

IUMI Policy Agenda

6. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Brief description

Illegal, unregulated, unreported (IUU) fishing

Seafood is a nutritious meal for millions of people across the world and an essential food protein in many developing countries. A major problem for sustainable fisheries management is illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU fishing). Vessels engaged in IUU fishing activities do not comply with safety measures on board, do not use legal fishing gear, do not follow fisheries management regulations and/or do not comply with regulations on quotas, fishing areas, closed seasons or prohibited species. The IUU catch is not recorded in catch registers. This is an important aspect because fishing stocks are estimated based on these registers.

There has been criticism of marine insurers but in fact, they are in a relatively clear legal position. Under most national law systems, they cannot insure an illegal venture but there can be a grey area over whether something is deemed illegal and intentional in some jurisdictions. Marine insurers can support the suppression of IUU fishing activities by applying due diligence and being aware of vessels which have been blacklisted for involvement in illicit actions. It is in their own interest to do so as legal penalties are considerable.

The ocean conservation group Oceana in cooperation with UNEP FI's PSI engaged with marine insurers and associations including IUMI to develop guidelines to control or mitigate the risk of insuring vessels and companies associated with IUU fishing. Oceana in cooperation with a group of maritime professionals, including marine insurers, developed an online tool to facilitate the exchange of information on IUU fishing vessels between companies that provide services to the global fishing sector. Through this tool, registered users can notify each other when a vessel on the official IUU vessel list of any regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) has sought and been denied services or had services cancelled. Users will also be sent an alert when new vessels get added to the IUU vessel lists.

A separate initiative is "Vessel Viewer" being developed by the Ocean Risk Alliance (ORRAA). This IUU fishing risk assessment tool is intended to help insurers quickly evaluate the risk that a vessel or a group of vessels may engage in or support IUU fishing. Through the tool, insurers are able to access key information on vessel identity, behaviour and risk indicators. It is a vessel history tool that uses satellite data to produce current and historical information on vessel identity and activity. Vessel Viewer consolidates data from a range of public sources to provide access to key information.



IUMI supports the adoption of the Cape Town Agreement (CTA) of 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the 1993 Protocol relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels. This IMO treaty to address fishing vessel safety is not in force yet. The absence of an international mandatory regime makes effective control and monitoring of fishing vessels difficult. The CTA sets minimum requirements on the design, construction, equipment, and inspection of fishing vessels of 24 meters in length and over. The agreement further facilitates better control of fishing vessel safety by flag, port and coastal States. Swift ratification of the CTA is therefore desirable and supported by IUMI.

In March 2023 the Joint Hull Committee (JHC) published a 'Fishing Vessel Due Diligence Clause' demonstrating readiness by marine underwriters to tackle the issue of IUU fishing.

Relevant authority / organizations and documents:

- **Cape Town Agreement** of 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the 1993 Protocol relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977, 11 October 2012.
- **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, MEPC and PPR:
(www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/Pages/Default.aspx#have)
 - **JWG 4/9**: Cooperation and dialogue on environmental issues relating to fisheries, note by Secretariat, 24 September 2019.
- **Oceana**: Tool to pull the plug on pirate fishing, 2022.
- **Vessel Viewer tool** to combat IUU fishing, November 2023

IUMI will:

- Support the ratification of the Cape Town Agreement on the implementation of the Torremolinos Convention for the safety of fishing vessels.
- Raise awareness for tools available to marine insurers to identify vessels involved IUU fishing activities.