

CUT & RUN



Exposing Senegal as a gateway
for the global shark fin trade



Protecting People and Planet

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We investigate and expose abuses and support environmental defenders, Indigenous peoples, communities and independent journalists on the frontlines of environmental injustice.

Our campaigns aim to secure peaceful, equitable and sustainable futures.

EJF is committed to combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as associated human rights abuses in the fishing sector.

Our investigators, researchers, filmmakers and campaigners work with grassroots partners and environmental defenders across the globe.

EJF investigators and our grassroots partners use film and photos to bear witness to environmental damage and the harm to the communities most affected by it. We never use AI-generated imagery to depict real events, people, or places.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AIS	Automatic identification system	HSBI	High Seas Boarding and Inspection
ARPE	Advance Request for Port Entry	ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
CCTV	Closed-circuit television	IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	IUU	Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (fishing)
CMMS	Conservation and Management Measures	MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance
CPCs	Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties	PSMA	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing
DWF	Distant-water fishing	REM	Remote Electronic Monitoring
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation	RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization		
FiTI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative		
GIES	Global Information Exchange System		

Executive summary



Senegal is a major fishing nation in West Africa, with large industrial and artisanal fleets operating in its waters. Its port of Dakar is also a key landing site for foreign-flagged fishing vessels which belong to large distant water fleets, including China and Taiwan. Although a signatory to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA), Dakar has been repeatedly linked to the presence of high-risk fleets and the landing of illegally caught fish.

This report examines the nature and extent of shark finning - a particularly cruel, ecologically destructive and often illegal practice - on board foreign vessels that call at Dakar, and the apparent impunity with which they operate. Shark finning is the practice of cutting off a shark's fins before throwing the body overboard, sometimes still alive. The fins are then sold for human consumption.

To document the extent of the Atlantic shark finning trade, and Senegal's role within it, the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) conducted and analysed 124 interviews with Indonesian and Filipino fishers who worked on board Chinese and Taiwanese tuna longliners operating in the region. EJF deemed vessels from these fleets to be particularly high risk on account of their repeated association with shark finning, both in the region and more widely.

Focusing on Chinese and Taiwanese-owned longliners which visited Dakar port at least once between 2020 and 2025, the report draws on the testimony of fishers to document extensive shark finning and the deliberate concealment of it. These findings are reinforced by photo and video evidence shared with EJF by crew from their time on board, as well as open-source research. Beyond revealing that shark finning was widespread on these vessels, EJF's investigation indicates that Dakar is a regional hub for the trade in shark fins. Testimony shows that fins were routinely landed there, and alleges that enforcement and regulation in the port were easily evaded or non-existent. Furthermore, tuna caught on these vessels is likely entering global markets through Dakar port - meaning consumers in Europe, Japan, South Korea and beyond may be indirectly and unknowingly funding cruel and harmful fishing practices.

These findings highlight the strategic importance of Senegal in the fight to prevent illegally caught seafood from entering global markets. To strengthen fisheries governance, Senegal must drastically improve its implementation of the PSMA, including the integration of core aspects of it into fisheries legislation. The report also demonstrates clear deficiencies in existing regulatory frameworks - especially at the level of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) - which are currently ill-equipped to end shark finning effectively and to preserve dwindling global shark populations.

ICCAT, as well as the flag and port states mentioned in this report, must all urgently move towards a 'fins naturally attached' policy on landing sharks, without exceptions that might allow for further ambiguity. Furthermore, all parties must implement transparency reforms, such as those in the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency, to ensure that global fisheries are legal, sustainable and ethical.



Fishers pose with a shark on a Chinese longliner.

Key findings

Shark finning prevalence and practice

- Of the 130 Chinese and Taiwanese-owned longliners with active authorisations to target tuna or tuna-like species within ICCAT's jurisdiction, more than half (57%) of Chinese vessels and nearly a quarter (23%) of Taiwanese vessels were alleged to have engaged in shark finning.
- Shark finning was described as large-scale and routine across the implicated vessels. Sharks were often captured as bycatch, although some fishers reported deliberate targeting of sharks through gear modifications and specialised bait.
- Interviewees reported the retention of fins from species that ICCAT entirely prohibits vessels from retaining, as well as species threatened with extinction.

Dakar port as a regional hub for shark fin landing

- EJJ's data indicates that 82% of Chinese and 38% of Taiwanese 'active' ICCAT tuna longliners called at the port of Dakar at least once between 2020 and 2025 - totalling 71 vessels across the two fleets.
- Fisher testimony gathered by EJJ implicates 41 of the 71 Dakar port-visiting vessels in shark finning, with prevalence highest among Chinese vessels (70%), compared to 42% of Taiwanese ones.
- 47 of the fishers who reported shark finning - having worked across 24 vessels - said that the fins were landed at Dakar port, either directly or via trans-shipment at sea to collection vessels returning to Dakar.

Evasion, concealment and monitoring failures

- Fishers described deliberate concealment of shark finning - including hiding fins on board, dumping fins before inspections, modifying behaviour under observation, and senior crew confiscating mobile phones to delete evidence.
- At Dakar port, fishers reported fins being unloaded at night to avoid detection. Interviewed crew also reported that port authorities failed to monitor unloading activities or, in some cases, appeared aware of fin landings and took no action.

- Onboard CCTV was reported to deter shark finning in some cases, but fishers also described concealing finning activities from cameras, turning them off, or finning openly within their view - suggesting that CCTV alone is an insufficient deterrent, particularly where footage is not tamper-resistant or reviewed independently onshore.
- The collective failure to adopt a 'fins naturally attached' policy on landing sharks, without exceptions, creates loopholes and places unnecessary burdens on port states - allowing shark finning to go undetected and unpunished.

High-risk tuna landed at Dakar enters global supply chains

- More than 1,800 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like products - suspected to be caught by longliners operating out of Dakar - were exported directly from Senegal to Japan in 2024 alone.
- A number of large Japanese companies are identified as potentially sourcing - directly or indirectly - tuna from Dakar that is at high-risk of being caught by vessels practising shark finning. One such company - Toyo Reizo - has previously been linked to the purchase of high-risk tuna from vessels belonging to Dalian Ocean Fishing Co., Ltd., that were later sanctioned by the USA for shark finning and human rights abuses.
- Processing companies in both Thailand and Singapore imported shipments of tuna and tuna-like species from Dakar, and also sent onward exports of tuna and swordfish - which could conceivably have originated in Dakar - to the EU (Italy), South Korea and the USA.
- These processing companies have US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and EU export licenses respectively, establishing plausible connections between high-risk tuna landed in Dakar and onward export to American, European and South Korean consumers.

1. Introduction

Senegal is a major fishing nation in West Africa, with 122 industrial vessels authorised to fish in its waters as of October 2025¹ and a sizeable artisanal fishing fleet that serves as a source of livelihoods and food security for coastal communities across the country. Furthermore, Dakar is a hub for the landing of seafood in West Africa, acting as a key regional port for foreign-flagged fishing vessels to unload their catch, much of which is exported globally.

As with many countries in the region, Senegal has struggled with detecting and deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing - to the extent that in 2024 the country was issued a 'yellow card' by the European Commission, meaning it is at risk of being identified as a non-cooperating party in the global fight against IUU fishing.²

In part, the decision to yellow-card Senegal stemmed from its failure to properly implement the PSMA,³ to which it became a party in 2017. The PSMA is the world's first legally binding global instrument specifically designed to combat IUU fishing, empowering port states to prevent foreign-flagged fishing vessels linked to IUU fishing activities from accessing ports and unloading their catches.

Two years on from the yellow card, the port of Dakar remains a major landing point for tuna longliners belonging to key distant-water fishing (DWF) nations - predominantly from China and Taiwan. Many of the vessels calling at the port could be considered as high-risk of having engaged in IUU fishing, on account of their associations with flag states or corporations that have a history of non-compliance with fisheries regulations. This, coupled with Senegal's history of poor PSMA implementation, means that there is a risk of illicitly caught fish entering global markets through the port of Dakar, placing pressure upon already threatened shark populations while also undermining efforts to have Senegal's yellow card rescinded.

This study draws on interviews with 87 crew members who worked on board Chinese or Taiwanese-owned DWF tuna longliners that used the port of Dakar between 2020 and 2025. Reported years on board span 2016 to 2025. The findings show the high prevalence of shark finning on these vessels, which is one of the most commonly found forms of destructive and often illegal fishing on tuna longliners.

