

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



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April 2008 Vol. 6 No. 4

This issue continues to highlight campaigns that address issues of human trafficking.

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Child Soldiers

Burma

Human Rights Watch (HRW) estimates the number of child soldiers in Burma to be as high as 70,000.

In a 2007 report, HRW accused the military of using children to compensate for a lack of adult recruits. Young children were being beaten or threatened to make them enlist and brokers were paid to provide child recruits.

In January 2008 an eyewitness told the BBC's Burmese service he saw a military recruiter rounding up three children in a Rangoon market. "I learned from the mothers that this sergeant routinely comes to the market and takes the kids away," he said. "He pays the market security money to get children for him."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7216848.stm>



'Night commuters' in Northern Uganda.

Thousands of children abandon their villages at night seeking safety from armed groups, who abduct children and force them to become child soldiers or sexual slaves.

Photo: Victoria Ivleva-Yorke, 2003.

More than 300,000 children under 18 are currently exploited in over 30 armed conflicts worldwide. The majority of child soldiers are 15 to 18, but some are as young as 7 years of age.

UNICEF

Uganda

In northern Uganda, more than 25,000 children have been kidnapped and forced to serve as soldiers in a nightmarish civil war that the world has largely ignored.

These innocent children are brutalized and mutilated, forced to commit atrocities, and given as sex slaves to military commanders.

Colombia

Colombia's civil conflict of more than 40 years involves left-wing rebels, right-wing paramilitaries and government forces.

Between 11,000 to 14,000 child soldiers are thought to have served in various illegal armed groups.

Child Soldiers cont. pg. 4

U.S.A. Involvement

The horror of war is traumatic for any soldier. Its psychological scars can last a lifetime. Yet children as young as seven years old are forced to fight. Governments around the world use children as frontline soldiers, porters, and spies.

The U.N. estimates that 300,000 children are actively involved in armed conflicts. In many cases, the U.S.A. is providing military financing, training, and weapons to the very governments that recruit and use child soldiers.

(See action on pgs. 6-7)



Awareness

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“Poverty among Florida’s farm workers is a myth.”
 Burger King executives and Florida’s tomato growers.

Farm workers are *“a labor force in significant economic distress,”* suffering *“low wages (and) sub-poverty annual earnings.”* U.S. Department of Labor

‘Burger King’ and Farm Workers

Three private equity firms (*Goldman Sachs, Texas Pacific Group, and Bain Capital*) bought *Burger King* in 2002 for \$1.5 billion. They have nearly tripled the original out-of-pocket investment, controlling 43 percent of the company and six seats on the company’s board.

During the same time, the *Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)*, a community organization in Immokalee FL, organized the *Campaign for Fair Food*, calling on major buyers of Florida tomatoes to take responsibility for the chronic poverty and horrific labor abuses faced by tomato workers.

Farm workers, who pick tomatoes for the fast-food industry, are among the US’s most exploited workers. Those who work in the tomato fields throughout FL earn sub-poverty wages and have no health care coverage or freedom to form unions. The piece rate — defined as the price paid to pickers for every 32-lb bucket of tomatoes they pick — has remained effectively stagnant for nearly thirty years. In 1980, the going piece rate was 40 cents per bucket. In 2008, workers are paid an average of only 45 cents per bucket. They have to pick twice as much today as they did in 1980 in order to earn anywhere near a minimum wage, which is far less than a living wage.

The CIW campaign achieved several unprecedented successes, bringing companies like *McDonald’s* and *Yum! Brands* behind two key principles: *economic relief for farm workers through a*



- Farm workers picking for 10 to 12 hours a day under FL’s relentless sun during Immokalee’s 8-9 month-long season. Jan. 5, 2008
- *Burger King* boycott march. Aug. 31, 2007

http://www.flickr.com/photos/_ciw_/sets/72157603640781910/

penny-per-pound surcharge passed on directly to workers in the form of a raise in the piece rate and a code of conduct with strict consequences for violating workers’ rights. McDonald’s agreed to pay a penny more per pound to workers harvesting tomatoes, which means the workers will get 72 cents to 77 cents for every 32-pound bucket of tomatoes they pick, up from 40 cents to 45 cents.

