



ONLINE

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS

DETECTING FORCED LABOUR IN COMMERCIAL FISHING

2026 EDITION

 12 HOURS

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

BACKGROUND

Decent work at sea remains elusive for far too many fishers. While there has been progress in some regions and countries, recent reports from a variety of sources confirm that forced labour and trafficking in persons persist in the fishing industry globally.

Forced labour risks are especially pronounced in, but by no means limited to, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Migrant fishers, who make up a significant portion of the fisheries workforce, are particularly vulnerable to being deceived and coerced to work on board fishing vessels.

The detection of forced labour victims in the fishing industry remains a major challenge, as forced labour at sea poses highly specific and complicated obstacles to victim detection and identification. Much of the work on victim identification has focused on the detection of forced labour on land, rather than on the detection of those exploited at sea. And yet effective detection is the critical first step to ensuring that forced labour victims escape exploitation and are afforded protection and assistance. It is also an essential part of ending the impunity of traffickers and other perpetrators and securing access to justice for forced labour victims.

The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), in collaboration with the International Labour Office, seeks accordingly to provide guidance and tools for the detection of forced labour in industrial fishing activities, including distant water fishing, and follow-up.

WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

- Representatives of State authorities with oversight over different aspects of the commercial fishing industry, namely labour inspectors, fisheries inspectors, coastguard and navy officials, maritime safety and port State control inspectors.
- Representatives of non-state actors directly engaged with fishers or otherwise concerned with labour and human rights in fishing, such as trade unionists, representatives from international trade union federations, vessel owner associations, welfare groups and other NGOs, seafood buyers, “social auditors” and researchers.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

To access guidance and tools designed to detect forced labour cases in industrial fishing activities, including distant water fishing, and ensure follow-up.

WHAT WILL I GAIN FROM THE COURSE?

- Understanding of the ILO legal instruments for work in fishing and for eliminating forced labour.
- Knowledge of the general indicators the ILO has developed for identifying forced labour situations and their manifestations in fishing.

- Knowledge of resources and tools to assess situations where risks of forced labour are highest in the commercial fishing industry, to conduct inspections, and to follow-up when indicators of forced labour are found.
- Capacity to detect forced labour situations on board fishing vessels and to follow up in accordance with national legal frameworks and the mandate of regulatory authorities.

WHAT TOPICS DOES THE COURSE COVER?

- The international framework for work in fishing and for eliminating forced labour:
 - ILO legal instruments, with emphasis on definition of “forced labour” and its key elements; and
 - ILO forced labour indicators.
- How to effectively detect forced labour in fishing, using a “strategic compliance” approach:
 - risk assessment;
 - vessel inspections, from reviews of vessel documentation to inspection of working and living conditions on board fishing vessels, including interviews with fishers and other actors;
 - follow-up investigation, referral and enforcement action of suspected forced labour cases.

WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE COURSE?

The course is offered in English. A good command of the working language is required.

HOW IS THE COURSE ORGANIZED?

- The course runs at a distance, via Internet, and is hosted on the ITCILO eCampus.
- Participation requires approximately 12 hours of self-study.
- The course is based on flexible and interactive self-guided sessions with materials to work with, including video pills, case studies, and multiple-choice quizzes.
- An assessment at the start and at the end of the training allows participants to measure improvements in levels of knowledge.
- An eLibrary compiling relevant multimedia resources is available to participants interested in knowing more about the course topic.
- On completing all course activities, participants earn a digital certificate of participation specifically issued by the ITCILO.

HOW MUCH DOES THIS COURSE COST?

The total cost of participation is **250 Euros**.

HOW TO PAY FOR THIS COURSE?

Tuition costs must be paid in advance before the beginning of the course by the participant or the sponsor through bank transfer or credit card.

Payments by bank transfer should be made to:

International Training Centre of the ILO Account No. 560002

Bank: Intesa-Sanpaolo Ag. 523

IBAN: IT96 G030 6909 2141 0000 0560 002 BIC: BCITITMM

Address: Corso Unione Sovietica 409, 10135 Turin – Italy

Note: on the bank transfer form, the participant's name and the course code (A9719450) should be indicated.

For payments by credit card, please e-mail to ils@itcilo.org.

For detailed information regarding payments, cancellations and refunds, please consult: <https://www.itcilo.org/applications-payments-cancellation>.

HOW TO APPLY?

Candidates must submit the online application form duly completed, available at <https://oarf2.itcilo.org/ST/A9719450/en> and a letter from the sponsor indicating the financial support (or a letter from the applicant stating that participation costs are covered by him/herself), to be uploaded while filling in the online application.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

As an Organization dedicated to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human rights at work, the ILO is taking a leading role in international efforts to foster gender equality. In line with this ILO focus, women are particularly encouraged to apply to ITCILO courses.

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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International Labour Standards, Rights at Work
and Gender Equality (ILSGEN)
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10127 Turin – Italy

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COURSE CODE: A9719450