



# SUARA LAUT

Volume 2 : Independence Day

## Reflection(s) on the Independence Days

## **Vol.2 Independence Day: Reflection(s) on the Independence Days**

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# Foreword from the Interrupter

## Reflection: Opening the Door of Another Reality(ies)

Luthfian Haekal  
Human Rights Manager

*"...We all must accept reality, but merely accepting reality is the work of humans who are no longer capable of progressing. Because humans can also create new realities. If no one is willing to create new realities, then the word and meaning of 'progress' ought to be removed from the dictionary of humankind..."*

*Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Rumah Kaca*

Pramoedya once wrote in *House of Glass*: "...We all must accept reality, but merely accepting reality is the work of humans who are no longer capable of progressing..." Through this sentence, Pram speaks about the resignation of the human spirit that is unable to change the world around them. Reality is not enough to be merely accepted; it must be challenged, questioned, and transformed. The annual ceremonial event commemorated every August 17th becomes a moment to accept the reality of Indonesia's condition while simultaneously opening opportunities to create new realities. The August 17th ceremony is not only observed through the raising of Indonesian flag but also through reflection to open up possibilities for new realities.

Reality is never neutral. It is the result of intersecting of power. Reality is a historical process that is continuously constructed and reconstructed. The process of constructing new realities is only possible if reflection takes place. Humans must first reflect to open the doors to new realities. Without it, humans will merely go in circles within a stagnant and unchanging reality—perhaps even a comfortable one.

Therefore, this zine is not merely an articulation of celebrating the existing reality, but an exploration of possibilities for alternative realities. Because the reality that has long been ingrained within us does not have to be fate. It can be disrupted and shifted. Without the courage to question, the reality we live in will only remain stagnant, bound to the same fate.

The zine "*Suara Laut*" published by Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) Indonesia strives to challenge the existing realities within the marine and fisheries world. True to its name, "*Suara Laut*" (Voice of the Sea) amplifies issues surrounding the sea—ranging from workers at sea, land-based workers who receive materials from the sea, to the sea as an ecological whole. "*Suara Laut*" is a product serving as a campaign tool supporting the advocacy efforts carried out by DFW Indonesia to improve the welfare of fisheries workers.



After the first issue of the Suara Laut zine introduced who the fisheries workers are and the vulnerabilities they face, the second issue will focus specifically on the conditions experienced by these workers. The first article, written by Fachrin, discusses the profit-sharing mechanisms that have been implemented so far. The second article is by Rusda, a researcher who conducted ethnographic fieldwork on land at Nizam Zachman Port, North Jakarta, exploring the labor regime of Fishing Vessel Crews (AKP). In his writing, Rusda shares brief excerpts from his field findings. In addition to articles, the second issue of Suara Laut also features a photo-essay section by Ferre, an intern at DFW Indonesia, capturing portraits of AKP crews docked at Nizam Zachman Port.

Through these three sections, DFW Indonesia aims to create a space for questioning. From the beginning, the Suara Laut zine was not intended as a formal publication like research reports or academic documents. Suara Laut is a space to amplify the voices of fisheries workers—a place to present their stories, to speak out, and sometimes to challenge.

We hoped that this zine can ignite the courage to question the reality we have long lived by, while seeking opportunities to open doors to alternatives that challenge the existing one. Such courage becomes the starting point of resistance. Every act of courage grows from reflection that questions the “reality”.

To close, I quote lyrics from the song “*Menjadi Indonesia*” by Efek Rumah Kaca:

Awaken quickly from a long sleep (*Lakas bangun dari tidur berkepanjangan*)

Declare your dreams (*Menyatakan mimpimu*)

Wash your face to look fresh (*Cuci muka biar terlihat segar*)

Straighten your features (*Merapikan wajahmu*)

There's still a way to grow big (*Masih ada cara menjadi besar*)

To rejuvenate your old age (*Memudakan tuamu*)

To transform and become Indonesia (*Menjelma dan menjadi Indonesia*)

Warm regards,  
The Interrupter







Post



**DFW Indonesia**


@dfw\_indonesia



nggak bisa yura, soalnya hak abk nggak lebih penting daripada ikannya :((

[Translate post](#)



**Yura Yunita**  @yurayunita · 28 Jul 24

Bisa?

18:35 · 01 May 25

 [View post activity](#)





# From Data at Sea to Policy in the Meeting Room

Have you ever tried to explain the concept of “ecosystem sustainability” to someone who, that day, just wants to make sure their family can eat? That is where our work begins. As the Program Director, I often find myself caught between two worlds: the idealistic world where the ocean must be preserved, and the real world where the kitchen must keep cooking. Our mission at Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) Indonesia is to serve as a bridge between the two—to ensure that protecting the ocean doesn’t mean sacrificing the stomachs of fishers, or the stomachs of workers in the fisheries industry, and vice versa. It is a delicate balancing act, sometimes frustrating, but always carried out with passion and wholehearted commitment.

We are not psychics who can guess what’s happening at sea from behind an air-conditioned desk. Every one of our programs is born from solid data, from research that sometimes requires us to endure the heat on fishing boats, sweat in the field, or stay up late analyzing numbers and findings. We map high-risk zones, investigate the socio-economic impacts of destructive fishing practices, and try to understand the mindset of every stakeholder involved. Think of it as our version of intelligence work—because without an accurate “battlefield” map, even the best strategy becomes nothing more than an expensive imagination.

Data on paper won’t change anything if it ends up in a drawer—or worse, in some digital storage forgotten over time.



