

2014 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

At ILRF we believe that human rights can only be secured when victims of rights abuses can speak up and demand change. Two examples illustrate the point.

- We asked a child laboring beside his father in a tobacco field in Malawi why he's not in school. He said he wanted to help put food on the table. Some hear that and say the child *wants* to work, but what we know to be true from our partner's work in the community is that the child doesn't dare to demand that his father be paid more so he can go to school. Without farmworkers in the leadership of reform efforts, this demand for living wages, so critical to ending child labor, gets lost.

- When we asked women garment workers in Bangladesh if they feel safer after all the safety inspections and trainings of the past year, many of them said no, because they do not believe management will listen to them if they raise a concern or propose a solution. As one worker told us, "We say nothing. They say everything. Then how could we say that it's safe?"

For nearly three decades, ILRF has been a leader in policy innovation: to make corporations more accountable for workers' rights in global supply chains and to strengthen legal protections for workers transnationally and locally. Yet we know from experience that these policies are only effective when workers and their unions or worker centers put them to use. That's why we are really excited to share some of our achievements of 2014 in this annual report, all of which involved grassroots worker groups or local rights advocates leading the change.

We were thrilled to see the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize go to one of our longtime board members and a leading advocate to end child labor, Kailash Satyarthi. This is the first time the Nobel committee's attention has focused on issues so central to ILRF's work and the entire ILRF community has celebrated this recognition of Kailash's leadership. ILRF's founding director, Pharis Harvey, worked closely with Kailash on the Global March Against Child Labor and to advocate for ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. We continue working with Kailash today to continue the fight against child labor with a particular emphasis on rooting out child slavery.

We are tremendously grateful to our grassroots partners who continue to inspire us every day – and to all of you who support our advocacy, whether by [taking action](#) in the streets or online or by [donating](#) to help grow our support network for frontline labor rights defenders around the world.

Thank you for all you do for global worker justice!

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judy".

Judy Gearhart
Executive Director



FEATURED STORIES

ENDING CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN TOBACCO



Child labor is pervasive in tobacco fields – in the U.S. and Malawi alike – and the work is extremely hazardous for workers of all ages. Toxins from the plant can cause nicotine poisoning (green tobacco sickness), lung infections from tobacco dust, or even cancer. Tens of millions of dollars are spent every year to dissuade youth from taking up smoking, but not enough attention or resources are being dedicated to ending exploitative tobacco production and the purchasing practices that fuel child labor in tobacco, or to finding less harmful alternative livelihoods for the families who depend on the crop to survive.

The U.S. Department of Labor confirms that tobacco from Malawi is produced with both forced and child labor. An estimated 300,000 Malawian families are trafficked from the impoverished south to northern tobacco plantations each year. Lured to the fields with false promises, tobacco workers move their families (single men aren't recruited because labor brokers know the tobacco harvesters will need additional, unpaid work) to work on plantations reminiscent of shareholder systems that former slaves labored on after the civil war. Given that 60% of Malawi's export income comes from tobacco, achieving accountability from the corporate giants who ultimately use this tobacco, like Philip Morris International, is critical for this tiny country.

ILRF is working with the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM) to enable these exploited farmers and farmworkers to advance policy change nationally and internationally and to take on Big Tobacco globally. By working closely with TOAWUM in 2014, we secured three advances:

- Raphael Sandramu, TOAWUM's general secretary, traveled with ILRF staff and allies to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Convention (FCTC) deliberations in Moscow to help secure language that placed responsibility for poor working conditions among tobacco farmers on the tobacco industry and promoted worker-centered efforts to develop alternative livelihoods for tobacco farmers;

- ILRF and TOAWUM organizers developed a field survey to document working conditions, child labor, and debt bondage, in order to build a body of knowledge that will help TOAWUM members advocate for systemic solutions to ending abuse in the industry; and

- ILRF organized an international coalition of labor and public health groups to sign a joint letter with TOAWUM to the Malawian government demanding structural changes to address forced labor in tobacco production.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN WORKERS' LEADERSHIP AND ADVANCING APPAREL INDUSTRY REFORMS



The majority of the workers around the world who make our clothes are women. In 2014, ILRF honed in on women's perspectives and strategies for promoting women workers' leadership in the industry. Our accomplishments included:

- Convened women union leaders from Honduras, Cambodia and Bangladesh to speak out against sexual harassment, intimidation, and violence against women at work, to join Congressman George Miller in keynoting an ILRF conference on women's rights in the apparel industry, and to forge networks of resistance with U.S. women's rights leaders; and

- Built momentum to end violence against women at work and hold companies accountable by getting 31 women's rights and labor groups to sign the AFL-CIO's petition in support of a Gender-Based Violence at Work Convention at the International Labour Organization.

