regulation shall not apply to:
(1) sea fishery work with less than 20 Employees. Except the provisions regarding payment of Wages under Clause 7 and 8 shall apply to sea fishery work with one or more Employee; and
(2) fishing boats regularly operated outside the Kingdom for a continuous period of one year or more.”

“Clause 4. An Employer shall not employ a child under sixteen years of age to work in a Fishing Boat, unless the child is not under fifteen years of age and his/her father, mother or guardian also works on the same Fishing Boat, or his/her, mother or guardian gives a consent in writing.”

The Ministerial Regulation ends with a clause that says, “Because marine fishing work has working conditions different from other general employment, it is expedient to put protection of such workers in a special category different from the protection provided by the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998). In pursuance of Section 22 of the Act, subsequent Ministerial Regulations shall be issued to cover protection for labour different from those provided by the Act. This Ministerial Regulation is issued accordingly.”

Researchers and legal experts have proposed that the Labour Protection Act and its Ministerial Regulations be amended.

The anti-trafficking and labour laws are complemented with the Chapter on the Offence Against Liberty within the Criminal Code:

“Section 309: Whoever compel another person to do or not to do any act or to be subjected to something by putting him in fear of injury to life, body, liberty, reputation or property of him or of another person or uses force or violence in such a way that he does or does not do such act or is subjected to such thing shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years or fined not exceeding six thousand baht or both.

“If the offence according to the first paragraph is committed by making use of arms or by five persons upwards participating or is committed in such a way that the compelled person executes, revokes, damages or destroys any document of right, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding five years or fined not exceeding ten thousand baht or both.

“If the offence is committed by alluding to the power of a secret society or criminal association, whether or not such secret society or criminal association exists, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment of one to seven years or fined two thousand to fourteen thousand baht or both.

No subsequent regulations have been issued.


29
“Section 310: Whoever detains or confines another person or does by any means whatsoever and deprives such person of liberty bodily shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years or fined not exceeding six thousand baht or both.”

“Section 312: Whoever acts to enslave another person or cause such person to be in a slave-like position, brings into or sends out of the Kingdom, removes, buys, sells, disposes of, receives or detains any person shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding seven years or fined not exceeding fourteen thousand baht.

“Section 312 tri: Whoever by dishonesty receiving, disposing of, procuring, seducing or taking away a person over fifteen years but not yet over eighteen years of age even with such person’s consent shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding five years or fined not exceeding ten thousand baht or both.

“If the offence according to Paragraph 1 is committed to a child not yet fifteen years old, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding seven years or fined not exceeding fourteen thousand baht or both.”

The third law is the Immigration Act (1979), in which sections 23, 24 and 25 state that “conveyances” entering or leaving the Kingdom must notify officials for inspection purposes. Immigration officers will inspect documents concerning the boat, the merchandise and crew members. The inspection should also determine which crew members do what type of work and whether each person has his proper documents. This law should serve as a deterrent to involuntary labour, to a certain extent.

However, the Mirror researchers’ interviews with immigration officers in four fishing ports 71 revealed serious problems and obstacles. First, there is a shortage of boat inspection officers. Thus, it is not always possible to conduct an inspection when a boat arrives in the port. Second, when an inspection is made, the captain invariably presents only crew members with proper legal documents. Third and perhaps the most serious problem is that many captains do not notify the authorities of their entry into and exit from the country.

4.2 International commitments

As pointed out by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations regarding the implementation of ILO Convention No. 29, states have a positive obligation to prevent, investigate and appropriately prosecute violations of human rights by state authorities and their agents, as well as by private individuals harming the rights of others.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, which Thailand has ratified, covers navigational rights, territorial sea limits, economic jurisdiction, legal status of resources on the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, passage of ships through narrow straits, conservation and management of living marine resources, protection of the marine environment, a marine research regime and a binding procedure for settlement of disputes between States.

The Convention on Forced Labour (No. 29) was among the first International Labour Organization Conventions that Thailand ratified (in 1969). The convention broadened the 1926 Slavery Convention’s definition of slavery to include forced or compulsory labour. In 2007, the ILO Committee of Experts issued an observation on the

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71 Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakan, Songkhla and Pattani.
application of the Convention with respect to fishers, which it had to repeat in 2009 in the absence of a report by the Thai Government. The relevant section read as follows:

“Trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation” – communication from an international workers’ organization. The Committee has noted the comments on the application of the Convention by Thailand, made by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) – now the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) – in its communication dated 31 August 2006. In this communication, the ICFTU expresses its concern about the persistence of the trafficking in persons from and into Thailand and refers to a report published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (April 2006), in which Thailand has been listed in the group of countries which have a very high level of trafficking, as a country of destination, origin and transit. According to the report, Cambodian and Lao women and girls are trafficked into Thailand for factory and domestic work and the sex trade; Burmese, Cambodian and Lao men are trafficked into Thailand for forced labour in such sectors as construction, agriculture and in particular the fishing industry. The ICFTU refers in this connection to first-hand information concerning Burmese fishermen and, in particular, six members of the Seafarers’ Union of Burma, who had been tricked into abusive working conditions on board Thai fishing vessels in situations similar to forced labour, which included allegations of brutality and injury. The ICFTU expressed concern about the lack of legal protection of men subjected to forced labour, which leaves the problem of male victims unaddressed.

The communication from the ICFTU was forwarded to the Government, on 28 September 2006, for such comments as might be considered appropriate. The Government acknowledged that the current legislation was limited in its scope and that human trafficking had become more severe and complicated. It indicated that the Government was in the process of adopting the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act and that it had been approved by the Cabinet and was now under the consideration of the National Assembly. However, the Committee notes that the Government’s report contained no reference to the ICFTU communication referred to above. It requests the Government to respond to the allegations made by the ICFTU in its next report.”

Other ILO Conventions specifically concern the fishing sector are the Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 112), the Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 113), the Fishermen’s Articles of Agreement Convention, 1959 (No. 114), and the Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (No. 126). Thailand has ratified none of these, however.

