

# THE EVIL EMPIRE

How the Common Fisheries Policy is recolonising the Third World



**Ray Finch MEP**

Member of the EFDD Group in the European Parliament  
Co-ordinator on the Fisheries Committee.



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*“We are all responsible. You can look at the sea and think it is eternal.  
Regrettably it is not. It is a living thing, just as was the tropical forest  
we today call the Sahara desert. The sea must not become a desert”*

*Haïdar el Ali, Senegalese ecologist and Minister of Environment*

# A letter from Nigel Farage



Dear reader

This booklet is the second in a series.

The first, *Stolen Seas*, set out the flawed structure of the Common Fisheries Policy and how the UK suffers particularly as a result.

But the CFP has an extra dimension, its impact on the world beyond the seas surrounding the European Union.

In view of the excellent response from many to Ray Finch's first booklet, we decided to produce a follow-up.

This is it.

Again, it sets out the short-termism, the lack of sustainability, the economic illiteracy, the absence of any thought for the future in what the European Union does at sea - but this time in the world's oceans off the coast of developing countries - in their waters.

But part of the story in this booklet is more uplifting than its predecessor.

It begins with a tale about how a universal evil could be brought to an end by the courage and integrity of a small group of campaigners who came from the United Kingdom.

When we were a confident nation at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, we British felt we had the moral compass to identify evil, expose it for what it was and, in time, after many trials and tribulations bring it, effectively to an end across the world.

I hope that provides an example that can inspire us today?

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nigel Farage". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Nigel Farage MEP

Co-President of the EFDD Group

# Ending Evil

*“This House, conceiving the African slave trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy, will, with all practicable expedition, proceed to take effectual measures for abolishing the said trade”*

*Charles James Fox, British Foreign Secretary, June 10th 1806*

**SINCE** the dawn of civilisation, the concept of property, of exclusive ownership, has brought it with slavery. If possessions, land and animals could be private property then so could people.

It was effectively a universal institution across all continents from the first growth of cities, whether in China, Mesopotamia or the Americas.

Although now usually thought of in terms - and taught in schools as - either the European Slave Trade or slavery in the Southern States of America, it was in fact everywhere, in classical civilisations, in the Arab world, in the American civilisations before the arrival of Christopher Columbus.

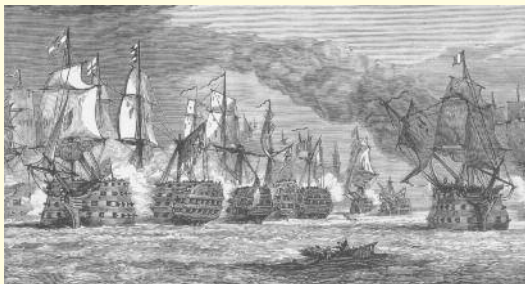
Slavery was universal and always brought suffering.

So, where and how did it come first to be challenged and then to be abolished.

That is a uniquely British achievement.

The first proper crack in the armour of its universality occurs in England in 1772 in the English law courts.

*Maritime power: British command of the seas after Trafalgar (1805) ensured that slave ship passages around the world were shut down.*



Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, a man who ought to have much more recognition than he does, delivered a legal judgement from which a brief extract is quoted below.

*“The state of slavery is of such a nature that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political... It is so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law. Whatever inconveniences, therefore, may follow from the decision, ... the black must be discharged”<sup>1</sup>.*



He declares slavery to be so odious, so evil, in its nature that it cannot be tolerated.

That single judicial decision is like the firing of a starting pistol to end the evil and exploitation across the world. It takes decades, of course, and committed, charismatic leadership, especially from William Wilberforce.

The anti-slavers triumph: the slave trade in the British empire is abolished in 1807, slavery itself is abolished in the British empire in 1833; (Mansfield had effectively abolished it in Britain itself by his case decision in the early 1770s).

The Royal Navy took on the moral duty of using its command of the seas to abolish it and stop it as a trade wherever it had the power.

The result is that during the course of the nineteenth century, it largely disappears.

This is not to say that is a smooth passage.

For instance, the treatment of the Congolese by the Belgians in the Belgian Congo in the late nineteenth century is truly appalling - but,

*Moral duty: Lord Chief Justice Mansfield also blocked an insurance claim from slavers who had thrown a boatload of sick charges overboard.*

Tentacles of abduction: Slave extraction from Africa goes back for millenia - this map shows how Islamic slavers penetrated Africa from the 7th Century AD. A millenium later, Western European slavers got in on the act



even there, British journalists have a key role in exposing the evil - and exposure is always the pre-condition to making something stop.

That is why dictators, autocrats, despots and absolute rulers tend, by and large, to cover the misdeeds - and why a free press is so important!

We, in EFDD believe, that it is very simple. States can - and should, make self-denying moral choices to bring about a better world.

We believe that this is what should happen in relation to the EU and the world's oceans.

The UK has provided such a moral lead in the face of long-standing universal evil and it can do so again.

# Black Gold

*“In Europe it is the extension of commerce, the maintenance of national honor, or some great public object, that is ever the motive to war with every monarch; but, in Africa, it is the personal avarice and sensuality of their kings. These two vices of avarice and sensuality ... we tempt, we stimulate in all these African princes, and we depend upon these vices for the very maintenance of the slave trade...”<sup>2</sup>*

*William Wilberforce, British politician and philanthropist, 12 May 1789*

**S**TARTING in the 17th century, colonial powers imposed their institutions on Africa in the hopes of making it civilised and easier to exploit. Tragically, this brought about a disintegration of their society and the ramifications are still evident in the current underdeveloped and struggling African continent today.

Throughout modern history, most African nations have been classic examples of states with extractive institutions. Extractive institutions concentrate power in the hands of a narrow elite and place few constraints on the exercise of this power. The elites run the economic institutions by extracting natural resources from the rest of the population and society<sup>3</sup>.

To explain Africa’s institutional failure, one has to go back in time, in particular to the period of the Atlantic slave trade and European colonialism. The expansion of European colonial powers to the New World led to an enormous increase in demand for slaves. As there were substantial profits to be made, African rulers captured and sold their own people to European slavers. Many African polities became more absolutist and organised in order to enslave African people. A number of West African empires were actually thriving on slave trade. Kingdoms invaded other territories and

started wars for the sole purpose of enslaving people. This intensive warfare was fuelled by huge imports of guns and ammunition from Europe. It is important to note that slavery in Africa is not a European invention. It was already a well-established practice centuries before the Europeans arrived, dating back to the 7th century<sup>4</sup>. The trans-Saharan slave trade, controlled by Arab traders, moved an estimated 10 million slaves, taken from East and West Africa bound for North Africa, the Middle East and India.

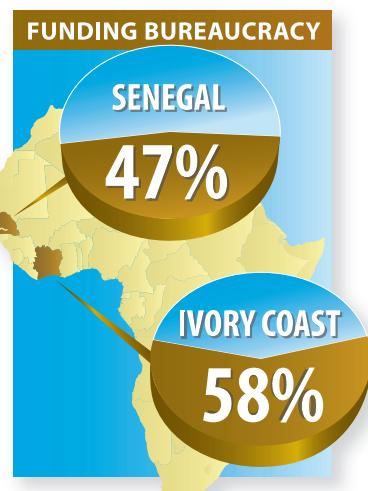
In the 17th century about 1,350,000 Africans were sold as slaves in the Atlantic trade. The Atlantic slave trade peaked in the 18th century with about 6,000,000 slaves being shipped across the Atlantic<sup>5</sup>. African slaves were often termed as 'black gold' because of their value to the Atlantic trade. At the same time, the intensive warfare and massive slaving destroyed the little order and state authority that had existed before in Africa.

In 1807, the external demand for African slaves had dried up, which in turn, ended the slave trade. Africans were put to work in their homeland, under coercion, to produce and export tropical products such as palm oil and kernels, peanuts, ivory and rubber. Slavery remained a way of life, slaves were simply redeployed, and the extractive political and economic institutions inherited during

the era of the slave trade were unaltered.

Extractive institutions became intensified after the independence of African nations in the 1960s. One-party systems developed all over the continent, enabling leaders to accumulate ever greater power. A small elite used their position of patronage to enrich themselves. Government bureaucracies were crowded with party loyalists and,

Percentage of 1964 taxation allocated for civil service salaries in two post-independence African countries.



accordingly, government budgets became burdened with the huge costs of civil service salaries, allowances and presidential expenses. Senegal's budget for 1964 showed that 47 per cent of the total was allocated for civil service salaries. In the Central African Republic and in the Ivory Coast the figure was 58 per cent<sup>6</sup>.

In post-independent Sierra Leone, internal taxation rose at the expense of the farmers. Dictator Siaka Stevens extracted 90 per cent of the income of the farmers to enrich himself and his entourage, and to buy political support. Paramount chiefs, members



of the Sierra Leone Parliament, had the power to provide law and order and to raise taxes. They were also able to determine who farms where, which resulted in very insecure property rights. Though Sierra Leone is an extreme example, essentially the same pattern dominated most African countries. Everywhere corruption spread from top to bottom.

