



# ข่าวสารนิเทศ • Press Release

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## Thailand Tightens Control on Fishing Fleet Management

On 6 June 2018, General Chatchai Sarikulya, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, visited Samut Sakhon Province together with the Chief of Naval Staff, the Director-General of the Marine Department, and the Director-General of the Department of Fisheries to follow up on the implementation of fishing fleet management by all relevant governmental agencies. The visit was part of the overall Thailand's effort to combat IUU fishing.

The Deputy Prime Minister's team examined the area around fishing ports and discovered 34 locked illegal vessels. The Deputy Prime Minister then assigned the Marine Department to issue notifications to the vessels owners to report to the authority within 7 days. After the deadline, the Marine Department has the right to auction off the said illegal vessels in accordance with the provision of the Navigation in the Thai Waters Act B.E. 2456. He also ordered all 22 coastal provinces to carry out similar inspection procedures in order to eliminate illegal fishing vessels.

In addition, for other fishing vessels declared as sunk or damaged beyond repair, the Royal Thai Government has set up a special operations team of police officers to collect more data on the ground. The team will contact the vessel owners and collect additional data and evidence to prove that those vessels were indeed sunk or damaged. This is to prevent this group of illegal vessels from returning to fishing activities.

The main objectives of the visit were to ensure that officials in all operational levels understand and possess the necessary knowledge of effective operational procedures; to promote awareness of how importance fleet control and management are in the fight against IUU fishing; and to promote cooperation among agencies concerned for effective control of any stateless, unregistered vessels or illegal vessels.

Moreover, the Royal Thai Government is considering issuing additional regulations to tighten control of the Thai fishing fleet including requirements for all shipyards to be registered, prior approval of the layout plan before commencing ship construction, and refusal to register fishing vessels that do not possess vessel identification number or IMO number. Furthermore, all fishing vessels that apply for a ship license will have to undergo thorough physical inspections. An evaluation committee for vessel registration will be set up and consist of representatives from the Marine Department, Department of Fisheries, Royal Thai Police and Royal Thai Navy, instead of solely from the Marine Department as was previously done. All general cargo vessels of 60 gross tonnages and over will be required to be fitted with AIS system to enable activities tracking at all time.

The Royal Thai Government has embarked on stringent control of the fishing fleet in order to limit the number of legal fishing vessels to the sustainable quantity of aquatic animals in the sea and to eradicate illegal vessels by all means. The Royal Thai Government also aims to prevent these vessels from returning to fish again which is the vital element of Thailand's effort to tackle the IUU fishing effectively and sustainably.

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