In 2007 the International Labour Conference (ILC) participants agreed that those Conventions needed revision and consolidation with a view to reaching a greater number of the world’s fishers, particularly those working on board smaller vessels. The ILC adopted in June 2007 the Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) and Recommendation (No. 199) to promote and protect fishers’ rights to work in decent conditions. Convention No. 188 calls for fishers to have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health protection, medical care and social security. Its Preamble “takes into consideration” the fundamental rights found in fundamental ILO Conventions, including those on forced labour. The Convention requires ratification by ten member States, of which eight must be coastal states, before it can enter into force. In 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the first country to ratify the Convention.

Forced labour is also prohibited under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all of which Thailand has ratified.
5 Victim assistance, justice and protection

5.1 Assistance

There are a number of agencies with a mandate to assist trafficking and forced labour victims, though most especially the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The agency that often is first on the scene when victims are reported is the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office. The Provincial Home for Children and Family also plays a role in the care of the victims once they are returned to their home province.

However, according to officials with the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, Provincial Labour Office, Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare, and provincial police stations, the coordination of information between agencies in various areas and between the areas where many workers originate and where they move to look for work can still be further improved.

There are also complaints that there is too little relaying of information and coordinating even between agencies of the same ministry. Information regarding victims of forced labour on fishing boats collected by agencies that work in the fishing pier areas does not get conveyed to relevant authorities in areas where victims are returned.

The set-up of the multidisciplinary Provincial Operation Centres on the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking, which have been established throughout the country in a phased process starting in 2003, are considered an excellent venue to address the issues. Although the centres in some provinces are more active than others, in general they bring all relevant government and non-government agencies into one communicating channel and have greatly helped to streamline the referral system; communication between agencies and provinces has improved.

From the interviews for the study, it is clear that the officials and staff people directly responsible for victims lack appropriate interview skills. Too often, interview screenings consist of recording the personal history of a victim and their family. Many interviewers do not go into essential details that may lead to better rights protection and successful claims, such as filing complaints against an offender or claiming benefits and compensation from an employer or boat owner. The interviewers often neglect to ask about the dates of employment, working conditions, wages paid and debts paid off.

In the rehabilitation process, several Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices operate merely to help the needy and destitute by giving them materials for basic needs and 2,000 baht to the victim as basic family welfare assistance. Prior to the Mirror Foundation’s study, there was no other kind of help. Although the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has in place a fund for trafficking victims, many
Provincial Social Development and Human Security officers do not know the criteria for requesting assistance from the fund for the victims. Money is available for victim rehabilitation, but many people do not know to ask for it.\textsuperscript{72}

Prior to the Anti-Trafficking Persons Act coming into force in mid 2008, there was little or no coordination of assistance or even communication among agencies in the home areas of victims included in the Mirror research. Often, only one agency provided help. For instance, the Provincial Employment Office in the four provinces where the Mirror researchers checked had no knowledge of the trafficking situation in their locality because they have never received any information. And yet other agencies likely were aware of victims. The multidisciplinary Provincial Operation Centre on the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking now in place in 19 provinces has the capacity and mandate to be more responsive to this concern.

In an attempt to increase the cooperation between agencies of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and those of the Ministry of Labour to protect human trafficking victims, the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare developed Operational Guidelines on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking for Labour Purposes and Assistance and Protection for Trafficked Persons, with ILO assistance. The training curriculum accompanies the guidelines, which were developed through a series of inter-agency meetings in response to the enactment of the 2008 Anti-Human Trafficking Act. A first batch of trainings took place during 2009 and more will follow around the country. These guidelines and the training should certainly improve both the level of agency and inter-agency communication and assistance for all victims, including men.

The Mirror research indicates that when a victim sought assistance from a local NGO, the NGO would coordinate with other public agencies concerned, especially the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office and the Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare for further help. However, often little was done to identify the worker as a victim of trafficking or even another criminal offence. He was instead categorized as a person in distress and received assistance in the form of a bus fare to return home.\textsuperscript{73}

Prior to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, no case involving men was labelled a trafficking case. Since the law came into force, some cases still are not treated as a trafficking situation even though they are. Because some cases are not treated as a trafficking case, the details are not forwarded around nor are legal aid, welfare assistance or wage compensation offered. As a result, there is no record of a fishing-related trafficking victim.

Another change since the study was conducted relates to improvements in victim assistance. The working procedures for the provincial units of the MSDHS that outline the provision of initial remedy support and victim rehabilitation were presented at a conference for officials of the 19 provinces where there is a Provincial Operation Centre on the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking. As a result, the Sakhon Nakhon provincial office of the MSDHS in the North-East provided cash assistance to a rescued victim by requesting a grant from the national fund for victims of trafficking. The first victim to apply for assistance from the victim-compensation relief fund in Yasothon province since that conference was granted 50,000 baht. Many more cases have since been processed for comparable compensation and other related recovery assistance.

\textsuperscript{72} The fund to assist trafficked victims, under the care of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, can be accessed for budget through anti-trafficking projects or projects designed to assist trafficked victims. Each Provincial SDHS Office is responsible for submitting the request to the fund. With the passage of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008), the fund stopped operating temporarily, it became the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Fund in accordance with the new law.

\textsuperscript{73} Interview with field officers of Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan) in 2008.
Rescuing victims

Based on the reports of rescued victims by public agencies and NGOs, there are several categories of workers who need help:

- those who were deceived into working against their will
- those who agreed to work on the boat but were exploited regarding wages and welfare
- those who were physically attacked by the boat captain (Tai-kong) or crew member
- those who were arrested outside the Thai waters and did not receive assistance from their boat owner.

The rescue of trafficking and forced labour victims or distressed workers starts, not unusually, when an NGO receives preliminary information about a person or persons. The information is then conveyed to a public agency, most often to the anti-trafficking multidisciplinary action team in the province where the crime has occurred. Until the 2008 anti-trafficking law included men, it had been difficult generating government assistance for men in trafficking and forced labour situations. The anti-trafficking multidisciplinary action team has helped improve the reporting situation, but there are still problems with coordinating information and arranging the rescue of victims.

Most victims cannot ask for help because they are trapped on a boat. Rescues come about only because an NGO working in a pier or fish-processing area hears reports of abuse. Occasionally a victim manages to escape before being delivered to a fishing boat and reports the incident to a local NGO. The point is, NGOs tend to acquire more information about potential victims than do public agencies.