This is where the next chapter begins: policy advocacy. This is the stage where we knock on the doors of decision-makers, armed with thick reports and a long list of recommendations. Sometimes, the process feels like an endless marathon, requiring patience as thick as a dictionary and countless cups of coffee. We come not as enemies, but as critical partners to the government—bringing voices and realities from the ground, with a touch of sarcastic humour when needed to lighten the mood. The best solutions often don’t come from high-rise towers in Jakarta, but from seaside coffee stalls. That’s why the cornerstone of our work is community empowerment. We sit with fishers and fishery workers—not to treat them as mere program beneficiaries, but as the true experts of the sea. From those long conversations, we develop training programs, introduce environmentally friendly fishing gear, raise awareness about occupational risks and labor rights, and strengthen local institutions. We believe that the best guardians of the ocean are those whose lives and livelihoods depend on it.



Our work is like assembling a complex racing car engine. Research is the blueprint, advocacy is the lubricant that keeps the wheels of bureaucracy turning, and community empowerment and awareness are the fuel that keeps it all running. These four elements are inseparable. Without research, our advocacy is toothless. Without advocacy, our findings evaporate. Lastly, without community involvement, all change will be temporary and superficial. Our task is to ensure all these components are properly assembled and work in harmony.

In the end, what do we dream of? It's simple: a healthy ocean, empowered fishers and fishery workers, and a fair and sustainable fisheries industry. A vision that might sound too grand, but every small step we take in the field brings us closer to it. We don't hold all the answers, but we always have an extra seat and a hot cup of coffee for anyone willing to think and work alongside us—because this big problem clearly can't be solved alone.

Imam Trihatmadja  
Program Director of DFW Indonesia



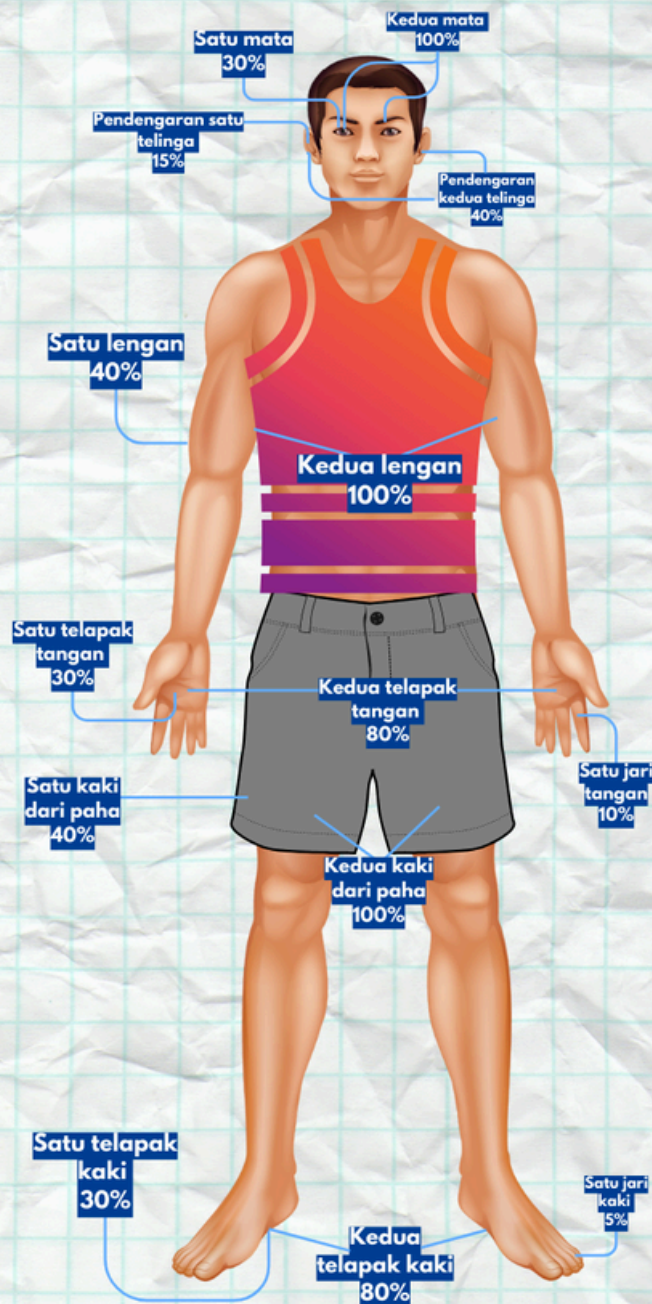


# Santunan ABK Perikanan

berdasarkan Peraturan Menteri Kelautan dan Perikanan No. 33 Tahun 2021 Pasal 187

## Cacat Tetap: Rp150.000.000

**Rp150.000.000 x angka% dari bagian tubuh yang cacat**



**Meninggal dunia:**

**Paling sedikit Rp100.000.000 jika karena sakit**

**Paling sedikit Rp150.000.000 jika karena kecelakaan kerja**



## Essay

# Profit-Sharing System Among Fishing Vessel Crew in Muara Baru

Muh Fachrin Apriyitno  
Facilitator, DFW Indonesia

The potential of capture fisheries in the Fisheries Management Areas of the Republic of Indonesia (WPPNRI) offers opportunities for fisheries production that impact the income levels of Fishing Vessel Crews (AKP). There are two wage mechanisms for AKP: monthly salary and profit-sharing. Regarding profit-sharing, the mechanism is carried out based on agreements between each group of fishers according to the vessel owner.

According to Law No. 16 of 1964, Article 1, Paragraph 1, a profit-sharing agreement is an agreement made in fishing or maintenance efforts between the fishing vessel owner and the Fishing Vessel Crew (AKP), where each party receives a share of the proceeds based on a previously agreed ratio. However, in practice, the crew members (ABK) as fishers often receive only the net share and find it difficult to express their desire for a higher profit-sharing percentage. The cooperation pattern between owners and crew in fishing communities is based on local customs and the type of fishing gear used, making it difficult to change because it is rooted in tradition (Brenner, 1998). This situation can hinder the economic development of fishing communities (Kusnadi, 2009).

