

Newsflash

Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking



Dear friends,

This is a newsletter of the Global Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking. It is aimed at everyone interested and contains information about and for trade union activities to combat forced labour and human trafficking around the world. The Alliance is led by the International Trade Union Confederation and financially supported by the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour of the International Labour Organisation. It promotes decent work for all and, more specifically, geographical and institutional commitment and cooperation to eradicating forced labour and human trafficking as its very antithesis.

ITUC launches [new best practices guide](#) and world map to indicate how unions are combating forced labour and human trafficking around the world. ITUC integrated a new blog on best practices of trade unions combating forced labour and human trafficking. Please send in any contributions, we would be happy to highlight the activities of your organisation.

ITUC WTO reports on Core Labour Standards:

- [Albania](#) (only in English)
- [Armenia](#) (only in English)
- [Croatia](#) (only in English)
- [El Salvador](#) (only in English and Spanish)
- [Malaysia](#) (only in English)
- [Georgia](#) (only in English)
- [Niger and Senegal](#) (only in English and French)
- [China](#) (only in English)
- [Malawi](#) (only in English)

[Why Dealing With Burma Is A Very Bad Idea](#) by Sharan Burrow, Australian [ACTU](#) and [ITUC](#) President. *“Through businesses operating in Burma, Australia is helping to prop up a military dictatorship that has one of the worst human and labour rights records in the world. Burma is notorious for its massive and systematic violations of human and workers’ rights. There are numerous reports of widespread use of forced and compulsory labour.”* On 20 January 2010, Burma's military government has agreed to extend the [Supplementary Understanding](#) (also available in [Burmese](#)) for a year allowing the ILO to monitor complaints of forced labor. A recent [article](#) says the Burmese military junta uses a new tactic for forced labour in Arakan State in order to avoid pressure from the ILO and international community. While ILO [says](#) forced labour is “reducing”.



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Trade unions affiliated to **BWI** are showing how to organise workers out of bonded labour in this [documentary](#) (only in Spanish) on forced labour in Peru's logging industry.

Belgian union ACV-CSC takes action [against gangmasters in the meat industry](#) proposing a system of joint liability, licensing, more effective control and strengthening of labour inspection, effective prosecution and more consultation with social partners.

The **Spanish General Federation of Labour (UGT)** launches a [campaign](#) on trafficking for labour exploitation and [demands](#) of parliamentary groups that the Law on Foreigners be turned into an instrument to combat labour exploitation and trafficking. It recently hosted a European [seminar](#) of the Global Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking to bring trade unions and other civil society organisations colder together in the fight against human trafficking in Europe.

Silvina Calveyra of the **Argentinian Workers' Central (CTA)** has published an [article](#) (in Spanish) on trafficking of workers and how to identify victims. She also gives [trainings](#) to trade union staff on the issue.

[Interview](#) on **child slavery** with Claudine Akakpo, assistant general secretary of the Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Togo (**Confédération syndicale des travailleurs du Togo – CSTT**): *"Hundreds of thousands of children are forced into domestic slavery in Togo."*

Dutch trade union FNV [reports](#) that a 46-year-old asparagus grower was arrested on suspicion of trafficking and economic exploitation. Last May the police have launched a criminal investigation and found forty workers in appalling conditions were put to work. *"It's a stinking mess. All tricks are pulled by that employer "*, said Wim Baltussen, director of FNV. The exploitation in Someren is unfortunately no exception. *"And we can only do something about these situations when workers and employers report them to us. Hopefully they will increasingly making themselves heard."*

[Interview](#) with Mamadou Niang of the **Confédération Générale des Travailleurs de Mauritanie (CGTM)**: *"Gathering data, offering legal assistance, developing a partnership with migrants' associations and combating trafficking and exploitation of domestic servants are just some of the areas of work the Centre for Migrants in Nouakchott is involved in."* [BWI report](#)

[Interview](#) with N'diougwa WADE of the **National Confederation of Senegalese Workers (Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal – CNTS)**: *"The unions have established themselves as the ultimate actor in the management of work migrations. With a dual priority: to provide employment alternatives in a bid to fight illegal emigration and to protect migrants who have settled in Senegal by fostering the organization of the informal sector, in which the majority of these male and femal migrants are employed."*



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ITUC published a [new report](#) about what trade unions in Mauritania and Senegal are doing to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers.

Representatives of the [ITUC](#), BWI and the **Confederation of Trade Unions of Bosnia-Herzegovina (KSBiH)** [visited](#) Azerbaijan to investigate the situation of 700 trafficked Bosnian construction workers and developed a [common action plan](#) for the ITUC, the KSBiH and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Azerbaijan ([AHIK](#)). ([BWI report](#) , [Change.org](#))

“Polish workers in the Netherlands are exploited and treated as slaves,” [says](#) Dutch union **FNV Bondgenoten**.

ITUC, ITGLWF, Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and ILRF [report](#) on World Cup Soccer Balls: Exploitation Still the Norm Report reveals Child Labour, Poverty Wages, Temporary Workers etc.

[Interview](#) with Albert Njeru, general secretary of the **Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA)**, affiliated to [IUF](#) and organising domestic workers. *“New legislation recognises more rights for Kenya’s domestic workers but many serious forms of exploitation are still suffered.”*

The Migration und Arbeit **DGB Hamburg (MigrAr)** organises local workshops for interested activists of trade unions or NGOs “Building up a network of Trade Unions with NGOs and organizing workers without regular status”. (Source: [ver.di](#)) The **Berlin-branch of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB)** is one of the four project partners of the [Berlin Alliance against Human Trafficking into Labour Exploitation](#).

