

Press Release

Thailand boosts efforts to regularize fishery migrant workers

5 February 2016

The Royal Thai government has extended the registration period for illegal foreign workers in the fishing and seafood industry. The six-month extension is part of the government's resolute efforts to facilitate the regularization of migrant workers and eliminate forced labor in the fisheries sector.

The latest measure, approved by the Cabinet on 2 February 2016, applies to nationals of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar who entered Thailand illegally. Alien workers in fishing vessels and seafood processing factories have until 31 July 2016 and 22 August 2016 to register respectively. Upon registration, the workers are given health check-ups and insurance, and afforded protection in accordance with the law.

Under the ongoing round of registration, which started in November 2015, over 21,000 alien workers in fishing vessels and 42,000 in seafood processing industry have been regularized. These numbers are in addition to 54,000 workers in the fishing industry who were registered during April – June 2015.

The Thai government is advancing a comprehensive reform of the fisheries sector in order to combat illegal fishing and unlawful labour practices. Aside from the registration of illegal migrant workers, the government has increased the workers' job flexibility by allowing them to change employers within their respective industry. New regulations were adopted to prohibit children under the age of 18 from working in the fishing and seafood industry. The government has also been working closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and foreign partners, including a current project aimed to combat unacceptable forms of work in Thai fishing and seafood industry.
