



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

May 6, 2016

Mary Junck
Chairman of the Board
Associated Press
450 W. 33rd Street, New York City
New York 10001

Dear Ms Junck:

I am writing to you to express the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's congratulations and appreciation for the excellent work conducted by the Associated Press journalists in uncovering the slave trade for the seafood industry in South East Asia, most notably in Thailand and Indonesia.

The human cost in disrupted lives, emotional stress, physical peril and the helplessness of those enslaved from Cambodia Laos and Myanmar is an appalling indictment on the seafood industry in South East Asia. Moreover, it is made all the more appalling that the United States, a country which perceives itself as a beacon of law and liberty, allows the import of seafood from companies benefiting from the slave trade.

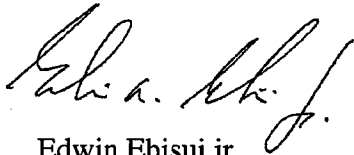
The Council is one of eight organizations established under the Magnuson-Steven Act to manage fisheries under federal jurisdiction. Our region comprising several tropical and subtropical archipelagoes also is constructively engaged in international fishery management through US membership of several regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) in the region.

US fisheries in our region have struggled to stay competitive with fisheries from the neighboring Pacific Islands and South East Asia, due to their lower management burden and costs. US fisheries, including those in the Western Pacific, are among the most strictly managed fisheries globally. Inexplicably, the US has agreed to increased Indonesia's Western Pacific longline bigeye tuna quota, while agreeing to a lower quota for US longliners and less vessel fishing days for US purse seiners

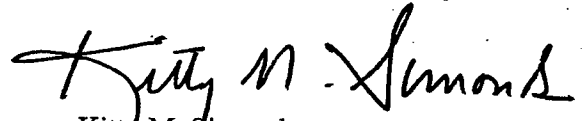
Your report on the slave trade in the South East Asian seafood industry shows how difficult it is to maintain high management standards in the face of such illegal activity. Nonetheless, the blind eye that the United States has turned towards the imports of seafood from suspect sources shows that we are also part of the problem. It is a "Viking" approach to fishery management: careful husbandry at home while supporting rape and pillage abroad.

The slave trade is likely to be just one aspect of the unlevelled playing field with which US fishermen are forced to compete, which includes other illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. However, it is useless to complain about this while allowing the unregulated imports of seafood from these sources. Again, the Council congratulates and thanks AP for bringing this issue to the public's attention.

