



**Iranian fishermen out of jobs
while regime sells Oman and
Persian Gulf fish to China
causing environmental crisis**



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The Iranian regime has made a hushed deal with Chinese fisheries allowing them to fish in Iran's southern waters, causing major problems for Iranian fisherman.

The Revolutionary Guards Corps linked Fisheries Organization has "rented out" Iran's southern waters to foreign fisheries.

The Chinese [bottom trawling](#) methods, under the auspices of official licenses from the Iranian Fisheries Organization, have led to the unemployment of a large number of local fishermen.

The industrial fishing practices of thousands of Chinese boats leave nothing for native fishermen and according to locals, even fish eggs, and shellfish get stuck in the [Chinese trawling](#) nets.

In addition, the Iranian Fisheries Organization, under the pretext of imposing restrictions to prevent over-fishing, has created many obstacles for native fishermen. Government agents also prevent locals from fishing from the southern harbors, while foreign boats are busy "sweeping the sea floor" even near the coast of Iran.

The fishermen in southern Iran have repeatedly [protested](#) the government's destructive policies that have led to a rise in unemployment and an increase in poverty among south Iran residents. Nonetheless, the Southern Fisheries has done nothing to address

their grievances.

In addition to the above problems, there have been reports about the harsh and abnormal behavior of Chinese fishermen with indigenous fishermen who fish with small boats. There have been numerous reports that the Chinese have used high-pressure water hoses on the smaller Iranian vessels to force them to leave the area.

In 2017, an [amateur video](#) was published on social media purporting to show Chinese fishermen killing Iranian fishermen who had lost their boat at sea. The culprits in the video were never confirmed to be Chinese but it does show the dangers that Iranian fishermen face making a meager income.

The overfishing in the Gulf waters by other countries has also led to serious and irreversible damage to the environment as well.

Of course, due to the lack of transparency of government organizations in Iran, the dimensions of the disaster caused by this phenomenon is not clear but the extent of the damage done to the environment is notable.

In this report, Iran Human Rights Monitor covers only a small portion of the problems fisherman in the south of Iran face due to the destructive policies and hushed deals made with foreign entities that have plundered Iran's seabed.



Illegal fishing practices and irreparable blows to the environment

The Chinese practice of bottom trawling has been denied by the Fisheries Organization but eyewitness accounts and observations of local sources indicate that Chinese companies are overfishing and exploiting the seabed with advanced equipment. The locals have said that the Chinese are "sweeping the seabed".

