



# Say NO to Shrimp Slavery in Thailand.

## Executive Summary

*“Thailand enjoys a prime position as the world’s largest prawn exporter in a vast seafood-export industry estimated to be worth some \$7.3bn.”*

**- The Guardian, 2014-**

Worldwide, shrimp is currently the most valuable fisheries product, which accounts for approximately **15 %** of internationally traded fisheries products in year 2010 (EJF, 2014). Despite the fact that Thailand shrimp industry is highly profitable and sophisticated due to technologically advanced farming methodologies and an efficient export process; the pre-processing stages of shrimp production are known to be highly labour intensive as well as unregulated (EJF, 2013). Thus with limited control and inspections, the shrimp industry in Thailand consists of poor working conditions, forced labour, exploitation and abuse (EJF, 2013): *“the Shrimp Slavery.”*

## Decreasing Shrimp Prices



The rising demand of **aquaculture** has led to ever expanding globalized shrimp supply, leading to **cheaper shrimp prices** across the globe (Accenture Report, 2013).

In fact, the price of shrimp has decreased by 48.2 % over just 30 years. The international price of shrimp was 16.17 USD per kg in year 1982 while in year 2012, the price has dropped to just 8.37 USD per kg (Accenture Report, 2013).

## Reality: Peeling sheds in Thailand

According to Environmental Justice Foundation, there are over 2000 unregistered **peeling sheds\*** in the Thailand shrimp industry while there are approximately 200 peeling sheds registered with Thailand’s Department of Fisheries (2013).

### **\* What are peeling sheds ?**

The small facilities where workers remove the heads, veins and hard shell of the shrimp and prepare for secondary and/or value-added processing in larger facilities. It is in these peeling sheds where slavery (i.e. child labour) readily takes place.



# Ethical Issues: What about human rights?

"I thought I was going to die. They kept me chained up, they didn't care about me or give me any food ... They sold us like animals, but we are not animals – we are human beings."

- *Vuthy, a former monk from Cambodia who was sold from captain to captain -*

"We'd get beaten even if we worked hard. All the Burmese, [even] on all the other boats, were trafficked. There were so many of us [slaves] it would be impossible to count them all."

- *Another victim who confessed to have seen as many as 20 fellow slaves being killed in front of him; one of whom was tied limb by limb to the bows of four boats and pulled apart at sea. -*

(Retrieved from The Guardian)

## Want to find out more?

#1. Please check out this **video** by Environment Justice Foundation (EJF) titled "**Slavery At Sea**" from the link below: [ejfoundation.org/oceans/slaveryatseafilm](http://ejfoundation.org/oceans/slaveryatseafilm)

#2. Also feel free to watch this **video** by *The Guardian* titled "**Supermarket Slave Trail**" from the link below: [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jun/10/supermarket-prawns-thailand-and-produced-slave-labour](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jun/10/supermarket-prawns-thailand-and-produced-slave-labour)



## Policy Implications and Recommendations

As suggested by Environmental Justice Foundation (2013), the below recommendations should be implemented by the responsible person(s) in order to mitigate the negative impacts of Shrimp Slavery in Thailand as well as to prevent any further labour and slavery.

**#1. The Thailand Government must** ensure all pre-processing facilities are fully registered and effectively regulated.

**#2. The International Community must** actively consider trade embargoes on Thailand shrimp in the absence of conclusive, independent evidence that action is being taken

→ **To combat human labour and slavery in the industry as a whole.**

**#3. The Thailand Shrimp Industry must** provide access to 3rd party monitoring of working conditions and recruitment processes

→ **To ensure workers have abilities to report labour violations and human rights abuses.**

## References

- Accenture (2013) Exploitative Labour Practices in the Global Shrimp Industry
- EJF (2013) THE HIDDEN COST: Human Rights Abuse in Thailand's Shrimp Industry
- EJF (2014) SLAVERY AT SEA: The Continued Plight of Trafficked Migrants in Thailand's Fishing Industry
- ILO (2012) Thailand's Shrimp and Seafood Industry - A World Leader
- The Guardian ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com))