Burger King refused to follow the lead of *McDonald’s* and *Yum! Brands*. Their stance helped empower the *Florida Tomato Growers Exchange (FTGE)* to bar its members from participating in any previous agreements with the CIW. Any grower that is found to be in violation of the policy faces a \$100,000 fine from the FTGE, rendering the CIW’s previous hard-fought victories worthless.

In January 2008 *Burger King* spread

rumors that it is considering importing tomatoes from Mexico in the future, citing the labor dispute as one of the chief reasons. This may be an empty threat, but it helped the FTGE in its efforts to intimidate both the farmers it represents and the tomato pickers they employ.

How much would it cost *Burger King* to double the pay of these workers? About \$250,000. Meanwhile, in 2006, 12 *Goldman Sachs* executives received more than \$200 million in *“executive bonuses”*.

US Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), along with Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), sent letters

Burger King cont. pg. 3



Awareness

Burger King *cont. from pg. 2*

to John Chidsey, CEO of *Burger King*, and Reggie Brown, head of the FTGE, urging them to improve farm worker wages and end the exploitation of Florida's tomato harvesters.

"The American people need to understand why it is that huge multi-national corporations that make billions in profits are unable to pay people who supply the products they use a living wage. They need to know why financial institutions like Goldman-Sachs and others, who have major holdings in companies like Burger King, are not applying the proper moral leverage to bring about the necessary changes.

...Now some people might say, 'Well, I don't pick tomatoes why do I have to worry about it?' And the answer is that so long as these types of abysmal working conditions exist in the U.S., they create a culture, which leads us to the race to the bottom...which says that any worker can be subject to arbitrary actions on the part of an employer. This creates a very, very strong anti-worker culture, which is part of the destruction of the middle class, the increase in poverty, the lack of respect for working people in this country."

Farm workers have few protections, with most workers earning sub-poverty wages and suffering exclusion from their right to overtime pay and to organize and bargain collectively.

**Boycott
Burger King!**

Prosecutions Due to Farm Laborer Exploitation

In the past decade, there have been six federal criminal prosecutions in FL for forced labor and slavery of farm workers, resulting in prison terms and freedom for more than 1,000 workers.

In February 2008 federal officials arrested Antonia Zuniga Vargas for virtually enslaving immigrant workers in south Florida. They charged her with conspiring to make money off workers from Mexico and Guatemala, forging documents and committing identity theft. She made workers sleep in box trucks and shacks, charged them for food and showers, didn't pay them for picking produce and had them beaten if they tried to leave. The documents list 13 instances when the workers were beaten.

In another Florida slavery investigation, prosecutors filed charges against four farm labor employers in Immokalee, accused of locking and chaining workers inside U-Haul trucks, holding workers in debt and beating workers who tried to leave.

On Dec. 5, 2007 brothers Cesar, Geovanni and Jose Navarrete and their mother, Virginia, were indicted in U.S. District Court in Fort Myers on charges of "harboring illegal aliens." A month earlier some of the workers, locked in a truck's cargo hold along with fellow workers, managed to punch their way through the ventilator hatch and run to a sheriff's office.

During a subsequent raid, federal agents found men living under deplorable conditions, while being forced to work for meager wages and accruing charges for two meager meals a day, with extra charges tacked on for beer, soda, even water, until the debits outstripped their wages. Anyone who attempted to leave the Navarretes, they said, was hunted down, beaten, brought back to the slave house. Sick days were unthinkable.

One worker told investigators he tried to take a day off and was beaten until he bled. The investigators heard similar stories and cataloged various bodily injuries of the workers.

Sources:

<http://blog.aflcio.org/2008/01/31/21st-century-us-slavery-immigrant-farm-workers/>
<http://blog.aflcio.org/2008/02/01/romneys-firm-refuses-to-protect-farm-workers-from-sweatshop-conditions/>
<http://www.miamiherald.com/418/story/346594.html>
<http://www.ethicalshopping.com/food/fast-food/burger-king-pinches-pennies-threatens-to-mato-growers-over-labor-concessions.html>

Support Farm Workers

Please sign Oxfam's
Burger King petition:
<http://act.oxfamamerica.org/campaign/burgerking/>

At this point, the *Coalition of Immokalee Workers'* (CIW) movement has reached a critical stage. It is important for American consumers to boycott *Burger King*.