Massive state intervention, wrong economic choices, and extractive policies led to a total collapse of the economy. Industrialisation proved to be a complete failure and, by the 1980s, much of Sub-Saharan Africa saw de-industrialisation. The situation of agriculture was even worse. Growth per capita during the 1980s contracted by an annual rate of 2.2 per cent. External debt tripled, reaching \$160 billion, a sum exceeding Gross Domestic Product (GDP)<sup>7</sup>

Many African nations are fettered by poverty because of these dysfunctional institutions. It is poor governance and corruption which has kept Africa (mainly Sub-Saharan Africa) impoverished and development aid has simply been unable to remedy this. Indeed it often exacerbates it<sup>8</sup>. Once again Europe is extracting natural resource from Africa, but now it's in the form of exploitative bilateral fishery agreements, as explained in the following chapters.

Endemic corruption: Siaka Stevens's ruinous tax hikes hit the poorest in 1970s Sierra Leone.

# Master and Servant

*“The richer countries would be capable of squeezing the poorer countries in specific negotiations, and the general trend of inflation would tend to make the earnings less and less valuable”<sup>9</sup>*

*George Kent, Professor at The University of Hawaii*

**WHILE Africa was struggling with internal issues, the ‘masters’ in Europe devised a new plan to exploit their ‘servants’. The EU introduced the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in 1970 and this allowed for the creation of a gigantic fleet of fishing ships.**

The industrial scale of these fishing vessels lead to over-fishing and the depletion of fish stocks in European waters. Yet already high consumption levels of fish and fishery products continued to rise. Therefore, fishing in outside waters became vital for the EU. Their sights turned toward their former colonies.

The waters of West Africa are among the world’s richest with more than 1200 species of fish, including tuna...

Traditionally, these fishing grounds had been freely explored by West European vessels, not only before, but also after these nations had become independent. This related to the region’s close proximity to Europe, its colonial ties with several European nations (notably France, Portugal and Spain) and its limited domestic demand<sup>10</sup>.

However, this changed dramatically after the unilateral declarations by developing coastal states of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and extended fisheries jurisdictions in the 1970s and 1980s. The enforcement of these 200-nautical mile EEZs was subsequently incorporated by the Third United Nations Convention on the Law

of the Sea (UNCLOS III), which came into force in 1983. In general, around 95 per cent of world’s fishing stocks and 35 per cent of the oceans were placed under the jurisdiction of national governments of coastal states.

Although developing nations had acquired the legal authority over the fisheries resources in their EEZs, they lacked the financial and other means and experience to exploit their rich waters. Their fish stocks would suffer the same fate as other commodities.

At the time, Professor George Kent warned, “It is an illusion to believe that fishing can be as rewarding to the less developed countries as it has been to the developed countries”<sup>11</sup>.

These were prophetic words as this was becoming more and more of a reality for African nations.

In order to alleviate its fleet over-capacity problem and reduce the pressure on fishing resources in EU waters, the EU decided to conclude fisheries agreements (FAs) with these coastal states. Continued access to distant coastal water fish stocks would secure employment in the fishing fleet, the processing industry and related sectors, while simultaneously satisfying the rising internal demand for fish<sup>12</sup>.

This is also seen within the context of Spanish and Portuguese accession to the EU in 1986. Under the 1985 Act of Accession, the EU had agreed to take over the management of the bilateral fisheries agreements of Spain and Portugal with coastal developing nations, and replace them with EU agreements. Importantly, additional fishing opportunities had to be sought for the Portuguese and Spanish vessels in the waters of developing nations to appease Spain and Portugal who were unhappy with the restricted access of their fleets to the waters of other member states<sup>13</sup>.



Encroachment: huge fishing fleets, financed by the EU, are hoovering up the world's marine resources.



There was also a strategic motivation of balancing the Soviet bloc, whose long-distance fishing fleets were dominant in West African waters in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>14</sup>.

This pressure has been more recently added to by the increased activity of the Chinese deep-water fleet.

Thus, FAs were and are essential for the CFP's (political) survival. By exporting the problem of over-capacity to the waters of developing nations, the EU was able to reduce the pressure on fish stocks in its own waters, thereby reducing internal political conflicts over Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and other issues between its member states<sup>15</sup>.

The FAs are essentially a neo-colonialist tool, imposing and continuing past practices, thereby satisfying certain powerful segments of the EU's fishing industry and appeasing nations with over-capacity in fleets, especially Spain.

The parties at the negotiating table needed each other but to a very unequal extent. Weak individual West African coastal states, with serious economic and social problems and the need for easy money, were again confronted with their former colonial masters; this time in the form of a powerful economic bloc. It was again the old relationship between master and servant.

# The Devil's Pact

*“The EU is unfairly profiting from the resources of one of the world's poorest countries (i.e. Madagascar). And they are breaking their own laws to do it”<sup>16</sup>*

*Rashid Sumaila, Professor of ocean and fisheries economics at the University of British Columbia, Canada*

**THE Fishery Agreements being negotiated and signed are not benefiting the coastal African states as was advertised. Rather, they are proving to be detrimental to livelihoods and ecosystems of the poor and underdeveloped nations.**

They are simply making a deal with the devil for quick compensation, without thinking of the long-term consequences.

Though the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) stipulated that coastal states were only obliged to give access to their waters in cases of 'excess stock', this was in fact only a paper protection. Such an assessment supposes that the governments concerned have adequate data about their stocks, the likely impact on them, changes in fishing patterns, and accurate socio-economic information about their fishing industry. This was and is beyond the capacity of most developing nations. In many cases, there is a serious lack of knowledge and data.

In reality, most governments, in need of immediate cash and under pressure, have signed every agreement that was put forward to them, regardless the status of their fish stocks. These coastal African states have debt, mass poverty, corruption, and a serious lack of development, causing them to take money from wherever they can.

Prior to signing the 2004-2007 agreement with the Ivory Coast, an

ex-ante evaluation indicated that the status of its fish stocks was poorly known. There were some indications of over-exploitation of demersal species, while no stock assessments for shrimp were available. The FA nevertheless increased fishing possibilities for demersal trawlers, many of which may also have been targeting shrimps.

Even when these governments knew that there was a clear over-exploitation, they have concluded agreements or protocols. In Mauritania a 1998 report asked for a 25 per cent reduction of fishing pressure on cephalopods. Paradoxically, in 2001 the number of licences granted to EU vessels for these species increased from 42 to 65<sup>17</sup>.

The basis of the FAs was that the coastal state concerned allowed EU-registered vessels to fish in its waters and that in return, the EU and vessel owners pay financial compensation.

Most of these so-called first-generation FAs, however, did not contain catch quotas. Rather, they made limits on fishing rights and intensity of resource exploitation, which were expressed in limits in terms of number, tonnage and types of vessel. However, a vessel's Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT) says little about its real harvesting capacity. This also depends on engine power, size of nets used, time spent fishing, skill and experience of fishers and other factors. This approach thus allowed the EU fleets to harvest an essentially unlimited volume of resources for one pre-fixed licence payment<sup>18</sup>.

To put it into the words of Daniel Pauly, Professor at the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia, "It's as if someone gave you three shopping carts for a day at a supermarket and told you that you wouldn't need to go through the cashier"<sup>19</sup>. The greed of the fishing companies driven by profit is almost unfettered.

In general, the terms of the agreements enabled the EU to manage the intensity of exploitation of fisheries resources practically without any consultation of the coastal state.

The African governments and the EU have financial incentives to increase the catch, since they both have interests to buy and sell,

respectively. This further intensifies over-fishing and endangers sustainability.

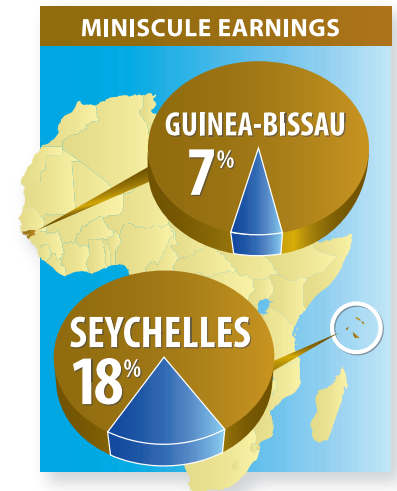
André Standing, criminologist with a focus on marine fisheries, and also founder of Transparentsea, notes: "The scale of funds available to African countries through access agreements is directly influenced by the scale of fishing rights they provide to foreign countries - the more fishing boats they allow to operate in their territorial waters, the greater the payments being received. Thus, in many countries access agreements have led to the licensing of too many boats and this has undermined the ideal of managing fisheries responsibly"<sup>20</sup>. In short, these agreements were essentially 'money for access' pacts, based on the principle 'pay, fish and go'.

The asymmetrical balance of power and the unequal treaty relationship have resulted into a serious under-compensation. The total amount of compensation paid by the EU compared to the actual value of the catches made by the fishing companies have always been detrimental to the coastal states. The EU and its fishing companies capture the lion's share of the value of these fisheries' resources, while poor coastal nations are paid only small sums.

For example, during the period 1990-1993, Seychelles earned about \$13.4 million from its FA with the EU, out of which 11.1 million was financial compensation. The reported fish caught, however, was estimated at \$75 million, which meant that Seychelles earned just 18 per cent of the value of the reported catch made in its waters by EU fishing vessels<sup>21</sup>.

The poorer the country, the less it is 'compensated'.

In 1996 the government of Guinea-Bissau received \$8,250,000 in total revenue in exchange for fish with an estimated value of \$78,000,000. The processed value of seafood products from these



Poor African countries earn a pitiful percentage of profits from the huge amount of fish extracted from their waters.

resources was \$110,424,000, meaning that Guinea-Bissau only received 7.5 per cent of the end value<sup>22</sup>.