Shark finning refers to the practice of cutting off a shark's fins and throwing the body, sometimes still alive, back overboard. This is often done to fuel an international trade in fins that endangers global shark populations - including protected species - and the marine ecosystems they are integral to.

EJF's findings also suggest that fins have routinely been landed in Dakar by vessels upon which shark finning has been reported, indicating it is a regional hub for this harmful trade. This comes in stark contrast with Senegal's consistent support for the better protection of sharks in international fora like the ICCAT and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).⁴ For example, Senegal has sponsored draft proposals for ICCAT's 'fins naturally attached' policy.⁵

The report is structured as follows: **Section 2** provides background context, covering why shark finning matters, the dynamics of its trade and governance, as well as the adoption and implementation of the PSMA in Senegal. **Section 3** outlines the methodology that underpins the research analysis, the findings of which are presented in **Section 4**. Based on these findings, the report sets out recommendations to Senegal, high-risk flag states using Dakar, market states and industry actors, as well as regulatory bodies (**Section 5**).

The findings highlight the integral role that Senegal can play in stemming the flow of illegal shark fins entering global markets, as well as the urgent need for the Senegalese government to strengthen its port controls in line with its commitments under the PSMA, focusing particularly on its monitoring of incoming fleets known to be at high risk of IUU fishing.

Also demonstrated is the urgent need for the wide adoption of regulations that insist sharks are landed with their fins naturally attached, without exceptions. Existing alternatives, as can be seen in this report, create loopholes and ambiguity that can be exploited by unscrupulous actors who are driven by the lucrative trade in shark fins, as well as burdening port states - many of whom have limited capacity to conduct sufficiently thorough inspections.



Suspected blue shark on board a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.

2. Background

2.1 Shark mortality, the global shark fin trade, and its governance

It is well established that sharks are critically important to marine ecosystems,⁶ yet shark mortality has risen over the past two decades. Despite growing global concern and new regulatory measures, including finning bans, an estimated 80-101 million sharks are killed as a result of fishing activities each year.⁷ According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, 70% of pelagic sharks are threatened with extinction.⁸ This is of particular concern because sharks are especially vulnerable to population collapse; most shark species grow slowly, have low birth rates, and long gestation periods.⁹ Over one-third of chondrichthyans (sharks, rays, and chimeras) are at risk of extinction, with overfishing posing the greatest threat.¹⁰

Human consumption is a key driver of the global decline in shark populations, with 96.6% of retained threatened species used as food.¹¹ The trade in shark meat is increasingly significant, with studies showing that the combined value of shark and ray meat is now 1.7 times that of the global fin trade.¹² Fins, however, fetch significantly higher prices per kilogram. Recent studies indicate that shark fins are worth at least 11 times more than meat,¹³ with other estimates suggesting their relative value is up to 100 times greater.¹⁴ The value of fins varies significantly depending on factors such as how they are processed - Hong Kong trade data shows that over the past five years, dried fins have averaged more than three times the value of frozen fins - at US\$64 (XOF 37,363) per kilogram compared to US\$19 (XOF 11,037) per kilogram.¹⁵

The global trade in shark fins is “highly centralised around Asian markets” - particularly Hong Kong and Singapore, but China, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines are also major traders.¹⁶ Shark fins are primarily sought to make shark fin soup, which is considered a luxury and often prepared at weddings or banquets.¹⁷ While Asia is the primary consumer, shark fins flow into the Asian market from all over the world,¹⁸ including Africa,¹⁹ the European Union (EU)²⁰ and Latin America.²¹

Senegal is a major player in the trade of shark fins, as highlighted in global trade data.²² Between 2015 and 2024, Senegal exported approximately 1,360 tonnes of shark fins, ranking 16th among the world's top 20 exporting countries by weight.²³

During this period, China and Hong Kong were the main destinations, each accounting for 24% of Senegal's recorded shark fin exports.²⁴ Most shark products landed in Senegal are exported, with only limited domestic consumption, underscoring Senegal's role as a key supplier in the global trade and the port of Dakar's importance as a site for governance, monitoring, and enforcement efforts.²⁵

Senegal is a signatory to key international frameworks that govern the trade and management of sharks.²⁶ Under the CITES, which regulates international trade in species at risk of overexploitation, Senegal is obliged to certify that exports of CITES-listed species passing through its borders are traceable, sustainable, and legal. This includes ensuring that sharks listed in CITES Appendix I - deemed threatened with extinction - are not traded, including the oceanic whitetip shark, whose Appendix I listing came into force this year.²⁷ As a contracting party to ICCAT, Senegal is also obliged to implement, among other measures, species-specific shark retention bans and enforce ICCAT's Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) on sharks (see **Box 1**). However, the effectiveness of these frameworks,²⁸ as well as the extent to which Senegal has fulfilled its obligations²⁹ - including through key instruments like the PSMA (see **Section 2.2**) - remains a key concern.



Pile of shark fins on the deck of a Taiwanese longliner.

Box 1: ICCAT - Relevant CMMs on sharks

Fishing operations related to tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic fall under the jurisdiction of ICCAT, a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) made up of 55 contracting parties.

As with all 'tuna' RFMOs, ICCAT have explicit CMMs relating to the retention, landing, transshipment and processing of sharks, designed to limit their accidental capture, protect endangered or at-risk species and prevent the practice of shark finning.

At present, ICCAT Recommendation (04/10) states that Contracting Parties and Co-operating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) shall:

- ***“require their vessels to not have onboard fins that total more than 5% of the weight of sharks onboard, up to the first point of landing”.***
- ***“take the necessary measures to require that their fishermen fully utilize their entire catches of sharks. Full utilization is defined as retention by the fishing vessel of all parts of the shark excepting head, guts and skins, to the point of first landing”.***
- ***“[prohibit] from retaining on board, transshipping or landing any fins harvested in contravention of this Recommendation”.***³⁰

Shark finning involves the discarding of bodies (which would constitute a failure to fully utilise shark catch), and should, in theory, result in fin ratios exceeding 5% of the weight of sharks on board. As such, it breaches the above-listed ICCAT CMMs, which as per ICCAT Recommendation 23-16, would be classed as IUU fishing.³¹

The RFMO's fin-to-carass ratio approach has remained unchanged for two decades, despite the fact that broadly such an approach is said to contain “substantial inadequacies and loopholes that complicate monitoring and enforcement”³². Key concerns include the fact that it does not distinguish between ‘dressed’ (partially processed by removing the head and guts) or whole sharks, it does not set specific weight ratios for each species of shark - which can vary widely, and in ICCAT, vessels are allowed to land fins and bodies separately.³³ All of this creates an extremely challenging environment for detecting shark finning and places a huge burden on port states tasked with inspecting catch.

There is a wide consensus that a ‘fins naturally attached’ rule, which does not allow for any exceptions - is the best-practice option for eliminating illegal shark finning.³⁴ Such an approach dictates that at the point of landing, a shark's fins must be naturally attached to its body. Leaving a shark's fins naturally attached enables clear identification of shark species and allows port authorities and other fisheries stakeholders to more easily identify instances of illegal shark finning. Despite this consensus, and the reported support of over 80% of ICCAT CPCs, progress within the RFMO is being hindered by the objections of a small number of distant-water fishing states - namely, Japan and China.³⁵

ICCAT also prohibits “retaining onboard”, “transshipping”, or “landing” any part or whole carcass of several shark species, including hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrnidae*, except for the *Sphyrna tiburo*), bigeye thresher sharks (*Alopias superciliosus*), oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) - a 2023 recommendation that CPCs were required to implement no later than 1 January 2025.³⁶ Recommendation 25-07, published in 2025, makes similar proscriptions for basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*) and great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*).³⁷

2.2 Port State Measures Agreement

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) PSMA, which entered into force in 2016, is the first legally binding global instrument to combat IUU fishing explicitly.³⁸ Recognising that ports are key gateways through which seafood enters global markets, the PSMA's primary objective is to empower port states to prevent foreign-flagged vessels linked to IUU fishing activities from accessing ports and unloading their catches. To date, there are 85 parties to the Agreement,³⁹ signalling willingness to block IUU fishing-linked vessels and establish international ports as sites of robust enforcement that cannot be exploited. Core obligations of port states that are party to the PSMA include:

- **Designate and publicise ports** which foreign-flagged vessels can enter.
- **Obtain and examine 'Advance Request for Port Entry' (ARPE) information from foreign-flagged vessels requesting port entry**, including flag state, IMO number, fishing authorisations, trans-shipment details, and catch data.
- **Authorise or deny port entry** after assessing the vessel's potential involvement in IUU fishing; vessels linked to IUU offences should be denied entry or allowed in only for inspection, while being barred from all port services.
- **Implement inspection and enforcement measures** to ensure compliance with the Agreement.
- **Share, cooperate and coordinate** with national agencies, other states, RFMOs and other relevant international organisations to support enforcement and information exchange.