But we must also communicate outrage to the company's corporate officials. *Burger King* does not accept e-mail, so phone calls or surface mail are needed.

Burger King Corporate Office:
Burger King CEO John Chidsey
5505 Blue Lagoon Drive
Miami, FL. 33126

Corporate Hdqrs (305) 378-3000
Marketing/Advertising (305) 378-7200
Consumer Relations (305) 378-3535
Mon. - Fri. 9 am to 5 pm, EDT
25% of BK's stock is owned by *Goldman Sachs* (212-902-1000) so let them know that mistreating workers in the BK supply chain will eventually affect their bottom line.



Advocacy

'A Ticking Time Bomb'

Plan International called for urgent action to defuse the 'ticking time bomb' of traumatized former child soldiers, who often face rejection by their communities when they return after years as unwilling conscripts.

Child soldiers are not only snatched from their homes and made to fight and kill, they also endure terrible hardship and brutality. Girls return home with babies and HIV after being forced to become the 'wives' of members of armed groups. Boys also endure savage beatings and rape from commanders.

A report by Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, warns that children in refugee camps are at particular risk of abduction, as well as rape and other forms of abuse. It concludes that not enough is being done to give former child soldiers real hope for the future.



A youth's painting of child soldiers in their community.

"Children forced to fight have lost their childhoods; their futures must not be stolen too. We have a moral responsibility to provide the education, treatment and other support they need to rebuild their lives. Failure to act will create a ticking time bomb of angry, alienated and traumatized youth, whose only skills they have to rely on are those they learned in war." Tom Miller, Plan International CEO

Plan provides long-term community based support to children whose lives have been ruined by conflict.

A Plan project is currently being set up in northern Uganda to help former child soldiers and families returning to their homes from refugee camps. It will:

- provide rapid catch-up education to former child soldiers;
- help girls who have returned with babies or HIV to find a livelihood;
- train teachers to provide psychosocial support.



Cover photo: Martin Adler, Panos Pictures

Rehabilitating Colombia's Child Soldiers

"Given the critical importance of the reintegration phase, *Y Care International* and *YMCA Bogotá* have focused on lessons learned from Colombia's reintegration program as it represents the most difficult and determinant phase in the life of a former child soldier."

"The analysis includes such programmatic challenges as family-based care and reunification, sexual and reproductive health needs, gender-related issues, education, employment and income generation, psycho-social counseling and support, and overarching issues of displacement, stigmatization, funding and monitoring and evaluation."

The 44-page Report will be useful for similar work in other countries. The Report may be obtained at: www.child-soldiers.org/Overcoming_Lost_Childhoods_-_Colombia_-_Y_Care_International_-_January_2008.pdf



Advocacy

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Training on Advocacy for Farmworkers

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services hosts free online Web Ex training sessions on a variety of topics related to human trafficking.

The April 8, 2008 training focused on *Human Trafficking and the Farmworker Community*.

The session was led by Owen Thompson and Renan Salgado, Outreach Paralegals, from *Farmworker Legal Services of New York, Inc.* (FLSNY).

FLSNY is a non-profit corporation providing free legal services to New York's migrant and seasonal agricultural workers. FLSNY's lawyers and paralegals provide a wide range of legal advocacy on behalf of farm workers. FLSNY seeks to assure that agricultural employers and housing providers in New York and nationwide comply with the law, that government entities respect farm workers' civil rights, and that the public is educated about farm worker exclusions from existing labor laws.

Topics covered included:

- What kinds of trafficking occur in farmworker communities.
- Clues for victim identification in farmworker communities.
- Barriers to victim identification — why victims don't come forward.
- How *Farmworker Legal Services of New York* works to identify victims.
- What role NGOs and other groups play in countering farm labor trafficking.