The diversity of profit-sharing arrangements among fishing vessel crews at Nizam Zachman Port is adjusted according to the type of fishing gear used. In this situation, fishers, especially the fishery workers, do not have the right to provide input regarding the determination of profit-sharing amounts. In some cases, vessel owners make offers deemed attractive to prospective crew members to encourage them to work on their boats. These offers may include target bonuses, contract money voluntarily provided by the vessel owner, fishing ground loans, as well as cash advances ranging from 5 to 10 million rupiahs per vessel.

Besides the variability of profit-sharing systems imposed by vessel owners, another common problem faced by crew members (ABK) is contract discrepancies. ABK often receive different earnings than those stated in the contracts they signed. Additionally, monthly wage mechanisms tend to be minimally applied. Squid vessels, vessels using gill nets, and tuna longline vessels use a monthly wage system. Apart from these vessels, ABK generally operate under a profit-sharing scheme.

To address the issues mentioned above, government policies that favor Fishing Vessel Crews (AKP) are necessary. The profit-sharing system for capture fisheries, as regulated in Law No. 16 of 1964, requires strict supervisory mechanisms.







There are four (4) points that vessel owners are prohibited from doing: *first*, owners who provide operational equipment for fishing are not allowed to profit from these items. *Second*, the provided equipment must be paid for at the purchase price. If the owner is also the seller of the operational equipment, the owner must apply the same prices to other customers who are not fishers.

*Third*, setting aside one percent of the income of fishers and crew members for a loan fund that can serve as a savings and loan capital during the lean season. This fund is managed by the fishers and crew members who form a fishing group. *Fourth*, the income of the crew, including the captain and crew members, must be handed over to their lawful wives or, if unmarried, to responsible parents. This measure is intended to prevent wasteful spending and to anticipate lean periods. Another purpose is to encourage fishers to prioritize their essential needs.









## Esai

# Why Are Fishing Vessel Crews Still Struggling to Prosper?

Rusda Khoiruz Zaman  
Researcher DFW Indonesia

Sweet promises and the lure of prosperity often attract people to become Fishing Vessel Crew (AKP). However, behind these promises and hopes for welfare lies a hidden chain of bondage and exploitation, invisible to the camera's lens. This bondage and exploitation have persisted and become increasingly entrenched over a long period, as if no one notices. In fact, this entrenched exploitation is gradually accepted as a normal and inevitable condition.

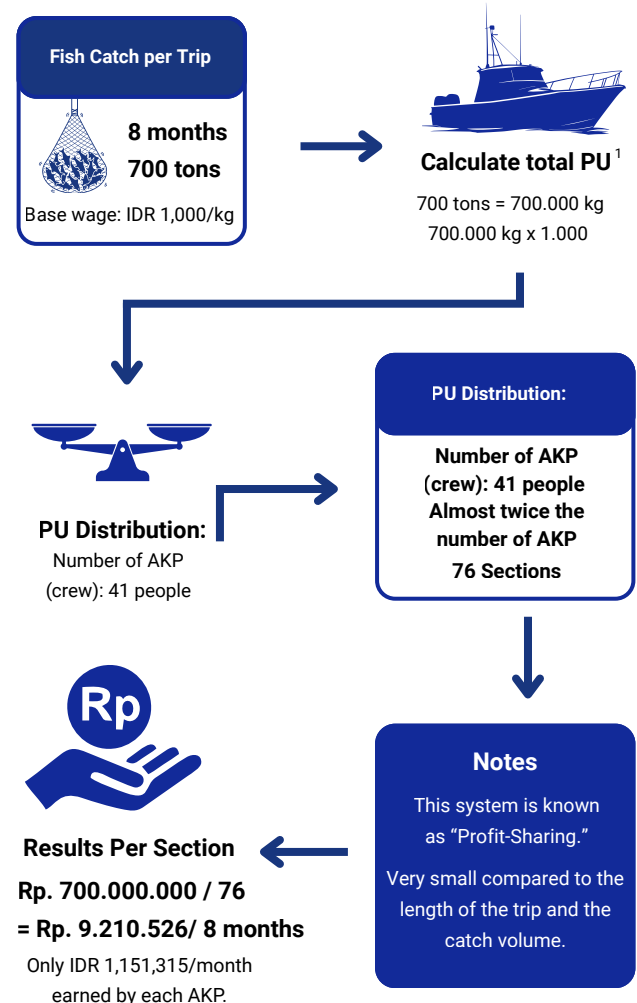
I often meet Fishing Vessel Crew (AKP) who have worked for decades but whose lives remain far from prosperous. For example, AKP working on vessels equipped with large pelagic purse seine nets at Nizam Zachman Port. The cultural term used among AKP for these vessels is "cakalang" boats. The average fishing trip on a cakalang boat lasts about eight months and can sometimes be extended if the catch is deemed by the company or vessel owner insufficient to cover the "provisioning costs."

At Nizam Zachman, the wage system for cakalang boats generally uses a profit-sharing system. However, the commonly known term "profit-sharing" is not a pure profit-sharing system but rather a production-based (*piece-rate wage*) system. Its main characteristic is that workers do not receive a fixed monthly salary but are paid based on the catch, the price of which is predetermined by the company from the start.



## Questioning the Fairness of Profit-Sharing Amounts

### Profit-Sharing Wage System for AKP on Cakalang Boats



<sup>1</sup>"PU" is a term used by AKP to refer to the clean portion before it is divided into several parts.



