

## Highlights of Thailand's progress against human trafficking (April – August 2016)

### Legal Reform

- On 12 April, Thailand's Cabinet approved a **draft amendment to the Labor Protection Act** in relation to **child protection**. This is in line with Thailand's international obligations, particularly ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age Convention, 1973). Among the measures included in the amendment was an increase in penalties for employers who hire children under 18 years old to perform dangerous types of work, or in workplaces prohibited for children.
- In May, the **Human Trafficking Criminal Procedure Act** entered into force. The Act expedites the judicial process for trafficking cases, and makes the process less burdensome for victims through measures such as allowing pre-trial depositions through video conferencing.



- On 7 June, the Minister of Labor deposited the Instrument of **Ratification of the ILO Maritime Labor Convention, 2006** to the Director-General of ILO. The Convention outlines seafarers' rights, such as fair terms of employment, health protection, welfare measures and decent working and living conditions onboard ships. This is the 17th ILO convention Thailand has ratified. It will enter into force on 7 June 2017, 12 months after ratification.



- On 24 July, the Minister of Foreign Affairs deposited the Instrument of **Ratification of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)** with the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The purposes of the Convention are (1) to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children (2) to protect and assist victims of trafficking in persons and (3) to promote cooperation among the parties in order to meet these objectives.

## Prosecution and official complicity

Raids and inspections both on land and at sea have continued. Examples are as follows:

- In June, **police charged five Thai men with human trafficking after raiding a massage parlor** they were running **in Bangkok**. Fifteen underage sex workers were rescued. One was Thai and the rest were foreigners, mostly from Myanmar. All are in the care of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The five men arrested have been charged with human trafficking, and face a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment.

(Credit: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-thailand-humantrafficking-idUKKCN0YW1E6>)

- In June, the central government **transferred the governor of Samut Sakhon province and 22 other officials**, including law enforcement officers. All are **under investigation** for alleged labor abuse, ill treatment of **Rohingya** migrants and human trafficking.

(Credit: <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2016/06/27/thai-officials-transferred-over-rohingya-abuse/>)



- In June, the Royal Thai Police's Anti-Human Trafficking Division **arrested a Thai man for luring a Laotian girl younger than 15 into prostitution** in a bar in Songkhla province.

(Credit: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/Suspect-arrested-in-case-of-trafficked-and-forced--30290580.html>)



- In July, Pak Phanang District Marine **Police** intercepted and **seized three Vietnamese vessels for illegal fishing and human trafficking** and **rescued 12 trafficking victims**. Social development and human security officers in Nakhon Si Thammarat province helped identify the victims.

(Credit: <http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9590000068494>)

- In July, an **Uzbek woman wanted by Interpol on human trafficking charges** was **arrested** in Bangkok. A joint investigation by the Immigration Bureau, Tourist Police and Metropolitan Police Bureau found she had entered Thailand many times as a tourist. She had colluded with other Uzbek nationals to lure young women from Uzbekistan into the sex trade in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

(Credit: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/1042641/>)

- On 31 August, a **human trafficker was sentenced to 34 years in prison** for trafficking **Rohingya** migrants. The trafficker and two accomplices were captured in Nakhon Si Thammarat province's Hua Sai district in January while transporting Rohingya migrants from Ranong to Songkhla province. Officers found 98 Rohingya in the cars, including 42 children under the age of 15.

(Credit: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Trafficker-gets-stiff-jail-term-over-migrants-30294210.html>)

## Protection

- **Victims and witnesses of human trafficking have been granted permission to stay and work in Thailand for up to one year while cases are investigated.** In April, the UNHCR Representative in Bangkok welcomed the Thai government's decision. The new policy serves as an alternative to detention and enables the victims to be self-reliant and begin rebuilding their lives.



- The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security organized **training for 40 Khmer interpreters** in May 2016. Trainings for Myanmar, Khmer and Rohingya interpreters have been conducted throughout 2016 targeting **120 interpreters**.

(Credit: <http://www.dailynews.co.th/regional/400593>)



- On 24 June, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security visited a **shelter for trafficking victims, including 76 Rohingya children and women** in Surat Thani province. The Permanent Secretary instructed the officials to always take into consideration the victims' needs. Language and skills training have been conducted at the shelter to prepare the victims for third-country resettlement.

(Credit: <http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9590000063264>)

- In July, the Royal Thai Police's Anti-Human Trafficking Division and the Myanmar Association in Thailand (MAT) **rescued 19 trafficked Myanmar fishermen** forced to work on a fishing vessel. The Thai police have arrested a Thai businessman and a Myanmar woman accused of being directly involved in the trafficking.

(Credit: Radio Free Asia, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/19-trafficked-myanmar-migrants-rescued-from-fishing-boat-off-thailand-07112016161942.html>)

## Prevention

- A **working group** to address **labor issues** in the **livestock sector** was established in July headed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of Labor. The group will monitor the implementation of Good Labor Practices (GLP) in the livestock sector, and supervise agencies to strictly abide by relevant laws.
- **Three border centers were set up** in Tak (bordering **Myanmar**), Nong Khai (bordering **Laos**), and Sa Kaeo (bordering **Cambodia**) provinces in August 2016 **to manage the arrival and departure of foreign workers**. The centers will also help educate the workers about Thai labor laws.