Appointment of a Special Advisor to the U.N. on Human Trafficking

Steve Chalke, the Chair of *Stop the Traffik Coalition*, was appointed as a special advisor to the UN's *Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking* (GIFT). He will advise the UN on *Community Action against Human Trafficking* within the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

"The reality is that trafficking is now the world's fastest growing crime," Chalke said. *"I believe that every person, corporation and government can make choices, which will turn the tide and that together we can see this great evil defeated."*

Chalke's appointment is part of a wider collaboration between the *Stop the Traffik Coalition* and the UNODC that will see the two bodies working together to produce resources for and strengthen connections with grassroots communities around the world. The organizations will also undertake joint research into trafficking in goods and product supply chains.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/un.appoints.steve.chalke.as.special.advisor.on.trafficking/16978.htm>

Corporate Stance

"We, the *Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul*, seek to empower others, especially the poor and oppressed, to achieve a quality of life in keeping with their human dignity (Mission Statement 1989). This impels us to work for the elimination of trafficking in human persons, especially women and children.

We will educate ourselves and others regarding the magnitude, causes and consequences of this modern-day slavery and advocate for policies and programs that lead to its eradication, prevention and healing. In so doing, we add our support and solidarity to the *Declaration of the International Union of Superiors General* (UISG), the *Canadian Religious Conference* (CRC), and the *Women of Providence in Collaboration* on the issue of trafficking in women and children." Gen. Superior, Pauline Lally March 2008

'Train the Trainer'

May 14 – 17, 2008 in Durham, NC *Crisis Care Training International* and *World Relief* will co-host the seminar. The event will feature *Hands that Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors*, produced by *Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking* (FAAST). *Hands That Heal* is a comprehensive, Christian curriculum to train global caregivers who are frontline providers of after-care for women, children and men who have been trafficked into the commercial sex industry.

The curriculum is the result of collaboration among more than 40 academicians and field practitioners from diverse backgrounds and organizations that address the needs of trafficked individuals. Curriculum editors Dr. Beth Grant, co-founder and co-director of *Project Rescue*, and Cindy Lopez Hudlin MPH, a Project Manager with *Project Rescue*, will lead the seminar. For more information contact *Crisis Care Training* at crisiscare@comporium.net



Action

The Better Hour

At the beginning of the 19th century, almost a third of the British economy depended on the trade of human beings. *William Wilberforce* was determined to end this horrific practice, by persuading both Parliament and the British society to abolish slavery in the British Empire. His fight against slavery inspired Abraham Lincoln and countless others throughout the world.

"The Better Hour," a new documentary about Wilberforce, gets its name from poet William Cowper, who said Wilberforce's effort led to *"the better hour"* for Britain.

The slave trade was an evil almost beyond description. Slaves were taken from the west coast of Africa on a two-to three-month voyage to the West Indies, where they were sold. Conditions for the slaves aboard the ships were atrocious. It is estimated more than 10 million Africans were put aboard the ships, with perhaps more than 2 million dying during the journey.

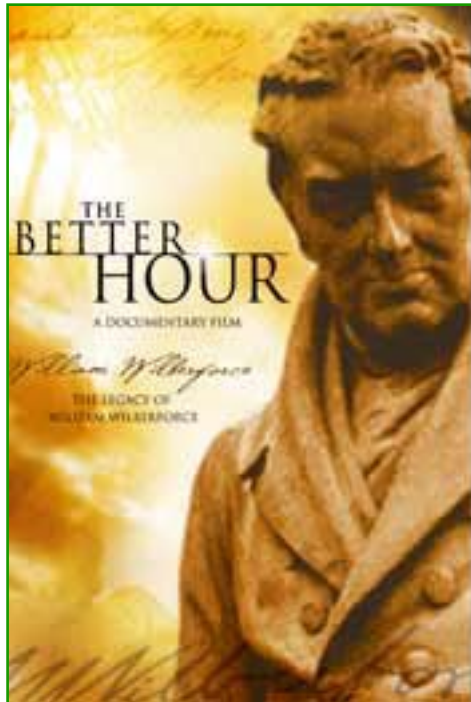
At the beginning of Wilberforce's effort in 1787, many members of Parliament argued that abolishing the slave trade would collapse the economy. But 20 years later, in 1807 Wilberforce's bill overwhelming passed, 283-16.