As an illustration, for every 1 kg of fish caught by net, an AKP receives IDR 1,000. If during one trip lasting 8 months the vessel catches 700 tons, then the PU<sup>1</sup> money that the company must pay (IDR 1,000/kg × 700 tons) to pay all the AKP is IDR 700,000,000. This total PU must then be divided into nearly twice the total number of AKP on board. Suppose there are 41 AKP on a single cakalang boat, the total PU is usually divided into 76 shares (IDR 700,000,000 ÷ 76 = IDR 9,210,526). Therefore, one share of the total PU is only IDR 9,210,526 for eight months at sea. Based on this rough calculation, if the wage is measured monthly, each crew member only receives a wage as low as IDR 1,151,315 per month.

The figure of 76<sup>2</sup> shares comes from the total sum of all shares allocated to the AKP on board the vessel and to actors on land who do not go to sea. The actors on board include regular crew members (ABK), the deputy captain, the captain, and various other job positions. In total, about 63 shares are distributed among all AKP on board, with varying portions. Meanwhile, the remaining 10-plus shares are given to actors on land, including administrators, ship maintenance workers, and are also converted into wages for the ship guards when the vessel is docked or under repair.

The explanation above provides a general overview of the profit-sharing wage system for AKP on cakalang boats. Besides receiving their profit shares, AKP are also encouraged to earn personal bonuses<sup>3</sup> by fishing during off-hours. The working hours for cakalang boats are only once a day, typically from around 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. to 12 noon, depending on the volume of fish caught in the nets. Outside of these working hours, AKP usually compete to catch fish to boost their final income - called as "*premi*".

Unlike net-caught fish, the prices for personal fishing catches by AKP vary. "*Cong*"<sup>4</sup> fish is priced at IDR 5,500/kg, while tuna, marlin, mackerel, Spanish mackerel, squid, and demersal fish<sup>5</sup> are usually priced at around IDR 10,000/kg. In a single trip, the personal catch by AKP varies greatly, ranging from 1 ton to 3 tons, depending heavily on how diligently they fish.

The pursuit of bonuses through personal fishing has become a kind of competition on board the vessel, where AKP are encouraged to compete to catch as much personal fish as possible to sell to the company. The personal catch is not allowed to be sold elsewhere on the grounds that the AKP are carried by the company's vessel. I often hear cakalang boat AKP chatting at coffee shops that what really drives their work spirit is the personal fishing bonus rather than the net fishing.

**“ Outside of working hours, AKP usually compete to catch fish to boost their income.**

As people who work on land, we might be familiar with a system where bonuses from the company compensate for overtime work. Personal fishing, in essence, is no different from AKP's overtime work. The difference is that at sea, overtime is difficult to calculate because the private life of the crew and their workplace are intertwined, so the compensation given is based solely on the catch they make.

An often overlooked but understandable reason why AKP compete to chase personal fishing bonuses is that the company or boat owner sets the profit-sharing portion for net-caught fish at only IDR 1,000 per kilogram. In pursuit of these personal fishing bonuses, crew members often have to work more than 14 hours a day with uncertain results.

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<sup>1</sup> "PU" is a term used by AKP to refer to the clean portion before it is divided into several parts.

<sup>2</sup> The number 76 is not definite; it depends on the count used by the captain.

<sup>3</sup> The bonus received by AKP from their personal catch.

<sup>4</sup> A cultural term used to refer to skipjack tuna, baby tuna, mackerel tuna, mahi-mahi, and others.

<sup>5</sup> Demersal fish are bottom-dwelling fish that live and feed on the sea floor.



## Cash Advances as a Control Mechanism

Apart from the pricing system for net-caught and personal fishing, AKP are also burdened by contract cash advances<sup>6</sup> given by the company at the beginning as an upfront payment that must be settled at the end of the trip. Among various vessels with different fishing gear, the cakalang boats are known to offer the highest contract cash advances before *lepas tali* (departure)<sup>7</sup>. The amount can vary, ranging from IDR 6 million to 10 million, depending on the position and how many times the AKP has joined that vessel.

In addition to contract cash advances, the company or boat owner also implements a wholesale credit system for AKP during fishing trips. Through this wholesale credit scheme, the company owner shifts the responsibility for the social reproduction of their workers, which should be their obligation. Instead, the wholesale credit system becomes a business opportunity for the company, as the prices of goods they sell can be much higher than those on land. Therefore, all daily necessities for AKP—aside from two meals a day—such as bread, snacks, instant noodles, flavored drinks, and others, are counted as debt. In some cases, AKP's wholesale credit debt can reach up to IDR 8 million in a single trip. The largest component of wholesale credit is usually cigarettes, with AKP spending nearly IDR 6 million or more on them during one trip.

The length of time spent at sea is also a crucial factor that enables the company or vessel owner to carry out extensive exploitation. Fishing operations that last for 8 months or even longer place AKP in highly vulnerable conditions. They have no access to any form of information, not even basic communication with their families. In such isolating working conditions, AKP are still burdened with covering their own social reproduction costs. The company or vessel owner shirks responsibility, as AKP are assumed from the start to be independent fishers. The company/owner merely acts as a provider of production tools, while the AKP are treated as self-reliant workers who must operate them—rather than being provided with adequate support as a form of compensation. As a result, the longer the trip lasts, the larger the debt from cash advances (*kasbon*) becomes.

From the brief description above, it's clear, isn't it, why so many AKP—despite working for decades—still live far from what could be considered a decent or prosperous life?

