

## **For Immediate Release**

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U.S. fishing groups call for solidarity with migrant fish workers in Taiwan, demanding Wi-Fi aboard vessels as a key protection against labor abuses

*Having built momentum in Taiwan, the workers are now bringing their campaign, called Wi-Fi Now, to the United States, urging multi-million dollar seafood retail buyers and decision-makers to support their basic demand.*

A coalition of community-based fishing groups in the United States, including the [North American Marine Alliance](#), [Block Corporate Salmon](#), and Rebel Alliance for the Oceans, are declaring support for migrant fish workers fighting for fundamental rights and protections against abuse on Taiwanese deep sea vessels.

The fish workers are coming to the United States to launch an international campaign called [Wi-Fi Now for Fishers' Rights at Sea](#). They are demanding secure and guaranteed access to Wi-Fi on all vessels, as a vital communication link to protect their safety and labor rights, organize without retaliation, and stay connected to loved ones.

The Wi-Fi Now campaign has already [gained traction in Taiwan](#), and the migrant workers are now bringing their fight to the U.S., starting with a virtual briefing on March 2 and a series of events at the Boston Seafood Expo, which will take place March 12-14.

With more than 1,100 vessels and 22,000 workers, Taiwan has the second largest commercial distant water fishing fleet in the world, and is a key supplier of tuna to the U.S. market through Bumble Bee and other well known brands. Workers, who are mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines, work under a discriminatory employment system that makes them even more vulnerable to exploitation and being a captive labor force at sea. They are highly isolated, spending up to ten continuous months offshore, with no ability to communicate with family, their union, or advocates due to a lack of access to Wi-Fi on vessels.

A group of workers are now traveling to the Boston Seafood Expo to urge Bumble Bee and other seafood retail giants to grant their request for Wi-Fi. They will travel to D.C. afterwards to seek legislators' support in eliminating forced labor in global supply chains. Allied groups in the U.S. are amplifying the workers' demands and supporting the following events and opportunities for solidarity:

## Event details

### Online briefing

- Date: Thursday, March 2, 2023
- Time: 8-9 AM EST
- Location: Online ([registration](#))

### Solidarity gathering outside Boston Seafood Expo

- Date: Sunday, March 12, 2023
- Time: 12 PM EST
- Location: Outside the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, 415 Summer St, Boston, MA 02210 ([registration](#))

### Church service

- Date: Sunday, March 12, 2023
- Time: 3 PM EST
- Location: Our Lady of Good Voyage, 51 Seaport Blvd, Boston, MA 02210

If you can't join us at any of these events, you can sign the [Allies Pledge](#) and/or stay connected to the campaign by liking and following the [Wi-Fi Now for Fishers' Rights Campaign Facebook Page](#).

## Background

The Wi-Fi Now for Fishers' Rights Campaign is part of a movement to demand collective bargaining rights, no forced labor, non-discrimination, and health and safety measures for migrant workers on Taiwanese fishing vessels. A coalition of groups, including [Global Labor Justice-International Labor Rights Forum](#) (GLJ-ILRF), the [Indonesian Seafarers Gathering Forum](#) (FOSPI), [Taiwan Association for Human Rights](#) (TAHR), and [Stella Maris Seafarers Center](#), are supporting this long-term fight to win freedoms for migrant fishers.

Taiwan and the U.S. have begun free trade negotiations with a commitment to worker-centric trade policies and elimination of forced labor in global supply chains. In this context, fish workers and global allies are demanding secure and guaranteed access to Wi-Fi in all vessels to help improve working conditions in supply chains. Having the right to communicate on all vessels is a necessary precondition to being able to report abuses, build support, and organize up the supply chain.

While Taiwan is known as a beacon of democracy and human rights in East Asia, the fishing industry is rife with abuses of migrant workers' labor and human rights aboard its deep sea fleet. The campaign is calling on the Taiwanese government, fishing vessel operators and key U.S. brands and retailers in the supply chain to ensure accessible Wi-Fi for all migrant fishers who spend months on the high seas. Without the ability to communicate with their worker organizations, allies and families, fundamental rights will be hard to win and enforce.

## About U.S. ally groups

[#BlockCorporateSalmon](#) is a national campaign focused on educating the public on the ecological hazards of genetically engineered salmon, while centering Native-led solutions like dam removal and salmon habitat restoration as real solutions to the salmon crisis. Inspired by the leadership of Indigenous Tribes protecting culturally significant wild Salmon stocks and the global food sovereignty movement, the #BlockCorporateSalmon campaign is calling for a global boycott of genetically engineered salmon.

[North American Marine Alliance](#) is a fishermen-led organization building a broad movement toward healthy fisheries and fishing communities. NAMA builds deep and trusting relationships with community based fishermen, crew, fishworkers and allies to create effective policy and market strategies.

Rebel Alliance for the Oceans is working at the educational intersection of Subsistence Rights, Human Rights, and Labor Rights for Small Scale Fishers, Fishpeoples, Fishworkers, Artisanal Mariculture Protections, and the strong stewardship of Coastal Communities that rely on and protect intact Habitat and Ecosystems, with the determination to keep our Seas and Coasts free from Corporate Private Ownership through the elevation of the Blue Commons Ideal.