The PSMA - which is reinforced by ICCAT under Recommendation 25-11 on Port State Measures⁴⁰ - encourages and facilitates the exchange of intelligence between port, flag and coastal states through a specially developed Global Information Exchange System (GIES).⁴¹ As a key part of a broader monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) framework, enforcement of the PSMA offers a safer and more cost-effective way to detect IUU fishing activity than measures such as at-sea patrols. Crucially, it positions ports as strategic checkpoints where coordinated international action intercepts IUU fishing and safeguards global seafood supply chains.⁴²

Port state measures are, however, only one piece of the puzzle. Vessels operating in the high seas - beyond national jurisdiction - require parallel MCS

mechanisms, including observer coverage (which best practice currently recognises should be 100%, either via human monitoring at sea or vessel-based CCTV cameras, a key component of remote electronic monitoring (REM) systems)⁴³ and RFMO-level High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) schemes, which authorise inspectors to board vessels to ensure compliance with RFMO measures.⁴⁴ Furthermore, seafood import controls provide an additional opportunity to stem the flow of illegally caught fish into global markets - however, their effectiveness is dependent on the information captured in such schemes, and the range of species that they cover.⁴⁵

Since coming into force, the PSMA has impacted the behaviour of higher-risk fishing vessels. By acting as a deterrent, it has pushed IUU-linked vessels away from PSMA ports and toward countries not party to the agreement, where oversight may be weaker.⁴⁶ As more countries have become party to the agreement, high-risk vessels have had to travel further to avoid PSMA ports - making the evasion of scrutiny harder, though the extent of this depends on the strength of implementation.⁴⁷

2.3 PSMA implementation in Senegal

Senegal is a key port state party to the PSMA.⁴⁸ Dakar was among the top 10 global ports visited by foreign-flagged vessels in 2023,⁴⁹ with China the top flag state for both fishing and carrier vessel visits to Dakar from 2019-2021.⁵⁰ China's DWF fleet has a well-documented record of IUU fishing⁵¹ and in 2025, ranked as the world's worst-performing country at tackling IUU fishing.⁵² Given Dakar's role as a major global port and its use by high-risk fleets, effective implementation of the PSMA is critical for Senegal to meet its responsibility to prevent IUU-linked seafood from entering global markets.

Since joining the PSMA in 2017,⁵³ Senegal has taken steps to support its implementation. These include receiving support from the FAO's PSMA capacity-building programme to undertake training on "fisheries port inspections in support of the agreement on port state measures",⁵⁴ as well as receiving support from the FAO in developing a new manual of procedures for fisheries inspections.⁵⁵ In addition, the Senegalese authorities have actively participated in the 'Intelligence-led fisheries port controls' programme led by Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) and Global Fishing Watch, which provided them with tools and methods to carry out risk assessments, identify non-compliance, and direct enforcement efforts where most needed.⁵⁶

Senegal has also made progress in transposing the PSMA into its legal framework, most notably

through ministerial orders in 2023⁵⁷ and 2025.⁵⁸ These introduced, among other measures, the mandatory requirement for foreign-flagged vessels to submit an ARPE to the Direction de la Protection et de la Surveillance des Pêches (DPSP) or its Port Surveillance Brigade, which operates 24/7,⁵⁹ at least 72 hours before arrival in Dakar. The proposed revision of Senegal's Fisheries Code presents an opportunity to identify and fill any remaining gaps left by the measures adopted to date.⁶⁰

Senegal has recognised that there is still work to do. Issues identified during an official assessment of the implementation of the PSMA in Senegal point to significant operational and capacity gaps. The timely submission of pre-entry information was noted as a problem, and limited access to regional VMS data further hampers pre-entry checks. At the landing stage, inspectors reportedly struggle to accurately estimate catch volumes and determine species composition, with difficulties compounded by limited capacity to identify frozen and processed catches landed by pelagic longliners. The absence of standardised operational procedures, which reduces the consistency and effectiveness of inspections on the ground, was deemed to reduce the overall effectiveness of inspections.⁶¹

These challenges are further compounded by historically low levels of transparency in Senegal's fisheries sector.⁶² While there has been notable progress in recent years - such as the publication of a list of vessels authorised to fish in Senegal's waters⁶³ - Senegal is not yet a signatory to the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency, a practical, low or no-cost framework for combating IUU fishing and associated human rights abuses through increased transparency.⁶⁴ In 2024, the country was delisted from the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) - a global initiative working to close the implementation gap on IUU fishing caused by a lack of transparency - for failing to implement the FiTI standards.⁶⁵ Reported corruption within the fisheries ministry under the previous government further undermines confidence in the integrity of fisheries governance in Senegal, and must be confronted.⁶⁶

In response to operational challenges, the government identified the strengthening of port inspection activities as a key strategic priority within its National Action Plan to combat IUU fishing for the period 2023-2028⁶⁷ and made repeated assistance requests in the context of ICCAT.⁶⁸

There are encouraging signs of recent enforcement activity. Reporting from the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (covering January to July 2024) shows action taken against 24 fishing vessels

involved in IUU activities, with fines ranging from 400,000,000 to 599,000,000 XOF (USD 699,734 - USD 1,047,852). For 2025, the total number of vessels - both foreign-flagged and Senegalese - inspected by the Port Surveillance Brigade reached 2,931.⁶⁹ However, beyond these figures, it remains difficult to assess whether inspections are risk-based and robust. Pending such strengthening, the risk of IUU-caught fish transiting through Dakar remains high.

Senegal is ranked as the 12th worst-performing African country in fulfilling its port state responsibilities, according to the 2025 IUU Fishing Risk Index.⁷⁰ Senegal performed particularly poorly on Indicator 20 of the Index, being frequently named by MCS practitioners as one of the five countries they considered most notable for compliance incidents in port.⁷¹ Concerns about PSMA implementation at Dakar port also explicitly informed the European Commission's decision to issue a yellow card to Senegal in 2024. The decision highlighted,⁷² among other deficiencies, the weaknesses in the monitoring and control of "foreign fishing vessels at Dakar port", constituting a breach of PSMA responsibilities.⁷³

Furthermore, Senegal was identified by the ICCAT compliance committee in 2022 as failing to meet its obligations under the ICCAT convention, with the country said to be failing in its responsibilities regarding IUU fishing.⁷⁴ Reasons given for this identification included potentially significant amounts of illegal trans-shipment and overharvesting of ICCAT species, evidenced by discrepancies between reported catch and reported exports.⁷⁵ While the identification remained throughout 2024, documents submitted by the secretariat in November 2025 suggest the identification has now been lifted.⁷⁶ Finally, in a forthright submission to ICCAT's compliance committee in 2025, the EU stated that "the critical failures identified in Senegal's implementation of its duties as Flag and Port State directly undermine the conservation and managements system established by ICCAT, and maintain disproportionate risk that fish harvested in clear violation of ICCAT rules is landed in Senegal and subsequently exported to ICCAT Contracting Parties."⁷⁷