Sincerely,



Edwin Ebisui jr.
Council Chair



Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

cc: Honolulu AP Bureau Chief



SEAFOOD FROM SLAVES

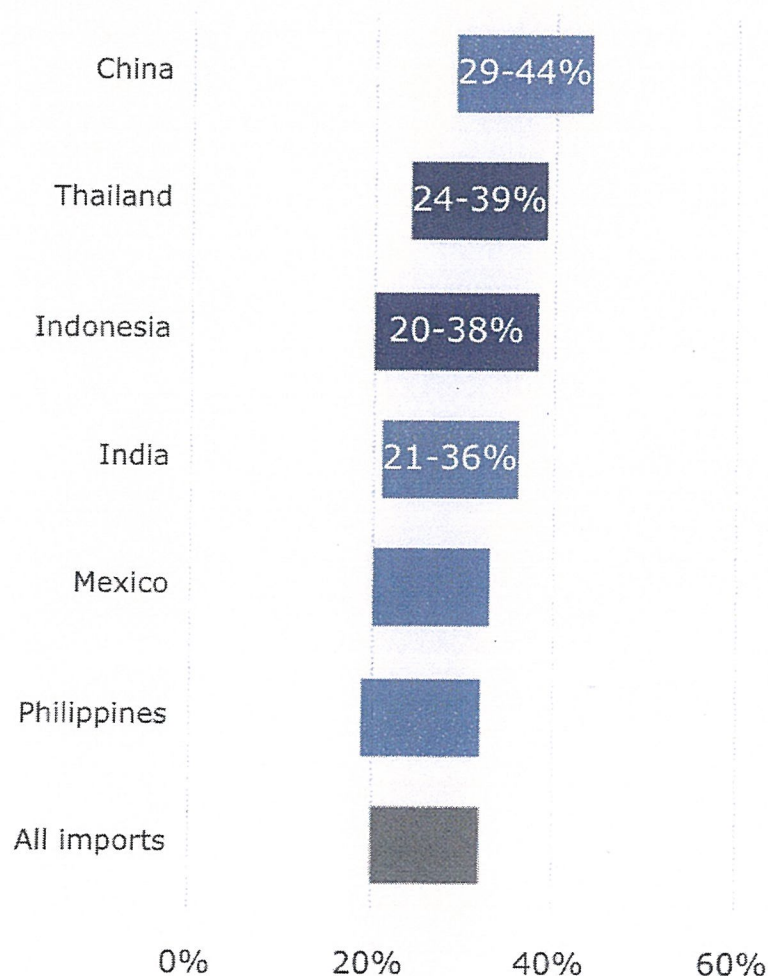


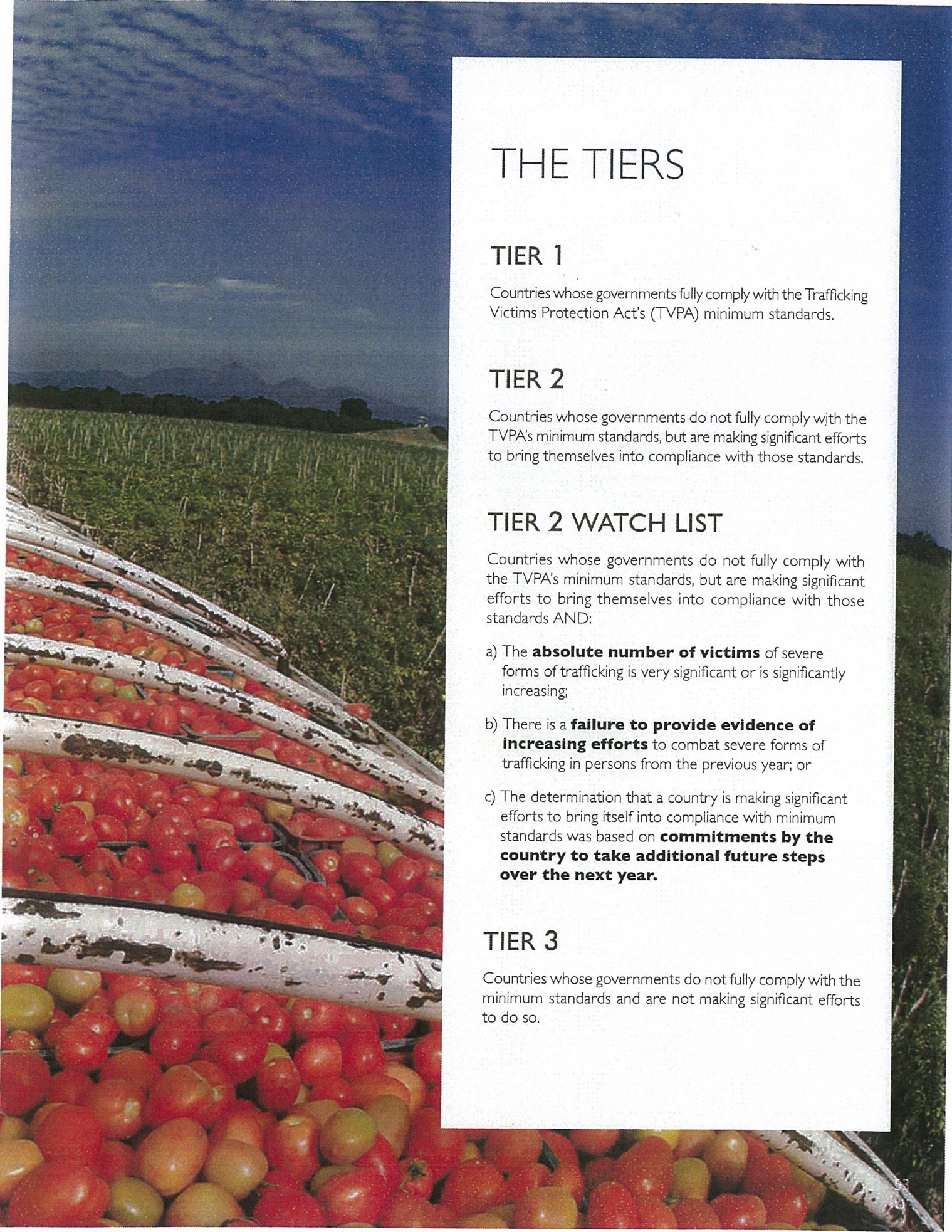
U.S. imports of illegal fish

Illegal fish account for an estimated 20 percent to 32 percent of all wild-caught seafood imported to the United States. Thailand and Indonesia are among the U.S. suppliers with the highest rates of illegal fish.

