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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement* submitted by International Career Support Association, Japan Society for History Textbook, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Ghanaians on Chinese Fishing Vessels Face Human Rights Abuses

Human rights exploitation in African region by Chinese companies continue to be overlooked by the world. In its recent report by London-based non-profit Business and Human Rights Resource Center cited that out of 1690 allegations of human rights abuses related to Chinese investments in the world, 181 were reported in Africa, and Ghana is no stranger to it.

There have numerous reports of human rights abuses against Ghanaian fishermen by Chinese Distant Water Fishing (DWF) fleet in Ghana. The fact that they keep on violating human rights and world chooses to shut their eyes have now become a usual practice.

"They beat them, they spit on them, they kick them" reports BBC about Ghanaians employed on Chinese fishing vessels. The working condition is alarming. Local workers have been subjected to cruel and inhumane working practices on board vessels, where they are forced to work for days without sleep. When their foods are withheld on of not working, they find "comfort" in drinking dirty water, which in itself is heart-shattering. i One of the local worker fell sick on board of a Chinese vessel but he was denied timely treatment. Crew refused to bring him back to the shore for medical support. Worker didn't make it back alive. Another on-board worker was trapped in a propeller. He neither survived nor did his family receive proper compensation. i)

Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)'s report that chronicles the local crews working condition on China's Distant Water Fishing (DWF) fleet in Ghana mentioned that 94% had received inadequate medicine and had been victim of verbal abuses by Chinese, whereas more than 80% of the crews reported of living in harsh and inadequate living conditions, witnessing physical abuse. A substantial proportion of Chinese trawlers in Ghana have been engaged in illegal practices as quoted by EJF.

Although, China conveniently denies the gross and widespread abuse and negligence caused by Chinese fishing vessels operating off Ghanaian shores yet on-ground situation narrates a contrasting story. Chinese companies working in Ghana have utter disregard for their fellow humans. They are low on morality and driver of human rights abuses in Ghana. For local Ghanaians, availing their even basic human rights while working for Chinese firms remain a distant dream. Meanwhile, Chinese firms operating in Ghana continue to suppress the voices of local through corruption, suppression and harsh measures.

An array of problems right from abuse, disappearances and poor pay has come to the fore and taken a lasting toll on mental health of Ghanaian workers working for Chinese.

I would urge the UNHR Council and International Community to take cognizance and formulate an action plan to protect human rights of Ghanaians being affected by Chinese enterprise.

iRICH: International Institute of Controversial Histories, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

i) Ghana fishing: Abuse, corruption and death on Chinese vessels

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-63720181>

Ghanaian Fishermen Describe Abuse Aboard Chinese Trawlers

90% of illegal fishing boats are Chinese-owned

<https://adf-magazine.com/2023/01/ghanaian-fishermen-describe-abuse-aboard-chinese-trawlers/>