3. Methodology

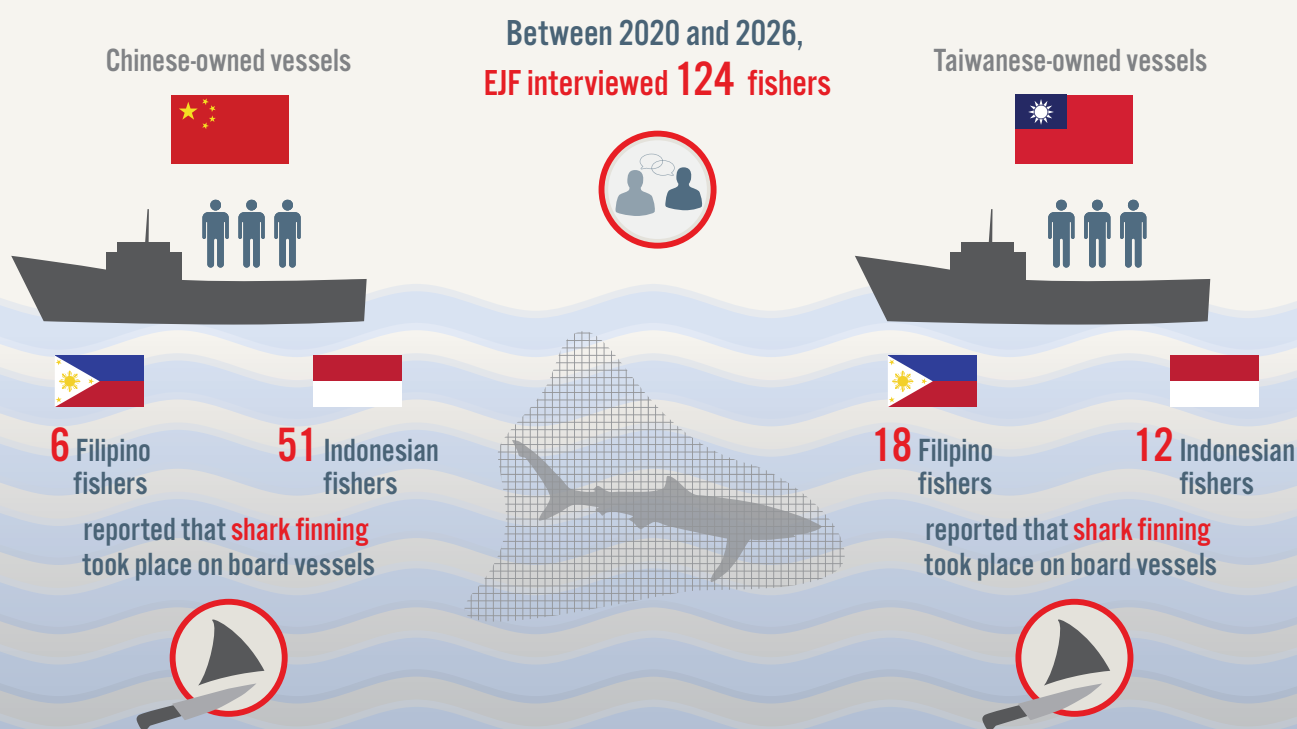
This investigation aims to establish the extent to which the port of Dakar serves as a regional hub for vessels at high risk of engaging in shark finning. Specifically, it looks at tuna longliners, which are widely acknowledged as the fishery and gear type most likely to interact with sharks on account of spatial overlap with shark habitats and the specific operational nature of the vessels.⁷⁸

The initial analysis for this report focused on industrial longliners over 20 metres in length, with active authorisations to target tuna or tuna-like species within the jurisdiction of ICCAT, as reported on the RFMO's Record of Vessels.⁷⁹ In particular, EJF scrutinised vessels flagged to China and Taiwan, as well as vessels whose beneficial ownership can be linked to these countries. These particular fleets constitute fleets of interest for two reasons. Firstly, they account for the majority of tuna longliners visiting Dakar's port - only nine longliners not belonging to these fleets were recorded visiting Dakar between May 2020 and December 2025, according to Starboard Maritime Intelligence.⁸⁰ Secondly, they are fleets that have been repeatedly linked to shark finning, both in the region and further afield.

At the time of accessing the Record of Vessels, there were a total of 130 longliners belonging to these two fleets - 49 flagged to or ultimately owned by China and 81 from Taiwan. To determine which of these

vessels used Dakar port at least once in the period of analysis (2020-2025), they were cross-referenced with available automatic identification system (AIS) data from Starboard Maritime Intelligence and Global Fishing Watch. AIS broadcasts a vessel's location, identity, course and speed - however, because not all vessels consistently transmit their positions, AIS data can provide an incomplete picture. Allowing for this, two vessels with limited AIS transmissions during the period have been included in the dataset for this study. While there is no AIS record of these particular vessels visiting Dakar between 2020 and 2025, crew on board both of them reported visiting the port in multiple interviews with EJF. It should be noted that the tracking of AIS data does not allow for a concrete determination of why a vessel visited, which could include landing of catch, crew transfer, vessel maintenance, refuelling, etc.

To identify which Dakar-visiting vessels are also implicated in shark finning, the refined vessel list was cross-checked against testimony obtained through EJF interviews with fishers who worked on board these vessels. Between 2020 and 2026, EJF interviewed 124 fishers from these vessels. Of these, 6 Filipino and 51 Indonesian fishers reported working on a Chinese-owned vessel where shark finning took place, and 18 Filipino and 12 Indonesian fishers reported shark finning occurring on board Taiwanese-owned vessels. These 87 fishers worked on vessels between 2016 and 2025.





Port of Dakar, Senegal.

To give an indication of when suspected offences occurred, **Table 1** shows the year that each fisher was last on board their respective vessel. In addition to crew testimony, publicly reported allegations of shark finning in the same time period have also been incorporated.

Table 1: Most recent year fishers interviewed by EJF were on board a Dakar-visiting vessel on which shark finning was alleged

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of interviews⁸¹	3	5	21	7	15	15	15	8
%	3%	6%	24%	8%	17%	17%	17%	9%

A vessel was considered linked to shark finning only where crew explicitly stated that the shark's body was thrown overboard; simply cutting fins from the shark does not necessarily constitute a breach of ICCAT CMMs. In total, EJF interviews covered 45% of the total fleet under review: 29 Chinese vessels (59% of the total authorised by ICCAT), and 30 Taiwanese vessels (37%). In sum, the vessels that form the core of the dataset were both: i) 'active' ICCAT tuna longliners owned by China or Taiwan that visited Dakar port between 2020 and 2025, and ii) identified by fishers interviewed by EJF between 2020 and 2026 as having engaged in shark finning - known herein as 'vessels of interest'.

Where available, videos and photos provided by crew were reviewed for evidence that might corroborate testimony of shark finning. To supplement this, EJF conducted open-source research, including social media monitoring across Douyin, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter).

To map the possible destination markets for seafood caught by these fleets, EJF used the Trade Data. Pro platform to identify companies that imported

tuna and tuna-like species from Dakar between January 2024 and April 2026.⁸² The analysis focuses on shipments that were deemed highly likely to originate from the Chinese and Taiwanese longline fleets, based on a range of available information including named exporters and importers, product description and Harmonised System (HS) codes. All trade figures (weights, number of shipments) subsequently included in the report have been manually filtered to exclude any possible duplicate shipments.⁸³ Given this conservative methodology, and the incomplete picture of international trade captured in Trade Data. Pro's data, the actual quantities of high-risk tuna entering global markets via Dakar port is likely much higher.

Together, these sources provide a detailed account of shark finning activity across the Chinese and Taiwanese DWF fleets operating in the Atlantic, establishing the scale of the illegal practice, the species targeted, processing methods, and landing practices at Dakar port, as well as the possible end markets for tuna and tuna-like species caught by these fleets. The findings are set out in the next section.

4. Findings

4.1 Overview of Dakar port usage by fleets of interest

EJF's analysis shows that a significant number of Chinese and Taiwanese 'active' ICCAT tuna longliners used Dakar port between 2020 and 2025. During this period, 82% of the Chinese fleet under review was found to use Dakar port at least once - a higher proportion than the Taiwanese fleet (38%) (see **Table 2**).

Table 2: Use of Dakar port by 'active' ICCAT longliners belonging to China and Taiwan

Country	Total number of 'active' ICCAT longliners	Number of 'active' ICCAT longliners with evidence of visiting Dakar (2020-2025)	% of 'active' ICCAT longliners using Dakar
China	49	40	82%
Taiwan	81	31	38%

4.2 Prevalence of alleged shark finning within the fleets of interest

Of the 130 'active' ICCAT longliners belonging to the two fleets under review, EJF has found that more than half (57%) of Chinese-owned longline vessels are alleged to have practised shark finning - the highest proportion among the fleets of interest (Taiwan: 23%), as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Overview of alleged shark finning on board 'active' ICCAT longliners belonging to China and Taiwan

Country	Total number of 'active' ICCAT longliners	Number of 'active' ICCAT longliners alleged to have engaged in shark finning	% of 'active' ICCAT longliners alleged to have engaged in shark finning
China	49	28	57%
Taiwan	81	19	23%

4.3 Prevalence of alleged shark finning on board vessels of interest

Fisher testimony gathered by EJF alleges that shark finning occurred on board 41 of the 71 'active' ICCAT Chinese and Taiwanese vessels that used Dakar port (2020-2025). Broken down by country, this indicates that 70% of Chinese vessels that used Dakar port also engaged in shark finning, compared to 42% of Taiwanese vessels. (see **Table 4**).



