

*International Labor Organization  
says profits from forced labor at  
nearly one-quarter of a trillion  
dollars*

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Thailand's seafood industry is one of a number of sectors considered most at risk of modern

United Nations, March 21 (RHC)-- Criminals are reaping “obscene” profits of nearly one-quarter of a trillion dollars from forced labour, says the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The United Nations agency published its latest report: Profits and Poverty: The economics of forced labour on Tuesday. It states that illegal profit from forced labour rose by 37 percent over the past decade to \$236 billion per year, with sexual exploitation accounting for nearly three-quarters of the total.

The rise in ill-gotten gains is due to growth in the number of people forced into labour, as well as an increase in the profit generated from the exploitation of each victim, said the report.

Traffickers and criminals are now making close to \$10,000 per victim, up from \$8,269 a decade ago. In terms of profit per victim, figures were highest in Europe and Central Asia, followed by the Arab States, the Americas, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific.

“Forced labor perpetuates cycles of poverty and exploitation and strikes at the heart of human dignity. We now know that the situation has only got worse,” said ILO Director-General Gilbert F Houngbo, appealing to the international community for action. “People in forced labour are subject to multiple forms of coercion, the deliberate and systematic withholding of wages being amongst the most common,” he said.

After forced commercial sexual exploitation, the sector with the highest illegal profits from forced labour is industry (\$35 billion), followed by services (\$20.8 billion), agriculture (\$5 billion), and domestic work (\$2.6 billion).

The report stressed the urgent need for investment in enforcement measures to stem illegal profit flows and hold perpetrators accountable.

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