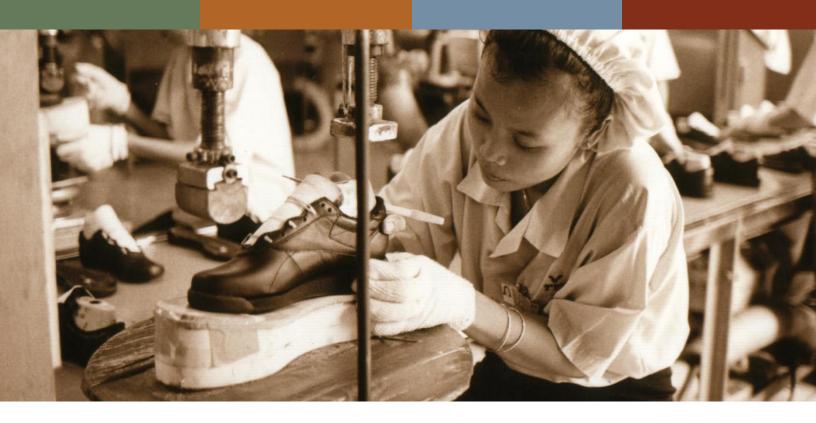
International Labor Rights Forum BUILDING A JUST WORLD FOR WORKERS



Progress Towards Justice 2007 Annual Report



A Message from the Director

The year 2007 may have marked a turning point in the struggle to end child labor around the world.

We at ILRF have been fighting to raise awareness of, and promote solutions to, the terrible problem of child labor since the day we opened our doors, over twenty years ago. Important progress was made in the late 1990s,



when we led the Global March Against Child Labor to the doors of the International Labor Organization, convinced the ILO to adopt a new convention against the Worst Forms of Child Labor, and successfully pushed the US government to be an early ratifier of that new Convention. Yet progress since that moment in 1998 has been slow. The ILO estimates that 211 million children around the world continue to work in conditions that jeopardize their health, education and welfare.

Yet we saw notable attention and progress to issues in our work to highlight forced and child labor throughout the year 2007, and media attention to this issue has reached a new high. A lengthy investigative report by Bloomberg News in December 2006 on forced labor in pig iron production in Brazil galvanized attention to this issue, and our Firestone campaign on child labor in rubber production received notable media coverage throughout the year, beginning in January 2007 when Firestone was given a Public Eye Award for Worst Global Corporation opposite the World Economic Forum in Davos. Later in the year, a BBC exposé of forced child labor in cotton production in Uzbekistan spurred global garment brands and retailers to take responsibility for forced labor in their cotton supply.

We ended the year 2007 on a true high note, celebrating the unprecedented victory by the Firestone Agricultural Workers' Union of Liberia (FAWUL), which in December 2007 won legal recognition as the first-ever independent workers' union on the world's largest rubber plantation. This victory reminded us that the true opposite of enslavement is not freedom, but empowerment. Individual freedom in a context of systemic economic repression has little practical meaning; worker and community empowerment to bargain better economic conditions, and a real future for workers and their families, is the only real and sustainable way forward out of modern-day slavery.

As FAWUL begins its negotiations with the company in 2008, we look forward to supporting its efforts to eradicate forced child labor on the plantation through the establishment of a fair deal and living wage that will finally enable the plantation's adult workers to support their families.

And what about the litigation? Many of ILRF's longstanding friends and supporters will look through the pages of this year's annual report and note the absence of updates on the important human rights litigation we have launched in recent years against Coca Cola, Drummond Mines, ExxonMobil and other major multinational corporations. As many of our supporters know, we experienced a dramatic organizational change in 2007, as in the beginning of the year we witnessed the launch of International Rights Advocates, a new sister organization dedicated solely to continuing this litigation work to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses around the world. Terry Collingsworth left ILRF to spearhead this new effort, and we look forward to a warm relationship with Terry and his team of lawyers, even as ILRF continues its own important work through public education, campaigns, and policy advocacy to develop innovative new means to hold corporations accountable for workers' rights violations.

We look forward with great enthusiasm to continuing this progress in 2008!

In Solidarity,

Bama Athreya Executive Director

Cover photo © Romano

Mission Statement

ILRF is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide.