Indonesian fisher being interviewed by EJP investigators.

“Sharks were only caught for their fins. The left and right fins, and tail. Their bodies were discarded. [...] When the vessel was about to dock, some shark bodies would be taken but not a lot.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

Table 4: Summary of vessels of interest

Country	Total number of ‘active’ ICCAT longliners	Number of ‘active’ ICCAT longliners that visited Dakar (2020-2025)	Number of ‘active’ ICCAT longliners visiting Dakar and alleged to engage in shark finning	% of Dakar-visiting ‘active’ ICCAT longliners also alleged to have engaged in shark finning ⁸⁴
China	49	40	28	70%
Taiwan	81	31	13	42%

“At first we took the body and the fins [...] But there’s also sometimes when [...] there are so many fish there that we didn’t include the body of the shark because it is said to be too cheap so we only took the fins.”

(Filipino fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

4.4 Nature of shark finning

Scale of shark finning

On board all vessels of interest, shark finning was repeatedly described as routine, substantial and presumed to be for onward sale at landing. Within the scope of this study, crew reported that only one Taiwanese longliner undertook shark finning solely for on-board consumption. While crew were not always able to testify exactly how many fins were taken, their testimony alleges that in some instances dozens of sharks were caught on a daily basis, and that illegal shark finning was practised on an industrial scale:

“When we caught plenty of sharks, we would fill a storeroom with fins and throw the bodies.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2020-2023)



Shark fins stacked on the deck of a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly from his time on board a Taiwanese-owned vessel.

“They took the fins and threw the body back into the sea. We piled up plenty of fins. We took more or less 15 sharks in a day. [...] I don’t know how to estimate how many kilos but it’s really a lot. In six months, we got many fins.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

“The captain sold the fins [...] In my five months on the ship, my estimate [...] is about 100 sharks or more died because of this.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

“We gathered 60 sacks of cleaned shark fins [...] the bag inside the freezer is taller than a person [...] a sack of fins weighs no less than 40 kilos.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“We caught countless sharks, at the level of ecosystem destruction.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“We could catch many sharks, and the captain ordered us to take off the fins. We could catch 30 sharks every night.”

(Filipino fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2019)



Screengrabs from fisher-shared video footage show a shark's fins being cut and retained before the body is discarded overboard. Video shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly from his time on board a Taiwanese-owned vessel.

Finning of endangered and prohibited species of sharks

EJF's interviews with fishers across both fleets of interest indicate that a wide range of shark species were finned on the vessels where such practices were reported. Photos and videos provided by fishers⁸⁵, taken during their time on board vessels of interest, include images appearing to show hammerheads (*Sphyrnidae*), bigeye threshers (*Alopias superciliosus*), and oceanic whitetips (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) - all shark species that ICCAT explicitly prohibits its 'active' vessels from retaining.⁸⁶

Oceanic whitetip sharks are classified by the IUCN as critically endangered,⁸⁷ and are listed under CITES Appendix I,⁸⁸ meaning they are considered at risk of extinction.⁸⁹ Images also show shark pups and juveniles on board vessels of interest.



Fisher holding a hammerhead shark on board a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.



Suspected critically endangered oceanic whitetip shark on board a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJP, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.



Fisher holding a suspected big eye thresher shark on board a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJP, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.

“We threw away the body of the smaller size and kept the larger size ones [...] We rarely caught oceanic whitetip sharks, if we caught one, we took the fins only and threw away the body.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2020)

“For tiger sharks we took the fins then the bodies were thrown back into the sea, but for the female sharks we took the whole bodies [...] For hammerheads, only the fins were taken, then the bodies thrown back.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“Shark finning was our side hustle. The most expensive shark fins that were captured on [REDACTED] were tiger sharks' fins [...] A sack of tiger shark fins shared with all crew and the captain could be worth US\$250 for each of us [...] hammerhead shark [...] is also expensive.”

(Indonesian fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)



Shark pups and fins. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJJ, reportedly from his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.

Methods of shark capture

According to fishers on board Chinese and Taiwanese-owned vessels of interest, sharks were deliberately targeted - through the use of harpoons, modifications to fishing gear and the use of shark meat as bait to target other sharks.

“We harpooned them (sharks) [...] we cut the fins [...] it was prohibited [...] (we caught sharks) every day. We caught more sharks than tuna. In a day we could only catch five to six tuna and dozens of sharks.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2021)

“The body (of caught sharks) is either thrown into the sea or used as bait for catching other sharks.”

(Filipino fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

“We took only the fins and threw away the bodies. There were also some sharks that we took the body too, but only a few of them, we used it as bait. Mostly we threw them away. We used any kind of sharks, we took a small part of them for bait, then we threw away the rest.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2020)

“Thresher shark [...] was used as bait on every ball. [...] In one setting, there were 300 balls. [...] It was specifically for sharks.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

“Shark bodies were cut off into small pieces and turned into bait. We used them as bait [...] to catch sharks again. [...] When we caught sharks using shark bodies as bait, we probably caught more sharks. [...] Because the shark bait we used was big. [...] it was fresher [...] we immediately used it as bait when it still had blood.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

One fisher, who shared a video purporting to show thresher shark meat being used as bait to target more sharks, explained to EJF that:

“That was the moment when we were doing the setting process [...] That was shark meat (reportedly thresher shark) [...] It was used as the bait for sharks. It was put on the ball.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

Processing and storage of shark fins on board

EJF's interviews with fishers indicate that drying shark fins is a common practice, reported on the majority of vessels of interest (56%) - likely as dried fins fetch a higher price. The process often involves laying fins on deck in the sun to dry - a processing step that adds significantly to their market value - before storing them in the fish hold.

“Sometimes we cleaned it (fins) and if we had already cleaned it the engineer would dry it up and wrap it with plastic. [...] The price of dried fins is very expensive.”

(Filipino fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“We also dried them on board because the captain said that the price was so much higher if we sold them dry. But if we did not have enough time to dry them, we just sold them fresh from the freezer.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“Shark fins were dried in the sun. After it dried, they were tied and then put in the freezer.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

“The fins were sun-dried, piled up, and then sold by the captain.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)



Shark fins hung to dry on the deck of a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJP, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned vessel.

A key indicator that these fins were taken in a manner inconsistent with ICCAT regulations is that fishers frequently detailed actions taken to conceal fins on their vessels, presumably to avoid detection during possible inspections. Tactics included hiding fins beneath bait or placing them at the bottom of the fish hold:

“The fins were hidden [...] they were kept secretly because the shark finning violates the country’s law [...] they were put in the bottom of the freezer.”

(Indonesian fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

“Usually, those (fins) were stacked together with the catch because there were often coastguard raids at sea. It was done so that those (fins) could not be found during the coastguard raid. Those (fins) were stacked together with tuna [...] hidden [...] so that those (fins) could not be discovered during the raid.”