Because NGO workers and volunteers regularly venture into the areas where fishing boat workers are likely to be, they can gain their trust and the workers may be more willing to report abuses. If there is a need for rescue, prosecution or rehabilitation, the NGO can now take the case to the multidisciplinary team, which operates under the supervision of the public agencies.

5.2. Justice

A big part of the problem remains with the recognition that fishing boat work is a destination for trafficked Thai boys and men.

In the Samut Sakhon Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office’s report on victims rescued from fishing-related trafficking situations from 2007 to end 2008, there is no mention of even one Thai male being trafficked or even simply deceived into the work. A similar report in Songkhla province cites the rescue of 16 victims (nationality not disclosed in the research). According to cases on record, both provinces are places of origin, transit and destination of victims from Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia.

On the other hand, the records at the Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan), a shelter for workers whose rights are violated as well as sick and trafficked workers in Songkhla province, reflects more than 50 Thai and foreign migrant victims from fishing boats in a one-year time period. It seems that almost six times the number of cases remained outside the purview of the public agencies.

Many victims believe that what has happened to them is their karma; either they did not want to press charges or take action against their abusers or they did not think it would do any good to go to the authorities. Foreign

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74 Information from the complaints received and rescues of victims, Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices of Songkhla, Pattani and Samut Sakhon, NGOs consisting of LPN, Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan) and the Mirror Foundation’s Anti-Human Trafficking Center.

75 Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices of Samut Sakhorn and Songkhla, reports on victim rescue from the trafficking and rights violation of fishery workers.

76 Interview with Suchart Chantralakkhana, manager of Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan), September 2008.
migrants, particularly those without proper work papers, are particularly hesitant to report a crime because it will likely and unfortunately result in them being deported to their country of origin on the grounds they entered Thailand illegally.

In most of the cases reported to the Mirror Foundation’s Anti-Human Trafficking Center, the victims said they did not know who or what public agency to turn to for help. Some thought of the local police station, but they did not feel comfortable with the police and were unwilling to file a police complaint. They feared they would be in danger if they accused the boat captain or a boat owner of human trafficking.

Even when a victim seeks out the police, the officers seem reluctant to pursue the case, although often there is little evidence to go on. Mr. D, for instance, was 20 years old when he left home in southern Pratum Thani province to find work in Bangkok in early 2008. Shortly after he stepped off the No. 59 bus at Sanam Luang park, he met a man who worked as a motorcycle taxi driver who said he could help him find a job. The man took him to a two-storey house near Bangkok’s Noi Bridge. At the house, he met an elderly man, also deceived. The next day a couple arrived and told Mr. D he would work in a restaurant. The two men were then taken to Songkhla but to a fishing boat. After four months working on the boat, Mr. D had a chance to go ashore in Malaysia when the boat stopped for refuelling. He decided to run away and was arrested by the Malaysian police and charged with illegal entry. He spent four days in jail before being repatriated to Sungai Kolok district, Narathiwat province. Mr. D could not identify any of the brokers or the ship captain. He could locate the house where he was first taken and reported that to the police. Mr. D spent three days talking with the police and retracing his movements. However, the investigating officer in the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women never registered it as a case. Then the officer was relocated, leaving no documentation behind. Mr. D lost interest in repeating the process with someone new.

**Shortcomings in the legal environment and justice system**

It is uncommon for a fishing boat victim to file a complaint to a police officer on his own, especially if he is a foreign migrant. Usually, the complaint is made through an NGO or public agency, such as the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office. Many victims are lacking awareness of the legal process and support for pursuing claims and charges.

Many police investigators seem to lack awareness on changes in the laws, and some investigating police officers are not familiar with the relatively new Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act – particularly that it now includes men and addresses the issues of labour trafficking.

To further complicate the matter, if a victim is younger than 18 years, the Criminal Code Procedure requires a multidisciplinary team to take part in the inquiry. Many police officers think that the process is rather complex. It was reported to the Mirror Foundation researchers that sometimes the police have decided not to investigate child cases or report their complaints, given the complexity.

The Mirror staff have reported complaints to investigating police officers who did not pursue the investigation. Appointments would be made for the victim to return for further questioning in accordance with the Criminal Code Procedure. This might take one to four weeks. Frustrated and needing to work, several victims who were given assistance in a temporary shelter decided against pursing the case and chose to return to their home.

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77 A victim who sought assistance from the Anti-Human Trafficking Center in May 2008.

78 Interview with officers of the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women on problems and obstacles in questioning victims younger than 18 in accordance with the Criminal Code Procedure in 2008.

79 Case study of victims who received service at Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan) and Pakkred Reception Home for Boys.
 Trafficking and Forced Labour of Thai Males in Deep-Sea Fishing

village without pressing any charges. In addition, police officers are often moved around. As a result, there is little continuity in their action. Some cases have been discontinued because the original investigating officer was no longer working in that jurisdiction and could not be contacted.

In other cases in which police might be willing to investigate, there simply isn’t enough information to go on. Often, a victim knows only a false name of the broker, if he can even remember it months or years later. Recalling the location of the house where they were initially taken and detained is extremely difficult for many victims because it is in unfamiliar territory.

**Case complicity and multiple offenders**

Another difficulty in bringing offenders to justice is the complicity of multiple offenders in different areas. Forced labour on fishing boats involves deception of victims and moving them from place to place. There can be many brokers involved: sending victims to and receiving them at various stops in the areas of origin, transit and destination. These people are offenders, co-offenders, conspirators and principals. In the investigating process that involves a lot of people, most of the suspects or people involved in the trafficking process are neglected. Only the boat captain may be questioned – if anyone is.

Several victims reported that they were deceived first in Bangkok, detained elsewhere and then sent to a fishing boat, all with different people in charge. For instance, three men\(^\text{80}\) reported they were deceived at the Rommaninat park in Bangkok, detained at a house in Samut Sakhon province and then sold to a fishing boat in Songkhla province. Before the victims reported their situation to the police in Region 9, they were shown photos of suspected traffickers (a photo collection the Provincial Police Region 7 has assembled). They identified a person who had taken them from the public park (broker 1) and the person who had detained them in the house in Samut Sakhon (broker 2). However, instead of pursuing trafficking charges against those two brokers, the provincial police in Region 9 focused only on building a case against the boat captain. They said they can only focus on offences that take place in their jurisdiction (the brokers committed a crime in a different jurisdiction).