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, more than 85 per cent of its people live in poverty. Despite all its fairness rhetoric, the EU has been systematically exploiting the island's weakness.



*Mugged in Madagascar: the EU takes the fish and the money, too.*

A 2012 study revealed that the EU paid less to Madagascar than it did a quarter of a century ago while catching more fish. Between 1986 and 2010, the EU received 30 per cent more tuna (quota increase from 10,000 t to 13,300 t) for a total fishing fee that had declined by 20 per cent. Taking into account inflation, the annual revenue collected for fisheries by Madagascar fell by 90 per cent over this period<sup>23</sup>.

In any case, FAs' payments have rarely been used to foster the development of the domestic fisheries sector.

Most of these coastal countries are states with extractive institutions. Arbitrary power, corruption and systems of patronage are firmly embedded. Much of the money has simply disappeared or has been used by the local elite for personal enrichment or to strengthen the existing patrimonial structures, rewarding (political) friends and party loyalists.

The European Commission itself has admitted that in many cases the compensation funds are essentially 'bribe money', noting that: "the existing financial compensation arrangements are little more than institutionalised corruption: financial compensation per se is seen as the 'bribe' to the Ministry of Finance; scientific and technical cooperation funds are seen as the 'bribe' to the Ministry of Fisheries; the bursaries programme is seen as a 'bribe' to all senior members and officials who can use it to send favoured friends and relations on all expenses paid training junkets to Europe"<sup>24</sup>.

Little has changed over the years because coastal governments decide how they make use of the payments. It is unclear how the earmarked financial support is spent.

For example, a series of interviews revealed that fishermen of Cape Verde are not receiving any funding or money from the government or another institution. The annual EU payment goes directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and thus the general national budget. No money is given to the country's only fisheries research institution and due to a lack of communication between the EU and the Cape Verdean government, it is unknown where exactly the money goes<sup>25</sup>.

By selling fishing licences to European and other countries in order for foreign industrial trawlers to gain access to their waters, these governments are causing much harm and misery to their own people. These agreements have led to over-exploitation, unemployment and under-nourishment.

In a 2004 environmental impact study, the French scientist Pierre Failler accused Mauritania of selling out its waters and fishing industry for short-term aid money, asserting that:

*"There is an ecological dumping happening, or a selling off of marine resources which reinforces economic development by relying on over-exploitation of natural resources ... the concept of sustainable development receives not much more attention than lip service"*<sup>26</sup>.

The other party of this pact, the EU, buys out fishing rights at a price, subsidising its own fleets to over-fish and catch the same fish that local artisanal fishermen aim to harvest. The EU and its fishing fleets are reaping the commercial profits and political benefits at the expense of the local population. This amounts to 'robbing the poor to feed the rich'. This is a devil's pact.

# The Winner takes it all

*“The neo-colonial days live on for Spain, which maintains a fleet over 200 trawlers off the coast of West Africa, largely at the other EU nations’ expense”<sup>28</sup>*

*Charles Clover, British journalist and author.*

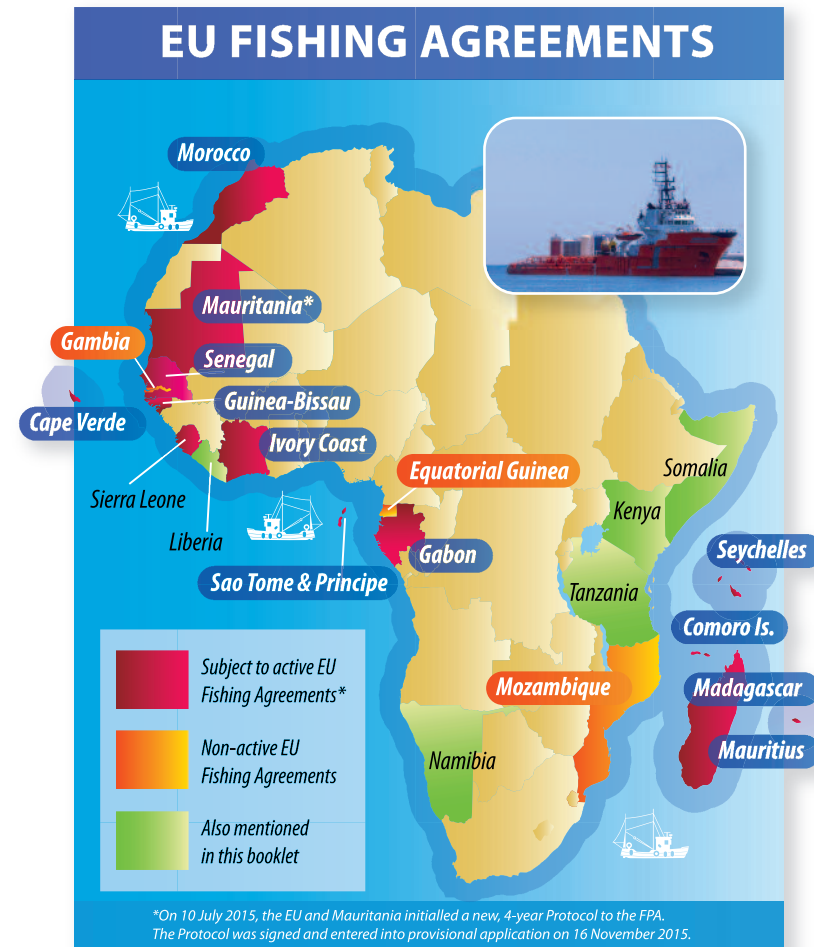
**T**AXPAYERS of the EU are unknowingly financing other countries fishing companies, who then use this funding to aggrandise their fleets and steal fish from coastal African states through access agreements. Africa does not benefit, small fishermen do not benefit, and most member states do not benefit. The only winner here is powerful lobbyists and greedy fishing companies.

The developing countries with which the EU has concluded FAs have mainly been African states, originally West African countries.

The first FA was concluded with Senegal in 1979. The number of agreements rose sharply in the 1980s, following the ratification of UNCLOS and the accession of Spain and Portugal. In the early 1990s there was a peak with 17 agreements in 1991. Subsequently, their numbers have oscillated between 14 and 17. Between 2009 and 2013, the total number of agreements decreased to 11. Now the EU has active agreements with 12 African countries<sup>29</sup>.

Traditionally, EU governments, that is to say their taxpayers, have subsidised about 80 per cent of the access costs for fisheries. The ship owners have contributed to the remaining 20 per cent, which are solely licence fees.

A study, covering the then 33-year period of the FAs with developing nations (1980-2012) found that for agreements relating

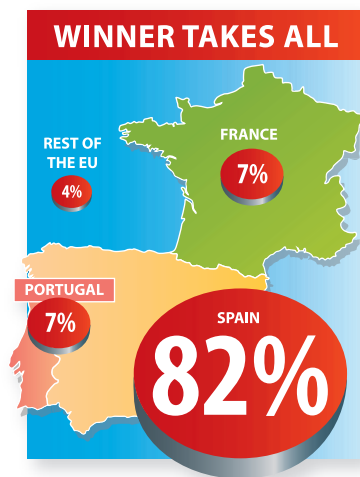


to tuna, EU governments pay 75 per cent of the annual access fees. The study revealed that the fishing industry only rendered about one-fourth of the cost of access. Furthermore, the fees paid by the industry amounted to 1.5 per cent of its revenue from fishing for tuna, and 3.2 per cent of its revenue from other species in these waters<sup>30</sup>. In other words, taxpayers in the EU are paving the way for fishing fleets to exploit the waters of developing nations while fishing companies pocket the profits. In this regard, the EU

governments provide a “winner-takes-all” approach to arranging agreements between fishing companies and West African nations.

It is important to note that these FAs do not provide European consumers with cheaper fish. The taxpayers never see the benefits. Instead, their hard-earned money is being funnelled to other member countries fishing sectors, who then exploit and profit from it. The main beneficiary of the FAs is Spain and Spanish fishing companies, followed by Portugal and France<sup>31</sup>.

A 1999 report released by the French Institute for Research and Exploitation of Fisheries Resources (IFREMER) indicated that during the five-year period 1993-1997, the EU governments had financed 82.8 per cent of the total cost of the southern agreements, that is to say an average of € 155 million euro per year. The remaining 17.2 per cent of the total cost had been funded by the ship owners themselves (an average of € 32 million per year in fees). Accounting for 82 per cent of the total catch (€ 485 million) Spain was by far the biggest beneficiary of these agreements, followed by France and Portugal, with about 7 per cent each. The catch under the southern FAs represented almost 20 per cent of the value of fisheries production in Spain, 11.4 per cent in Portugal, and 4 per cent in France .



*Net beneficiaries: Spain has had the lion's share of the profit from EU Fishing Agreements.*

It is a condemnation of EU policy that not only taxpayers in the EU are forced to bear the costs of agreements which primarily benefit select fishing sectors in a few member states but that it also impoverishes the poor in the target nations.

# Feeding the Beast

*“Since the companies aren’t paying the full cost of doing business, they make more profit and in turn invest in bigger and more efficient boats, which enable them to further exploit developing countries’ fish stocks”<sup>32</sup>*

*Frédéric Le Manach, French fisheries scientist*

**T**HE fishing boats operating in the EEZs of developing nations are already highly subsidised by the CFP machinery.

Please do not imagine the romantic image of a traditional fishing boat.