## Cooperation with NGOs, international organizations, and other partners



(Credit: [http://www.prachachat.net/news\\_detail.php?newsid=1464772837#](http://www.prachachat.net/news_detail.php?newsid=1464772837#) )

**The Songkhla Fishermen's Life Enhancement Center was established on 21 May through a public-private partnership.** It aims to improve the quality of life of fishery workers and their families, educate them on labor protection and raise awareness on human trafficking. The center is expected **to serve more than 25,000 foreign workers** in Songkhla and nearby provinces. The partners are the Fish Marketing Organization, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Department of Labor Protection and Welfare, Family Planning Association of Thailand, Stella Maris Center Songkhla and Charoen Pokphand Foods Plc.



- The 2<sup>nd</sup> **bilateral meeting to review the MoU between Thailand and Laos on cooperation to combat trafficking in persons** was held on 6 – 10 June in Phuket province. Thailand and Laos signed the MoU in 2005 to strengthen cooperation to prevent human trafficking and assist the victims, especially women and children.

(Credit: <http://www.phuketgazette.net/phuket-news/Thai-Laos-leaders-meet-Phuket-combat-human/64032#ad-image-0>)



(Credit: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/DSI-pledges-to-push-trafficking-cases-30288192.html>)

- **Thai and Myanmar law enforcement officials met in Chiang Mai province in June.** The 14<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Meeting on Cross-border Human Trafficking was attended by Thailand's Deputy Director-General of the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) and the Deputy Chief of the Myanmar Police Force's (MPF) Anti Trafficking in Persons Division. Both sides exchanged information and discussed issues such as the trafficking of migrant workers in the fishing industry.



(Credit: INN News)

- The Ministers of Labor of **Thailand and Laos signed an MoU on labor cooperation** on 6 July to improve the livelihoods of Lao workers in Thailand. The Prime Ministers of both countries observed the signing.



(Credit: <http://www.innnews.co.th/shownews/show?newscode=720131>)

- **The Deputy Governor of Lopburi** province teamed up with local government representatives and **Betagro Group** to **inspect chicken farms** in the province in August 2016 whether there were instances of human trafficking or labor abuses.



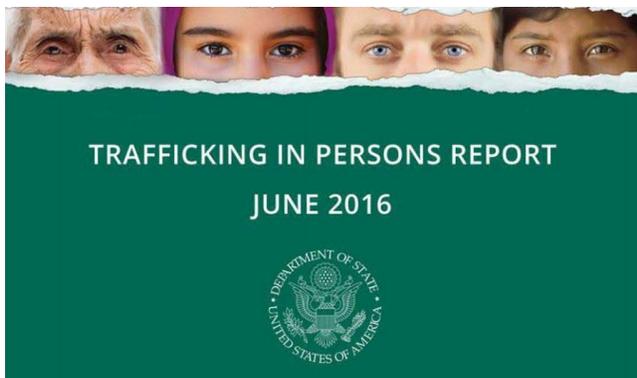
(Credit: <http://www.ryt9.com/si/prg/2494945>)

- On 22 - 26 August, Thailand hosted the bilateral **meeting to review the MoU between the governments of Thailand and Myanmar on cooperation to combat trafficking in persons** in Chiang Rai province. The MoU was signed in April 2009 in Myanmar. The meeting discussed many aspects of trafficking including prevention, protection, partnership, and repatriation and reintegration.



- On 26 August, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia signed an **MoU on the establishment of a Transit and Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking and Other Vulnerable Groups** in Poi Pet, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. The signing was one result of the Tenth Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia held in Bangkok. The center would help victims of human trafficking undergo rehabilitation.

### Cooperation with the U.S.



- On August 8, Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon chaired a meeting of the **Committee on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking**, an inter-agency body, and pledged to **implement the recommendations on the United States in its 2016 TIP Report**.

- The meeting adopted a draft translation of the report so that the agencies and people in Thailand working to solve the problem of human trafficking can clearly understand the recommended measures and put them into practice.

- The Thai Government has developed a six-month **Action Plan** on human trafficking that aims **to adopt and address the U.S. recommendations**. The Action Plan sets 24 goals. Each has a concrete time frame for implementation, and assigns the agencies responsible for their achievement. The goals are comprehensive. They cover law enforcement, victim and witness protection, and preventing the conditions that allow human trafficking to flourish. The plan intends to make the response to trafficking more effective, speed up progress and close gaps.
- The Action Plan will be submitted to the Prime Minister, and will be used to monitor progress by all relevant agencies on ending human trafficking.



- On 8-11 August, Thailand participated in the **28<sup>th</sup> Annual Crimes Against Children Conference in Dallas, Texas**. Pol. Lt. Gen. Tamasak Wicharaya, Assistant Commissioner General of the Royal Thai Police, led the delegation comprised of officials from the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation, and civil society representatives to share Thailand’s experiences in addressing crimes against children and child exploitation with over 4,000 participants from all over the world.



- A delegation of law enforcement officials from Thailand visited several U.S. cities in August as a part of an **International Visitor Leadership Program** focusing on **U.S. law and international agreements on human trafficking**.

(Credit: U.S. Embassy Bangkok’s Facebook)

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Royal Thai Embassy,  
Washington, D.C.  
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