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# Thai authorities begin checking fishing vessels in the sea to stem out human trafficking

By [editor](#) on 2015-05-05 [Thailand](#)

**Authorities begin checking fishing vessels in the sea to stem out human trafficking**



**BANGKOK: – Marine police began random check of all fishing vessels at the mouth of the Tha Chin river as part of an effort to stem out human trafficking problem prevalent in the fishery industry.**

The stringent check came after Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha announced the invocation of Section 44 of the interim constitution to tackle the fishery industries problems.

Under the prime minister's order, relevant government agencies such as the Royal Thai Police, the Thai Overseas Fisheries Association, the Harbor Department, the Labor Department and the Immigration Department are now in close coordination to address the problem.

Monthly checks on all fishing vessels in the country's waters have been planned to prevent illegal labor as well as human trafficking operations.

Royal Thai Police spokesperson Pol Lt-Gen Prawut Thavornsiri inspected the check in Samut Sakhon province today.

He said the Royal Thai Police have assigned specific areas for marine police units to patrol along coastal waters. Coastal fishing vessels will be monitored by boat patrols that have been given the authority to board and check any vessel.

“As for ocean going or deep sea fishing vessels, we have posted units at deep sea refueling points and are coordinating with the Royal Thai Navy to help police the vast areas. Finally, for shallow water coastal fishing operations usually lasting no more than several days in duration, we have set up 26 – 28 fixed check-points or check-centers both on the Andaman and the Bay of Thailand to check on workers employed by these smaller fishing vessels.”

He said in total, between January – May 2015, 2,056 vessels have been checked and 17,541 workers have been registered.

Of these, 637 illegal workers were discovered and 159 individuals were apprehended for illegally operating fishing vessels in Thai waters.

The illegal workers however, were given a chance by authorities to be correctly registered by their employers.

“Policing fishing vessels will need a coordinated effort between all the relevant departments but what must take priority is the proper registration of the large number of foreign workers that are currently being employed in the industry,” the spokesman said.

The issue of legal registration of all foreign workers is a matter that must be given the highest priority by the government. Following the setting up of foreign worker registration centers in the country, 27,493 foreign workers have been accounted for.

These workers at present are employed by 3,229 local employers. With regards to the fisheries industry, authorities are urging all employers to cooperate with the government and have all their workers properly registered as it will benefit both parties and will provide a better working environment as well as guaranteeing better welfare for all involved.

Meanwhile a labour protection and welfare officer of Samut Sakhon Mr Boonleu Satrapet said authorities task is to look at employment agreements, actual living conditions, the worker’s welfare and their wages.

He said authorities are currently concerned with whether workers in the fisheries industry are being paid appropriate wages as specified by the law.

At the same time, Samut Sakhon Fisheries Association president Kanchorn Mongkoktrirat said the fisheries industry want the government to help in the installation of tracking devices or VMS (Vessel Monitoring System) that will greatly aid in keeping track of all vessels in Thai waters. This, they say, will enable a more effective policing of fishing vessels.

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