There are central police units that have a mandate to operate nationwide, such as the Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women. However, they tend to concentrate mainly in Bangkok. According to Mirror informants, they also need to first obtain approval from higher-level authorities and the budget to conduct investigations beyond Bangkok; that process can delay an investigation.

**Court trials**

Of the 83 victims in cases reported to the Mirror’s Anti-Human Trafficking Center, only 11 have become a court case, all of which were still ongoing as of April 2010.

Court delay is another obstacle to victims’ pursuit of justice. All known victims have been poor. They came from different regions of the country or beyond. It has been difficult for them to appear before the court for financial reasons or sometimes even to find them again to summon them to testify because the proceedings are delayed. If the proceedings drag on, they lost interest in pursing the case. One victim agreed to settle his case out of court and took a payment offered by the boat captain.\(^\text{81}\)

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\(^{80}\) Interview with rescued victims at Songkhla Marine Police station, August 2008.

\(^{81}\) Information from the interview with a victim deceived and sold to a fishing boat in Songkhla in May 2008. The victim was forced to work on the boat for more than two years in return for 20,000 baht (his monthly average pay was 834 baht).
There are ways around the court delays or the problem of bring victims for testifying in court. According to the Criminal Code Procedure:

“Section 237bis: Before the case is submitted to the court, when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the witness will depart from the Kingdom, has no habitual residence or has residence far from the court of trial, or when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the witness will be tampered directly or indirectly, or when there are other necessary causes that make it difficult to bring the witness to give testimony in the future, the public prosecutor himself or the inquiry officer, upon receiving the request from the injured person, may submit an application specifying all the acts allegedly committed by the alleged offender for the court to issue an order that the testimony be taken promptly. If the alleged offender has been ascertained and kept in custody of the inquiry officer or the public prosecutor, the public prosecutor shall bring him to the court. If he has been kept in custody by the court, the court shall call him for trial accordingly.

“On receiving such a request, the court shall take the testimony of the witness promptly. The alleged offender may cross-examine or appoint a counsel to cross-examine the witness.”

However, often the investigating officer or the public prosecutor does not request a witness testimony in advance. Some police officers find it burdensome to make the additional request to a court, which is needed to make a video deposition. As a result, during the trial when evidence is needed, it will be very difficult to bring to court the victim or witnesses who are likely habitual migrant workers. Without a victim or witness, a case most likely will be dismissed.

**Budget and shelter for victims**

Until 2008, there was no government shelter available for male trafficking victims. Now there are four. The provincial shelters such as homes for boys and girls as well as women, under the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, are understaffed. Previously, fishing boat victims were sent to temporary shelters of local NGOs, such as LPN and the Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan), which operate with limited budgets.

The privately operated shelters, however, are not without problems. Because they are non-governmental, they are not legally authorized to keep and provide shelter for non-Thai citizens who illegally entered the country.

The private shelters receiving victims sent by public agencies have to pay the expenses themselves. This automatically limits the extent of the rescue because there is no money for food and other recreational activities for these victims. In addition, these shelters are also understaffed.

The hospitals of Samut Sakhon and Songkhla provinces are always ready to help victims sent to them by any agency. But the hospitals cannot charge them for the health care and have to absorb all the expenses.

**5.3 Protection**

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Labour and the Royal Thai Police also have jurisdiction over the protection of potential victims. However, there is insufficient coverage of protective information, and thus the messages are not reaching workers looking to migrate. Because of the poor information referral system, there is no database on victims that can be used to inform prevention campaigns.

Because most of the victims interviewed came from Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Si Sa Ket and Buri Ram provinces, the researchers looked at what is in place in those north-eastern areas to inform potential male workers
of the risks in migrating. For economic reasons and when the harvesting season is over, many workers travel to Bangkok or other more economically prosperous provinces to find more work. Many go aimlessly, without knowing where to go when they get there or where to look for employment. They are willing to take whatever first comes along. Most do not know that there are local employment offices.

**Shortcomings in providing information to job seekers before they leave home**

Many of the interviewed victims did not know or receive information before leaving home about the possible dangers. They did not know about the Department of Employment or that they could contact it in Bangkok or other provinces to look for work.

Similarly, government employment officials in several provinces commented that most government employment agencies in the north-eastern region pay more attention to providing information and assistance for jobs overseas. These government offices do little to facilitate internal migration.

Although the Department of Employment had several projects ongoing at the time of the study that proactively focused on local communities and providing information on overseas jobs, migrating risks, curbing deceptive recruitment and inspecting recruitment agencies, none of the 30 victims who were interviewed had heard of any of those activities. It appears likely that the provincial employment agencies’ efforts to educate workers did not reach the targeted population.

The Mirror researchers met with officials from the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices, Provincial Offices of Employment, Provincial Labour Offices, Provincial Offices of Labour Protection and Welfare and Provincial Public Relations Offices. There seemed to be little awareness about forced labour in fishing work and they were not aware of any complaints that had been filed in their jurisdiction. Thus, the activities conducted to educate local people about risks and dangers in migrating have never included warnings of fishing boat work and deceptive employment practices.

Many officials in the north-eastern provinces thought that because the deception takes place elsewhere, such as the central region, then it is a problem to be addressed by officials working there. Their duty, they believe, is to help assist and rehabilitate victims once they return.

The interviews with several victims indicate they had never used or had access to information about employment opportunities from the public sector.

**Shortcomings in providing warning information in areas vulnerable to deceptive practices**

**Bangkok**

The five areas previously pointed out as where victims interviewed for this research had been deceived (Sanam Luang, Mo Chit bus terminal, Hua Lamphong railway station, Wongwian Yai and Rommaninat public park) come under the responsibility of many agencies. Thus there is no one agency with a leading mandate in dealing with the protection of job seekers, particularly from deceptive practices for such jobs as fishing.

Such semi-open areas as the Mo Chit bus terminal, Hua Lamphong railway station and Rommaninat park are available to the public during certain hours under supervision of officials. They are more easily controlled than

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82 Interview conducted at Anti-Human Trafficking Center after receiving complaints between 2007 and 2008.