Picture instead, vast factory ships able to Hoover the sea of marine life in industrial quantities - all built with massive subsidies from taxpayers and fishing throughout the year to maximise the owners’ return.

Subsidies have produced a beast that is only quelled by more money and more fish.

Taxpayers in the EU pay most of the financial compensation for access. The large subsidies that finance these fleets lead to an over-fishing capacity in developing nations’ waters. There have been incentives in the form of subsidy payments to ship owners to build new vessels for fishing in these waters. For instance, 54 out of a total of 125 new boats (in particular Spanish and Portuguese) that had fished in Moroccan waters (the 1995-1999 FA), had been taken out of EU funds<sup>33</sup>.

Clearly, local artisanal fishermen are no match for this highly



**UNEQUAL COMPETITION**



*No match: Traditional Mauritanian pirogue boats (top) cannot match the output of a single Pelagic Freezer Trawler.*

specialised and expensively equipped and subsidised EU fleet.

Matthias Mundt describes how EU vessels operate, for example, in the waters of Cape Verde:

*“Purse seiners are usually longer than 45 metres and the tonnage is normally above 100 GRT. The search for tuna schools is often carried out by a helicopter, for which a landing platform is provided on the superstructure. Longliners engaging in the hunt for tuna are similar in size and sometimes equipped with a processing plant including mechanical gutting and filleting equipment with accompanying freezing installation. Pole-and-line vessels are smaller and use echo sounders and/or sonars for detecting tuna schools”<sup>34</sup>.*

The Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA) represents the interests of nine European companies, which are based in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Lithuania. Together these companies operate 34 pelagic freezer trawlers. These vessels are among the biggest fishing vessels in the world, dominating the list of the EU’s top 20 fishing vessels in terms of length, engine power and gross tonnage. PFA vessels can catch and process around 200-250 tonnes of fish per day, in their on-board factories. They can continue fishing for weeks, because of their enormous holding capacity and transfer their catches to

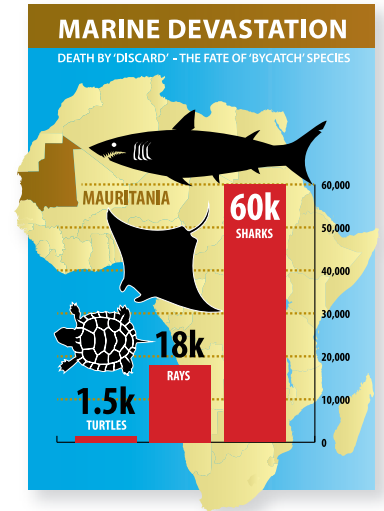
support vessels while at sea. To give an idea: it would take 56 traditional Mauritanian pirogue boats one year to catch the volume of fish a PFA vessel can capture and process in a single day.

PFA vessels cause much damage to marine resources, threatening food security. The amount of fish discarded at sea during one PFA trawler’s fishing trip at full capacity is the same as the average annual fish consumption of 34,000 people in Mauritania. In 15 years, bycatch from around 20 EU pelagic trawlers in Mauritania had killed an estimated 1,500 critically endangered turtles, more than 18,000 big rays including endangered manta rays, and more than 60,000 sharks including endangered hammerhead sharks.

In addition to these environmental harms, fishing ships also do great damage to the ocean floor. Bottom trawlers are one of the most destructive means of fishing, using heavily weighted nets that are dragged across the ocean floor. The nets destroy everything in their path, including seagrasses, coral reefs, and rock gardens, all of which are vitally important for marine life and the health of the ocean<sup>35</sup>. These fishing methods are causing desertification of the seas.

The EU paid about € 142.7 million to secure fishing rights for PFA vessels in Mauritanian and Moroccan waters between 2006-2012. It is estimated that without these subsidies, their average combined annual profit of € 54.7 million would evaporate, and could even result in a loss of € 50.3 million<sup>36</sup>.

If it weren’t for these subsidies, it wouldn’t be worthwhile for EU fleets to head to West Africa and other regions and the local economy and local people could thrive on their own resources.



*Weasel word: you’ll hear the term ‘Bycatch’ - this means anything caught other than the intended species. Their fate is to become ‘discards’ - being thrown back in the sea, by which time the fish has died.*

# Crime Pays

*“We have seen how the navy becomes a part of the corrupt team that receives hard currency and turns a blind eye to the looting of their nation’s health”<sup>37</sup>*

*Edouardo Loayanza, former World Bank fisheries adviser.*

**E**UROPEAN and other industrialised nations fishing vessels ignore boundaries, under-report catches, and even bribe African officials. Yet, they are very rarely caught or penalised.

By flouting the law, there is more profit to be made, so fishing companies carry on, even though their practices are illegal.

The 2014 African Progress Report describes how African waters are suffering financially from illegal fishing. Around \$1.3 billion is lost as a result of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing from West Africa each year. It is estimated that one-third to one-half of West Africa’s catch is IUU.

In Sierra Leone, 252 incidences of illegal fishing by 10 industrial vessels were reported over an 18-month period up to July 2012. In Liberia, over 40 vessels have been investigated for illegal fishing since 2011. Senegal’s IUU loss amounts to around \$300 million in 2012, which is equivalent to 2 per cent of the country’s GDP<sup>38</sup>.

EU vessels repeatedly break the law by taking part in illegal fishing. A 2001 audit by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) reported frequent infringements ranging from the catching and landing of immature fish, to incomplete or incorrect logbook entries (mostly under-declaration of catches), and finally to fishing in closed

*Taking advantage: the system allows ships to plunder the West African coastal seas.*



areas and violating crewing requirements<sup>39</sup>.

A 2012 study by the UK-based charity Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) documented 252 reports of illegal fishing by industrial vessels in inshore areas off the coast of Sierra Leone. Nine out of the 10 vessels, which account for the majority of the reported illegal activities, were accredited to export to the European market. EU-accredited boats went into exclusion zones and used banned fishing equipment. Bribes, intimidation, and the refusal to pay fines were also documented along with photos of a local fisherman beaten unconscious<sup>40</sup>.

Reports reveal several cases where a delegation of the European Commission came to the aid of perpetrators. In 2004, a Tanzanian patrol discovered that 25 European fishing boats had been illegally operating in protected areas. Following the arrest of the crews of these boats, a delegation from the Commission’s Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries visited Tanzania. Though the boats’ owners received a fine, several commentators in the country said that the response on the part of the Tanzanian authorities was not as punitive as it could have been, due to the EU delegation’s influence<sup>41</sup>.

Illegal fishing in West Africa is not only attributed to the policies of the EU and European vessels, but also to the actions of Chinese fishing fleets. China is the world's largest fish processing and exporting country, with around half its seafood production being exported to developed countries. Its population consumes around one-quarter of the world's fish. Within China's own EEZ, 30 per cent of fisheries have collapsed, and a further 20 per cent are over-exploited. The lack of fish in domestic waters has pushed China to build a huge Distance Water Fleet (DWF) to expand into international waters and into other countries' EEZs. China's DWF expansion is also a means to combat unemployment, giving them a plausible explanation for being so far from home<sup>42</sup>.

A study released by the University of British Columbia and The Pew Charitable Trusts in March 2013 claims that Chinese vessels are taking a total of some 4.6 million tonnes per year, 12 times what is reported to the United Nations (UN), particularly off the coast of West Africa<sup>43</sup>.



*One sided: The advantages are all with the EU fishing fleets.*

In general, the rate of illegal exploitation in developing nations (approximately 35 per cent) is more than three times higher than in waters controlled by developed states (around 10 per cent). This is due to the weak control, corrupt and poor governance, and unreliable monitoring mechanisms<sup>44</sup>. Africa's failure to protect its seas is especially political, as the continent is generally not stable enough to exert full control over its resources<sup>45</sup>. Moreover, most African states cannot afford to buy adequate numbers of surveillance boats and finance equipment and staff. In Cape Verde, for example, only a couple of boats cover a vast area of 734,265 square kilometres<sup>46</sup>.

For two years, Sanji Fati, an African official, was in charge of enforcing Guinea-Bissau's fishing rules. When he began this job in 2005, he said, his agency did not have a single working patrol boat to monitor hundreds of pirogues and dozens of foreign industrial trawlers. An estimated 40 per cent of fish were caught illegally, and

vessel operators routinely lied about their catch. Government observers were mostly illiterate, underpaid and easily bought off. Mr Fati tried to tighten enforcement, but said he still felt as if he were waging a one-man war. In 2007, he left frustrated due to the lack of cooperation and corrupt conditions. Meanwhile, Guinea-Bissau and the EU concluded an agreement, allowing European boats to fish this country's waters for shrimp, fish, octopus and tuna<sup>47</sup>.

Corruption is the biggest obstacle to fisheries management. It is used by foreign countries and ship owners to get access to fish resources and to avoid prosecution of illegal fishing if detected<sup>48</sup>. The British Department for International Development (DfID) correctly observes that unless African nations clamp down on corruption and strengthen their legal systems, aid and technical support for the improvement of the monitoring and surveillance systems of these countries will have little impact<sup>49</sup>.

The fishing companies pay bribes to observers on board and to marine inspectors on land. There have been many cases where boats are suspected of illegal fishing, and even vessels that are blacklisted, have managed to dock in ports and trans-ship catches. Corrupt state officials are at the heart of the problem. By collaborating with ship owners, they defraud their motherland.

