

PRESS RELEASE
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Cooperation to Strengthen the Protection and Empowerment of Migrant Fishing Vessel Crews,
Small-scale and Labor Fishers in Central Java

Semarang, Central Java, 22 May 2022 - The Provincial Government of Central Java and the Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (IOJI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday (22/5). The signing of the MoU entitled "Strengthening the Protection and Empowerment of Migrant Fishing Vessel Crews, Small-scale and Labor Fishers" was held after the 115th National Awakening Day commemoration ceremony with this year's theme "Spirit to Rise".

This MoU is in line with the spirit of national awakening commemoration day. In this ceremony, the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo said that "National Awakening Day is interpreted as commemorating a joint struggle. The Central Government, Regional Government, and all elements of the nation united to collaborate in the implementation of the unity as well as oneness values in perceiving the rise of our nation."

The MoU between the Central Java Provincial Government and IOJI is expected to synergize cooperation between various parties to strengthen the protection and empowerment of Central Java's migrant fishing vessel crews, small-scale and labor fishers, fisherwomen, and other marginalized communities who depend their lives and livelihoods on the ocean. The cooperation is also expected to support the establishment in the aspects of planning, implementation, research, development of legal and policy instruments as well as increasing the capacity of human resources.

The MoU is derived from the data on a large number of migrant fishing vessel crews, labor and small-scale fishers in Central Java Province. In 2021, a total of 1,408 migrant AKP were placed by companies holding Business Permits for Recruitment and Placement of Vessel Crews in Central Java Province (BP3MI Jawa Tengah, 2022). This data does not represent the number of migrant fishing vessel crewa from Central Java because many migrant workers depart non-procedurally.

Migrant fishing vessel crews, including those departing from Central Java, are vulnerable to human rights and labor rights violations at all stages of their migration, including fraud and falsification of documents, debt bondage, and withholding of wages. Working on fishing vessels abroad also often makes them isolated in the middle of the sea, and it is difficult to get access to assistance and communication. Another challenge for protecting migrant fishing vessel crews from Central Java is the rampant presence of brokers, massive information on job vacancies

and non-procedural placements, as well as the lack of competency of workers, poor knowledge of worker's rights, and work culture in destination countries and flags.

“Central Java is a province with a very large number of fishers in Indonesia. Small-scale and labor fishers in Central Java also face various problems, such as accidents at sea, difficulties due to the impact of exploitation and climate change on marine and fisheries ecosystems, and other problems caused by the unequal bargaining position of fishers with capital owners, employers, and policy makers,” said CEO IOJI, Mas Achmad Santosa.

Provincial Governments have duties, responsibilities and authorities that can be optimized in facing the various protection and empowerment challenges that have been mentioned. In relation to the protection of migrant fishing vessel crews, the duties and responsibilities of the Provincial Government focus on the pre- and post-employment stages (pre and post-migrant). These forms of protection include dissemination of information, organizing outreach and education, training and education, monitoring and coaching, as well as settling the rights of migrant fishing vessel crews.

“The Provincial Government is also responsible for protecting and empowering fishermen. Protection is carried out, among others, through the provision of fishery business facilities and infrastructure, guarantees of business certainty, and guarantees of security and safety. While empowerment is carried out through, among other things, through the provision of education and training, easy access to science, technology and information, as well as cooperation and business partnerships,” said Head of the Central Java Province Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Fendiawan Tiskiantoro.

The implementation of the duties and responsibilities of the Provincial Government in protecting and empowering migrant fishing vessel crews and fishery business actors certainly requires a sizable budget and human resources. Therefore, close cooperation between government agencies at the central and regional levels and the community can play an important role in supporting the implementation of these duties and responsibilities.

"Broadly speaking, IOJI is committed to supporting the Provincial Government of Central Java in various types of activities for the protection of migrant fishing vessel crews, small-scale and labor fishers, in the form of (i) research and preparation of policy papers, (ii) development of legal instruments and policies, (iii) strategies and roadmaps, (iv) communication products and information dissemination, (v) implementation of migrant fishing vessel crews, small-scale and labor fishers protection programs in Central Java, one of which is through supervision, (vi) strengthening systems, institutions, training coordination to increase competency and awareness regarding basic rights, culture in the destination country, and mechanisms for fulfilling rights, in collaboration with the Central Government, and (vii) facilitating meetings and discussions between stakeholders," concluded the CEO of IOJI. ***

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The Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (IOJI) is a think-tank and policy advocacy institution that supports Indonesia, as the largest archipelagic country in the world, to realize marine governance based on the principles of effective protection, sustainable use, and equitable welfare. IOJI builds collaboration with state and non-state actors to influence decision-making processes at the national, regional and international levels by providing various scientific evidence-based policy recommendations. IOJI also works to assist and empower people whose lives depend on the sea, such as small fishermen, coastal communities and migrant seafaring workers, in defending and fighting for their basic rights.

Note to Editors

1. The scope and validity period of the collective agreement
 - a. The Scope of this Mutual Agreement includes:
 - i. strengthening the protection and empowerment of Migrant Fishing Ship Crews from Central Java Province in the stages before and after work;
 - ii. strengthening the protection and empowerment of Fishery Business Actors originating from Central Java Province;
 - iii. other fields agreed by the PARTIES in accordance with their respective duties, responsibilities and authorities.
 - b. The validity period of the collective agreement is 5 (five) years

2. Definition of Small Fishermen and Labor Fishermen based on Regional Regulation of Central Java Province Number 1 of 2023 Concerning Protection and Empowerment of Fisheries and Salt Business Actors

- Small-scale fishers are people whose livelihood is catching fish to fulfill their daily needs, both using fishing vessels and those who do not use fishing vessels.
- Labor fishers are fishermen/women who provide their physical (blue-collar) work and participate in the fishing business.