

For immediate release
October 29, 2014

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Charges Against Andy Hall Dismissed

Activists plan global actions to show support in advance of next case tomorrow

A Thai court dismissed criminal defamation charges against labor rights activist Andy Hall today, citing an unlawful interrogation process. It was the first of four criminal and civil charges leveled against Hall by Natural Fruit leveled four charges against Hall after he contributed to [research by the Finnish NGO Finnwatch](#), which documented conditions including illegally low wages, forced overtime, document confiscation, and hazardous working conditions at a Natural Fruit pineapple canning factory in Southern Thailand.

The trial for a second civil defamation case will start on October 30, Hall's 35th birthday.

Activists from four countries will rally outside Royal Thai Embassies today, demanding the Thai Government end this abusive use of Thai law to silence human rights activists, and ensure decent working conditions for migrant workers. If found guilty on all charges, Hall could face more than 8 years in prison and more than \$10 million in fines.

“Use of criminal defamation laws, by private companies or governments, against human rights defenders has a dangerous chilling effect,” said Abby McGill, ILRF campaigns director. “Migrant workers in Thailand are already isolated and vulnerable, in large part because of Thai immigration and labor laws. Advocates must be free to help break their silence and speak out when they find themselves exploited by abusive employers.”

Demonstrators will [deliver a letter](#) at each rally signed by 33 labor and human rights organizations from around the world. The letter calls on the Thai Government to take action to ensure that: freedom of speech is protected for human rights defenders; unfair and/or illegal labor practices documented at Natural Fruit are investigated; remediation is available for victims of any illegal labor practices; and effective measures to prevent future violations of workers in the pineapple industry are introduced in consultation with workers and their advocates.

Details for the action in Washington DC:

WHAT: Birthday party demonstration in support of Andy Hall

WHEN: 4:30pm - 5:30pm, Wednesday, 29 October 2014

WHERE: Embassy of Thailand, Washington DC, 1024 Wisconsin Ave NW

EVENT PAGE: <https://www.facebook.com/events/577748169019525/>

Other events occurring in support of Andy Hall on October 29 (all times are local):

- Helsinki, Finland, 9 a.m. Contact: Sonja Vartiala, sonja.vartiala@finnwatch.org, Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1549376001960080/>
- The Hague, Netherlands, 10 a.m. Contact: Wendy Schutte, Wendy.Schutte@fairfood.org
- London, United Kingdom, 4:30 p.m. Contact: Owen Tudor, OTudor@tuc.org.uk,
Event page:
https://www.facebook.com/events/545374012263029/?ref_dashboard_filter=upcoming

Hall is a British-born campaigner and workers' rights advocate who works with NGOs and trade unions in Thailand and Burma to protect the rights of migrant workers. For more information on Hall's case, visit his blog at: <https://andyjhall.wordpress.com/>

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International Labor Rights Forum (www.LaborRights.org) is a human rights organization that advocates for workers globally.