

# **Filipino Fishers on Ocean Going Vessels: A Case of Modern Day Slavery**

**Atty.Edwin Dela Cruz**

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# Isolation at sea for months = Modern day Slavery

*Isolation at sea for months, even years, makes escape difficult and often impossible. It is all too easy for these vessels to operate away from the reach of the law. Such a scenario, where fishing vessel captains rule with impunity, makes modern slavery at sea possible.*

SEABOUND: THE JOURNEY TO MODERN SLAVERY ON THE HIGH SEAS. P. 6. Greenpeace and SBMI December 2019

# Violation of POEA/ DMW Contract



- The Philippines is a source of more than 10,000 Fishers working on Ocean Going Vessels. Although there is a nominal contract called the (POEA) Standard Agreement, now called the (DMW) Standard Agreement, stating the wages, hours of work, leave pay, overtime pay, holiday and regular rest day every week, this agreement is blatantly violated by shipowners and the master of the vessel.

# Fishers endure the hardest, dirtiest and most dangerous work

*Crewmembers are notoriously denied previously agreed wages, if they get paid at all, while some captains and boat owners ignore basic human rights, forcing fishers to endure extended periods at sea, under dangerous conditions. (UN FAO: International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability, November 19, 2019 Rome)*

LACK OF SLEEP  
NO SHORE LEAVE  
NO REST DAY  
NO OVERTIME PAY  
LOW WAGES  
NO MEDICAL ATTENTION.



# Modern Day Slavery at Sea – ILO,

*Modern-day slavery is described as “any situation of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power”. This includes “forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices and human trafficking”.*

*Greenpeace ibid. p. 15.*

# Forced Labour worsened during the COVID 19 Pandemic



Many months stranded.

No sufficient food and water

No medical attention.

No contact with families.

An alliance of grassroots and seafarers rights advocates was formed in the Philippines in 2021 called the SEANETWORK for Seafarers Empowerment Advocates Network.

**State Of Seafarers Abroad:** Lumalala ang pisikal at psychological na kalagayan ng maraming Pinoy Seafarers na istranded abroad gaya nang nasa Uruguay, China, at Sri Lanka. Iilan ay umiinom na ng kalawanging tubig at dalawang beses nalang kumakain sa isang araw.

**MAKIISA SA PANAWAGAN NILA AT NG KANILANG PAMILYA!**



**PHIL. GOV'T: BRING HOME ALL STRANDED SEAFARERS NOW!**



**#SendOurSeafarersHome**



# Fishers in Crisis during Covid 19

## Stranded

- FV Lu Qing Yuan Yu 286 and FV Lu Qing Yuan Yu 287 who have been stranded off the coast of Montevideo, Uruguay since March, 2020.
  - 97 crew of several ships including FV Fu Yuan Yu who were stranded in China for several months were ultimately repatriated in July on board MV Star Mariner
  - Ocean Star 8688 and FV He Li 1 Hao.
  - FV Han Rong 349 Indian Ocean

## Shipowners abandoned them

- Jenn Yih Song Seafoods Ltd of Kaohshung China and the manning agencies are the Global Maritime and Offshore Resources, Global Offshore, Global Master Marine Agency

# After Covid 19, the new normal?

## On wages

- No timely payment of wages
- Nominal \$ 450 /month not followed
- Lower than \$ 740 Taiwan migrant fishers
- No Overtime and Rest day work pay

## Isolation

- No shore leave.
- Isolated in the middle of the sea for months or even a year.
- No financial security for illness, injury or death

## No Family Contact

- No internet and access to phone.

