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Peruvian Unions & ILRF File Labor Rights Complaint Against Peru

Today several Peruvian unions and the International Labor Rights Forum [filed a complaint](#) against the Government of Peru under the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement. The complaint alleges that the Government of Peru is failing to enforce basic labor laws in its garment, textile, and agricultural export sectors, which together employ hundreds of thousands of workers who produce billions of dollars of goods for the U.S. market.

The complaint breaks new ground by testing a key provision of the “May 10th” standard, which requires countries that sign a trade agreement with the United States to adopt and enforce laws that uphold fundamental worker rights. It argues that Peru’s Non-Traditional Export Promotion Law fails to comply with minimum standards on freedom of association adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) by exempting employers from key parts of the general labor code, allowing them to hire virtually their entire workforce for an unlimited duration on a series of renewable, temporary contracts, some as short as 15 days. Garment and textile employers have taken advantage of the law by systematically declining to renew the contracts of thousands of workers who joined unions in an effort to improve wages and working conditions.



High Crimes on Outlaw Oceans

The New York Times began a four-part series last week on rampant criminality on the world’s oceans. [Part one](#) of the “The Outlaw Ocean” series documents how easily vessels can cheat workers and exploit the environment. [The second part](#) reports on murder at sea. Check out these impressive pieces of investigative journalism, and be on the lookout for a third, coming soon, which will explore how fishermen are trafficked at sea.



Congressional Briefing on Child Labor in Tobacco Industry

On June 11, in advance of the World Day Against Child Labor, ILRF and the Child Labor Coalition organized a Congressional Briefing about child labor in [tobacco fields in the U.S. and in Malawi](#), which earns 60% of its export income from tobacco.

Raphael Sandramu, the General Secretary of the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM) and one of ILRF's 2015 Labor Rights Defender Awardees, gave a moving speech about how tenant farming families in Malawi are tricked into moving north to work in the tobacco fields, where many of them then get trapped in a cycle of debt bondage and are unable to leave. Raphael was joined on the panel by ILRF's Executive Director, Judy Gearhart, as well as the Director of Human Rights Watch's Children's Rights Division, Zama Coursen-Neff, and a former child tobacco worker from North Carolina, Celia Ortiz. The panel was expertly moderated by Norma Flores, now with East Coast Migrant Head Start.



Urging Industry to Address Root Cause of Child Labor in Cocoa

ILRF's Executive Director, Judy Gearhart, spoke on a panel at the U.S. Department of Labor during its annual Child Labor Cocoa Coordinating Group meetings on June 26. Judy presented ILRF's findings from our report, [The Fairness Gap](#), and advocated for initiatives to move the struggle against child labor in cocoa beyond a focus on building schools and monitoring the numbers of children still working in the sector. ILRF is calling on the cocoa industry, along with the U.S., Ivorian and Ghanaian governments, to prioritize strategies that will track and improve cocoa farmers' net income gains and thereby address a primary root cause of child labor in cocoa: poverty.



Launch of the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

On June 16, at the Meet-Up for Childhood Freedom at the Lincoln Memorial, ILRF staff and board members joined our long-time board member, Kailash Satyarthi, to celebrate his work to end child labor and child slavery, his receiving the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, and the launch of the [Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation](#).



New Video: Story of the X

A new [5-minute documentary-style video](#) from an innovative unionized co-op in Massachusetts tells the history of the X: from SweatX to WorX Printing Cooperative. Kevin O'Brien, Co-Founder of WorX, says: "What we've witnessed in the United States is a resurgence of people wanting to know how their clothing and products are made, particularly knowing that they were made with good conscience and by people who are being treated well."

The [WorX Printing Co-op](#) gives people an ethical alternative to sweatshop-made and printed textile products, including custom-printed T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, bags and more.



ILO Urged to Address Forced Labor in Uzbekistan

ILRF joined with 35 trade unions, business associations, investors and other human rights organizations, united as the Cotton Campaign, to [call on the ILO to press the Uzbek government to end forced labor](#). The Uzbek government uses the largest state-orchestrated forced labor system of cotton production in the world. At a meeting this August, the ILO is expected to present the Uzbek government with a plan of action to apply ILO Conventions No. 29 and 105, which prohibit forced labor.



Videos from Labor Rights Defenders Awards

This year's Annual [Labor Rights Defenders Awards](#) honored Senator Sherrod Brown, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi for their commitment to advancing workers' rights and working to end forced and child labor.

If you missed the Awards Ceremony on June 3rd, here are the videos:

- [Senator Sherrod Brown](#)
- [Farm Labor Organizing Committee](#)
- [Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi](#)
- [More videos from the ceremony](#)



Welcome to New Staff & Job Openings

We're delighted to welcome several new staff to ILRF: [Diana Alonzo Watkins](#) joined us in April as Senior Development Officer, [Andy Shen](#) is our new Senior Legal & Policy Analyst, [Caitrin McKee](#) started this week in our new Stephen Coats Memorial Fellowship position to coordinate USLEAP@ILRF, and Graham Robertson is our Summer Legal Fellow sponsored by the Peggy Browning Fund.

We are currently seeking applicants for two job openings: a [China Program Officer](#) and an [Operations and Financial Assistant](#). Please help us find excellent candidates!


