



# COVER NOTE

## **COVER NOTE TO THE INFOGRAPHIC: INFORMATION ABOUT FISHERIES OBSERVERS 1.0**

JUNE 2021

**Human rights apply at sea,  
as they do on land**



HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA

[www.humanrightsatsea.org](http://www.humanrightsatsea.org)

[www.humanrightsatsea.org/fisheries-observer-research-advocacy](http://www.humanrightsatsea.org/fisheries-observer-research-advocacy)

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## Glossary

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>APO</b>   | Association for Professional Observers           |
| <b>GTA</b>   | Global Tuna Alliance                             |
| <b>IOBR</b>  | International Observer Bill of Rights            |
| <b>NGO</b>   | Non-Governmental Organization                    |
| <b>PNA</b>   | the Parties of the Nauru Agreement               |
| <b>RFMO</b>  | Regional Fisheries management Organization       |
| <b>USCG</b>  | US Coastguard                                    |
| <b>WCPFC</b> | Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| <b>WWF</b>   | World Wide Fund for Nature                       |

## Executive Summary

Fisheries observers play an important role in global and sustainable fisheries management. As part of ongoing work by Human Rights at Sea<sup>1</sup> to further raise international awareness about the work of observers, the charitable NGO, in partnership with interested stakeholders, has produced this freely available infographic. The infographic provides background to, and key information about, the working environment for observers including how to become an observer, the duties, contractual safeguards, and the safety, security and well-being while working on-board a fishing vessel. The infographic is a live document and will be subject to updates.

## Background

Fisheries observers play an important role in supporting sustainable fisheries management by providing scientific data but also by observing the vessel's compliance with existing international instruments, policies and rules<sup>2</sup>. This can potentially put observers in a delicate situation as they might be perceived as a threat to the vessels' activities in terms of challenging conflicting catch data and awareness of unlawful activities that may be undertaken to supplement often meagre incomes<sup>3,4</sup>. Following, the tragic and yet, unexplained death of Eritara Aati Kaiherua in March 2021, a fisheries observer from Kiribati, the need to provide a safe and secure work environment for observers is now receiving global attention and justice for families in such circumstances is being pursued.

<sup>1</sup> [www.humanrightsatsea.org](http://www.humanrightsatsea.org)

<sup>2</sup> Porter, R.D. (2010). Fisheries observers as enforcement assets: Lessons from the North Pacific. *Marine Policy*, 34:583-589. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2009.11.005>

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights at Sea. "Investigate report and case study: fisheries abuses and related deaths at sea in the pacific region." December 1, 2017. <https://humanrightsatsea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/HRAS-Fisheries-Abuse-Investigative-Report-Dec-2017-SECURED.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ewell, C. et al. (2020). An evaluation of Regional Fisheries Management Organization at-sea compliance monitoring and observer programmes. *Marine Policy*, 115:103842. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.103842>





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## Aim

The aim of the infographic is to provide an independent, iterative and accurate overview of key information concerning the role, safeguards, standards and the lawful working environment for fisheries observers.

## Objectives

This infographic has three objectives:

- 1 To act as a means of increasing public awareness about fisheries observers, the role and working environment.
- 2 To provide iterative education materials that are easily understood by all within the supply chain.
- 3 To support and drive the ongoing discussion about the safety, security and well-being of fisheries observers at sea.

## Stakeholders 1.0

This initial version of the infographic has been peer-reviewed by international experts and produced in collaboration with the Blue Marine Foundation<sup>5</sup>, the US Coastguard (USCG)<sup>6</sup>, WWF<sup>7</sup>, the Association for Professional Observers (APO)<sup>8</sup>, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)<sup>9</sup>, and the Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)<sup>10</sup>. It is expected that more stakeholders will become involved with the following iterations.