<sup>6</sup> Contract cash advance is a loan provided by the boss/company as an upfront payment before the AKP (fisher) goes to sea. In some cases, companies often compete to offer large cash advances to attract the interest of AKP."

<sup>7</sup> A term used to refer to the act of setting sail.



Foto: Fai/ DFW Indonesia



GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE ■ 全球氣候罷課 ■ MOVILIZACIÓN MUNDIAL POR EL

MOVILIZACIÓN MUNDIAL POR EL CLIMA ■ 全球氣候罷課 ■ GLOBALER KLIMASTREIK ■ GRÈVE MONDIALE ■

CLIMA ■ GLOBALER KLIMASTREIK ■ GRÈVE MONDIALE POUR LE CLIMAT ■ JEDA UNTUK IKLIM ■ MOBILI-

# KATANYA GAJI 10 JUTA

## PULANG MALAH MEMBAWA HUTANG

ZACÃO GLOBAIS PELO CLIMA ■ グローバル気候マーチ ■ GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE

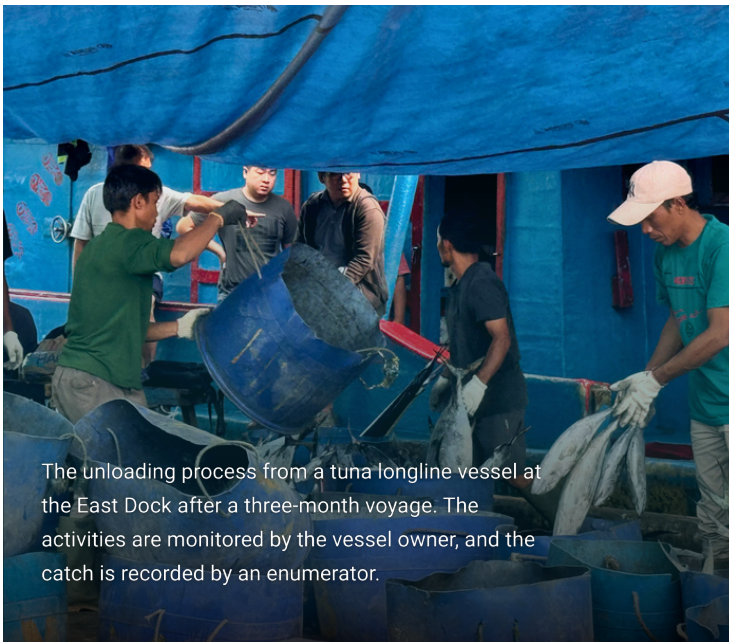
## Photo - Essay

# A Brief Stop Before Heading Back to Sea

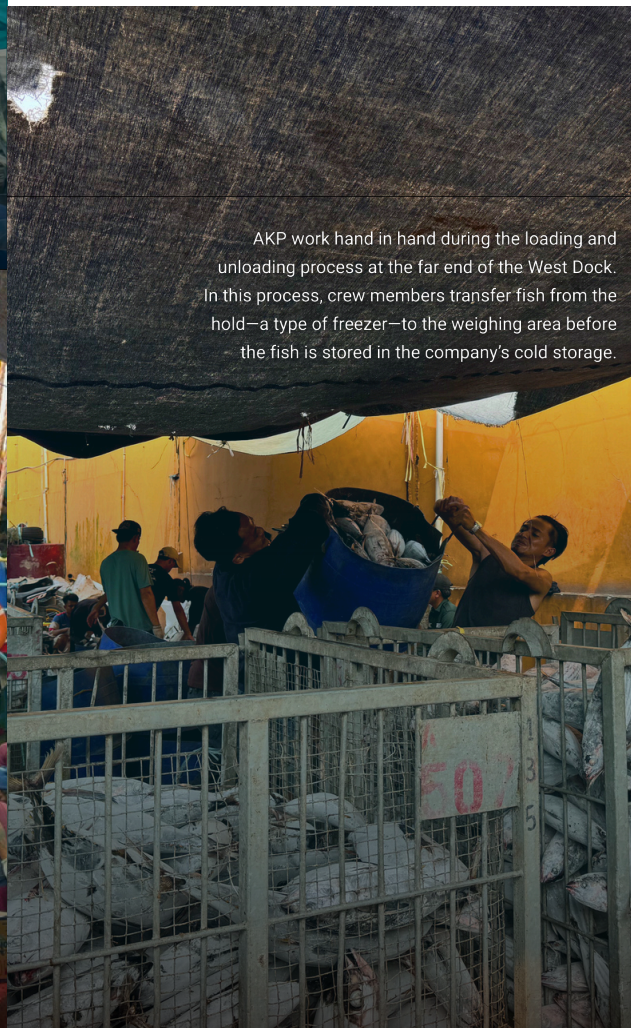
Ferre Reza

Etnographer Intern, DFW Indonesia

## Fish Unloading Activities



The unloading process from a tuna longline vessel at the East Dock after a three-month voyage. The activities are monitored by the vessel owner, and the catch is recorded by an enumerator.



AKP work hand in hand during the loading and unloading process at the far end of the West Dock. In this process, crew members transfer fish from the hold—a type of freezer—to the weighing area before the fish is stored in the company's cold storage.