About ILRF

Millions of workers around the world toil under inhumane working conditions. In a globalized economy, corporations from developed countries produce consumer goods ranging from coffee to cellphones in poor developing countries, where they can take advantage of cheap labor and lack of environmental or community protections. Workers, including child workers, must toil extremely long hours for wages that are barely subsistence wages, and often under unsanitary and unsafe conditions. In many countries there is little or no labor law enforcement, and many workers are prevented from joining organizations to advance their interests.

Advocacy for these workers is essential to ensuring their protection, strengthening their voice, and ending abuses that violate their rights and dignity. ILRF is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. ILRF serves a unique role among human rights organizations as advocates for and with working poor around the world. We believe that all workers have the right to a safe working environment where they are treated with dignity and respect, and where they can organize freely to defend and promote their rights and interests. We are committed to ending the problems of child labor, forced labor, and other abusive practices. We promote enforcement of labor rights internationally through public education and mobilization, research, litigation, legislation, and collaboration with labor, government and business groups.

Some of ILRF's accomplishments in 2007 include:

- Publication of reports with international partners documenting the growing child labor problem in the cottonseed industry in India, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Due to ongoing pressure from ILRF and partners, Monsanto Corporation agreed to participate in a child labor monitoring program in India and to undertake a global risk assessment.
- With the support of our **Stop Firestone Campaign** (to end child labor on Firestone's rubber plantations in Liberia), workers held the first free, fair and democratic union elections to ever take place

on the Firestone plantation (after Bridgestone/ Firestone 'won' the Public Eye Award for Worst Global Corporation in January due to ILRF's nomination).

 Through our Wal-Mart "Nailed" Campaign, ILRF facilitated two Wal-Mart worker speaking tours throughout the US featuring workers from Colombia, the United States and India, helping to educate US consumers about the exploitative conditions in Wal-Mart production facilities around the world.

The following pages highlight ILRF's achievements in 2007 for each of its major program areas: Stop Child Labor, Create a SweatFree World, Rights for Working Women, and End Violence Against Trade Unions.

partner and worker spotlights

In late 2007, ILRF surveyed its supporters to gain more insight into what ILRF is doing that people enjoy as well as ideas for ways to improve. One thing that came from the surveys loud and clear was a desire to learn more about workers themselves. You requested and ILRF delivers! In this annual report, you will find a story of a cut flower worker and more information about an organization we have been working with in Pakistan. We appreciate your feedback and have made it our priority to uplift the stories and promote resources that can be useful to consumers trying to support companies that support workers' rights. We look forward to sharing this information with you in 2008 and beyond.

Stop Child Labor

An estimated *one out of six* children in the world – approximately 211 million – are child laborers. Worse, the ILO estimates that nearly 75 percent of working children are engaged in the "worst forms of child labor" (trafficking, armed conflict, slavery, sexual exploitation, and hazardous work). These children are robbed of their childhoods and forced to perform work that is damaging to their physical, mental, emotional, and cognitive development.

ILRF is leading the movement to hold some of the world's most profitable and ubiquitous corporations accountable for allowing children in abhorrent conditions in the developing world to produce the goods they sell to consumers in more prosperous nations.

ILRF's Campaign to Stop Child Labor focuses on public education, mobilization and policy advocacy to end the global exploitation of children in the labor force. Given the prevalence of child labor in commercial agriculture and other commodity production, this program includes **campaigns in the cocoa, rubber and cotton industries**. ILRF also advocates for increased global funding for basic childhood education in the developing world through participation in an international campaign to increase access to education.

With support from our **Stop Firestone Campaign** to end child labor on Firestone's rubber plantation in Liberia, workers held the first free, fair and democratic union elections to ever take place on the Firestone plantation and workers are currently negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement.

Our **Cocoa Campaign** to raise awareness of forced child labor in cocoa harvesting in West Africa, Fair Trade chocolate consumption in US market expanded five fold, and 60 national organizations and Fair Trade chocolate companies signed onto a Commitment to Ethical Cocoa Sourcing.

In addition to campaigns against specific companies and industries, ILRF is also leading public policy advocacy efforts to address child labor through legislative approaches. Just within the past year, the United States Trade Representative initiated reviews of slavery, forced labor and forced child labor in Uzbekistan and Niger as a result of ILRF petitions. ILRF





also drafted and promoted introduction of major new legislation in the US Congress on child labor, with passage expected in early 2008.

ILRF has also actively engaged the socially responsible investment community in specific actions to address child labor. In 2007, ILRF encouraged socially responsible investors to agree to coordinated shareholder efforts to push garment brands and retailers to verify whether child labor was used in their cotton production.