83 Areas that the deceived victims said they were sold to fishing boats, information from the Royal Thai Police and the Mirror Foundation.
a public space open at all hours. However, there is little in the way of preventive measures against deception from human traffickers in place in these three locations. Nor are there areas cited in warning messages in upcountry provinces. There are occasional warnings passed through loudspeakers and signs in the actual locations to guard against thieves, but there is nothing substantial about human trafficking. There are warnings about offers of free food or drink.

In open public areas, such as Sanam Luang and Wongwian Yai, there are no warning messages at all. Prevention takes the form of police patrolling the area to deter crime.

Although there are some labour protection activities by certain units of the Department of Employment in semi-open areas such as the Mo Chit bus terminal and Hua Lamphong railway station, they do not work proactively, particularly in terms of protecting job seekers. The local employment agencies are not clearly marked and seem hidden away in these transport stations. Those who are looking for work do not know that there are such agencies in the area and what their roles and functions are.

**Samut Sakhon province**

Samut Sakhon, which is commonly referred to as Mahachai (a subdistrict name), is a high-risk area for labour deception. It is a heavily industrial area, known largely for the shrimp processing that takes place. Nearly all shrimp that is farmed in the country comes to Samut Sakhon for processing. It is a popular destination for upcountry job seekers looking for work.

There are reports of some publicity activities to raise awareness and protect Thai workers in the vulnerable areas. The Samut Sakhon employment agency has placed signs in Thai around the public park and in front of the Lak Muang Shrine. There are also loudspeaker units disseminating information on the prevention labour trafficking and wage cheating.

**Songkhla province**

The province has a big port with a high demand for workers naturally attracts labour brokers in various guises. A report from the Royal Thai Police refers to organized human trafficking groups in the fishery labour sector operating there. In addition, the big fishing pier in Muang district has at least 50 karaoke bars, some of which have been cited in the reports from victims.

According to conversations with Thai government officials and victims, there has not been any publicity to warn job seekers or even provide useful information to help them find safe and decent work. Songkhla provincial employment officers said that they have never received any complaint about worker deception on fishing boats so there was no need to prepare publicity material on labour protection.

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84 Interview with a Samut Sakhon provincial employment officer in July 2008
86 Information about karaoke bars in Mueang district, Songkhla province from Investigation Section of Songkhla Provincial Police station.
87 Information from community health volunteers, Songkhla Marine Police and Songkhla provincial police station.
88 Interview with Songkhla provincial employment officers in July 2008.
6 Summary of the study’s findings and recommendations

6.1 Summary of the study’s findings

The study on forced labour in deep-sea fishing in Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, Songkhla and Pattani provinces revealed the following primary issues:

1. Thai boys and men are being trafficked into forced labour on Thai fishing boats.

Although the trafficking and forced labour problem appears to affect foreign migrants (mainly from Myanmar but also from Cambodia and to a lesser extent Lao PDR) to a far greater degree, the Mirror Foundation located 83 cases of Thais aged 14 to 55 who were tricked or abducted and forced to work on fishing boats either in Thai waters or beyond for months or years. The men and boys are typically picked up after they newly arrive in an area looking for work. Many are offered jobs in another industry or told they will be sorting fish on land. Some agree to fishing boat work thinking they will be at sea only a few days or weeks at a time, only to be taken to boats that go abroad and don’t return for a year or more. Some men (though few) were abducted through the use of a drug, knocked unconscious or taken while intoxicated to a boat.

Thailand is one of the world’s primary suppliers of seafood products, both fresh and processed and the fisheries industry contributes significantly to Thailand’s economy.

In the best of times, the boat conditions are harsh with long hours at gruelling work and poor compensation, making it an unattractive source of employment. Even with the foreign migrant worker pool, there is a high demand for labour. The demand has given rise to “bounty brokers” who set out to deceive workers and send them to fishing boats. A bounty broker may run a gang of smaller brokers who make the first connection with a potential victim. The brokerage movement can consist of several stages of moving a victim from one place to another and one level of broker to another before they are delivered to a boat captain for a final fee of 7,000–25,000 baht per person. Boys younger than 18, and some as young as 15, are found on fishing boats. They are treated the same as adults and assigned heavy loads.

2. There are few safeguards for internal migration and little warnings of trafficking and exploitation risks for Thais moving around the country in search of work.

Migration of people within Thailand is not safe. There is little information that will help workers make informed decisions to migrate from one place to another. When workers migrate from upcountry to Bangkok, for example, they will meet job brokers in such public areas as parks and transport terminals who lead them into abusive and exploitative situations. There are no reports of widespread cracking down on these types of illegal practices – going after the gangs (rather than individuals) and the ease in which they can operate. The Mo Chit bus terminal, the Hua Lamphong railway station and Sanam Luang, Wongwian Yai and Rommaninat parks were the most vulnerable areas where the victims that the Mirror researchers tracked were picked up.
The public agencies do not have any concrete policy on labour protection and internal migration. Nor do they have programmes to raise awareness of the people either in their home province or in the areas where they go to find work.

3. There is poor scrutiny of crew members and fishing boats by the various authorities.

How many fishermen work on Thai boats in unknown because of the trafficking situation. The number of boats is uncertain because so many are not registered, and there is no enforced system of checking the departure and docking of fishing boats. Proof of status of boat crew members is very important. A seaman’s book is required before boats are allowed to go overseas, but the real status of each deep-sea fishing worker is not registered. Falsification of documents of crew members occurs. In particular, deceived workers are found to carry documents with someone else’ name. Without proper inspection of boats, crew members do not undergo the identity verification process by marine transport officials who can determine if they are voluntary workers.

In addition, the notification and inspection of the fishing boats on entering and leaving the waters are not as efficient as they should be. Rules and regulations are not followed. Thus, the official inspection system cannot truly check the status, number of the crew members and the boats that go fishing overseas. There is no knowing which boats enter or exit or who the crew members are.

4. Thai law on fishing limits protection, and law enforcement against offenders remains weak.

Ministerial Regulation No. 10 excludes fishermen working at sea for more than a year from the protections of the Labour Protection Act. Another key issue of concern is that the regulation allows for children aged 15 or 16, depending on certain conditions, to work on offshore fishing boats, spending months or sometimes years on the sea and often in international waters. The Ministry of Labour should assess if this is in compliance with the commitments under ILO Convention No. 182 and No. 138. Fortunately as of mid 2008, the new Anti-Trafficking in Persons law includes labour exploitation and includes men as victims.