Breaking the law has proved to be lucrative for fishing companies, yet the EU still subsidises and funds fishing companies that have been repeated offenders. The more nefarious fishing companies take advantage of the system and the EU continues to reward them. This must end.

# Ravaging the Garden of Eden

*“Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them”*

*Joel 2:3 (Bible; Old Testament)*

**MALFEASANCE and illegal fishing is not restricted to West African fisheries. East African coastal nations, specifically Madagascar and Mozambique, have also suffered badly.**



*No joke: diminishing yields of mackerel in East Africa?*

Madagascar is an exceptional place. Due to its separation from mainland Africa over 165 million years ago, much of the island’s flora and fauna is unique. This ‘Garden of Eden’, rich in wildlife, has some of the world’s most fascinating plants and animals. Madagascar has 5 per cent of the world’s species with 80 per cent of those indigenous to the island.

This island has also many of the world’s most precious marine species and 90 per cent of its wildlife cannot be found anywhere else on earth. However, this is now at risk. Decades of political instability have left Madagascar’s government weak and powerless; powerless to stop the plunder of its seas. Big foreign vessels including Chinese, Thai, South Korean and

European ships are massively poaching fish in the Indian Ocean surrounding the island. Some Chinese ships are allegedly using DDT, a pesticide of which the agricultural use is banned by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants<sup>50</sup>. As Madagascar only has 11 police speed boats to patrol its 4,828

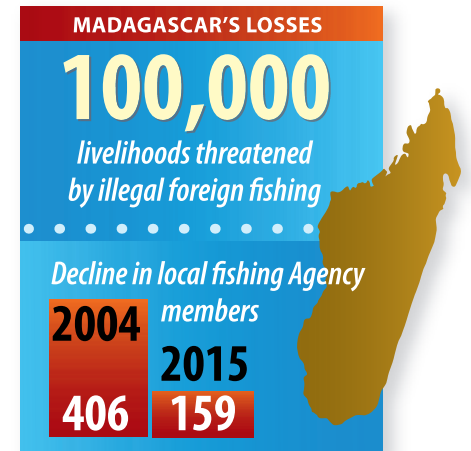
kilometre coast, the plunder continues unabated.

The massive illegal fishing by foreign trawlers is threatening the livelihood of an estimated 100,000 people in 1250 coastal fishing communities across the country. For example, the Antananarivo Boat Fishers Agency points out that in 2004 it had 406 boat fishers as members. In 2015, only 159 remained in employment. To survive, many local fishers have joined the illegal fish trade, working on the ships of these perpetrators.

Because Madagascar’s monitoring system is critically under-resourced, few foreign vessels are inspected. Officials are relying on the good-will of vessel owners to report their catches. However, EU vessels are known to under-report their EEZ tuna catches throughout the Western Indian Ocean.

For example, the 2005 ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of the FA with Mozambique reported that EU vessels provided almost no vessel catch data to the Mozambique authorities. In 2010, Mozambique authorities investigated and revealed that 3 Spanish-owned long-line vessels had not been reporting their entrance into the Mozambique waters to them. Additionally, out of 11 French owned tuna purse seiners, only two provided accurate information. Four boats declared zero catches and two boats declared less than was documented in their annual company reports. A conservative estimate is that due to irregularities, French boats failed to report over 500 tonnes of tuna in 2010<sup>51</sup>.

The only way to protect the precious marine resources of Madagascar is to ban all foreign fishing in this country’s waters. A group of 100 local fishermen has paved the way, trying to force the government in a court case to ban Chinese trawlers from fishing within 30 kilometres of the country’s shores. It is a small step in



*High impact: how FAs and illegal fishing have hit the local economy.*

Limited capacity:  
smaller local  
fishing boats  
simply find their  
fish stocks  
disappear before  
their eyes.



the right direction. Mankind - and particularly the civilised world - has a moral duty to help Madagascar to protect and rebuild its unique resources, thereby ensuring that its fishing community stays alive to feed the local population. Then this precious island is preserved for the world.

# Shake the Disease

*“If people aren’t able to get their protein from fish, they’ll turn elsewhere for food and economic survival”<sup>52</sup>*

*Justin Brashares, Professor of wildlife ecology and conservation at the University of California, Berkeley*

**O**VER-FISHING and illegal fishing in African coastal waters have had devastating consequences for local fishermen and coastal communities. Their lives are dependent on fish as a main source of food, protein and income.

However, when there are no fish available, or the price is too high, public health and the local population suffer. Access to fish not only prevents malnutrition in African communities, but it also prevents or slows the impact of devastating diseases.

Marine resources are vital in maintaining the health of the people of poor coastal communities, who rely on fish as an affordable source of protein. The depletion of fish stocks and the growth of export-based fisheries have led to serious protein deficiencies. In turn, protein deficiency contributes to illness and low productivity, perpetuating poverty cycles.

While providing African countries with humanitarian aid to deal with severe food shortage, the EU is at the same time busy depleting their fish stocks, which is illustrative of inconsistent EU



*Long haul:  
Fishermen  
return from the  
Cape Verde  
Islands*

policy. For example, in a response to the EU's \$29 million contribution in humanitarian aid to help Angola in 2002, the WWF stated: "Angola is starving but the EU - while providing emergency food aid - has recently signed an agreement to take fish from Angolan waters to feed European markets"<sup>53</sup>.

Taking fish from African waters is not only an issue of food shortages, but also of malnutrition. As noted by George Kent: "For poor people who are highly dependent on fish in their diets, insecurity with regard to fish food supplies may mean they are exposed to real harm. When fish supplies are short and prices go up, poor consumers are forced to shift to inferior foods, and their already monotonous diets become even less varied, putting them at risk of missing important micro nutrients"<sup>54</sup>.



HIV/AIDS is a public health crisis that Africa has been battling for decades. While there is no definite cure for the fatal disease, having a nutritious diet alongside medical treatment has proven to prolong the life expectancy of the infected person. This is where fish plays an important role in managing the virus. As noted above, fish contains nutrients and vitamins necessary for the repair and maintenance of the human body. "These nutrients are particularly essential for people with ill health such as HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria". Keeping the body and immune system healthy and strong are necessary for battling the disease. Furthermore, "supplementing patients living with HIV/AIDS with nutrient dense foods such as fish and Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) showed positive responses to treatment, including Anti-Retroviral Treatment"<sup>55</sup>.

FAs and overfishing by subsidised European fleets off the coast of West Africa have forced people to slaughter wildlife in order to survive. A cheap and easy dietary substitute for fish is bush meat. Bush meat can refer to monkeys, rodents, bats, crocodiles, forest antelope etc. Using data from six Ghanaian nature reserves between 1970 and 1998, a 2004 study showed a direct link between fish supply and the demand for bush meat in Ghanaian villages. In 14 local food markets, where fish supply was limited or its price increased, residents substituted bush meat as an alternate source of



affordable protein. Park rangers later observed that the number of bush meat hunters in parks had increased. Overall, the research team found a massive 76 per cent fall in abundance for 41 species of animals such as lions, leopards, hyenas, buffalo, antelope, jackals, elephants, monkeys and baboons.

During the same period, trawl surveys conducted since 1970 in the Gulf of Guinea, off Ghana's coast, along with other regional stock assessments, estimate that fish biomass in near shore and offshore waters had declined by at least 50 per cent<sup>56</sup>. Declining fish stocks are fuelling a multibillion-dollar bush meat trade in West Africa. The study found that more bush meat was being traded in years of low fish catches.

Study co-author Andrew Balmford, a conservational biologist at the University of Cambridge, notes, "Given the EU's expressed concerns about the bush meat trade, phasing out subsidies to their own fleets offers at least a short-term route to limit the trade, while simultaneously enhancing local fishers' livelihoods"<sup>57</sup>. EU financial support of its foreign fleet increased from about \$6 million in 1981 to more than \$350 million in 2001. From 1950 to 2001 EU fish harvests increased by a factor of 20 in this region.



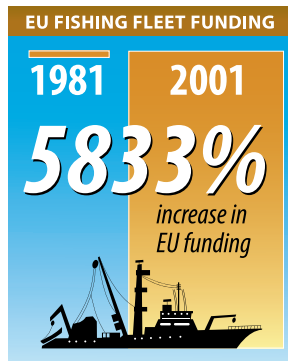
On the menu: side-striped jackal (above), velvet monkey (opposite) and hyena (below).

Local diet: lack of fish has led to diminishing health and reliance on 'bush meat'.



Consequently, the study argues that the only immediate response to increase production and sustainability of domestic fisheries, thereby reducing pressure on terrestrial wildlife, is to limit the access of these foreign fleets and also to combat illegal fishing.

Moreover, many studies have made the link between hunting and wildlife interactions and diseases. For example, outbreaks of the Ebola virus in the Congo Basin and in Gabon in the 1990s have been associated with the butchering of apes and consumption of their meat<sup>58</sup>.



Some species of fruit bats can harbour Ebola. Via their droppings or fruit they have touched, these bats can in turn infect other non-human primates, such as gorillas and chimpanzees. Ebola kills these animals, and hunters who find their remains in the forest use them for bush meat. By butchering an animal that has been infected, they can get infected themselves<sup>59</sup>.

