

**News/ Ghana****Free the Fishing Boys**

*A Press Release (summarized below) dated 11 March 2003 from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, draws attention to .child labour in the fisheries in Ghana*

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A programme, implemented by the IOM with the Ghanaian authorities, the ILO, Catholic Relief Service and the local NGO APPLE, aims to return to their families more than 1,200 children who have been trafficked into forced labour in the Central and Volta regions of Ghana.

To date, IOM staff in Yeji and Atebubu districts of Brong Ahafo region have successfully registered 814 children who are currently employed under slave-like conditions in numerous fishing communities established along the shores and on islands scattered on Lake Volta.

The victims, mostly boys aged between 5 and 14, are forced to work from dawn to dusk casting and drawing nets. They live separately in cramped thatched roofed huts, are poorly fed, suffer physical abuse and never get paid. Their diet consists mainly of cassava with watery soup. They never eat fish. Because of their poor diet, harsh living and working conditions, many suffer from water born illnesses and experience stunted growth.

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