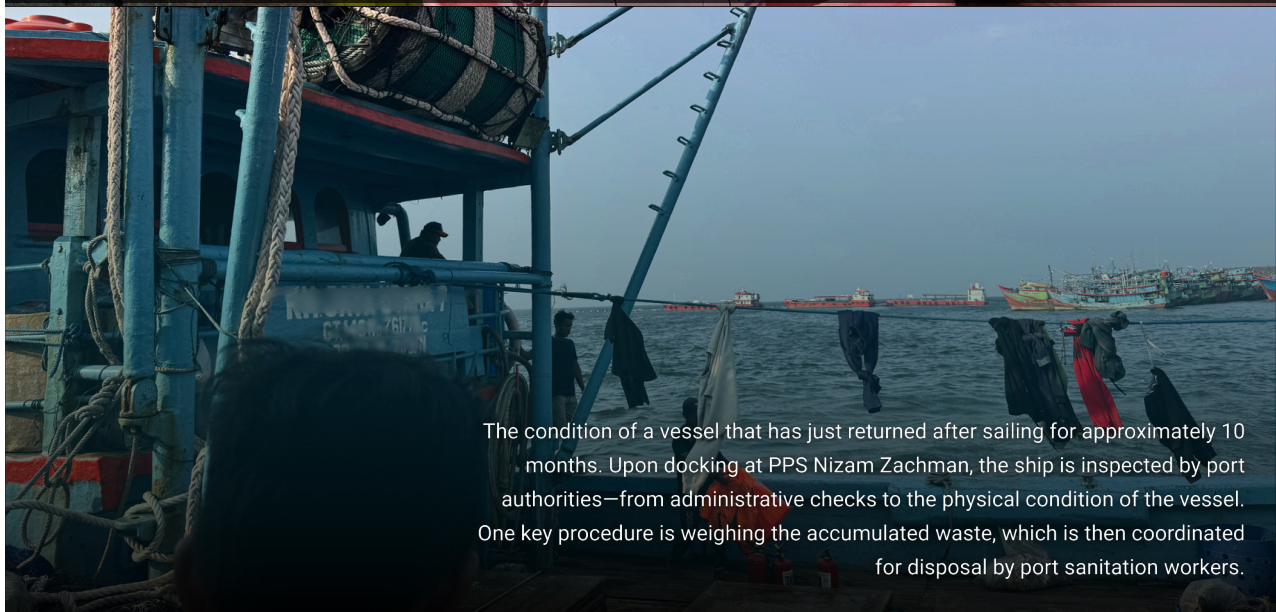
All the photos taken depict the fishery production process at Nizam Zachman Port, North Jakarta. These images aim to illustrate one segment of the seafood production chain that has long supplied consumption in Indonesia—and even globally. However, working conditions like these are rarely highlighted or brought into public view.



## Vessel Condition



Drinking glasses used by AKP on board the KM Surya Timur 60. There are also cans of Bear Brand milk, which some AKP believe help maintain their stamina during the voyage.



The condition of a vessel that has just returned after sailing for approximately 10 months. Upon docking at PPS Nizam Zachman, the ship is inspected by port authorities—from administrative checks to the physical condition of the vessel. One key procedure is weighing the accumulated waste, which is then coordinated for disposal by port sanitation workers.





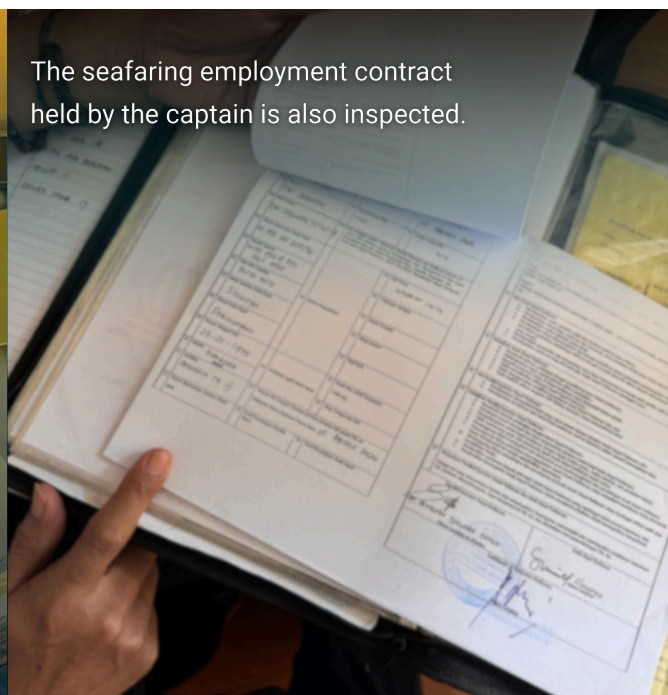
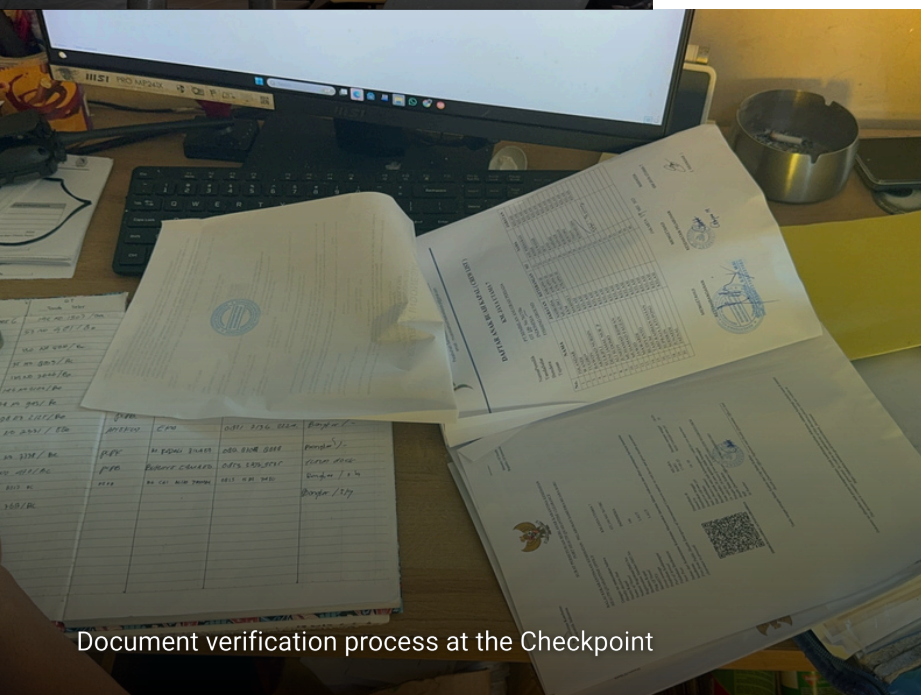
## Photo - Essay



