

October 23, 2023

Re: FROM BAIT TO PLATE—HOW FORCED LABOR IN CHINA TAINTS AMERICA'S SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

I am Badri Jimale. I represent Horn of Africa Institute. I am testifying in favor of having meaningful discussion about the illegal fishing practices conducted by People's Republic of China based companies in the Horn of Africa. I will discuss the impact of Chinese fishers on Somaliland.

The illicit activities of a People's Republic of China based companies engaging in illegal fishing off the coast of Somaliland are posing significant challenges for the local fisher industry, placing immense pressure on its sustainability. Unfortunately, Somaliland lacks a well-equipped coastguard capable of effectively fending off these encroachments by Chinese trawlers prowling its waters. This glaring inadequacy creates an alarming scenario where the delicate balance between marine resources and human livelihoods is severely jeopardized. Moreover, what exacerbates this issue further is the overall lack of transparency and communication surrounding these activities, leading to confusion among local authorities and communities alike. Disturbingly, it must be highlighted that this problem extends beyond just Somaliland's shores as China's fishing at Nigeria seas has resulted in countless Nigerian fishermen being rendered unemployed due to extreme overfishing practices employed by Chinese vessels. We are deeply concerned about the potential ramifications of such a scenario repeating itself in Somaliland. The devastating consequences stemming from such unsustainable methods are numerous - depletion of fish stocks impacting food security and nutrition, loss of income for local fishermen leading to heightened poverty levels, and irreparable damage to fragile marine ecosystems that support diverse species and maintain ecological balance. These actions not only undermine sustainable development efforts but also violate international laws governing maritime territories. Urgent measures need to be taken by both national and international stakeholders to address this critical issue before irreversible harm occurs.