Hunters can also get the virus from direct contact with live bats and been bitten or scratched<sup>60</sup>. A 2015 study has explored the contextual factors and drivers of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, making the link with food security and regional ecosystem dynamics. Since fruit bats are potential reservoirs of Ebola, hunters and people who interact with wildlife are highly at risk for contracting the disease.

In any case, coastal fisheries and seafood are crucial for the nutritional well-being of the affected Ebola countries. It provides the necessary caloric intake and micro-nutrients for bolstering the immune systems for those affected. For the healthy, it is the main nutritional protein available to resist the disease<sup>61</sup>.

Over-fishing has also been linked to prostitution, child labour and child slavery. In surveys of Kenyan households conducted by Kathryn Fiorella, a graduate student who works with Justin Brashares, a large proportion of women reported exchanging sex for fish. They found that fish had become too scarce and expensive to secure otherwise. More than half of these women were HIV-positive. In West Africa child labour and child slavery are increasing as both fishing and bush meat hunting become more difficult<sup>62</sup>.



Virus danger: hunters for bush meat are vulnerable to Ebola-carrying fruit bats.

Moreover, many studies have made the link between hunting and wildlife interactions and diseases.

Fish play an important role in African communities, as it fosters the maintenance of a healthy society. However, when their fish stocks are being depleted by foreign fishing companies, it leads to unanticipated public health problems that become humanitarian crises later down the road. It is incumbent upon us all to remedy this.

# Exodus

*“I could be a fisherman there (Spain). Life is better there. There are no fish here in the sea here anymore”<sup>63</sup>*

*Ale Nodye, Senegalese fisherman and smuggler.*

**U**NEMPLOYMENT and poverty are driving a large number of fishermen, specifically from Senegal and Mauritania, to migrate illegally to Europe through the Canary Islands.

As a result of the EU's advanced industrial fleets - capable of over-fishing and over-exploitation - local small-scale fishing industries have been unable to compete. Many of these workers find it impossible to make ends meet, and they ultimately resort to an exodus from their homeland.

Kiet Tuan Nguyen notes: *“Instead of fishing a reasonable and sustainable amount of fish from the Senegalese waters, the EU overexploits and depletes the fish stocks in Senegal. Thus, they prevent the local fishermen not only from catching fish in their own waters, but the EU also contributes to prevent them from surviving. Basically, the EU is reaping the profits by exploiting the fish stocks in Senegal at the expense of its local fishermen. These fishermen are poor and they have to catch their own fish in order to survive. Not only does fish constitute a source of food to these fishermen, but fish is also a source of income”<sup>64</sup>.*

Thomas Binet, fisheries scientist, attests that the migration problem in West Africa started with a small group of small-scale fishers, and it has now moved on to African youth who seek employment and “a better future in Western Europe”. He contends that the root of this issue lies with Europe and its “persistent illegal fishing”<sup>65</sup>.



*Economic collapse: these refugees have fled from Somalia to Kenya.*

The fish stocks around West African coastal states are declining rapidly. It is no longer profitable or sustainable to be a small fisherman in Africa. The foreign fishing fleets have robbed Africans of their livelihoods and futures. They have no choice but to turn to Europe, which offers more hopeful prospects for employment.

The situation has gotten so bad that African fishermen are leaving their homelands by the thousands, seeking jobs in Europe. The migrants make the treacherous and often fatal journey to reach Europe, all in search of economic opportunity that they lack in their fishing villages at home. Author Amikam Nachmani asserts, *“poverty, the direct product of declining fish stocks, is the major reason young people are prepared to chance drowning in the Atlantic on the perilous voyage to Europe”<sup>66</sup>*. It is not greed that drives the fishermen away, but rather desperation.

The lack of fish and monetary resources have caused fishermen to turn to the profitable enterprise of smuggling people to Europe<sup>67</sup>. Individual fishermen find passengers and organise these marine transports individually, sometimes earning tens of thousands of dollars a trip.

This profitable business of transporting people instead of fish has in

effect sharply inflated the price of Senegal's traditional fishing boats. According to veteran Senegalese fisherman Badou Ndoye, trafficking people to the Canary Islands requires little investment and receives much profit: *"If I'd realised straight off I would've sold my boat, which is in far better state than many I've seen sold for the Canaries, and I would've organised my team as well. We have nothing nowadays. A boss like myself can be forced to leave his boat for days on the beach because he can't afford to buy petrol to go to sea. If I were still 45 or 50 I would've gone to Spain and I would've gone to see a marabout (witchdoctor) to make sure the journey would be profitable. I want money as much as the young fellows do"*. Mouleina Diouf, another fisherman, added: *"We have no choice. The European fishing boats are looting our waters"*<sup>68</sup>.



*Long road: economic migrants have left their families for the long trek through Europe.*

The trafficking of Western Africans to Europe is not illegal, but it is also fatal, as the stormy seas and lack of stable transport have made it extremely difficult to make it out alive. Recent news reports reveal that there have been more than 1,800 casualties of migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean sea in the first half of 2015<sup>69</sup>. Pape Omar Diouf, a town elder from Dakar, Senegal, reflects on a time 10 years ago when his people first started venturing to Europe: *"The dream of going to Europe animated everyone until the deaths started to multiply"*<sup>70</sup>.

Despite the high risks, West Africans, particularly in Senegal, continue to migrate to Europe.

In 2007, over 900 pirogues with approximately 31,000 West Africans attempted to migrate to Europe through the Canary Islands. The UN estimated that 6,000 of these people died or disappeared during this voyage. A more recent estimate according to Jo Lind Roberts-Sene, head of the Senegal office for the International Organisation for Migration, reveals that about 2,300 Senegalese travelled to Italy between January and June of 2015<sup>71</sup>.

In FAs negotiated between Africa and the EU, the coastal states are financially compensated for access to their fishing grounds. However, the compensation never finds its way to the fishermen and fishing communities that the money is supposed to be helping. *"African governments either misspent or diverted the funds earmarked for development to more pressing needs, while Europeans sometimes only made token efforts on promised projects"*<sup>72</sup>. There is no positive reciprocity that makes these agreements balanced, fair, or beneficial for the local fishermen.

The EU's development aid programmes are merely a sop for the problems caused by its plundering of West African waters. On the one hand, it is subsidising industrial fleets that plunder the waters of African coastal nations, causing illegal immigration. The aid funding to Senegal would not be needed to this extent without the plundering of its waters.

# Meet the Pirates

*“In the ever-shifting world of pirates, coast guards, and fishermen, the movement amongst the three professions has never been in only one direction.*

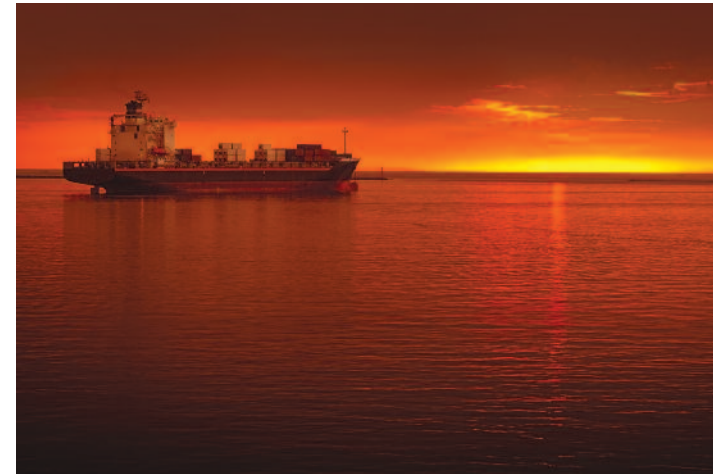
*As some coast guards have transitioned into piracy, so have some pirates made the shift into coast-guarding”<sup>73</sup>*

*Jay Bahadur, Canadian journalist and author*

**T**HE plundering of the waters of the poor African countries has also led to a dramatic increase in piracy. The under-funded, under-resourced African coast guards cannot possibly maintain peace and security within their waters. It is a war between two illegal entities who are fighting each other for access to fishing grounds, and the defective coastal governments can hardly intervene.

The pirates that have emerged on the coasts of Africa have done so in reaction to the foreign fishing vessels' blatant disregard for the law. If they break the law, why can't the pirates. The Africans are in a sense protecting their seas from what they view as European pirates, who are illegally operating off their coast. There is condemnation for both sides.

Piracy in Somalia has also developed due to the absence of a Somali coast guard. As a consequence to a civil war in 1991 that left the country in a state of anarchy, Somalia lost all control of its seas. Since there lacked a proper coast guarding system during this time, pirates had taken upon themselves to survey their surrounding waters. Peter Lehr, Lecturer in terrorism studies at the University of St. Andrews, notes that: *“The first pirate gangs emerged in the 1990s to protect against foreign trawlers”<sup>74</sup>*. Thus, the first volunteer coast guards organised by pirate gangs, such as the National Volunteer Coastguard, came about in the late 1990s. Ishaan



*Vulnerable:  
Indian Ocean  
shipping has been  
targeted by East  
African pirates.*

Tharaoor illustrates that Somali fishermen became pirates out of desperation to protect their territory: *“They are not desperate bandits, experts say, rather savvy opportunists in the most lawless corner of the planet”<sup>75</sup>*.