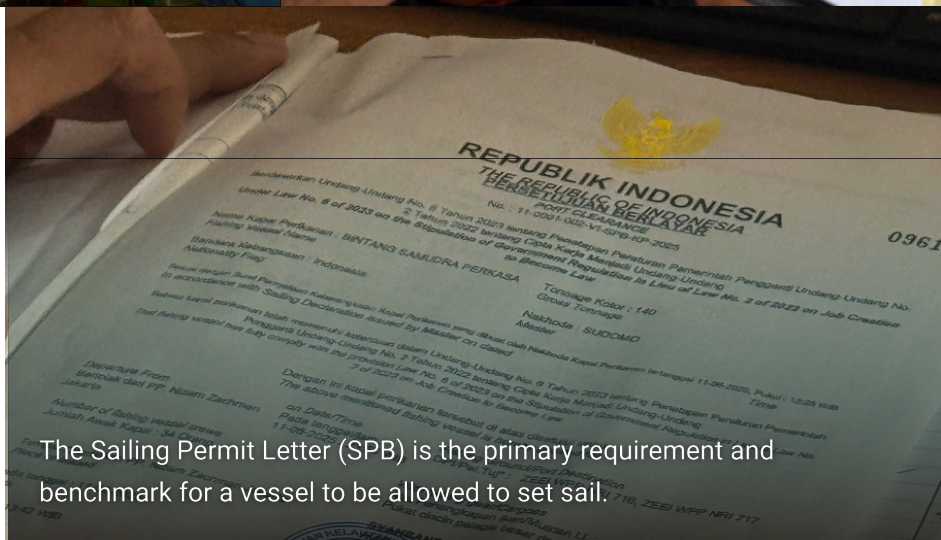
# Checkpoint: Pre-Departure Administration

Ferre Reza

Etnographer Intern, DFW Indonesia



## Certificate and Document Inspection





## Marine News

# Enhancing Access to Social Protection in Pekalongan, DFW Indonesia Launches PROSPER

Pekalongan Regency has become one of the most vulnerable regions in Indonesia to climate change. As a coastal area situated on soft alluvial soil, Pekalongan is threatened by rising sea levels due to global warming, causing tidal flooding and coastal abrasion. The impacts of climate disasters have affected the fisheries sector, which is the main livelihood of Pekalongan's coastal communities, forcing many to switch professions and become migrant workers in order to maintain their family income. Fishery migrant workers, such as Fishing Vessel Crew Members (*Awak Kapal Perikanan* or AKP), are highly vulnerable to exploitation through non-transparent recruitment, long working hours, minimal protection, unfair wages, and weak social protection guarantees.

In response to the social issues arising from climate change in the coastal areas of Pekalongan Regency, DFW Indonesia is implementing the Protecting Rural & Ocean-dependent Societies through Participatory Economic Resilience (PROSPER) program. This program aims to strengthen social protection systems and introduce alternative livelihoods for communities affected by climate change, particularly Fishing Vessel Crew Members (AKP) and their families, small-scale fishers and aquaculture farmers, fishery product processors, and other poor coastal residents. PROSPER focuses on improving access to social protection systems and developing sustainable livelihood alternatives through the empowerment of coastal communities.

PROSPER is being implemented in Wonokerto Subdistrict, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, with three coastal villages serving as pilot areas: Tratebang Village, Api-API Village, and Pecakaran Village. These three areas are coastal regions impacted by climate change due to global warming. The effects of climate change have caused rising sea levels, tidal floods (rob), coastal abrasion, and risks of losing livelihoods in these villages. They also serve as labor suppliers for the capture fisheries industry on fishing vessels in various locations, such as Muara Baru, Tegal, Juwana, Cilacap, Benoa, and other areas.

As an introduction to PROSPER, DFW Indonesia held a socialization event titled "Enhancing Access to Social Protection Information for Coastal Communities." This event discussed various types of social protection programs, particularly those designed by the local government. Held at the village meeting hall, the PROSPER socialization event was attended by families of Fishing Vessel Crew Members (AKP), fishers, pond farmers, other fisheries sector workers, the Pekalongan Regency Social Services Office, and the Pekalongan Regency Fisheries and Marine Affairs Office. The event also served as an effort to build partnerships with local government, private sector actors, rural stakeholders, and village communities.

The government has managed various social protection programs for communities in the form of social assistance and social security distributed across different sectors, but these programs often operate independently. Therefore, PROSPER was established to foster collaboration and develop an integrated system to provide accessible information about social protection programs for coastal fisheries communities.

"The PROSPER program develops an approach to integrate various social protection programs managed by the government, private sector, and individuals, so they can be more effective and better targeted to the community," explained Nabiyya Perennia, PROSPER Program Coordinator at DFW Indonesia.

PROSPER received a positive response from the three village heads in the pilot areas. Pronisa, the Head of Tratebang Village, expressed hope that PROSPER would help the community receive proper social protection. Similar appreciation was also conveyed by Abdul Muis, the Secretary of Pecakaran Village. He said that PROSPER could assist in outreach efforts to provide social protection information to villagers who have long faced limited access.