Thai law requires that deep-sea fishing boats operate with a registration permit and a license from the Department of Fisheries as well as a permit from the Marine Department. All fishing boat workers are required to have a seaman’s book, which means they are required to be officially documented workers. Many victims in the Mirror research had a seaman’s book that bore the name of someone else.

Law enforcement against the offenders is not effective. Victims are unable to access the justice system on their own and, in the past, they did not receive much support to do so. Often the matter is brought to the attention of the police, there is not enough evidence to further investigate, or police officers do not regard the situation as serious. In addition, owing to the slow justice process and trial, some victims lose interest in pursuing the case against the offenders.

5. The cooperation among agencies and within agencies has been weak in terms of victim assistance and in tracking the problem.

Attempts to tackle the issue of deception and trafficking of fishing boat workers involve several public and private agencies. Prior to the enactment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, which extended the crime to include labour exploitation and to include men, victims of trafficking and forced labour on fishing boats were not treated as victims. Very few of them came to the attention of public agencies. There was little coordination in the work between agencies and some victims were overlooked. There was poor reporting of victims as trafficking cases, thus there has been little or no record of such a problem.
The gradual process starting in 2003 to set up the multidisciplinary Provincial Operation Centre on the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking throughout the country has been successful in bringing all relevant government and non-government agencies into one action channel. However, the centres in some provinces are far more active then in others, where they remain essentially inactive.

With the recognition of labour trafficking in the 2008 trafficking law, there was a shift in ministerial ownership of the trafficking agenda. While the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security remains the focal point in general, the inclusion of labour exploitation required active involvement of the Ministry of Labour. In an attempt to increase the cooperation between agencies, the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare developed Operational Guidelines on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking for Labour Purposes and Assistance and Protection for Trafficked Persons and a training curriculum to improve agency and inter-agency communication and assistance for all victims, including men.

6.2 Recommendations

**Short-term measures:**

1. Conduct a survey of all agencies concerned to collect information on the victims in order to get a better estimate of the number and types of victims as well as an overall picture of the situation. The information from the survey will be used as the basis on which measures can be set to manage the problem.
2. The central authorities such as the Office of the Prime Minister should act as a central body to organize forums in which the leaders of various ministries, business establishments and other agencies concerned discuss to decide who should be the main organization for the matter and to set strategies to solve the problem.
3. Educate and disseminate information to the public in the provinces as well as developing information and education materials for use in all vulnerable areas so that workers can make an informed decision on safe migration. Because so many workers use the bus or train, develop informational videos (with testimonies from previous victims) that play in those transport venues.
4. Provide protection and care for current victims to ensure that they are treated and rehabilitated as prescribed by law and that all actions are taken quickly and efficiently.
5. Train officials and volunteers in vulnerable areas so that they become partners and create watch networks to monitor, prevent and report any suspicious incident.
6. Take action against the offenders and human trafficking groups seriously and decisively.
7. Work with the Department of Fisheries to encourage responsible investment in fishing boats.

**Long-term measures:**

1. Consider revising the Ministerial Regulation No. 10 (1998), issued in pursuance of the 2008 Labour Protection Act, so that it prohibits employment of children younger than 18 to work on offshore fishing boats. It also needs to be revised to extend protection to cover fishing boat workers who have gone overseas for more than one year. Other legal provisions that need amending are: employment contract or agreement, returning crew members to their domicile, pre-service training for boat crew members, health...
inspection, hours of work, welfare, standard security system and medical supply onboard, and occupational safety. Attempts should also be made to develop mechanisms for victim protection and care in a systematic and efficient manner. Draft a Ministerial Regulation that addresses fishing boat work of any duration in and out of Thai waters.

2. Integrate databases of the seaman’s book system, registration of fishery workers, registration of fishing boats and notification and inspection of fishing boats entering and leaving Thailand so that they are under one uniform standard. Mobilize the forces of all agencies concerned in the operation.

3. Develop a memorandum of understanding with the government of the country in whose waters Thai fishing boats operate, requesting its cooperation in the inspection and rescue of victims of deception or trafficking on the boat. In particular, there should be government-to-government concessions instead of private sector-to-private sector agreements. All this will serve to set standards for fishing boats. Penalties should be imposed on the concessionaires who have something to do with trafficking; their rights should be taken away.