Following the horrific tragedy of the Rana Plaza collapse, ILRF and allied organizations pressured global brands and retailers to make working conditions safer in their Bangladesh supply chains and pay full and fair compensation to the injured workers and families of the deceased. For industry initiatives to make a real difference, they need to be transparent, legally-binding and include a meaningful role for workers and their organizations. These principles are embodied in the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which had reached 180 company signatories and over 1500 factories by the end of 2014.

ILRF's report, [*Dangerous Silence: Why the U.S. military exchanges need to address unsafe and illegal conditions in their supplier factories*](#) (February 2014), helped spark a movement for the U.S. Government to address labor and human rights in its procurement policies. Given that the U.S. Government is the world's largest consumer, such reforms could have profound impacts on the global economy. Following the report release, ILRF helped Kalpona Akter, Executive Director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (a long-time ILRF partner organization), to brief congressional representatives and testify to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee about apparel workers' struggle for safe workplaces, victim compensation, decent wages, and union rights. ILRF also worked with the Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium to promote better human rights screens in all levels of government purchasing. Thanks to these efforts and the work of many allies, the U.S. Congress endorsed the Accord, praising the Marine Corps for adopting the Accord standard and urging the rest of the Armed Forces to do the same in the Defense Appropriations Act of 2014.

ENDING FORCED LABOR IN UZBEKISTAN



The Cotton Campaign has worked with civil society, government and business representatives to advocate for the end of forced labor in Uzbekistan's cotton sector since 2008. In 2014 two decisions by the government of Uzbekistan resulted from the sustained pressure:

- The Uzbek government did not use forced child labor to pick cotton on a nationwide scale for the first time in its history; and
- The Uzbek government signed a Decent Work Country Programme for technical assistance to apply core labor standards with the International Labour Organization.

Unfortunately, the government also increased forced labor of adults and continued violent crackdowns on human rights defenders throughout the year. In response, we doubled down on efforts to press the government to stop the abuses. We expanded programs to strengthen the capacity of the community-based monitors who document forced labor in the cotton harvest and supported these grassroots monitors to testify to governments and international institutions around the world. Thanks to the collective work of the multi-stakeholder Cotton Campaign, awareness remains

high about continued labor abuses in the country. The U.S. ranked Uzbekistan in the lowest level of its 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report; the European Union maintained its deferral of a textile trade deal with Uzbekistan due to human rights concerns; the World Bank committed to monitor core labor standards and cease loans to the Uzbek government if there is forced or child labor in its project areas; and the Norwegian investment firm Kommunal Landspensjonskasse (KLP) blacklisted cotton trader Olam, textile manufacturer Daewoo and its parent company Posco due to their Uzbek operations.

ENDING FORCED LABOR AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THAILAND



There are an estimated 3 to 4 million migrant workers in Thailand, which the U.S. Department of State identified as the population in Thailand most vulnerable to human trafficking in its 2014 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. Eighty percent of these workers came from Burma to work in the most dangerous, demeaning and dirty jobs, including manufacturing, seafood harvesting and processing, and domestic work. ILRF coordinates a transnational coalition of human rights, labor and environmental organizations to develop solutions that promote environmental and social sustainability within Thailand's seafood industry and bring migrant workers' voices into global accountability discussions.

In 2014, ILRF supported efforts by the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN), a democratically-run migrant-led labor organization in Thailand, to uncover abusive working conditions in seafood export factories and negotiate for remedies on behalf of workers. MWRN is an integral member of ILRF's international coalition and, with support of ILRF and other allies, is expanding its influence among other stakeholder groups. Through our work convening this coalition, ILRF:

- Led a coordinated campaign against a Thai government proposal to use prison labor on fishing vessels that resulted in the government scrapping the plan; and
- Coordinated advocacy that helped secure a downgrade for Thailand in the U.S. State Department's 2014 Trafficking in Person's report, placing them among the least-performing countries in combating human trafficking.

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

PERU

- Worked with Peruvian trade unions to document the abusive use of short-term contracts to deny apparel and agricultural workers their right to form unions
- Prepared for filing a complaint under the U.S.-Peru free trade agreement to challenge abuse in contracting

COTE D'IVOIRE & GHANA

- Presented ILRF research to cocoa farmers and sought their perspectives on solutions to forced and child labor in cocoa
- Convened meetings with Ivorian, Ghanaian, and U.S. government and civil society representatives and to discuss solutions to child labor
- Published a report, *The Fairness Gap*, that documented how the economics of cocoa drive persistent poverty in cocoa-growing communities

COLOMBIA

- Published two profiles of trade unionists under threat as part of our "Sindicalistas Bajo Amenaza" series drawing attention to the continuing violence against unionists in Latin America

GUATEMALA

- Teamed up with BananaLink to promote an online petition that generated over 6000 signatures asking Guatemala's new Attorney General to investigate the backlog of unsolved murders of trade unionists

