



US shrimp producers say they have been long harmed by imports from countries with cheaper labor. Photo: Southern Shrimp Alliance

'We need to do whatever it takes to stop this': US shrimpers call for action on India labor abuse claims

US shrimp industry executives want the US government to crackdown on shrimp imports.

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By [John Evans](#) 

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA), a coalition of US shrimp fishing and processing companies, is calling for action in response to reports of “pervasive systemic abuses” throughout India's shrimp supply chain.

US shrimp industry executives said they have yet to formulate a plan to respond to the reports but are meeting in the coming days to chart a course of action.

"We need to do whatever it takes to stop this ... it's beyond the pale," SSA Executive Director John Williams told **IntraFish**, adding that authorities should have addressed this issue years ago.

"We have laws that say you can't send product into the United States made with child labor and slave labor, but it's not being enforced proper I don't think."

India's shrimp industry was accused of mistreating workers and violating quality standards in three separate reports published Wednesday by US-based media and nonprofit groups.

The first report, authored by the Corporate Accountability Lab (CAL), a Chicago-based nonprofit group, claims “pervasive systemic abuses” throughout the shrimp supply chain. It alleges that workers are routinely exploited and subject to forced labor by some companies.

The CAL report was followed by an investigation from the *Associated Press* news agency, which said it uncovered widespread abuse and hazardous working conditions in Andhra Pradesh state, and a report by investigative journalism group The Outlaw Ocean Project, which interviewed a whistleblower and former employee of a shrimp company in the same state.

Representatives of the Indian shrimp industry deny the accusations in the reports.

India is the largest supplier of shrimp to the US market. In 2023, the country shipped 296,000 metric tons of shrimp into the United States, worth over \$2.3 billion (€2.1 billion), according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Shrimp imports are among the seafood products subject to NOAA's Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP), requiring importers to provide traceability information at the point of entry into the United States.

The Outlaw Ocean Project's reporting raises serious issues related to documents supplied to the federal agency by importers, SSA said.

The trade group notes that NOAA recently announced the abandonment of proposed amendments to SIMP that would have strengthened the program and has, instead, informed the public that it will be conducting a “comprehensive program review” of SIMP to determine its future.

“While we have gone to work for the last 40 years with the federal government on our shoulders watching our every move, our government rolled out the red carpet to foreign industries to sell into this market," Williams said, adding that only 1 percent of shrimp imports into the United States are checked as they come in.

"Rather than hold us to the same standard, the US shrimp industry is stunned to see federal agencies propose backtracking on the minimal requirements that have been demanded on foreign seafood suppliers.”

SSA previously called for a US consumer boycott of Indian shrimp after nearly half the shrimp refused entry into the United States in 2022 for banned antibiotics originated in India.

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