

FOC and The Site of Lawlessness: The roles of brokers in the sending countries

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Abstract

Despite its well-known horrendous images and unbearable working conditions, Indonesian fishers are still willing to be recruited and employed on Taiwan's distant water fishing vessels. The paper will provide a critical analysis of why and how Indonesian migrant fishers ended up working on Taiwanese far sea fishing vessels by examining the roles of brokers in the sending countries. The paper aims to show how the recruitment agencies and brokers use all kinds of strategies to bring fishers onto Taiwanese vessels, such as false advertisement, fraud, cost-free, loan sharks, forging documents, and recruiting inexperienced fishers. The paper also will illustrate how overlapping authorities governing manning agency and licensing generates loose ends. The paper will use data from fieldwork in Java, Indonesia (between 2017-2018) and Taiwan (between 2016-2018, and 2020-2021). The paper highlights the need to consider the roles of brokers in sending countries to forced labour, human trafficking, and new slavery practices on board distant water fishing vessels.