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF U.S. FISH IMPORTS THAT ARE ILLEGAL

By source country





THE TIERS

TIER 1

Countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

TIER 2

Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards AND:

- a) The **absolute number of victims** of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- b) There is a **failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts** to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or
- c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on **commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.**

TIER 3

Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

TIER PLACEMENTS

TIER 1

ARMENIA	DENMARK	KOREA, SOUTH	SLOVAKIA
AUSTRALIA	FINLAND	LUXEMBOURG	SPAIN
AUSTRIA	FRANCE	MACEDONIA	SWEDEN
THE BAHAMAS	GERMANY	NETHERLANDS	SWITZERLAND
BELGIUM	ICELAND	NEW ZEALAND	TAIWAN
CANADA	IRELAND	NORWAY	UNITED KINGDOM
CHILE	ISRAEL	POLAND	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CZECH REPUBLIC	ITALY	PORTUGAL	

TIER 2

AFGHANISTAN	ECUADOR	LITHUANIA	RWANDA
ALBANIA	EL SALVADOR	MACAU	ST. LUCIA
ANGOLA	ESTONIA	MADAGASCAR	ST. MAARTEN
ARGENTINA	ETHIOPIA	MALAWI	SENEGAL
ARUBA	Fiji	MALTA	SERBIA
AZERBAIJAN	GEORGIA	MEXICO	SEYCHELLES
BAHRAIN	GUATEMALA	MICRONESIA	SIERRA LEONE
BANGLADESH	GREECE	MOLDOVA	SINGAPORE
BARBADOS	HONDURAS	MONGOLIA	SLOVENIA
BENIN	HONG KONG	MONTENEGRO	SOUTH AFRICA
BHUTAN	HUNGARY	MOROCCO	SWAZILAND
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	INDIA	MOZAMBIQUE	TAJIKISTAN
BRAZIL	INDONESIA	NEPAL	TOGO
BRUNEI	IRAQ	NICARAGUA	TONGA
CABO VERDE	JAPAN	NIGER	TURKEY
CAMEROON	JORDAN	NIGERIA	UGANDA
CHAD	KAZAKHSTAN	OMAN	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
COLOMBIA	KENYA	PALAU	URUGUAY
COTE D'IVOIRE	KIRIBATI	PANAMA	VIETNAM
CROATIA	KOSOVO	PARAGUAY	ZAMBIA
CURAÇAO	KYRGYZSTAN	PERU	
CYPRUS	LATVIA	PHILIPPINES	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	LIBERIA	ROMANIA	

TIER 2 WATCH LIST

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	CUBA	LESOTHO	ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES
BOLIVIA	DJIBOUTI	MALAYSIA	SOLOMON ISLANDS
BOTSWANA	EGYPT	MALDIVES	SUDAN
BULGARIA	GABON	MALI	SURINAME
BURKINA FASO	GHANA	MAURITIUS	TANZANIA
BURMA	GUINEA	NAMIBIA	TIMOR-LESTE
CAMBODIA	GUYANA	PAKISTAN	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
CHINA (PRC)	HAITI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	TUNISIA
CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REP. OF	JAMAICA	QATAR	TURKMENISTAN
CONGO, REPUBLIC OF	LAOS	SAUDI ARABIA	UKRAINE
COSTA RICA	LEBANON	SRI LANKA	UZBEKISTAN

TIER 3

ALGERIA	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	KUWAIT	SYRIA
BELARUS*	ERITREA	LIBYA	THAILAND
BELIZE	THE GAMBIA	MARSHALL ISLANDS*	YEMEN
BURUNDI	GUINEA-BISSAU	MAURITANIA	VENEZUELA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	IRAN	RUSSIA	ZIMBABWE
COMOROS*	KOREA, NORTH	SOUTH SUDAN	

SPECIAL CASE

SOMALIA

* Auto downgrade from Tier 2 Watch List