# Worsening conditions of fishers

## Systemic Problem

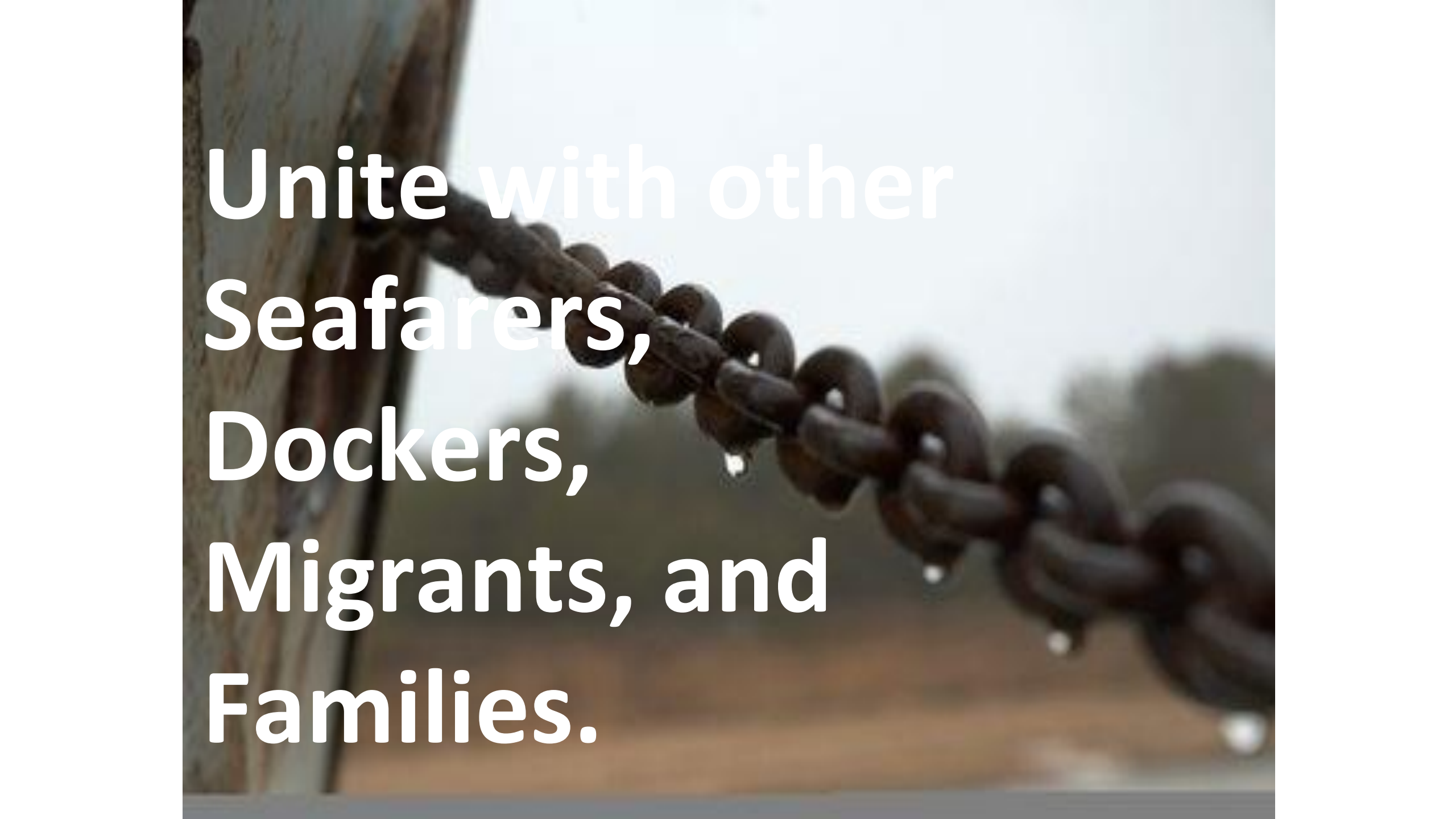
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated IUU fishing and the prevalence of Flags of Convenience ships.
- Lack of Philippine government action against the human trafficking and modern day slavery among Filipino fishers.

## Government Neglect

- Refusal of the government even to ratify the ILO Convention 188
- Include fishers in the proposed Magna Carta for Seafarers.
- Labor Export Program

# What must be done?

- A. Fishers must know their rights, organize themselves, and collectively fight for these rights.**
- B. Fishers must unite with seafarers, dockers, migrant organizations, and advocates of fishers and seafarers rights.**



**Unite with other  
Seafarers,  
Dockers,  
Migrants, and  
Families.**


# What must be done?



**A. Ratify ILO Convention 188**

**A. Include Fishers in the Magna Carta for Seafarers. Amend ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 to cover Fishers.**

# Oppose Labor Export Program



Lowest wages, most difficult work, most hazardous work place, no government protection, no financial security,

**Modern Day Slavery**



Edwin Dela  
Cruz

Email:  
edlaw76c@  
gmail.com

Thank you