"The Better Hour: The Legacy of William Wilberforce" will be airing on PBS stations nationally and also is available on DVD. Go to:

<http://www.pbs.org/tvschedules> enter your zip code & search for *"The Better Hour"* on a local PBS station.

The \$25.00 DVD may also be ordered through PBS at:

<http://www.shoppbs.org/>



TVPA 2007 Needs Your Help

The William Wilberforce Act, HR3887 (Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2007 – TVPA) is currently stalled in the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.

Please contact your senators (<http://www.senate.gov/>) to let them know you support the *William Wilberforce Act* as passed by the House.

Look for New Documentary Film

Tens of thousands of Congolese women and girls have been systematically kidnapped, raped, mutilated and tortured by soldiers from both foreign militias and the Congolese army. The world knows nothing of these women. Their stories have never been told. They suffer and die in silence.

In the 76-minute documentary *'The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo'* these brave women finally speak. (See pg. 7)

"Violence against women in conflict is one of history's greatest silences." Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia

Tell the Senate to 'Stop Child Soldiers'

The *Child Soldier Prevention Act (S1175)*, a bipartisan bill to stop US military aid to countries using child soldiers, has 34 co-sponsors in the Senate. Please help convince the other 66 senators to sign on.

Children should not be forced to endure the terrors of war. Tell your senators to co-sponsor the *Child Soldier Prevention Act* today!

Action Letter

Right now, governments around the world are using children as frontline soldiers, porters, and spies. The UN estimates that 250,000 children are actively involved in armed conflicts. In many cases, the US is providing military financing, training, and weapons to the very governments that recruit and use child soldiers.

As one of your constituents, I am writing to ask that you co-sponsor *the Child Soldier Prevention Act (S1175)*. If you are already a co-sponsor, please encourage your colleagues to join with you. Senators Durbin and Brownback have introduced the bill to encourage governments to disarm, demobilize, and rehabilitate child soldiers from government forces and government-supported militias.

Most of the countries perpetuating this problem rely on US military aid. When that aid is threatened, it can provide governments a powerful incentive to change their ways. That's why this bill has the potential to make a significant difference.

Children should not be forced to endure the terrors of war. Please take action to end this deplorable practice.

Thank you for your support,
(Your name and address)

<http://act.oxfamamerica.org/campaign/childsoldiers/>



Action

The 'Red Hand' Campaign

On February 12, 2002, a treaty came into effect, banning the use of children under age 18 in war. Unfortunately, the UN estimates that up to 250,000 children are still being used as soldiers in 20 armed conflicts worldwide.

Children have initiated the *'Red Hand Campaign: One Million Red Hands Against the Use of Child Soldiers'* to urge officials at the UN to act. The aim of this global campaign is to present UN officials in New York with one million red hands on *Red Hand Day, February 12, 2009*, the anniversary of the day the treaty to ban child soldiers took effect.

Let's make clear that we expect more than a ban – we want enforcement. Invite all organizations, communities, schools and individuals to join this campaign and organize events in cities around the world. Appeal to your partner schools and sister cities in other countries. Please participate!

Create your message on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, including your name, your city, state and country. As an expression of your protest, please include your handprint in red paint. These messages will be forwarded to the UN.

Upload reports and photos from your event to the *Red Hand Day* website at: www.redhandday.org

If in the U.S.A., please send your sheets of paper with the red hands to:

Red Hand Campaign, c/o HRW
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118

Address questions to: kizukak@hrw.org

If outside the US, obtain an address from: aktion@babylon21.org



Help Ugandan Children: Sign the Declaration

Please sign the *'No Child Soldiers' Declaration* at:
<http://www.worldvision.org/nochildsoldiers>

World Vision plans to collect 100,000 signatures and present them along with the Declaration to the Bush Administration, Congress, and the UN to demand action. All children deserve to have a childhood free from torture and a future free from cruelty.

Informative Web Sites:
(Each contains information related to human trafficking)

Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

www.child-soldiers.org

Video and Action

http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/child_soldiers/takeaction.htm

Plan International

<http://www.plan-international.org/news/childsoldiers/>

'The Greatest Silence:

Rape in the Congo'

<http://www.thegreatestsilence.org>

**Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking
Resource Center
1.888.3737.888**



Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

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