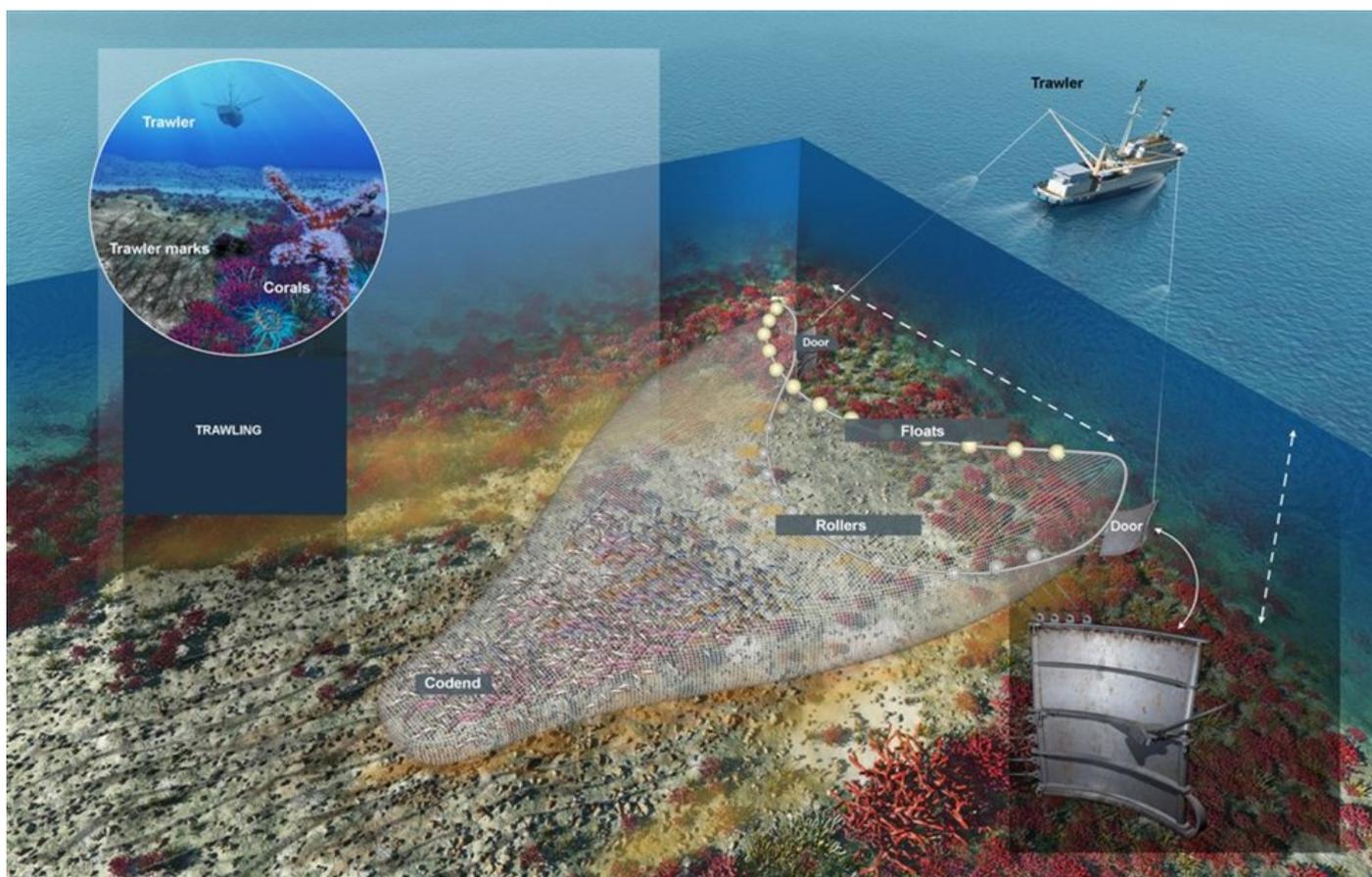
Because bottom trawling involves towing heavy fishing gear over the seabed, it can cause large-scale destruction on the ocean bottom, including coral shattering, damage to habitats and removal of seaweed. The primary sources of impact are the doors, which can weigh several tons and create furrows if dragged along the bottom, and the footrope configuration, which usually remains in contact with the bottom across the entire lower edge of the net. Depending on the configuration, the footrope may turn over large rocks or boulders, possibly dragging them along with the net, disturb or damage sessile organisms or rework and re-suspend bottom sediments. These impacts result in decreases in species diversity and ecological changes towards

beautiful Qeshm turtles, which are a tourist attraction.

The 200-meter depth of the Oman Sea is considered an exclusive and economic area. According to the 1962 Law of the Sea, coastal states have legal rights, including the exclusive right to protect and manage natural resources or inland waterways of the coastal State. But the Iranian government has actually taken this right away from the people of Iran and given it to other countries. Chinese ships have been known to even come close to the coast.

In a report titled, "Chinese Nets on Persian Gulf Sources", the state-run Young Journalists Club News Agency quoted the Spokesperson of the Sailor Association on the Chinese fisheries illegal measures. "The Chinese sailors turn off their tracking devices and pay the 60 million toman fine (around \$14,250) under the excuse that their trackers don't work and then illegally fish more than 800 million tomans (around \$190,000) worth of fish in unauthorized and unregulated areas", he said in the July 29 report carried by the state-run news agency.

"This is the main reason behind the lack of fish for local fishermen", he added.



more opportunistic organisms. The destruction has been likened to clear-cutting in forests.

Chinese fisheries also use electrofishing procedures, using a very high voltage to stun and catch a large amount of fish. Fish that are in a distance are also injured. This has resulted in the destruction of many aquatic animals, including dolphins and the

This is while authorities at the Fisheries Organization say that Chinese fisheries only catch fish that are "haram" (forbidden to eat in Islam) which is ludicrous since they are using bottom trawling and electrofishing which lacks selectivity.

Under the excuse that the Chinese are only catching haram fish, the government has allowed the Chinese to catch all kinds of fish despite the fact that even the haram fish are part of the ecosystem and if overfished, can cause an irreversible damage to the aquatic environment.

The lack of oversight and control over marine resources also allows foreign fishermen to catch "out of season" fish which deals serious blows to their life cycles.

