



BANGKOK, THAILAND

THE PROBLEM LABOUR TRAFFICKING

Located in the heart of Southeast Asia, Thailand is a source, transit and destination country for traffickers seeking higher profits by using slave labour. Labour trafficking in Thailand's fishing industry and reports of slavery in supply chains are making international headlines. Vulnerable migrant workers, primarily from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, are trafficked into the Thai fishing and seafood industries through deception, threats and violence. Human trafficking is a lucrative business—profits top \$150 billion a year globally—and a sustainable anti-trafficking solution must involve criminal prosecution. Like other forms of slavery, labour trafficking thrives when criminals are free to prey on victims without fearing the law.



Men at work on a fishing vessel in the Gulf of Thailand

THE FACTS

Thailand is the world's largest exporter of shrimp and third-largest exporter of seafood, with over **\$7 billion exported annually**.¹



Trafficking is widespread in Thailand's seafood industry: One UN study found **57% of Burmese seafood workers to be victims of forced labour**.²

The issue hits home: **The third-largest import product to Canada from Thailand is meat, fish and seafood**.³



Inside a fish sorting facility

“We are seeing unprecedented levels of violence and human rights abuse in the Thai fishing industry. Men, women and children are enslaved in brutal conditions, working long hours for hardly any pay. The good news is the government wants to stand against this crime.”

Andrey Sawchenko, IJM Bangkok Director

How IJM Bangkok Combats Labour Trafficking

We rescue victims who have been trafficked and are being exploited on fishing vessels and within the seafood industry. IJM will collaborate with Thai law enforcement and other governments in the region to investigate labour trafficking crimes and assist with operations to set these men free.

We bring criminals to justice by assisting police as they gather evidence and by supporting prosecutors as they bring charges and build cases against traffickers, recruiters and boat crews or owners involved in the exploitation.

We restore survivors to a place of physical and emotional safety. IJM social workers provide support during the rescue operation and create individualized care plans for each survivor so they receive medical attention, psychological counselling and long-term support in their home community—often in a neighbouring country like Cambodia or Myanmar.

We strengthen justice systems by advocating for systemic changes that will end the impunity traffickers currently enjoy in Thailand and neighbouring countries. IJM also partners with global seafood retailers to use data in assisting the government with their efforts to end slavery in the seafood industry.

IJM BANGKOK MILESTONES

2016

IJM DOCUMENTS PREVALENCE OF THE CRIME

IJM worked with researchers to document the prevalence of labour trafficking and assess the scope of the crime in Thailand’s seafood industry. These studies helped shape our program.

2017

IJM BANGKOK OPENS

2018

FIRST ARREST SECURED UNDER IJM PROJECT

IJM supported Thai authorities in arresting a Cambodian suspect, believed to be a key player in an international trafficking network.



FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR ANDREY SAWCHENKO

Andrey joined IJM in 2004, first leading a team to combat sex trafficking of children in Chiang Mai, Thailand. From 2007 to 2014, Andrey led IJM Cebu in the Philippines to fight sex trafficking of children; after four years of IJM’s work alongside local authorities, a study showed 79% fewer children for sale in the commercial sex industry in the metro area. Andrey most recently led IJM Chennai to combat forced labour slavery in India. He and his family moved to Bangkok in 2017.



PO Box 336 STN B
London, ON N6A 4W1
P 519.679.5030
F 519.679.3358
IJM.ca

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION CANADA is part of a global organization that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

All text and images © 2019 International Justice Mission