(Indonesian fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“If they (the shark fins) were put in the freezer at the front, or the one that’s easiest to open, we’d definitely get caught, you know. But if they were put in the freezers in the corner or downstairs, it’d be harder to find them.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2021)

“They (fins) were kept differently (to tuna). They were kept at the front storage mixed with the bait. [...] We kept them in the sack [...] it was kept secretly at the very bottom [...] covered by the second-grade fish.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“Of course we hid them (fins), we certainly did. We hid them under the pole, in the corner, we covered them, that’s for sure. Because there were inspections at sea. We were afraid to get caught, so we hid them.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“We [...] hid them (fins) whenever there were other vessels passing by. Sometimes we covered them with bait. It was not allowed to be exposed. [...] We hid them (fins) from the collecting vessels, usually when we were transferring catch to collecting vessel, the engineer would get on our vessel and check the freezer [...] maybe the captain was worried if there was a collecting vessel engineer that was checking up on our freezer and found the sharks inside and reported it to the police then we would get fined.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

In some instances, fishers described the dumping of fins in advance of anticipated inspections:

“Since we were informed ahead that coastguards are waiting at the port, 68 sacks (of fins) were thrown with an average of 50 kilos per sack.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

“The captain ordered us to throw away the fins when there was a police inspection using a helicopter. So we threw away the fins to the sea. We discarded around 20 bundles, weighing 70-80 kg each.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2021)

“It was discarded to the sea, around 25 bundles of fins, each weighed around 120 kg; he (the captain) discarded all fins in the freezer.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“The vessel owner called the captain, “Don’t bring the fins, there is an ongoing operation” [...] There were Filipino crew who took the tail fins and dried it. The foreman told them not to bring it to Dakar as there was an ongoing operation. He told them to dump it.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

Fishers also reported that shark finning was concealed by modifying practices when the vessel was being observed, either by an onboard human observer or via vessel-based CCTV cameras. One fisher described how his vessel would usually discard shark bodies, but when an observer was on board, bodies were retained:

“Sometimes we also kept the body of the shark inside the freezer because there is an observer on guard to see what kind of fish we catch.”

(Filipino fisher, Taiwanese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

Another fisher, from a separate Taiwanese-owned vessel, recalled that sharks were deliberately targeted only when the vessel's CCTV system was not working. Other fishers similarly said that disabling onboard CCTV systems was commonly used to hide shark finning activities.

“When we took fins, the CCTV was turned off [...] So, sharks got caught on the hook. Before we hauled, the CCTV was first turned off. All of them were turned off. After those sharks were taken onto the vessel, they were processed. Their fins were taken.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“The cameras were rarely turned on because there was a shark operation.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

However, fishers from other vessels of interest that engaged in shark finning reported the presence of CCTV cameras, without describing any attempts to conceal the activities from them. This suggests that CCTV alone - particularly where footage is controlled onboard and not transmitted for onshore review - is an insufficient deterrent.⁹⁰

Senior crew reportedly took further steps to conceal shark finning on board these vessels by prohibiting fishers from taking photographs on their mobile phones. Crew members told EJJF that their devices were confiscated and any evidence of shark finning was deleted.

“It wasn’t allowed to record it using phones. It wasn’t allowed [...] When we were going to be transferred to other vessels, the phones were taken by the captain. All of the crews on the vessel were gathered. [...] On this day, all of the phones were collected. The videos were deleted. [...] In case there was video containing the sharks or the fins.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“We were watched by the Chinese (officers) during the transfer. They did not allow us to use phones during the shark fin transfer, it was prohibited.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

Two fishers working on vessels operated by the same Chinese company also said that they would discard the bodies of sharks once they had stored a certain tonnage - potentially identifying a deficiency in the 5% fin to body ratio (i.e., that illegal shark finning can go undetected on vessels that comply with the ratio):

“We’ve been told to take the fins only and a certain tonnage of bodies. If we reached the target, we threw the body away.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“We usually took its fins and bodies. But for the bodies, if we already reached a certain tonnage we stopped taking it, we took only the fins.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

4.5 Port of Dakar as a regional hub for landing shark fins

Shark fins were landed in Dakar port by 24 vessels of interest, as per the testimony of 47 fishers who worked on them and were interviewed by EJF. These landings were either made directly or through trans-shipment at sea to vessels that would return to Dakar. Fishers ($n = 15$) from nine vessels reported trans-shipments linked to two specially adapted carrier vessels, which, despite being authorised by ICCAT as longline fishing vessels, were in fact operating as collection vessels. Both of these were IUU-listed by ICCAT in 2022⁹¹ (see **Case Study 1** for a detailed analysis of these activities, focusing on the LISBOA).

Chinese tuna longliner unloading catch in Dakar.
Image digitally altered to remove vessel name.



CASE STUDY 1: The case of the LISBOA

In the late 2010s, a notorious IUU fishing network was operating out of the port of Dakar, including the LISBOA. Although registered as a fishing vessel, the LISBOA acted as a collection vessel and frequently conducted illegal trans-shipments with Chinese and Taiwanese-owned longliners, before laundering their catches through Dakar port, as well as moving crew back and forth from the longliners. The vessel also featured heavily in the EU's decision to yellow card Senegal in 2024, which stated that the LISBOA exported quantities of albacore tuna in 2020 that exceeded Senegal's quota in ICCAT.⁹² Despite being renamed KIKI and re-flagging to The Gambia in 2021, the vessel was ultimately included in the ICCAT IUU list in September 2022.

11 crew from on board eight vessels of interest (between 2017 and 2020) explicitly described the transfer of shark fins onto the LISBOA. Several others described shark fins being transferred onto a collection vessel, without remembering the name. Furthermore, an interview conducted by EJF with a crew member who worked on the LISBOA between 2019 and 2020 confirmed that the vessel received and landed significant volumes of shark fins. Elsewhere, a 2020 Greenpeace report alleged that the LISBOA would transport crew to, and collect fins from, the Taiwanese-owned longliner WEI CHING.⁹³

One crew member who worked on a Chinese-owned longliner told EJF that his vessel transferred fins to the LISBOA two or three times while he was on board, totalling 20 baskets, each of which weighed 40-50 kg. A number of fishers stated that tuna would be transferred to (often Japanese) reefers, and that shark bodies, fins, and other non-tuna catch were collected by the LISBOA shortly after.

“The first 3 months after we sailed from Cape Town, we transferred tuna and then shark fins a week after. So, we transferred every three months. We usually transferred shark fins and bodies to LISBOA.” (Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)

“One bundle of dried fins weighed 60-70 kg, the wet ones 90-100 kg. [...] (we transferred) to Lisboa every three months. We could transfer hundreds of bundles in one transfer.” (Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2018-2020)



Two crew members pose in front of the LISBOA. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly taken during his time on board the Lisboa.

The crew member interviewed by EJF who worked on board the LISBOA said that the vessel collected from across the Atlantic, receiving around two tonnes of shark fins from vessels belonging to one Chinese operator. The captain would pay the vessels directly for the fins on most occasions, before returning to Dakar and loading them into containers bound for Taiwan and China. The same interviewee noted that even when shark bodies were trans-shipped with the fins, they would be discarded at sea.

While there is no indication that the LISBOA continues to operate from Senegal, its activities demonstrate two concerns: that the port of Dakar is a regional hub for the landing and trade of shark fins, and that port authorities in the country have long been ill-equipped to successfully detect and deter the trade.

Estimates provided by fishers indicate that significant quantities of shark fins are being landed at Dakar port. One fisher, who worked on board a Chinese longliner of interest to this study from 2024 to 2025, explained that his vessel would dock in Dakar approximately every five months to unload fins. During each unloading, the vessel would land “one hundred bundles”, each one weighing around 50 kg. Fishers from other vessels also reported large-scale unloading of shark fins at Dakar:

“It was almost seven to eight sacks [...] one sack of fins weighs 35 kilos.”

(Filipino fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“The fins were put together in a basket [...] (we’d get) sometimes two baskets in one month, if combined it can be more than 100 kilos [...] the fins were brought to Dakar.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2022)

One fisher alluded to the fact that port controls at Dakar were significantly less stringent than at Cape Town, another key port for landing tuna in the Atlantic:

“As far as I know, when we were in Cape Town, when the number of fins and body did not match (likely referencing the 5% fin-to-body ratio rule), there would be a fine. [...] (In Dakar) We could just do it (unload fins). We did not have to hide anything because there was nothing to be scared of.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2016-2018)

Many fishers ($n = 14$) described how fins would be unloaded in Dakar at night, likely to avoid inspections:

“We secretly unloaded them (fins) at night.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“The (shark fin) unloading process was usually done at three am. [...] Catch was unloaded in the morning until afternoon. From eight am until five pm.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“We didn’t unload the shark fins at noon (with the rest of the catch). The shark fins were unloaded in the evening, around eight pm, and the people (who bought the shark fins) would come.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

“The sharks are usually unloaded at night. [...] As far as I know, those that are related to sharks being illegal. It isn’t allowed. That’s why they were unloaded at night. We were also hurried.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

“The catch was unloaded first, whereas the fins were (unloaded) secretly. [...] At night [...] It was like a theft.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

Ten fishers who worked on vessels they witnessed unloading fins in Dakar port told EJP that, to their knowledge, Dakar port authorities did not monitor any of their vessels’ unloading activities, while two other fishers alleged that authorities were aware of the fin unloading but took no action:

“I think the unloading was done in conspiracy with the Dakar police [...] it looked like a cover-up. [...] It was known (by the harbourmaster).”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2021-2023)

“We were inspected, but we bribed (the inspectors). In Dakar, it’s usually very easy to bribe the police. We’d give them fish, and they wouldn’t check the vessel. [...] we anchored [...] before the vessel entered (the port), it was inspected first by the police. They only wanted to ask for fish, you know.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2019-2021)

Fishers knew little about the onward supply chain of these fins. Some described fins being collected by vans or trucks - in some instances, reportedly by “African” individuals, and in others, “Chinese”.