A 2006 UN report indicated that because of the absence of a Somali coast guard, foreign fishing fleets were illegally plundering Somali fish stocks. According to another UN document, an estimated \$300 million worth of seafood was stolen from the country each year. Moreover, small-scale Somali fishermen, lacking the advanced boats and technologies of their foreign competitors, complained of being shot at by foreign fishermen.

Tsuma Charo of the Nairobi-based East African Seafarers Assistance Programme, which monitors Somali pirate attacks and liaises with the hostage takers and the captured crews, agrees that illegal trawling has fed the piracy problem. In the beginning, those who seized trawlers without licences received a quick ransom payment because the boat owners and companies did not want to draw attention to their illegal activities. This allowed the pirates to build up their tactical networks and made them hungry for more.

The idea of making tens of thousands of dollars from catching one

foreign ship is too enticing for the poor fishermen to resist. In contrast to their arduous job of being a fisherman with little financial compensation, pirating offers much more of a reward<sup>76</sup>.

What happened in Somalia can also happen in other countries. An angry Senegalese fisherman accounts:

*“The catches are already down 75 per cent on 10 years ago because of the foreign fishing boats. They destroy our gear. If this goes on there will be a catastrophe. Until now we haven’t taken any direct action against the foreign fishermen. Once we took the captain from one of the vessels and we beat him around the balls. For sure, in 10 years’ time people will go fishing with guns. They are desperate. When people had enough to eat and to drink, Senegal was a calm country. As the situation becomes more difficult, it will become more and more like Somalia. We will fight for fish at sea. If we cannot eat, what do you expect us to do?”<sup>77</sup>.*



*Keeping watch: German naval units are currently operating from Djibouti.*

Abdou Karim Sall, president of the Fishermen’s Association of Joal and the Committee of Marine Reserves in West Africa, warns: *“Senegal’s only resource is the sea. One in five people work in the industry but if you put those people out of work then you can imagine what will happen. Europe is not far away and Senegal could become like Somalia. People are getting desperate. For sure, in 10 years’ time, we will carry guns. The society here destabilises as the fishing resource is over-exploited. As the situation becomes more difficult, so it will become more and more like Somalia”<sup>78</sup>.*

African fishermen are being forced into piracy and attacking foreign fishing vessels because they can no longer survive from their meager earnings. They armed themselves in order to protect what little resource they have left. It is mainly desperation that has forced Africans to take up the skull and crossbones flag.

# Much Ado About Nothing

*“These states are not able to negotiate agreements”<sup>79</sup>*

*Frédéric Le Manach*

**The issues and damage done by fishery agreements is largely downplayed by the EU because they claim that the FAs are compensating African countries for use of their fishing grounds.**

This is true, but the money rarely reaches the development projects for which it was intended. The EU is fully aware that the African states in these partnerships are corrupt, dysfunctional, and inefficient. It should then be abundantly clear to them that the compensation is being misappropriated and even pocketed by government officials. Yet, the EU continues to support these partnerships even though they and the criminals are the only ones benefiting.

The Commission claims that the gradual replacement of the FAs by so-called Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) since 2004 has substantially improved the situation of poor coastal nations. In contrast to the FAs a fixed amount (between 20 and 40 per cent) of the financial transfer is channelled to targeted measures to help develop the local fisheries sector<sup>80</sup>. However, the change is only cosmetic.

A 2015 audit of the FPAs with Mauritania, Madagascar, Mozambique and the Seychelles by the ECA found that the Commission’s control of sectoral support actions was limited and that the actions actually implemented by the partner countries were in some cases

different from those agreed. The information provided by these countries was not always verifiable. The ECA notes that, “most actions were not traceable in the budget, and the Commission had limited assurances that the claimed actions were actually undertaken and that the cost is reasonable”. The funds concerned were not fully used as intended in all these countries and in some cases the funds were used for other projects and actions<sup>81</sup>.

Next to this, the ‘partnership agreements’ have facilitated the permanent transfer of vessels to developing countries in the context of joint enterprises. Though the latter are promoted as a method of reducing EU fishing capacity, while simultaneously contributing to sustainable socio-economic development in the coastal states, they merely export excess EU capacity, further leading to the over-exploitation of the fish stocks in the coastal state<sup>82</sup>.



*Self-supporting African fishermen have little chance to compete against the massive taxpayer-funded fleets of the EU*

The 2013 reform of the CFP renamed the agreements sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPA). It is a typical example of using language deceptively to hide the real purpose.

Meanwhile the EU fleet continues to be highly subsidised by the CFP machinery even with all the problems this entails for the coastal nations’ waters and communities. The 2014 African Progress Report notes that a large part of these subsidies goes to fleets that are implicated in over-fishing in illegal fishing activities in African waters.

“Via the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the European Union will make around € 6.5 billion (US \$8.9 billion) available from 2014 to 2020 to support the fisheries sector. Despite appeals from the scientific community, the fund will subsidise investments - including the purchase of new engines - that promote over-fishing. Most of the benefits of EU subsidies flow directly to powerful fishing industry interests, notably the companies that operate large fleets from Spain”<sup>83</sup>.

Also problematic is that the EU Directorate-General for Marine Affairs serves as an adviser to these countries, which indicates a conflict of interest, because it acts as both judge and plaintiff in



*Centuries-old traditional working practices - eroded by EU Fishing Agreements.*

disputed cases. These European advisers not only write fishing policies and national management plans, but also negotiate SFPAs<sup>84</sup>. In any case, it is ironic that the EU is advising developing nations how to manage the fisheries in their waters sustainably, while its own CFP has caused damage in European waters<sup>85</sup>.

There has been no improvement of the situation of the coastal nations’ fisheries. Pierre Failler and Thomas Binet emphasise that these agreements have not only failed to meet their stated aim and improve management of fish stocks, but that they have also contributed to fisheries’ degradation<sup>86</sup>.

The positive reciprocity of the SFPAs is a fallacy. It would be naive to think that these deals will benefit the African coastal states in the long run. It is just a cruel ruse perpetuated by the Evil Empire.

# A New Hope

*“Fisheries agreements may not provide the right incentive to improve management and fisheries policy. They may in fact be a distraction to effective management, rather than an incentive, due to the steady stream of guaranteed income to the fisheries sector for several years.*

*Improvements in fisheries management have been observed when countries actively decided not to sign fisheries agreements with the EU”<sup>87</sup>*

*S.F. Walmsley, C.T. Barnes, I.A. Payne and C.A. Howard, Marine Resources Assessment Group*

**D**ependency on foreign aid obstructs structural economic change. Governments for whom aid is a permanent source of income are not motivated to pursue an alternative policy to foster and finance the economic development of their country. Countries that have performed best in reducing poverty and meeting human goals are also the ones that have managed to reduce their dependency on aid<sup>88</sup>. The compensation funds under the FAs have had the same perverse effect.

Similarly, Charlotte Tindall, independent fisheries consultant, observes that: *“the funding provided within FPAs may be a disincentive for coastal states to directly tackle fisheries management in order to generate sustainable rents from the fishery”<sup>89</sup>.*

In sum, the FA’s compensation funds actually hamper the development of policies that may improve local management capacity as well as policies that will benefit job creation and the welfare of small-scale fishermen. Countries that have ended their access agreements have made significant improvements in local fisheries policy and increased government revenue has come from



*With freedom from EU interference, coastal African fishing industries can thrive.*

locally based fishing and processing.

For example, since it escaped foreign control, Namibia has flourished. When the country was governed by South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, fleets from the Soviet Union and Spain plundered its waters. Hake and sardine were over-fished at dramatic levels. At the time of independence in 1990, sardine stocks were just two per cent of what they once were. The newly established government acted swiftly. It established its own EEZ of 200 nautical miles and refused to sign a FA with the EU.

Former Swedish MEP and fisheries campaigner Isabella Lövin describes how Namibia’s fishing industry regained its strength:

*“Domestic companies and Namibian-controlled joint ventures have priority to all fishing rights ahead of foreign fishermen. Fishing rights are allocated as seven-years quotas for foreign-controlled companies and ten-year quotas for Namibian firms. Quotas can be reviewed, but not transferred or sold to third parties. Quota holders are required to pay an annual fee to the state and a smaller levy per tonne of fish landed, and these revenues are used to finance the Ministry of Fisheries’ budget. Fishing boats are required to foot the bill for having observers on board*

*Sustainable economy: These young men in Ghana have the resources to maintain their boat; we must ensure that they can continue to make a living.*



to control their catches and collect scientific data. Observers are assigned by the ministry and spend limited periods on each boat to avoid any risk of dependency on the ship owner. Coastguards patrol the exclusive economic zone and illegal fishing has become less of a problem following a number of arrests, with monitoring now focused on ensuring that legal vessels comply with government regulations and quotas<sup>90</sup>.

As a result, Namibia's fish stocks have partially recovered and fisheries now accounts for ten per cent of GDP. Domestic consumption has more than doubled but at the same time Namibia is able to export 95 per cent of its fish.

African countries need to realise that the agreements they are signing are greatly damaging their coastal communities, their ecosystems, their economies, and ultimately their own people. It is only after they say "no" to European deals and "yes" to domestic development that they will be on a path headed toward prosperity.

## 'Namibianisation'

**Or, how letting African states manage their own destiny can improve economies, health and fishing stocks, too.**

INTERVIEW WITH HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HANNO RUMPF, AMBASSADOR OF NAMIBIA, ON THE NAMIBIAN FISHERIES SECTOR, BRUSSELS, 3 JUNE 2015.