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Stop Firestone campaign spotlight



To get involved in the Stop Firestone campaign, supporters can check out the new and improved campaign website at **www.StopFirestone.org**. You can send an e-mail to Firestone and find a letter to deliver to your local Firestone Complete Auto Care store. You can also join the Stop Firestone Picture Protest by taking a photograph of yourself holding a "STOP Firestone" sign and posting it on **Flickr.com** and tagging it with "StopFirestone."

In December 2007, Berkeley, CA became the first city to pass a City Council resolution expressing solidarity with the Firestone workers in Liberia. Passing a similar resolution in your city, state, university or union local is a great way to support the campaign. Also, in the summer of 2008, we will be launching an exciting new postcard campaign and organizing actions across the country. Make sure to sign up for ILRF's e-mail list to get the latest updates.

Create a Sweatfree World

ILRF seeks to challenge sweatshop conditions globally, and promote ethical alternatives to sweatshopproduced goods. Simultaneously, we seek to change the global trade rules, and enforce existing legal protections for workers around the world. Workers rights need to be enforced just as stringently as investors rights are now enforced under these rules.

ILRF's Creating a SweatFree World Campaign focuses on sweatshops (particularly in the garment industry), working conditions in food and agriculture supply chains, strategies to enforce laws that protect workers' rights, and the policies (such as NAFTA and CAFTA) that lead to systemic labor rights violations, as described briefly below.

ILRF has campaigned against Wal-Mart through its **Wal-Mart "Nailed" Campaign** for the past several years for sweatshop abuses around the world – both within garment production and in the cultivation of fruits and vegetables retailed in Wal-Mart and other supermarket giants. In February 2007, ILRF organized a speaking tour across Oregon and Washington featuring workers from India, Colombia and the United States. The speakers addressed over a thousand people in just two weeks and even managed to catch the attention of elected officials in Portland.

In 2007, ILRF also released a critique of Wal-Mart's Ethical Standards Report and contributed to "Wal-Mart's Sustainability Initiative: A Civil Society Critique," a collaborative effort by 23 organizations describing ways in which Wal-Mart is harmful to workers, communities and the environment and must make drastic changes to reverse its negative impact.

ILRF is also currently housing and facilitating the "Big Box Collaborative," a forum dedicated to information-sharing among organizations campaigning against Wal-Mart.

ILRF began work in 2007 with state officials in Maryland and Michigan through the **SweatFree Communities and Uniforms Campaign** to create a joint purchasing consortium and monitoring body to implement sweatfree procurement legislation. In addition, ILRF has been working with K-12 schools in the Washington, DC area to pass sweatfree policies for school uniforms.



Together with Chinese NGOs, ILRF's **Promoting Legal Protection for Chinese Workers Program** provided basic legal training to hundreds of workers in Southern China during the past year. The focus of the free courses was on work injury compensation, health and safety, hours and wages, women employees' rights and China's recently-enacted Labor Contract Law. Trainees who reached an "advanced" level were taught to become trainers themselves.

The Labor Contract Law, which went into effect on January 1, 2008, introduced new guarantees in terms of hiring and firing and probationary periods and reinforced existing legislation on contracts, work hours, and social security payments—often by adding real teeth to penalties against non-compliant employers. Though opposed by business groups, the Labor Contract Law was greeted with enthusiasm by workers. This enthusiasm was shown in the greatly increased attendance rates at some of our partners' classes whenever they dealt with the new legislation.

Less noticed have been recent regulations on job discrimination issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and China's new Arbitration Law, which, while less ambitious than many advocates had hoped, had the important effect of eliminating onerous arbitration fees that were a barrier to worker suits. Combined with a new commitment by some local governments to cracking down on abusive employers, these moves open up fresh space for labor rights advocates. ILRF is committed to using this space to increase workers' capacity to protect their own rights and interests.

ILRF's **Fairness in Flowers** Campaign has been working to strengthen the labor standards in cut flower certification programs. In 2007, we continued to closely follow the national process to develop a Sustainable Agriculture standard (which arose last year out of the VeriFlora certification program for cut flowers) and host strategy sessions with NGO allies. ILRF also recently became the first USbased organization to become a full member of the Review Committee of the Fair Flowers Fair Plants (FFP) certification initiative, which certifies flowers for the European market. For Valentine's Day, we invited a Colombian cut flower worker to the US to



share her experiences and concerns with members of Congress, NGOs, and consumers. Later in the year, we worked with a local partner in Guatemala to carry out preliminary research on working conditions in the poinsettia industry.