## General Stakeholder Comments for consideration

This infographic is meant to be seen as a live document and presents the status quo as of May 2021. Moreover, this infographic targets a broad supply chain and state-level audience, thus, several of the information areas are presented in a simplified way to highlight the issue to lead to separate and more detailed discussions, as necessary. It is also important to note that relevant areas such as supply chain actions have not yet been addressed in the infographic, but otherwise warrant to be highlighted for due consideration.

5 <https://www.bluemarinefoundation.com/>

6 <https://www.uscg.mil/>

7 <https://www.worldwildlife.org/>

8 <https://www.apo-observers.org/>

9 <https://www.pnatuna.com/>

10 <https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/>



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# Global Tuna Alliance Points

- Review sourcing requirements for tuna and adopt aspirational timelines (e.g. sourcing X% of supply from vessels with 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) by 2020 increasing to 100% over Z timeframe).
- Advocate for Member States, regulatory authorities and their respective observer programs to work together and implement the IOBR at the RFMO level.
- Agree to add a sourcing requirement for tuna for enhanced observer safety. Until the time when all RFMOs implement the IOBR and WCPFC mandatory observer safety reforms. For example, adopt aspirational timelines (e.g. sourcing X% of supply from RFMOs which have implemented the IOBR and WCPFC mandatory observer safety reforms by 2020 increasing to 100% over Z timeframe).

If you want to learn more about supply chain actions, visit the Global Tuna Alliance website:  
<https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/>

## Contact

For more information and to engage with the Human Rights at Sea Fisheries Observer project work, please contact:

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## About

Established in April 2014, Human Rights at Sea is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and registered Charity No. 1161673 based in the United Kingdom. It has been established for the benefit of the international community concerning the explicit engagement in exposing and ending abuses at sea by acting as a global catalyst for change. The charity raises international awareness of human rights abuses at sea, delivers social justice through legal and policy development, and has a vision of ending human rights abuse at sea.

**Website:** [www.humanrightsatsea.org](http://www.humanrightsatsea.org)

**HRAS Fisheries Observer Research & Advocacy Programme:**

<https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/fisheries-observer-research-advocacy/>

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## KEEPING THE MARITIME COMMUNITY SAFE

CGIS relies on you to provide tips about suspected crimes affecting the maritime community! That's why CGIS has launched CGIS Tips, a web-based and mobile means to submit tips anonymously to CGIS criminal investigators.

## WHAT KINDS OF TIPS SHOULD REPORT?

Any federal crime committed on or affecting the maritime community to include: polluting the oceans or other navigable waters; illegal fishing, maritime smuggling of weapons, narcotics, money, or humans, Merchant Mariner Credential Fraud; TWIC abuse/fraud, etc.



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# Who We Are

## BACKGROUND

Human Rights at Sea was established in April 2014. It was founded as an initiative to explore issues of maritime human rights development, review associated policies and legislation, and to undertake independent investigation of abuses at sea. It rapidly grew beyond all expectations and for reasons of governance it became a registered charity under the UK Charity Commission in 2015.

Today, the charity is an established, regulated and independent registered non-profit organisation based on the south coast of the United Kingdom. It undertakes **R**esearch, **A**dvocacy, **I**nvestigation and **L**obbying specifically for human rights issues in the maritime environment, including contributing to support for the human element that underpins the global maritime and fishing industries.

The charity works internationally with all individuals, commercial and maritime community organisations that have similar objectives as ourselves, including all the principal maritime welfare organisations.

## OUR MISSION

To explicitly raise awareness, implementation and accountability of human rights provisions throughout the maritime environment, especially where they are currently absent, ignored or being abused.



## STAY IN CONTACT



We welcome any questions, comments or suggestions. Please send your feedback to:  
Human Rights at Sea, VBS Langstone Technology Park, Langstone Road, Havant. PO9 1SA. UK



Email: [enquiries@humanrightsatsea.org](mailto:enquiries@humanrightsatsea.org)



[www.humanrightsatsea.org](http://www.humanrightsatsea.org)



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