

Royal Thai Government's Significant Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking in 2014

The Royal Government of Thailand prioritises the fight against human trafficking and forced labour as a matter of utmost national concern. Efforts to prevent, detect and prosecute rights violations and trafficking in persons are being driven by the highest levels of government, in close collaboration with the international community, civil society, and industry. In 2014, the Royal Thai Government's anti-human trafficking efforts have been intensified and become more integrated. Tangible achievements in key areas are as follows:

Policy and Mechanisms

- The Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.) has established the Policy Committee on Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Fishing and five Subcommittees that deal with (1) Human Trafficking, (2) Fisheries and Illegal, Unregistered, and Unreported (IUU) Fishing, (3) Child Labour, Forced Labour, and Migrant Workers, (4) Women Issues, and (5) Public Relations and Legal Affairs as a new mechanism **to address the issue of trafficking in persons in a more comprehensive manner.**
- The Thai Government is actively addressing human trafficking at **its root causes**, by setting up **Special Economic Zones** in 6 border areas to improve the well-being of people on both sides of the border and reduce the risk of them becoming victims of labour exploitation.
- The Thai Government uses a **holistic approach** to address human trafficking in the sea fishery sector such as the registration of Thai and migrant workers in the sector, the registration of vessels, enhanced Port-in/Port-out measures, the installation of Vessel Monitoring System, etc.
- Several laws and regulations have already been amended;
 - The Ministry of Labour's Regulation to Protect Labour in the Sea Fishing Industry B.E. 2557 (2014)
 - The Ministry of Labour's Regulation to Protect Agricultural Workers B.E. 2557 (2014)
 - The Marine Department's Regulation on Criteria for Permission to Work in Fishing Vessels of 30 gross tonnage or over B.E. 2557 (2014)
- There is also an ongoing process to amend the Anti-Human Trafficking Act B.E. 2551 (2008)
- **The Government's budget** on combating human trafficking in the budget year 2014 was 210.77 million Baht (about 5.81 million Euro). **The amount has been increased to 496.82 million baht** (about 13.88 million Euro) **in the budget year 2015** (from 1 October 2014 – 30 September 2015).

- 5.6 million baht (about 0.17 million Euro) from the Trafficking in Persons Prevention and Suppression Fund had supported 17 projects and activities, carried out by the private sector and NGOs to combat human trafficking. In the budget year 2015, the Fund stands at 62.5 million baht (or about 1.7 million Euro).
- **A human trafficking database** of legal proceedings against offenders and victims of human trafficking has now been put in place by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS).

Prosecution and Law Enforcement in 2014

- Inter-agency inspection units have been established to pool government resources and expertise.
- 280 trafficking cases were investigated.
- 155 defendants were prosecuted.
- 104 defendants were convicted.
- 19 officials and public employees have been penalized as part of a zero-tolerance approach to corruption in the public sector
- 5 legal recruitment/employment companies were penalized.
- 263 illegal brokers faced legal actions following investigations and complaints filed.
- 47 cases of forced labour were found, including 11 cases of forced labour on fishing vessels.
- 107 money laundering cases associated with trafficking under investigation by the Anti-Money Laundering Office.

Protection and Recovery in 2014

- 595 victims of human trafficking were identified by trained, multi-disciplinary teams.
- 303 trafficking victims were placed in shelters (236 foreigners and 67 Thais).
- **Job opportunity services** and **vocational training** have been provided to victims of human trafficking in the shelters. Out of 236 foreign victims, 57 (42 men, 15 women) have chosen to work outside the shelters.
- **These shelters have provided services to child victims** of human trafficking in accordance with international standards and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Two major groups of Hotlines** have been made available: **Human Trafficking-related Hotlines** (Interpreters in 5 languages: Burmese, Chinese, English, Khmer, and Vietnamese, are provided by OSCC's Hotline by the MSDH) and **Anti-Corruption Hotlines**.
- **Well-trained interpreters in six main languages** (English, Myanmar, Laotian, Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese) as well as legal aid services have been made available for **for all victims**.

- All expenses for **repatriation of 397 victims** to their respective country of origin were covered by **Trafficking in Persons Prevention and Suppression Fund**.
- 463 victims received financial aid equivalent to 104,700 Euro from the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Fund.
- 57 victims (14 Thais, 43 foreign victims) in civil cases received compensation of about 240,613 Euro.
- 53 victims in criminal cases received compensation of about 44,416 Euro.
- In the current amendment to the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, there is a proposed provision for **half of the confiscated earnings of traffickers to be used as an additional compensation for victims**. Should there be any amount left, it will be contributed to the **Trafficking in Persons Prevention and Suppression Fund**.

Prevention in 2014

- 1,626,235 formerly undocumented migrant workers have registered in 87 dedicated One Stop Service Centres as of 31 October 2014. Their legal status significantly reduces the chance of them being taken advantage of in all forms, including human trafficking. It also empowers them with the rights to respond to and report their offenders in accordance with pertinent laws.
- 71,132 migrants working in the sea fishing sector have registered themselves.
- 9,506 high-risk areas were inspected, resulting in 44 arrests, 79 victims identified, and 13 minors under the age of 18 rescued.
- 1,316 workplaces were charged with labour laws violations after being inspected.
- 46,722 fishing vessels have been registered in total. They must comply with several reporting and licensing requirements.
- 612 fishing vessels were inspected and 117 vessels were found to be in violation of navigation laws.
- 82 sex tourists were blacklisted, 98 were denied entry, and 12 foreigners had their permission to stay in the Kingdom revoked due to their involvement with sexual exploitations
- The Ministry of Labour's Ministerial Regulation to Protect Labour in the Sea Fishing Industry B.E. 2557 (2014) came into effect on 30 December 2014. It raises the minimum age of labour at sea to 18 years, and mandates mandatory rest periods, as well as employment contract requirements.

Partnership Efforts in 2014

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in combating human trafficking cooperation was signed between the Department of Special Investigation (under the Ministry of Justice) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office Southeast Asia and Pacific (UNODC OSEAP) on 25 August 2014. This complements existing MoU that Thailand has signed with several neighbouring countries.

- 61 victims of trafficking in 16 cases were rescued by information provided to the Royal Thai Police by NGOs and international organizations.
- Cooperation between the Ministry of Labour (Department of Labour Protection and Welfare) and ILO produced a book of good practice guidelines and risk evaluation checklists for labour inspection in the sea fishery sector. These guidelines are based on international labour standards, and anchored in Thai law.

Future Work

- Thailand remains committed to tackling the remaining challenges.
- The Thai Government will continue working closely with partner countries. Currently, an MoU between Thailand and Vietnam is under considerations by both sides to supply sufficient amount of legal labour and do away with the problems of illegal brokers.
- MSDHS will work closely with the Polaris Project (USA) to improve existing hotline services to provide adequate care for those who need assistance.
- The Department of Fisheries and other relevant agencies will consider decreeing relevant laws and regulations to supplement and enforce Port-in/Port-out and VMS-related measures.