4. More should be done to protect victims who have escaped from boats from being jailed at length or even punished in foreign countries.
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ANNEX 1. Thai males tricked or abducted to work on a fishing boat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Day disappeared</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Location met broker</th>
<th>Method used by broker</th>
<th>Province where the boat was docked</th>
<th>Total time on boat</th>
<th>How escaped from the boat</th>
<th>How escaped from the boat</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Buri Ram</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work in pineapple farm</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td>Jump ship</td>
<td>Jumped ship after informed he’d been bought and was heading beyond Thailand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Pathum Thani</td>
<td>Sanam Luang</td>
<td>Offered work in restaurant</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Escape to the Malaysian side</td>
<td>Boat docked in Malaysia to refuel petrol and ice and he escaped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>21 July 2008</td>
<td>Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>Rommaninat public park</td>
<td>Offered work in factory, sorting fish</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td>Received assistance from the Marine Police</td>
<td>Marine Police heard calls for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>21 July 2008</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>Rommaninat public park</td>
<td>Offered work in factory, sorting fish</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td>Received assistance from the Marine Police</td>
<td>Marine Police heard calls for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>21 July 2008</td>
<td>Nakhon Ratchasima</td>
<td>Rommaninat public park</td>
<td>Offered work in factory, sorting fish</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td>Received assistance from the Marine Police</td>
<td>Marine Police heard calls for help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Unknown, victim appeared to be mentally challenged</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Victim deceived twice; first time he escaped. Second time he disappeared and then the family received a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that victim was returning from Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sukhothai</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>To contact the family to help</td>
<td>Victim arrested in Indonesia for illegal entry. Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate assistance for his return by boat. He never arrived and remains a missing person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Source City</td>
<td>Source Station</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Time Offered</td>
<td>How Escaped</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Construction work</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>Tak</td>
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<td>Construction work</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>Tak</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Construction work</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>Tak</td>
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<td>Construction work</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>Tak</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Construction work</td>
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<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Surat Thani</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Construction work</td>
<td>10 years</td>
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<td>Victim escaped to the Malaysian coast and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
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<td>Lampang</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Construction work</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim was passed from boat to boat until he escaped in Malaysia in 2005 and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
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<td>7 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim was passed from boat to boat until he escaped in Malaysia in 2005 and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Nakhon Sawan</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Construction work</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Victim was passed from boat to boat until he escaped in Malaysia in 2005 and was arrested for illegal entry.</td>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Region</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Lampang</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work on a farm raising ducks</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work on a farm raising ducks</td>
<td>Given excessive bill after getting drunk in a karaoke bar</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Fish farming</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Sakon Nakhon</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Offered work deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work on a farm raising ducks</td>
<td>Offered work on a farm raising ducks</td>
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<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>Offered work deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Given excessive bill after getting drunk in a karaoke bar</td>
<td>Offered work deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Mahachai</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Ayutthaya</td>
<td>1 year 4 months</td>
<td>Escaped jump ship</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Prachuap Khiri Khan</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Prachuap Khiri Khan</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Escaped jump ship</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Mahachai</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Phuket</td>
<td>1 year 4 months</td>
<td>Escape jump ship</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Escaped jump ship</td>
<td>Saman Luang</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>No education</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Roi Et</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Escape jump ship</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Mahachai</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Roi Et</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Escape jump ship</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Saman Luang</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Other than</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Stay Duration</td>
<td>How Escaped</td>
<td>Anti-trafficking Operation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>47 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Chaiyaphum</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>55 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Si Sa Ket</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Escaped ship at the coast for repairs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>32 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>February 2009</td>
<td>Nong Khai</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Drank water that was offered and felt dizzy</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>Contacted family for assistance</td>
<td>Anti-trafficking operation with Mirror Foundation; victim needed medical attention and was returned by boat owner</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>35 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Songkhram</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Contacted family for assistance</td>
<td>Anti-trafficking operation with Mirror Foundation; victim needed medical attention and was returned by boat owner</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Buri Ram</td>
<td>Hat Yai train station</td>
<td>Offered work on a farm and drink alcohol at a karaoke</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Accident and disability on the boat; cannot work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Nakhon Sawan</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>Contacted family for assistance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Nakhon Sawan</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Lampang</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Escape to the Malaysian side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Si Sa Ket</td>
<td>Sanam Luang</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Escape to the Malaysian side</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>35 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>December 2004</td>
<td>Udon Thani</td>
<td>Missing person</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Working in Malaysian presently</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>44 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Nakhon Si Thammarat</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>February 2004</td>
<td>Prachuap Khiri Khan</td>
<td>Offered work in fishing boats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fishing boat returned to Thailand</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Buri Ram</td>
<td>Made unconscious</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fishing boats back to Thailand</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Udon Thani</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>Made unconscious</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Contacted family for help</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>Nakhon Ratchasima</td>
<td>Offered work in fishing boats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fishing boat returned to Thailand</td>
<td></td>
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<td>43.</td>
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<td>Offered work in fishing boats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Anti-trafficking operation with Mirror Foundation; victim needed medical attention and was returned by boat owner</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location 1</td>
<td>Location 2</td>
<td>Occupation 1</td>
<td>Occupation 2</td>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Method of Escape</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nongbua Lam Phu</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Prachuap Khiri Khan</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Kamphaeng Phet</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Chngrai</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Escaped by jumping overboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Missing person</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>Petchabun</td>
<td>Mo Chit bus station</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Escaped to the Singapore side</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Surin</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work in fishing boats</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Had not yet started</td>
<td>Escaped from house detention to ask for help</td>
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<td>Srakaew</td>
<td>Hua Lamphong train station</td>
<td>Offered work in fishing boats</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Fishing boat returned to Thailand</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Fishing boat returned to Thailand</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>Songkhla</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Fishing boat returned to Thailand</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Other Details</td>
<td>Missing Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Missing person</td>
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<td>54.</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Prachinburi</td>
<td>Sanam Luang</td>
<td>Offered work other than deep-sea fishing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Contacted the family</td>
<td>Missing person</td>
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<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Samut Sakhon</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Contacted the family</td>
<td>Missing person</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>46 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Mahasarakham</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Escaped to the Malaysian side</td>
<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Surin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Escaped to the Malaysian side</td>
<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
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<td>58.</td>
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<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
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<td>59.</td>
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<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
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<td>Duration</td>
<td>Escape Location</td>
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<td>Nonthaburi</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>3 April 2008</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>52 years</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Samut Prakan</td>
<td>Given excessive bill after getting drunk in a karaoke bar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 year 5 months</td>
<td>Escaped to the Malaysian side</td>
<td>3 April 2008</td>
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<td>Samut Prakan</td>
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<td>Khon Kaen</td>
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<td>3 April 2008</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Reason</td>
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<td>Khon Kaen</td>
<td>- - - 5 years</td>
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<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
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<td>83.</td>
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<td>Chaiyaphum</td>
<td>- - - 3 months</td>
<td>Escaped to the Malaysian side</td>
<td>Victim was arrested for illegal entry into Malaysia and returned on 3 April 2008</td>
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<td>Case</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>When taken</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Province of the boat</td>
<td>Total time work</td>
<td>How to escape from the ship</td>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>31 years</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>2,100 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>600 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>1,300 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>1,200 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Month</td>
<td>Reason to Work</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Duration</td>
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<td>Details</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>1,400 baht</td>
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<td>1,700 baht</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>400 baht</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>1,800 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>September 2009</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>900 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>3,000 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>July 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>2,500 baht</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2,700 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>2,700 baht</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Month-Year</td>
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<td>Factory in</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>3 months</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work</td>
<td>Factory in</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>2,500 baht</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>200 baht</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>1,200 baht</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
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<td>Reason for Arrest</td>
<td>Assistance Provided</td>
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<td>27.</td>
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<td>May 2006</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>28.</td>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to repair the boat</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
<td>Rescued by police and LPN while locked in a house, waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009; provided human trafficking victim assistance</td>
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<td>1 month</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
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<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
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<td>Boat access to the coast to sell fish and add oil</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
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<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>25 years</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>44 years</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>Trang</td>
<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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<td>24 years</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Invited to work in factory in Thailand</td>
<td>Trang</td>
<td>Had not yet worked and was rescued from a house waiting for boat assignment on 23 November 2009</td>
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ANNEX 3. Study methodology

The Mirror Foundation conducted the three-month study to assess the situation relating to the deception and forced labour in the fishing boat sector as well as the approach adopted by the public sector and its agencies to manage the problem.