Regarding access to social protection, Qomarudin, the Head of Api-Api Village, emphasized that the village government has proposed the names of community members eligible for social protection programs. However, he stated that currently the village head only acts as a lower-level implementer. According to him, decisions made after the field verification process (ground check) conducted by the government through the Ministry of Social Affairs sometimes do not align with the data proposed through the village's Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang).

Responding to this, Muhlisinalahudin, a representative from the Social Service Office of Pekalongan Regency, stated that the data collected at the regional level has been verified by the central government. The central government, through the Integrated National Socio-Economic Data (DT-SEN), has conducted data verification compiled by the Ministry of Social Affairs and other ministries. "This process is carried out to ensure that the distribution of social assistance and social security provided by the state is not overlapping and is well-targeted," he explained.

Aside from the data discrepancies with the village Musrenbang proposals, Musnafik, a family member of an AKP (Fishing Vessel Crew), also highlighted concerns about the insurance provided by the government for AKP. In his view, social protection for AKP who work at sea for months—sometimes up to nine months—is still unclear. Fahrudin, Head of the Aquaculture Division at the Fisheries and Marine Service of Pekalongan Regency, stated that social protection efforts for fishermen are provided through fishermen's insurance under BPJS Employment with a premium of IDR 38,000 per month. "With this social security, it can help reduce the risks and vulnerabilities faced by fishermen while working at sea," Fahrudin explained.



Foto: Dzulfiusi Rafif/ DFW Indonesia



## Marine News

# DFW Survey: Small-Scale Fishers Still Struggling to Access Diesel Subsidies

As of 2022, Indonesia has a fishing population of approximately 2,401,540, with 85% classified as small-scale fishermen in 2023. These small-scale fishermen heavily rely on subsidized fuel (BBM) for their fishing activities. However, many still face difficulties accessing the subsidized type of fuel known as *Jenis Bahan Bakar Tertentu* (JBT) or solar diesel. The fuel price hikes in 2022 have also negatively impacted fishermen's purchasing power (*Nilai Tukar Nelayan*) during the 2022–2025 period.

DFW Indonesia conducted an offline survey from May 8 to July 10, 2023, across multiple locations including Denpasar, Aru Islands Regency, Baubau, Tanimbar Islands Regency, Pekalongan, Bitung, and North Jakarta. The survey involved 184 small-scale fishermen, 87.5% of whom have been fishing for 16–20 years using vessels smaller than 6 GT.

The survey revealed that around 66.3% of respondents do not receive subsidized fuel directly. Instead, many purchase fuel from retailers or middlemen, with only about 25% buying from Special Fishermen Fuel Stations (SPBN). While many fishermen are aware of SPBN, they often don't know about the availability of subsidized fuel there or find the stations frequently out of stock. Moreover, 75% of respondents reported that the subsidized fuel supply is insufficient for their fishing needs. With an average fishing frequency of 21–25 trips per month, fishermen typically require 5–30 liters of fuel per trip. Due to limited subsidized fuel availability, 41.8% of respondents fish fewer than five times per month.

"These fishermen face difficulties with administrative requirements, but even getting subsidized fuel stock itself is also challenging," said Zulkarnain Sahi, a fisherman from Gorontalo.

Retailers play a dominant role as intermediaries in providing access to subsidized fuel for fishermen. Although the distance between fishermen's locations and the subsidized fuel stations (SPBN) is relatively short, the limited number of SPBN outlets forces many fishermen to wait in long queues. Furthermore, 78.3% of fishermen have to pay more than Rp6,800 per liter for fuel. As a result, fishermen often spend over Rp2,000,000 per month just to buy subsidized fuel for going out to sea, which is a significant financial burden. "Small-scale fishermen, especially in Denpasar, Baubau, and Kabupaten Aru, have to wait in line for more than two hours to purchase subsidized fuel," said Luthfian Haekal, Human Rights Manager at DFW Indonesia.

Moreover, many small-scale fishermen respondents admitted that they do not understand the official procedures for accessing subsidized fuel. They also perceive the distribution of subsidized fuel as unfair to small-scale fishermen. Survey findings show that at least 53.8% of respondents believe that large-scale fishermen receive better access to subsidized fuel. This inequality in fuel access has led many small-scale fishermen to demand that their voices be heard and to be involved in the oversight of fuel distribution.

"There needs to be an increased role for cooperatives or fishermen groups in the distribution access, as 61.4% of respondents are still not members," explained Haekal.



Responding to Haekal's presentation, Niko from the Indonesian Traditional Fishermen's Union (Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia - KNTI) stated that the leakage of subsidized diesel fuel extends beyond the fisheries sector. The leakage primarily occurs in the transportation sector. "We received insights from friends at DFW that the fuel leakage not only flows into other sectors but also involves middlemen who channel it to large-scale fishermen," explained Niko. He also added that according to KNTI's study, the barcodes used by small-scale fishermen are also being sold on marketplaces. This further contributes to the shortage of subsidized diesel fuel for small fishermen.

In addition to Niko, Panji Setyo Wibowo from the Directorate of Fishermen Protection and Empowerment at the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) stated that the government is currently making efforts to improve the distribution system of subsidized fuel for small-scale fishermen. These improvements involve intensive communication between agencies such as the Directorate of Ports and BPH Migas, particularly concerning the Kusuka card.

"KKP and BPH Migas have synergized efforts to facilitate fishermen in obtaining subsidized fuel. There is already data synchronization from the KUSUKA Card to Pertamina's application," said Panji.





# FORCED LABOR AND TRAFFICKING

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