Ambassador Luis CdeBaca of the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons [announced](#) that the **AFL-CIO Solidarity Center** would be playing an important role in helping Haitian migrant workers avert exploitative conditions in the wake of the recent earthquake.

The **trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)** made a [documentary](#) on the Colombian trade union centre for migrant workers at the [Confederación General del Trabajo \(CGT\)](#).

ITUC released a new [report](#) on domestic workers. Domestic workers, especially women migrant domestics, are exposed in their millions to the risk of exploitation and abuse reaching terrible extremes.

The **International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers’ (IUF)** [article](#) shows that domestic workers around the world are organizing to challenge the harsh, abusive and often slave-like conditions in which they work.



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ITUC published an [interview](#) with Luc Demaret of the **ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)** on recent developments at the ILO regarding new international regulations on domestic work "*Putting an end to exclusion and exploitation*".

The **Migrants' Trade Union of Hong Kong** [reports](#) that the governments' refusal to include foreign domestic workers in the Statutory Minimum Wage has been the most recent move to reduce the status of migrant workers to no more than mere slaves of the modern times.

The **ILO** in **Thailand** has published a [book](#) entitled *Domestic Work - Decent Work* in seven languages including Thai, Burmese, Lao, Shan and Karen to inform domestic workers about their rights and to help them avoid exploitation.

[Anti-Slavery International](#) has launched its new [Home Alone: End Domestic Slavery](#) campaign to protect the rights and dignity of domestic workers.

President of the women's committee and deputy secretary-general of the **National Confederation of Senegalese Workers (CNTS)**, Fatou Bintou Yaffa [explains](#) below the CNTS strategy for organizing informal sector workers. She appeals for support for a project to create a training centre for domestic workers, which would also contribute to combating human smuggling and trafficking, of which domestic workers are often victims.

Through a partnership with the National Council of the SESI (Social Service of Industry), the **Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT Brazil)** joined a network against sexual exploitation of boys and girls in Brazil. [The Project ViraVida](#) aims to restore the self-esteem of these victims, to prepare them for the labour market, and to offer psycho-social support.

[BWI unions in India](#) are organising, promoting child labour free villages and changing community spirits. By focusing on solutions to child labour problems in the brick kiln, stone quarry and forestry sectors, unions in India have managed to not only help thousands of children, but also to organise and bargain much better conditions for their parents. 19 schools have been established in different states through union-to-union solidarity work, and several villages and worksites have been declared child labour free.

The **ITUC** has welcomed the adoption of a new child labour "[Roadmap](#)" at an international [conference](#) in the Dutch capital The Hague this week, which will give a new push to reach a target set by the International Labour Organisation to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016. The results of the Conference will be submitted to the June ILO Conference, which will debate progress towards ending child labour, based on a key ILO report "[Accelerating action against child labour](#)".

ITUC [interviewed](#) Kailash Satyarthi of the **Global March against Child Labour**.



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Over the past three years, [MRCI](#) and the **Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)** have actively [campaigned](#) for the introduction of a scheme that has become commonly known as the “Bridging Visa,” which allows migrants who have become undocumented for reasons beyond their control an opportunity to get back into the system. ICTU’s Esther Lynch welcomed the new scheme as a necessary first step in helping to prevent the emergence of ‘a working underclass that is without either hope or protection’, and highlighting that ‘failure to provide a solution for undocumented migrant workers benefits no one but abusive and exploitative employers’. The **ICTU** also organises Global Solidarity Champions [training courses](#) for its officers.

The **British Trades Union Congress (TUC)** has signed a new agreement with ITUC to support migrant workers in Asia.

The **Georgian Trade union Confederation (GTUC)** organised [training](#) on trafficking, migration and forced labour for their staff.

Other news items:

Following the retirement of Roger Plant in November 2009, Ms. Caroline O'Reilly has become the Head of the **ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL)**.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** has appointed Maria Grazia Giammarinaro as the new [Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings](#).

“Slave Nation” is a new [EJF report](#) on State Sponsored **Forced Child Labour in Uzbekistan's Cotton Fields**.

South Africa is to fast-track a comprehensive [new law against human trafficking](#) before the start of the **soccer World Cup in June 2010**. The law would give South African courts extra-territorial jurisdiction to prosecute.

Recent **Human Rights Watch Reports** indicate widespread [abuse](#) and [discrimination](#) of migrant workers. Another Human Rights Watch [report](#) documents how individuals detained in some drug detention centers are routinely beaten, denied medical treatment, and forced to work up to 18 hours a day without pay in Yunnan and Guangxi provinces. Another [report](#) describes the widespread and severe human rights abuses faced by migrant workers in Thailand, including killings, torture in detention, extortion, and sexual abuse, and labour rights abuses such as trafficking, forced labour, as well as restrictions on organising.



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The **French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH)** adopted its [opinion](#) on human trafficking and exploitation.

The **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** found the Republic of Cyprus guilty in the case of [Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia](#) for failing to protect Oxana Rantseva, who was trafficked in Cyprus on an "artist visa" to work in a local cabaret.

UNESCO report covers the issue of child soldiers (estimated at 250,000 worldwide). Abductions are frequently carried out for the purpose of forced recruitment or sexual violence against girls.

The **European Parliament** adopted a [resolution](#) on preventing trafficking in human beings.

If you know other people interested in the issue please forward this newsletter and invite them to subscribe by emailing lyris@forum.ituc-csi.org and write "subscribe forcedlabour" in the message body or send an email to forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org.

You are kindly invited to send any relevant information to be included in the next issue.

For more information please contact forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org

Website: www.ituc-csi.org/forcedlabour