***Prior to Namibia's independence in 1990, there was uncontrolled fishing on a massive scale, mainly by South African, Spanish and Soviet vessels.***

***The International Commission for Southeast Atlantic Fisheries (ICSEAF), established in 1969, served in act to legitimise plundering of fish stocks in Namibian waters. How did your country respond to this?***

"Namibia proclaimed a 200 nautical mile EEZ and issued a statement to foreign fishing fleet operators that illegal fishing would no longer be tolerated. As Namibia didn't have any naval capacity there were some fishing vessels that disregarded this warning. Then we hired some helicopters from one of our neighbours, and with the services of our military personnel set about seizing some of those vessels. Arrests were made. Companies challenged this but were not successful. Several of these vessels were auctioned".

***Did the EU try to impose a fisheries agreement on Namibia?***

"On numerous occasions the EU requested this but Namibia declined. Such an agreement is not in our interest. We prefer to manage our own resources. Now we have joint ventures with a couple of European fishing companies".

***How is the fishing management regime of Namibia organised?***

**Which are the central elements of this regime?**

“Namibia’s management of her marine resources since independence has been a success story on most levels. The fishing industry has grown to be one of the most significant employment creators in our country. Key features of our management regime include limited access through setting fishing rights, establishing total allowable catches for all major commercial species, allocation of individual quotas, payment of fees generating income for the state, and by-catch fees. We have built up a good research capability in order to gain a good knowledge of our stocks. Stocks of most species have recovered and also the size of most of the species has increased”.

**Is the Namibian fishing industry subsidised?**

“Namibia does not subsidise the fishing industry”.

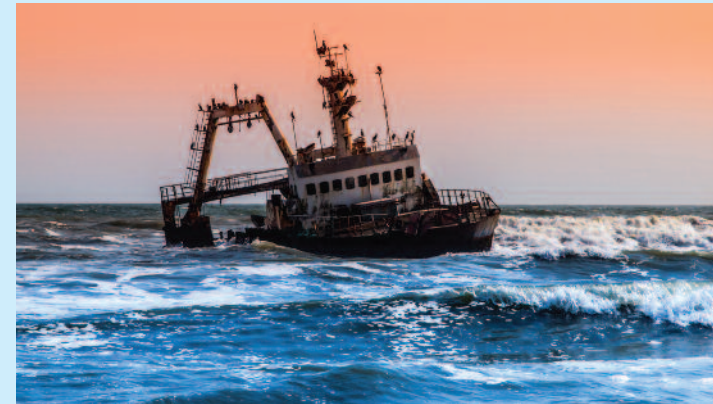
**How is the monitoring, control and surveillance system of Namibia organised? Is there an integrated programme of inspection and patrols at sea, on land, and in the air?**

“As I mentioned, our government moved to ensure control over fishing activities in the EEZ by largely excluding the large number of foreign vessels that had been fishing without restrictions. Without going into the specifics of the system, we established several programmes aimed at monitoring and controlling. Substantial investments have been made in this regard”.

**How is Namibianisation promoted?**

“The ‘Namibianisation’ policy aims to encourage the active and greater involvement of Namibians in the fishery sector. Just one example: incentives are offered to companies that are at least 51 per cent owned by Namibians (e.g. quota levies, long-term fishing rights)”.

**It is crucial that African nations become fish processors instead of only being the suppliers of raw fish. They should invest in processing plants, port and other necessary infrastructure.**



*Stuck fast: this fishing vessel ran aground on Namibia’s Skeleton Coast. Illegal fishing boats will find themselves grounded by the Namibian state rather than the sands.*

**What steps has your country taken in that direction?**

“Value addition is one important aspect of Namibia’s agenda and is one of the challenges that we face. However, the Fisheries Ministry at all times encourages right holders to value-add the fish to create job opportunities and increase their income. In most fisheries such as hake, pilchard, crab, monk and rock lobster, the value addition aspect is satisfactory with the exception of horse-mackerel quota to be directed to value addition for the 2014 allocations. In Namibia we have a deliberate policy of 70 per cent of the hake quota allocated to be processed on land and 30 per cent is processed offshore. There are at least 34 factories in the fishing industry. It is worth noting that there are incentives where companies are urged to value-add their catches. Recent deliberations were made in horse-mackerel where right holders are engaged in canning the horse-mackerel which was not the case before”.

**What is the position of the fishing industry in Namibia’s national economy?**

“Namibia’s fishing industry remains the country’s second prevalent export earner of foreign currency after mining. The sector plays a significant role in terms of production, employment, foreign exchange earnings and government revenue”.

# Taking the Lead Again

*“For us, the fishing agreement between the European Union and Guinea Bissau has no sense or benefit because the industrial fishing boats don’t leave us any chance of survival. They fish right up to the coast without being stopped and the government doesn’t have the means to control their activities. If the government would listen to us, we wouldn’t sign an agreement with people who catch everything, even the small fish”<sup>91</sup>*

*Mario Alberto Da Silva, artisanal fisherman, Guinea Bissau, 2003*

**The fishing deals between the EU and developing countries are immoral. Essentially, they have always been a neo-colonialist tool, serving the economic interests of certain segments of the EU fishing industry and ensuring the (political) survival of the CFP.**

The EU is using taxpayers’ money to subsidise big and powerful vessels to expand into the fishing grounds of some of the world’s poorest countries, undermining the people and communities who rely on fish for work and food. As fishing rights are sold by cash-strapped governments to foreign fleets, African fish stocks have declined.

Next to the EU’s CFP, also local governments are to blame. Local rulers and decision-makers have abused these agreements for personal, political or financial ends. They have only been interested in receiving easy cash to obtain personal gain or to plug immediate deficits rather than hoping for fish stocks to pay-off in the future. This rent-seeking behaviour is typical for resource-rich countries

with extractive institutions.

Since these nations are badly governed and suffer from widespread corruption, their fishing grounds are barely monitored, policed or protected, and wide open to legal and illegal plunder by EU and other foreign fleets.

What’s in a name. The FAs have become FPAs and afterwards SFPAs but little has changed. The more recent agreements allocate fixed amounts of money for the development of local fishing industries. However, given the corruption and the extractive nature of the institutions in these countries, local fishermen rarely see any material benefit. These funds remain simply ‘bribe money’.

Meanwhile, the EU fleet is further being subsidised and continues to target fish stocks for which a biological surplus cannot be ascertained scientifically. Fisheries management in these countries has not been improved nor does the EU ensure that the money is spent as foreseen in the agreements. Fish stocks are decreasing and the lives of fishermen and fish workers in these nations are becoming harder than ever.

Over-exploitation of African fisheries is ecologically unsustainable and has led to unemployment and under-nourishment, causing in their turn migration movements to Europe and piracy. Over-fishing is also related to viruses and dangers to public health.

As rising Asian distant water powers and fleets - leading the lists of IUU infringements and characterised by non-transparent fishing agreements and lack of rules and regulations - are even less scrupulous than ‘Western’ fishing powers, urgent action is more



*Will there be any fish be left for them?*

than ever needed to prevent the total collapse of African fish stocks.

On the international level, the use of flags of convenience by fishing vessels must be stopped since they allow illegal activities by helping the beneficiaries of pirate fishing to avoid detection and penalties. More international and regional measures are needed to combat IUU fishing.

It is unacceptable that taxpayers in the EU are forced to serve the commercial interests of a few fishing companies who are making profits at the expense of the poor local population.

If European vessels want to enter the waters of developing nations, they alone must pay for the access costs. Instead of subsidising fishermen and fishing companies to compete against the fishermen of developing nations, European countries should help developing countries to combat illegal fishing by supporting coastguards and navies. This technical and financial support should be closely monitored and controlled by way of a regular feedback.

At the time, Britain was one of the most ardent supporters of the abolition of slavery. Now our country should again take the lead and press the international community to act. We must, unilaterally and multilaterally with all institutions, not just the EU, seek to end these destructive actions that cause instability, piracy, poverty, desertification and disruption to coastal communities.

However, (coordinated) international action alone will not be sufficient to save Africa's fish stocks.

Unless these nations enhance democracy and transparency and radically clamp down on corruption, international support to improve control and surveillance systems will not lead to the right results.

Building up the right (inclusive) institutions would be a crucial step in the right direction. The governments of these countries should listen to their fishermen and fishing industries instead of ignoring them.

This would pave the way for the development of a genuine local



*Prospering local economies will more easily be able to invest in their own processing technology, thus benefitting local populations.*

fishing industry. Together with a gradual reduction of foreign fishing in their waters, these governments should aim for well-controlled increases in domestic harvest. They should begin to invest in processing plants and other necessary infrastructure. They should also become fish processors instead of only being the suppliers of raw materials. The long term beneficiaries of any industry are rarely suppliers of raw materials.

Namibia is a fine example of a possible way forward. The experience of this country has demonstrated that a developing nation is better off without foreign interference or fisheries agreements and that a nation should first support and control its own marine fisheries resources before selling it to the highest bidder. This requires political will and national and international support. Britain can also play an important role in this field. We have done it before and we can do it again.

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# THE EVIL EMPIRE

## *How the Common Fisheries Policy is recolonising the Third World*



In this booklet, the second in the series on EU Fishing Policy, Ray Finch demonstrates how taxpayer-funded EU mega-fleets are having a malign impact beyond the seas surrounding the European Union, particularly around the coastlines of Africa.

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