

# OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF CONTROL

## SUMMARY: EUROPEAN UNION

**The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)** works internationally to inform policy and drive systemic, durable reforms to protect and restore our natural world and defend human rights.

We investigate and expose abuses and support environmental defenders, Indigenous peoples, communities and independent journalists on the frontlines of environmental injustice. Our investigators, researchers, filmmakers and campaigners work with grassroots partners and environmental defenders across the globe to secure sustainable, peaceful and equitable futures.

### HEADLINE STATS FROM THE REPORT:

- + EJF investigations into unregulated high seas squid fisheries reveal how governance vacuums across the Northwest Indian, Southwest Atlantic, and Southeast Pacific Oceans are fuelling rampant destructive fishing and egregious human rights abuses. These three squid fisheries make up approximately 60% of the global supply.
- + EJF interviewed 431 fishers from Indonesia and the Philippines who had worked on 249 unique DWF squid vessels operating in these three fisheries between 2020 and 2025. 70% of these vessels were flagged to China, 16% to Taiwan, and 14% to South Korea.
- + Fishers working on China's squid vessels described abuses that were consistently worse than on South Korean or Taiwanese-flagged vessels. 60% of Chinese vessels were alleged to have engaged in shark finning, 53% in the capture of vulnerable megafauna, and 18% in unauthorised fishing. Chinese vessel shark finning rates were 7x higher than Korean vessels and 3.4x higher than Taiwanese vessels.
- + The presence of forced labour forms a baseline for employment on DWF squid vessels. China's fleet ranked the worst for living and working conditions on vessels with over 92% of interviewees reporting at least seven indicators of forced labour during their time onboard. This compares with 82% for Taiwanese vessels and 16% for South Korean vessels.
- + The Northwest Indian Ocean stands out as the most destructive squid fishing ground in the study. 62% of vessels conducted shark finning and 66% of vessels caught vulnerable megafauna.
- + 25 deaths were reported on 20 vessels. All of these were flagged to China. At least nine deaths (36% of total deaths) were suspected to be due to beriberi - a disease caused by a severe vitamin deficiency that was widespread on merchant and navy ships in the 1800s.<sup>1</sup>
- + At-sea trans-shipment is now an almost ubiquitous fishing practice amongst squid vessels. 97% out of 431 fishers told EJF that their vessel would trans-ship catch at sea rather than unload into port.

---

<sup>1</sup>Hawk, A. (2006) The Great Disease Enemy, Kak'ke (Beriberi) and the Imperial Japanese Army, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7106648\\_The\\_Great\\_Disease\\_Enemy\\_Kak'ke\\_Beriberi\\_and\\_the\\_Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Army](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7106648_The_Great_Disease_Enemy_Kak'ke_Beriberi_and_the_Imperial_Japanese_Army)