Study of Thai citizens

The study took place from 26 May to 30 September 2008 and looked at the situation involving Thai citizens:

Objectives

- to study the situation of deception and use of forced child labour and Thai workers in the deep sea fishing sector
- to study the forms and methods used to deceive and use forced child labour and Thai workers in deep-sea fishing
- to study the process and structure of managing the problem, as well as preventive and corrective measures, by public agencies
- to provide information as a basis for recommendations to solve problems of deception of fishery workers.

Methodology

Staff and volunteers with the Anti-Human Trafficking Center and the Lost Persons Information Center collected qualitative information, as follows:

1. Study of relevant documents from research work, newspapers and electronic media, documents and articles on fishery workers disseminated from 2003 to September 2008.
2. Field survey on physical environments and their context:
   - fishing piers, Samut Prakan province
   - fishing piers, Samut Sakhon province
   - fishing piers, Songkhla province
   - fishing piers, Pattani province
   - Sanam Luang Pramane grounds
   - Hualumphong Bangkok railway station
   - area around Wongwian Yai Circle
   - Rommaninat park
   - Chaopho Lak Mueang Shrine and park, Samut Sakhon province
   - bus terminal for the northern and northeastern routes (Mo Chit)
   - community behind Wat Dongmunlek
   - Sadao immigration checkpoint (outer post).
3. In-depth interviews:
   • 30 victims and their families who filed direct complaints with the Anti-Human Trafficking Center and the Lost Persons Information Center
   • 10 victims under the care and protection of the Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan)
4. In-depth search on former brokers and interview with one person who had been involved in the trafficking of fishing boat workers.
5. Joint meetings with officials of agencies from the public and private sectors:
   **Central authorities:**
   1. Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children
   2. National Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking
   3. Department of Labour Protection and Welfare
   4. Department of Employment
   5. Department of Consular Affairs
   6. Marine Department
   7. Department of Fisheries
   8. Provincial Police Region 7
   9. Division for Crime Against Children, Juveniles and Women
   10. Railway Police Division
   11. Center for Children, Juveniles and Women
   12. Pakkret Reception Home for Boys
   13. Chanasongkhram Metropolitan Police Station
   14. Bang Sue Metropolitan Police Station
   15. Thai Deep-Sea Fishing Association
   16. Fisheries Association of Thailand.

   **Provincial authorities:**
   **Samut Prakan province**
   1. Samut Prakan Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
   2. Samut Prakan Provincial Office of Employment
   3. Samut Prakan Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare
   4. Samut Prakan Provincial Labour Office

   **Samut Sakhon province**
   1. Samut Sakhon Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
   2. Samut Sakhon Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare
   3. Samut Sakhon Provincial Labour Office
   4. Samut Sakhon Provincial Office of Employment
   5. Samut Sakhon Provincial Police
   6. Samut Sakhon Hospital
   7. Marine Office 3, Samut Sakhon province
   8. Marine Police 4, Sub-Division 4
   9. Immigration checkpoint, Samut Sakhon province
   10. Labour Rights Promotion Network (LPN)
   11. Raks Thai Foundation, Samut Sakhon province
   12. Samut Sakhon Provincial Shelter for Children and Families
Songkhla province
1. Songkhla Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
2. Songkhla Provincial Office of Employment
3. Songkhla Provincial Police
4. Songkhla Hospital
5. Marine Office 4, Songkhla province
6. Songkhla Marine Police
7. Immigration checkpoint, Songkhla province
8. Songkhla Provincial Shelter for Children and Families
9. Songkhla Stella Maris Seafarers Center (Ban Suksan)
10. Volunteers, Prevention of HIV/AIDS Among Migrant Workers in Thailand Project (PHAMIT)
11. Village health volunteers
12. Local fishermen group, Singha Nakhon district

Pattani province
1. Pattani Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
2. Pattani Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare
3. Pattani Marine Police
4. Pattani Marine Office
5. Immigration check point, Pattani province
6. Pattani Provincial Shelter for Children and Families
7. Raks Thai Foundation, Pattani province

Ubon Ratchathani province
1. Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
2. Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Labour Office
3. Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Office of Employment
4. Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare
5. Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Public Relations Office

Udon Thani province
1. Udon Thani Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
2. Udon Thani Provincial Labour Office
3. Udon Thani Provincial Office of Employment
4. Udon Thani Provincial Office of Labour Protection and Welfare
5. Udon Thani Provincial Public Relations Office

Si Saket province
1. Meeting with 20 agencies on the committee of Si Sa Ket provincial Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (Si Sa Ket POCHT)

Buri Ram province
1. Buri Ram Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office
6. Organizing meetings to present the findings and recommendations of the study and discuss with the local agencies:
   • two meetings in the domicile of the victims (north Isan and south Isan):
     - the provinces of Si Sa Ket, Nakhon Ratchasima, Buri Ram, Ubon Ratchathani and Surin
     - Udon Thani province (meeting with the Provincial Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking)
   • two meetings in the destination areas (fishing piers): Samut Sakhon and Songkhla-Pattani.

**Scope of the study**

The study was designed to cover the following issues:
- the situation of labour shortage in the deep-sea fishing sector (related social, economic and political contexts)
- the nature of the problem of deception of fishing boat workers, focusing on children and Thai workers, patterns and methods used in the cycle of trafficking of workers
- measures and constraints in the management of the problem on the part of public agencies.

The study focused on child labour and Thai workers in the deep-sea fishing sector, including public and private agencies concerned in the areas as follows:
- Source areas (vulnerable to deception of workers) in Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, and Songkhla
- Destination areas (fishing piers and nearby areas) in Muang district of Samut Prakan, Muang district of Samut Sakhon, Muang district of Songkhla, and Muang district of Pattani
- Domiciles of the victims
  - **main areas**: Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Si Sa Ket and Buri Ram provinces
  - **additional areas**: Nong Bua Lam Phu, Nakhon Ratchasima and Surin provinces.