

# INVESTIGATION NO. 3

## IUU LISTED VESSELS DE-FLAGGED



Fishing vessel owners often use name and flag changes to avoid the consequences of being IUU listed by regional fishery management organisations (RFMOs). Two IUU listed fishing vessels, using the names ALDABRA and CHANG BAI, were de-flagged by Tanzania at the request of the RFMO, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The ALDABRA is now operating as a stateless vessel and, after many name changes; the CHANG BAI is currently detained thanks to international cooperation and investigation.

VESSEL TYPE	FLAG STATE	PENALTY/SANCTIONS
Toothfish longliners	Tanzania	De-flagged

### KEY EVENTS

**2007** The then Togo-flagged ALDABRA was IUU listed in 2007 by CCAMLR for fishing for toothfish without a licence. The ALDABRA had previously used the names OMOA 1, ILANGA, STELLA 1, KING STAR No. 303 and CLOVER No. 103 and had been flagged to Togo, Honduras, Belize, and South Korea.

The CHANG BAI was a well-known IUU vessel. IUU listed since 2003, she had operated under 13 previous names. The vessel had employed the use of several flags of convenience and flags of non-compliance including North Korea, Panama, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay.

**2008** The ALDABRA, flagged to United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) through the Zanzibar Maritime Authority (ZMA), appeared active in the Indian Ocean region with records of port visits to Mombasa, Durban, Cape Town, Vigo and Montevideo.

The CHANG BAI was flagged to Sierra Leone, and then to Panama.

**2012** The CHANG BAI was flagged to Tanzania.

**2013** CCAMLR and the Australian authorities requested support from FISH-i to have the vessels de-registered by Tanzania.

**SEP 2013** The ZMA de-registered the vessels to Tanzania in response to the IUU history of the vessels.

**FEB 2014** ALDABRA was observed just south of South African waters, still claiming the Tanzanian flag.

**2014-2015** The CHANG BAI underwent two further name changes and continued to fish illegally, firstly as the TAISHAN (or TAI SAN) and then as the KUNLUN.

**JAN 2015** KUNLUN was issued with an INTERPOL Purple Notice for illegally fishing for toothfish inside an area regulated by CCAMLR.

**MAR 2015** Following a coordinated effort between INTERPOL and law enforcement authorities in Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, the KUNLUN was detained on fisheries-related violations in Thailand after an attempt to offload approximately 200 tonnes of illegally caught Patagonian toothfish, falsely labelled as grouper.

**SEP 2015** The KUNLUN absconded from custody into international waters with her shipment of stolen fish.

**NOV 2015** The KUNLUN arrived in Dakar using the name ASIAN WARRIOR and operating under suspected false Indonesian registration.

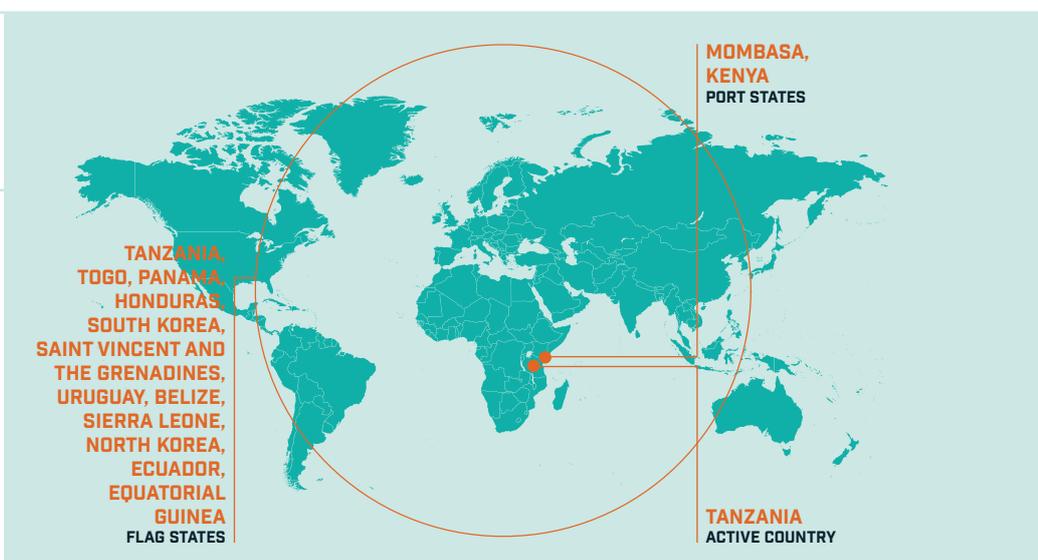
► **JAN 2016** The KUNLUN was detained in Senegal in relation to its registration status. It was later confirmed that the vessel was stateless.

## WHAT WORKED?

- Cross checking of information by CCAMLR identified the IUU vessels operating in Tanzanian waters.
- De-flagging and refusing them fishing licences, forced the vessels out of the region and rendered them stateless and without the ability to fish legally anywhere in the world.
- Strong policy statements from political leaders, supporting cooperation and information sharing gave national officers confidence to act.
- INTERPOL engagement and the issuance of a public Purple Notice raised the profile of the vessels.

### WHAT DID FISH-i AFRICA DO?

- ZMA de-flagged the vessels in cooperation with the Tanzania Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA).
- Task Force wide coordinated response to refuse re-flagging and fishing licence requests.
- Created awareness around the vessels on the Stop Illegal Fishing website.
- Liaised with CCAMLR and Australian authorities.



## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- Flagging practices need to be improved to prevent flag hopping and make sure IUU-listed vessels are denied access to a flag.
- Effective catch certification schemes would help ensure that fish entering a market has been caught legally.
- Port State measures provide a good opportunity to intercept IUU fishing vessels, but developing countries will require support to implement them.
- A mandatory system for identifying and recording vessel identity that is publicly available will prevent identity confusion.
- Wider compulsory use of automatic identification system (AIS) on all commercial fishing vessels will enable vessels to be located and activity monitored.



In working together on over thirty investigations, FISH-i Africa has shed light on the scale and complexity of illegal activities in the fisheries sector and highlighted the challenges that coastal State enforcement officers face to act against the perpetrators.

FISH-i investigations demonstrate a range of complexity in illegalities – ranging from illegal fishing, to fisheries related illegality, to fisheries associated crime to lawlessness.

In this case evidence of illegal fishing and fisheries related illegalities were found.

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## HOW?

**The evidence uncovered during FISH-i investigations demonstrates different methods or approaches that illegal operators use to either commit or cover-up their illegality and to avoid prosecution.**

**VESSEL IDENTITY** Both the ALDABRA and CHANG BAI used multiple identity changes to hide their history of IUU fishing across jurisdictions, enabling the vessels to register with new flag States and obtain authorisations to fish from Tanzania.

**FLAGGING ISSUES** Flag hopping helps conceal the real identity of IUU fishing vessels. The use of flags of convenience and non-compliance keeps checks and controls to a minimum and if caught operating illegally there is little follow up from flag States who may not have the will nor capacity to act.

**BUSINESS PRACTICES** The company structures for both vessels were found to span over several continents, making identification of the beneficial owner difficult. There was suspicion that corruption may have limited the sharing of information between agencies in Tanzania, and the undetected absconding of the KUNLUN from Thai detention provides further suspicion of corruption.

**AVOIDANCE OF PENALTIES** Not only did the KUNLUN abscond but by hiding the identity and history of the vessels the owner avoided the consequences of being IUU listed by an RFMO.

**DOCUMENT FORGERY** (suspected)  
 The registration documents provided to Tanzania are suspected to be forgeries.