“(Fins were unloaded) to a private car [...] It was like a (small minivan). Those fins were unloaded to the trunk. [...] there were three cars.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

“Those (fins) were not picked up by containers, those were picked up by trucks [...] Shark fins were picked up by individuals. [...] It was a regular car [...] not a big truck.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

“Fins were not transferred to containers; they were usually transferred to private cars.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2023-2024)

“There were seven boats. All boats were all in together and out together [...] they were always together [...] on my boat alone [...] for the [REDACTED] (there were) three cars, private cars [...] (each one) could load two to three sacks.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2024-2025)

“Yes, we took them (fins) out of the boat [...] All the crew carried them to the top of the car.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

Similar to some instances on board the vessels at sea, a fisher employed on a Chinese vessel reported that a fellow crew member had tried to film the unloading of shark fins at Dakar port, but had his phone confiscated, and the evidence deleted:

“Not only Indonesians, but also Filipinos were taking videos, recording the activities on the boat. We got scolded and were not allowed to record. [...] It took place in Dakar. [...] All the unloading always took place at night. [...] At first, I got scolded by the dark-skinned person [...] Whether he was a buyer or not, I don’t really know. In essence, I wasn’t allowed to (record it) [...] He seemed like an organiser, I mean, he has collaborated with the captain. I also don’t really know about it. [...] So I was scolded, I wasn’t allowed to document it. The Filipinos experienced the same; when they were documenting it, they weren’t allowed and got scolded. [...] His (a Filipino crew member’s) cellphone was even checked, and the video was deleted.”

(Indonesian fisher, Chinese-owned longliner, 2022-2024)

Chinese-owned longliners in the port of Dakar.



4.6 Onward supply chains of long-line-caught tuna landed at Dakar

This report has detailed the scale and nature of shark finning on board DWF vessels that use the port of Dakar - many to unload tuna and tuna-like species, as well as, in some instances, shark fins. The opacity that characterises many global commodity supply chains, which is particularly acute in the fisheries sector, makes tracing end markets for the produce challenging. However, using trade data aggregated on the Trade Data.Pro platform, this section identifies a number of instances between January 2024 and April 2026 where tuna and swordfish - that is highly likely to derive from DWF longline vessels - was exported from the port of Dakar directly to Japan, as well as to Singapore and Thailand-based processors that export tuna and/or swordfish to the EU, South Korea and the USA.

It should be noted that there is no direct evidence showing that companies in this section have bought tuna or tuna-like species from vessels that have undertaken shark finning. However, considering the widespread nature of shark finning on board DWF longline vessels using Dakar port, the purchase of any products from such vessels should be considered high risk.

Supply chain links to Japan

Japan is comfortably the world's largest importer of fresh and frozen non-canned tuna.⁹⁴ On account of the fact that tuna meat can be well preserved in the catching process and quickly frozen, longline tuna vessels are best-suited to catch lucrative sashimi-grade tuna, which is a central part of Japanese culinary culture.

EJF identified several trade flows connecting Dakar to Japan, with at least 1800 tonnes of suspected longline-caught tuna and tuna-like species reaching Japan in 2024 alone. Fifteen shipments, containing a total of 414.5 tonnes of tuna (including yellowfin, bigeye and albacore) were exported to Japan from Dakar in 2024, and subsequently purchased by Toyo Reizo.⁹⁵ Toyo Reizo is a subsidiary of the Mitsubishi Corporation, and imports into Japan, or procures domestically, whole fish and seafood products in various processed forms, including products caught on Chinese and Taiwanese longline fishing vessels.⁹⁶ Toyo Reizo's website specifies that it sources albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna from the Atlantic Ocean.⁹⁷ A joint investigation by EJF and Mongabay in 2022 details historic links between Toyo Reizo and a number of vessels accused of shark finning - many of which operated in the Atlantic - belonging to Dalian Ocean Fishing Co., Ltd. (DOF).⁹⁸

DOF were targeted with sanctions by the US Department of the Treasury in December 2022, linked to allegations of shark finning and human rights abuses on board the company's fleet.^{99/100}

EJF identified a second Japanese buyer importing tuna, very likely caught on longliners, from Dakar. Between January and December 2024, 42 shipments (most of which were labelled as 'frozen albacore' or 'frozen fish') went from Dakar to 'Hiroichi Co Limited'. For two of these shipments, the exporter was listed as 'Fujian C AND G Logistics Co LTD' and the notifying party as 'Fujian Yaoxiang Marine Fisheries Co', which owns the FU YUAN YU fleet of Chinese-owned longliners that operate from Dakar. The exporter of the remaining 40 shipments is listed as 'Yuh Jan Enterprise Co LTD' (Yuh Jan). Notably, Yuh Jan were one-time owners of the tuna longline vessel DIAMALAYE 1909 (now LUCCIA), which the EU alleged in 2019 exported albacore tuna to Thailand despite not then being authorised to fish for that species in the ICCAT area.¹⁰¹ Yuh Jan were identified by Greenpeace as facilitating the transfer of a crew member to a Taiwanese longliner at sea via the IUU-listed LISBOA vessel, described in **Case Study 1**.¹⁰²

Hiroichi Co. Ltd - the importer listed on Trade Data.Pro for Yuh Jan's tuna exports - is a Japanese company with strong historical ties to Taiwanese companies. According to its website, it "intermediate[s] transactions between Japanese companies requiring tuna stocks and Taiwanese and Chinese ship owners".¹⁰³ Hiroichi's website lists a number of its main clients, including Japanese seafood companies Toyo Reizo and Try Inc.¹⁰⁴

Links to Singapore-based seafood supplier whose onward market includes the EU, South Korea and the USA

Two shipments of 'frozen fish' were exported from Dakar to Singapore between 11 August 2024 and 20 September 2024, totalling 52.5 tonnes. The exporter for each of these is recorded as 'Fujian C AND G Logistics Co LTD', and the notifying party is 'Fujian Yaoxiang Marine Fisheries Co', owner of the Dakar-based FU YUAN YU fleet discussed above. The sole importer for these shipments was 'Fong Hsiang Enterprise Co PTE LTD' (Fong Hsiang). The name and address listed on Trade Data.Pro match that of Singapore-based seafood processor and supplier Fong Hsiang, which specialises in swordfish as well as tuna and other tuna-like species.¹⁰⁵

Fong Hsiang's website shows a verified Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan, and also bears the logo of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - implying that it may supply seafood to the US market. Five shipments of swordfish totalling almost 129 tonnes were exported by Fong Hsiang to the US between 2024 and the time of writing, with the port of discharge listed as Los Angeles. EJF also traced exports from Fong Hsiang - which are authorised exporters to the EU under the Approval Number VPH-FE-003¹⁰⁶ - to Italy. Between May 2024 and December 2025, eight shipments (totalling 231.6 tonnes) have been identified from Fong Hsiang to various Italian importers. Seven shipments of frozen swordfish, of unknown quantities, were also exported by Fong Hsiang to South Korea between July 2024 and March 2025, according to Trade Data.Pro.

Links to Thailand-based importer whose onward market includes the USA

In late 2024, one shipment of 'FROZEN YELLOW FIN TUNA', totalling 25.6 tonnes, travelled from the port of Dakar to Thailand. Again, the exporter was recorded as 'Fujian C and G Logistics CO LTD' and the notifying party as 'Fujian Yaoxiang Marine Fisheries CO'. The importer was 'THAI OCEAN VENTURE CO LTD', a self-proclaimed leading processor and exporter of frozen tuna products based in Phuket, Thailand.¹⁰⁷ According to a filing by Thailand's Department of Business Development, 46% of shares in Thai Ocean Venture Co are Chinese-owned.¹⁰⁸

Thai Ocean Venture's website states that in 2018 they achieved US FDA approval, "*establishing international standard compliance and expanding access to premium global markets*".¹⁰⁹ EJF found that between January 2024 and February 2026, at least 11 shipments of yellowfin tuna products weighing 215.5 tonnes went from Thai Ocean Venture to the US. Some of this tuna, which was largely imported to the US as pre-processed cubes for poke, could feasibly have originated from the high-risk longline fleet in Dakar.