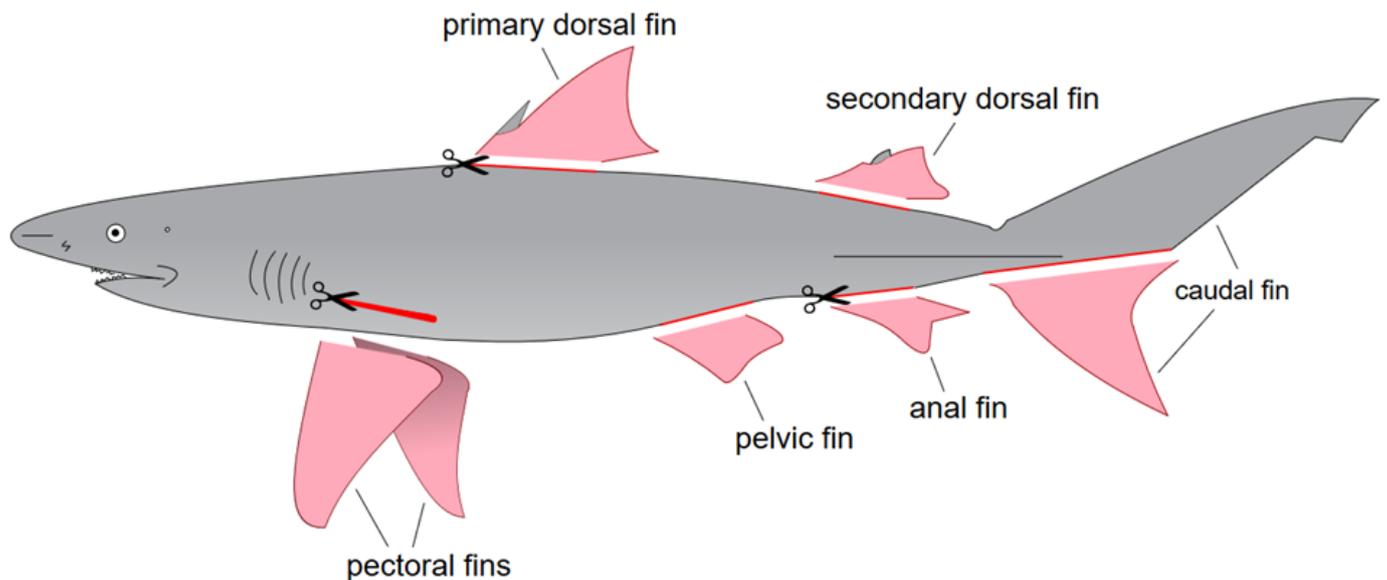
Kianoush Jahanbakhsh, a member of the Bandar Abbas City Council, quoted the Governor of Jask as saying that when they had gone to the sea with journalists they witnessed a number of Chinese fishermen running off the deck of a Chinese vessel. "When we went inside the boat, we saw some out of season fish", he added.

Jahanbakhsh also said that the license for two tons of shark fins has been given to the Chinese by the Fisheries Organization, adding that a large number of sharks have to be killed to get two tons of fins. This is while sharks play an important role in the aquatic environment.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Shark Specialist Group has said that [shark finning](#) is widespread, and that "the rapidly expanding and largely unregulated shark fin trade represents one of the most serious threats to shark populations worldwide".



Nakhl Nakhoda Port in Chabahar – The use of electrofishing by Chinese fisheries



Limitations set for Iranian fishermen while Chinese fisherman roam freely

Under the pretext of preventing overfishing, the Iranian Fisheries Organization has imposed many restrictions on native fishermen while preventing fishermen from fishing in the south due to "poor weather conditions". This is while on most days, wind speeds were just 16km/h and the waves were not even 10cm high. Nevertheless, the Port Authority would not allow boats to sail. In some areas, local fishermen who have no other source of income other than fishing were unemployed for up to two months because of the "sailing ban". This is while the Chinese boats were roaming freely in the water.



Low income and unemployment of local fisherman

Sistan and Baluchestan fishermen are facing an income crisis while some people say that their monthly wages have reached less than 1 million tomans (around \$230). Reports indicate that some receive wages as little as 500,000 to 700,000 tomans (around \$118 to \$166). It is important to note that according to economists, the poverty line in Iran is 4 million tomans (around \$1000). In a recent interview with state TV, Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Javad Zarif, said that Chinese companies only fished in areas that Iranians were unable to fish in. This is while many fishermen on the southern coast have been forced to consider other jobs as there is nothing left in the water to fish. They are forced to work as construction workers while others are left completely unemployed and without any source of income.



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