LIBERIA

- Worked with the Firestone Agricultural Workers Union of Liberia (FAWUL) to develop worker surveys to assess working conditions in Liberia's emerging palm oil sector
- Raised over \$4,000 to support FAWUL's Ebola relief fund, which provided for much-needed supplies for union members to protect their communities from the deadly disease

UZBEKISTAN



-Pressure led Uzbek government to not force children to pick cotton nationwide for the first time in its history

-Supported complaint to World Bank, which then committed to monitor core labor standards

-Trained Uzbek human rights advocates on monitoring working conditions in fields

THAILAND



-Supported efforts by the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN) to uncover abusive conditions in seafood factories and negotiate for remedies

-Led a successful coordinated campaign against a Thai government proposal to use prison labor on fishing vessels

-Successfully advocated for U.S. to place Thailand among the least-performing countries in combating human trafficking in its Trafficking in Person's report

CHINA

-Supported legal aid clinics and migrant worker labor rights training in China

-Enabled workers to seek compensation for workplace injuries and other legally-protected social benefits and entitlements

CAMBODIA



-Trade unionists and activists arrested during wage strikes were finally released after demonstrations held at Cambodian embassies by ILRF and allies

-Urged apparel brands to pay higher prices to their suppliers in Cambodia and to support a minimum wage increase; the minimum wage was increased to 28%

BANGLADESH



-Interviewed 60 workers about their perspectives on safety

-Urged brands to join the Bangladesh Accord in order to make garment factories safer and save lives

-Campaigned for global brands to contribute to Rana Plaza victim compensation

MALAYSIA



-Co-hosted a workshop in Malaysia where NGOs and unions shared strategies for eradicating forced labor in the global palm oil industry

MALAWI



-Helped the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM) to document child labor, debt bondage and other abuses

-Organized coalition letter to Malawian government demanding structural changes to address forced labor in tobacco production

-Successfully advocated for a WHO framework convention to place responsibility for poor working conditions on the tobacco industry and promote alternative livelihoods

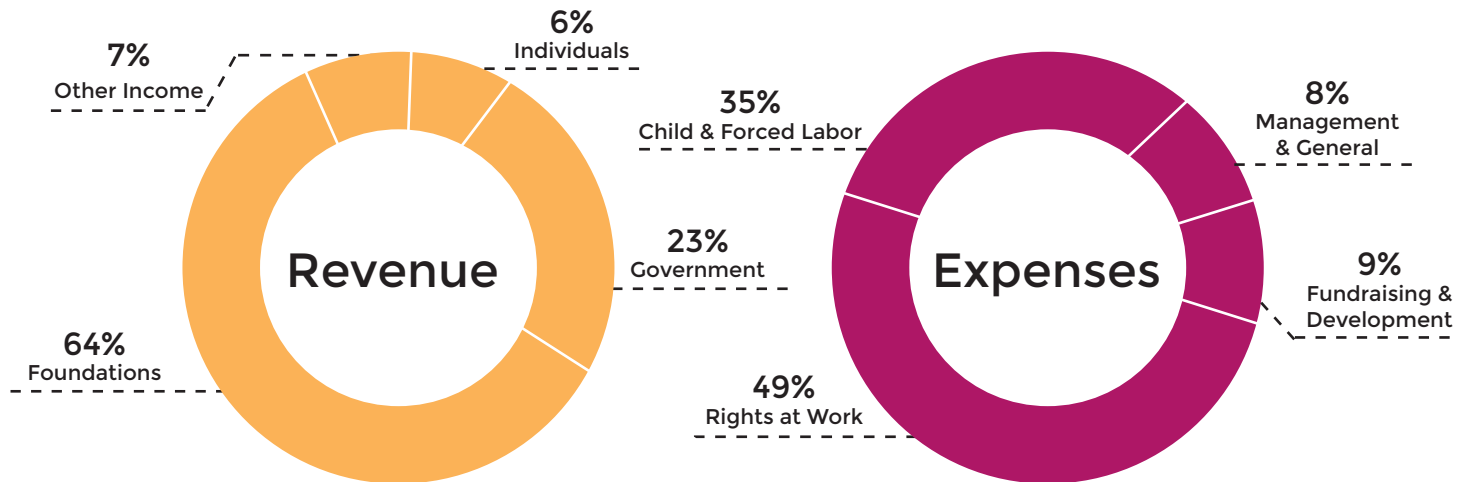
INDONESIA



-Examined discriminatory labor laws and practices that put palm oil workers at risk

-Co-published the "[Fair Labor Principles](#)" as a challenge to the palm oil industry to improve its labor practices and create space for worker voice and organizing

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF 2014



\$1,269,584	Foundations
\$454,571	Government
\$113,097	Individual Donors
\$148,425	Other Income
\$1,985,677	Total

\$823,792	Rights at Work
\$585,616	Child & Forced Labor
\$157,817	Fundraising & Development
\$127,741	Management & General
\$1,694,966	Total

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