Fisher removing the fins of a suspected blue shark on board a fishing vessel. Photo shared by a fisher interviewed by EJF, reportedly taken during his time on board a Chinese-owned fishing vessel.





Port of Dakar, Senegal.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on a substantive body of first-hand testimony, satellite tracking data and visual evidence, this report documents the extent and nature of shark finning on board Chinese and Taiwanese tuna longliners operating in the Atlantic. Shark finning is not only ecologically destructive, but it also hinders the ability to capture accurate scientific data related to species abundance and shark population status, ultimately undermining the ability of regulators to make science-informed improvements to CMMs. More fundamentally, shark finning inflicts acute suffering on captured sharks and fuels networks of criminal actors who profiteer from this international illegal wildlife trade. The presence of IUU fishing offences such as shark finning on a vessel can also serve as an indicator for associated crimes, such as human trafficking and forced labour.¹¹⁰

With many of the vessels in question operating hundreds of miles from shore, with limited or no onboard oversight, port visits provide a key opportunity for intervention. As a port frequently visited by these fleets, and in many instances a conduit through which shark fins are landed and enter international markets, the regional and global significance of Dakar in this trade cannot be understated. A party to the PSMA, and a CPC of ICCAT, Senegal is duty-bound to ensure that seafood caught through, or in association with IUU fishing, does not enter its ports. Failing to do so not only allows cruel and unsustainable practices such as shark finning to continue unfettered, but also diminishes the country's reputation on the international stage, with potential economic and political ramifications that could take years to undo.

At this juncture, the Senegalese government has an opportunity to build upon recent commitments to fisheries transparency and improved port controls, and to position itself as a regional leader in the fight against IUU fishing. Doing so requires progressing further from commitments to action, capitalising on the ongoing fisheries legislative revisions to enshrine core tenets of the PSMA and wide-ranging transparency measures into law. Beyond this, Senegal must ensure that sufficient technical and logistical mechanisms are in place to effectively implement such changes. Where possible, this should include leveraging the support and expertise of technical and trade partners who should be similarly invested in stemming the trade of illegal seafood.

Beyond Senegal, this report identifies gaps in oversight, MCS, transparency and regulatory frameworks that span a range of actors - including China and Taiwan as flag states, ICCAT as the RFMO under whose jurisdiction shark finning is occurring, and key market states which are likely, albeit indirectly and potentially unknowingly, fuelling the destructive trade in fins. Urgent alignment with best practices - including the adoption of a 'fins naturally attached' policy without exceptions, increased observer coverage, and adopting key traceability and transparency measures - is needed to halt the unacceptable and entirely unsustainable mortality rate of sharks worldwide.

In light of the above, EJF recommends the following:

Recommendations to Senegal:

- In line with the PSMA, and ICCAT Recommendation 25-11 on port state measures, demand strict compliance with advance requests for port entry obligations and take enforcement action in case of non-compliance, including sanctions where appropriate.
- Ensure that authorised inspectors are properly empowered, trained and equipped, and familiar with relevant national, regional and international conservation and management measures, including ICCAT's shark-related protection measures.
- Supply relevant information - such as denials for foreign vessels to enter into or use ports as well as reports of inspections conducted on such vessels in port - to the GIES, and, in the event of apparent infringements, strictly follow the procedure outlined in ICCAT Recommendation 25-11 on port state measures.
- Ensure that the possible presence of shark fins on board is routinely investigated as part of any inspection of longline vessels.
- Assess the possibility of introducing in designated ports an REM system with CCTV cameras, allowing the competent authorities to monitor landing and trans-shipment activities, and activities around vessels at all times. This should be complemented with enhanced round-the-clock in-port presence of fisheries inspectors.
- Designate foreign-flagged tuna longliners, particularly those from China and Taiwan, as high-risk for IUU fishing, and prioritise their inspection when entering the port of Dakar.
- Regularly prepare and publish data on foreign-flagged fishing vessels that visit Senegalese ports - including vessel names and nationalities - as well as gear and flag-state disaggregated information on ARPE submissions, vessel inspections conducted and vessels refused entry to port.
- Use the ongoing legislative redrafting process to ensure that the core principles of the PSMA are enshrined in law, and to mandate that sharks caught by Senegalese-flagged vessels, or landed in Senegalese ports, must have their fins naturally attached, without exceptions.
- Similarly, consider updating other relevant documents, such as the National Plan of Action on Sharks (2005),¹¹¹ to reflect the current threat of illegal shark fins being landed in Senegalese ports by foreign-flagged industrial vessels.

Recommendations to China and Taiwan as flag states:

- Investigate the activities of ICCAT-authorised tuna longliners - collaborating with key port states, including Senegal, as necessary.
- Increase at-sea observer coverage, be it human or through REM including CCTV systems, with a target of 100% coverage - especially for high-risk fleets such as those covered in this report. Where there is coverage on board, ensure there are sufficient review mechanisms in place to ensure that instances of deliberately concealing onboard behaviours are identified and acted upon.
- Demonstrate a genuine commitment to ending the illegal trade in shark fins through introducing into national laws a fins naturally attached policy, without exceptions.
- On top of the above, push for RFMO reform on measures that would help end shark finning, including the adoption of a fins naturally attached policy, without exception, increased observer coverage and a HSBI scheme.

Recommendations to market states buying longline-caught tuna landed in Dakar:

- Increase scrutiny of imports of longline-caught tuna landed in Dakar by DWF vessels to ensure the catch is legally caught.
- When an import scheme is in place, ensure that a sufficiently wide range of key data elements are captured (regarding when, where, how, and by whom fish is caught) to inform risk-based assessments of incoming seafood products.¹¹²

Recommendations to retailers and processors buying longline-caught tuna landed in Dakar:

- Carry out effective due diligence to identify, prevent, and address risks of IUU fishing and associated abuses in tuna supply chains. This due diligence should be aligned with relevant international frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as national regulations and established voluntary guidance.
 - Advocate for improved flag state, port state and RFMO-level measures to address shark finning in the Atlantic and farther afield, leveraging market influence to drive lasting and legitimate change.
- This could include mandating that companies from which tuna or tuna-like species are sourced develop and publish robust anti-finning policies, including the requirement that sharks are landed with fins naturally attached.
- Immediately endorse the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency, and call publicly for its adoption and implementation by governments. In line with the Charter, retailers and processors should work towards ensuring full supply chain traceability and transparency.

Recommendations to ICCAT:

- In line with globally recognised best practice, urgently adopt and implement a 'fins naturally attached' policy without exceptions, in order to improve the detection of shark finning by onboard fisheries observers and port authorities. This should include a detailed list of all species to which it applies, ideally including all elasmobranchs.
- Ensure full and timely submission of shark-specific catch data (at the species level), including dead discards, using ICCAT's standardised shark data collection forms ("shark check sheets"), which are a critical tool for both stock assessment and compliance reviews. ICCAT members should ensure that these forms are reported consistently across their fleets, with submissions that are timely, complete, species-specific, and verified through observer coverage.
- Set time-bound targets to achieve 100% observer coverage - via REM and/or human observers - for industrial fishing fleets, with clear interim milestones to track progress towards full implementation. This should, at a minimum, reflect calls from various parties, including NGOs and ICCAT's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics,¹¹³ for an immediate increase to 20% coverage for pelagic longline vessels. Where REM is used for observation purposes, this should be done in line with the minimum standards and programme requirements adopted by ICCAT in 2023.¹¹⁴
- Establish an HSBI scheme, supported by capacity building for inspectors.
- Connected to ICCAT Recommendation 25-11 on port state measures, facilitate better information exchange through the development of an ICCAT-managed electronic information exchange system, interoperable with the GIES, that includes information on denials of port access and inspection results, at a minimum.

To ICCAT as well as all coastal, port, market and flag states:

- Adopt and implement measures recommended in the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency's 'Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency',¹¹⁵ as the most cost-effective and immediately impactful means to combat illegal, unsustainable and unethical activities in the fishing industry.

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