
International Labor Rights Forum

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June 29: International day of action to end deathtraps

Tomorrow students, workers, and consumers will demonstrate in 30 cities across the US as well as in Bangladesh, Canada, UK, Australia, and Japan to call on Gap, Walmart and other global brands and retailers to join the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. Get involved - [join an action near you](#) or follow ILRF on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#).

Maine-based labor groups, women's organizations, and human rights activists ran an [open letter](#) to former Maine Senators Olympia Snowe and George Mitchell in four newspapers across the state today, urging them - as leaders of the Bipartisan Policy Council - to call on Gap and Walmart to support the Accord.

US suspends Bangladesh's trade benefits

[ILRF applauds the decision yesterday](#) by the US Trade Representative to suspend Bangladesh's GSP benefits.

The overall economic impact of the decision to suspend the trade benefits is minimal and will result in increased tariffs on only 0.72 percent of all U.S. imports from Bangladesh. However, the decision does send a strong message to the Bangladesh government, factory owners, and global brands and retailers that they must take serious action to end widespread labor abuses and protect workers' right to organize.



US government opens path for sanctions against government of Uzbekistan

[The ILRF commends the State Department's decision](#) last week to place Uzbekistan in the lowest rank in the Global Trafficking in Persons Report. The Tier 3 ranking comes as a result of the Uzbek government failure to make significant efforts to end forced labor in the cotton sector. We expect the downgrade will add urgency to the international community's calls on the Uzbek government to end forced labor of children and adults in the cotton sector.



Child labor and workers' rights violations revealed at certified Walmart shrimp supplier

A longtime Walmart shrimp supplier, certified by the Global Aquaculture Alliance, engaged in serious violations of Thai law and international human rights standards, according to a briefing paper released this month by ILRF and Warehouse Workers United. The brief, [The Walmart Effect: Child and Worker Rights Violations at Narong Seafood](#), documents serious violations of Thai law and international human rights standards at Narong Seafood, a model shrimp processing company and longtime supplier to Walmart. Violations at Narong include utilizing underage workers, nonpayment of wages, charging workers excessive fees for work permits, and an ineffective auditing regime.



Nike called out for doing business with slave cotton company

Uzbek human rights activists, political leaders, and prominent dissidents released an [open letter](#) calling on Nike to stop doing business with Daewoo International, the largest processor of forced labor cotton in Uzbekistan. The 141 signatories, many of whom have been harassed, threatened, tortured or imprisoned by the current Uzbek regime for speaking out against human rights abuses, are asking Nike to follow the lead of several major apparel companies that have taken action to remove Daewoo International from their supply chains.



Pressure builds on US government to support the Bangladesh Safety Accord

In early June, Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, submitted [written testimony](#) in a hearing on labor issues in Bangladesh held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Soon thereafter, in an effort coordinated by ILRF, [over 100 organizations sent a letter](#) to US Secretary of State John Kerry,



urging public support for the Bangladesh Safety Accord.

US House of Representatives shows support for Bangladesh Safety Accord

The US House of Representatives took an important step to make sure military exchange stores that buy apparel made in Bangladesh do their part to ensure safe and decent working conditions for garment workers. [The House passed the amendment](#) - offered by Rep. Schakowsky and Rep. Miller - as part of the National Defense Authorization Act earlier this month. The amendment requires the exchange store system to become a signatory to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh or comply with the requirements of the Accord. It also requires military exchanges to provide a purchasing preference to apparel brands that are signatories to the Accord. ILRF is working with Senators to make sure that the same issue is taken up as part of the Senate bill.



ILRF calls on US Customs Service to halt imports of forced labor cotton from Uzbekistan

ILRF filed a [formal complaint](#) against the importation of cotton from Uzbekistan grown and harvested with forced labor. Under the Tariff Act of 1930, the US Customs Service is required to deny entry to goods that arrive at US ports that contain materials made with forced labor. The complaint calls on US Customs to issue an immediate detention order on all pending and future imports of cotton goods manufactured by Daewoo International Corporation, Indorama Corporation, and other companies processing cotton in Uzbekistan.



In wake of unabated human rights abuses in Philippines, groups call for expanded military sanctions and continued review of GSP violations

In a [joint letter](#) to Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, 130 religious, labor and human rights leaders expressed concern over the failure of the Philippine government to address impunity for human violations committed by its armed forces and demanded that all US assistance be conditioned on full implementation of human rights. The letter draws attention to the role of General Palparan in the extrajudicial executions and demands that the Philippine Government investigate Palparan and the military officials working under him.



In March, Brian Campbell [testified](#) before USTR on ILRF's 2007 GSP petition, highlighting the continuing murders of trade union leaders and the harassment of indigenous people impacted by mining and agricultural companies. Yesterday, the USTR announced that the review will remain open - we expect a next hearing later this year.

We're hiring!

[ILRF seeks a Campaigns Director](#) to help carry out our public campaign advocacy for workers' rights and build our base of supporters and participating activists. This position requires excellent writing skills, experience in social/economic justice campaigning, enthusiasm to travel frequently, and knowledge about international labor rights issues with the ability to speak persuasively to audiences of all sizes on topics including freedom of association and collective bargaining, child labor, forced labor and trafficking, and the power of organizing for achieving change.