Rosa Delgado worker spotlight

"...I had been working at this plantation for four years when my hands started to fall asleep. I would work from 6 a.m. until 5 or 6 p.m., using clippers all day long. The pain went all the way up to my shoulder. They gave me an exam to see if the carpal tunnel syndrome was due to a thyroid problem, arthritis, or glycemia, and since those tests came back fine, they knew it was because of the work.

I have had surgery on my right hand three times. I feel like I am going to lose this finger. It is really hard to bend it or move it. I get to work at 6 a.m., and by 8:30 a.m. my hands hurt so much I can't stand it. I only work taking the smaller buds off the stems; this is an easier job than cutting but I am still sick. They didn't give me enough time to recover from the surgery before sending me back to work. After the last surgery, they gave me 1 month and 20 days of rest. But the specialists say that it takes at least 6 months for the nerves to recover. On the outside, the skin looks healed, but inside the nerves have a hard time healing. I haven't recovered, and every day my hand hurts more...[?]

> Rosa Delgado Colombian Flower Worker

Create a Sweatfree World



Protecting the rights of workers through **Advocacy on Trade Agreements and Labor Standards** within the global trading system has long been ILRF's main priority, and one longstanding vehicle has been the use of mechanisms in bilateral and multilateral trade initiatives. ILRF regularly presents testimony before Members of Congress and before the Administration on labor standards in proposed and existing trade agreements, in 2007 including the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement; in 2007 ILRF also presented testimony related to worker rights and trade preferences for the Philippines, Niger, Uzbekistan and Bangladesh.

Shop With a Conscience Consumer Guide

Together with SweatFree Communities and Sweatshop Watch, ILRF released the latest version of the Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide featuring



clothing retailers that meet very strict standards throughout their supply chains. The companies in the guide have committed to sourcing from worker owned cooperatives and unionized factories. You can view the Guide at **www.sweatfree.org/shoppingguide.**

Rights for Working Women

While increased access to employment has provided new economic and social opportunities for poor women, the jobs they occupy remain unregulated and unstable. Women workers are systematically denied their rights to regular pay and regular working hours; equal pay for equal work; permanent contracts; safe and non-hazardous work environments; and freedom of association. Sexual harassment in the workplace, and workplace-related sexual violence, is a particularly egregious and widespread form of discrimination against women. Organizing against such abuse is also particularly difficult for women, because of the highly gendered nature of subcontracting and other forms of flexible work.

ILRF developed the Rights for Working Women Campaign in 2002 to promote increased awareness of and viable remedies for the problem of workplace sexual harassment and violence against women. The Campaign has enabled ILRF to produce comprehensive studies on the plight of women workers in targeted countries throughout the world and promote cross-regional dialogue to build international consensus. The Campaign also works to alleviate sexual harassment and violence through reform of local laws, judiciary advocacy, and the promotion of effective monitoring of sexual harassment in corporate codes of conduct and collective bargaining agreements.

In 2007, with support from the Rausing Charitable Trust, ILRF promoted advocacy for the rights of women workers through the continuation of a small grants program that provides meaningful financial project support to improve the conditions of working women around the world. Grantees were strategically selected to be geographically diverse and representative of the industries most affected by workplace sexual harassment and violence. Grantees included four Central/South American NGOs (Colombia, Mexico, Peru and the Dominican Republic), two African NGOs (Kenya and South Africa), and four Asian NGOs (China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). The partners under this program used the small grants to conduct pathbreaking new research on the scope of sexual harassment; to provide legal assistance and services to women workers; and to undertake important awareness-raising activities.



Harmony Foundation partner spotlight

Harmony Foundation is an organization based in Faisalabad, Pakistan, that seeks to advance workers' rights, especially the rights of working women. To this end, Harmony engages with lawyers, the media, civil society organizations and representatives of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce.

Harmony uses interactive theater to promote labor rights, encouraging workers to act out different stories from their lives. The organization has been pushing for the adoption of a Code of Conduct prepared by the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment at Work (AASHA). It has established a help line for women workers to report instances of discrimination, sexual harassment and other abuses. Currently, with support from ILRF, Harmony is undertaking research on the labor and health conditions of women in Faisalabad's textile mills.

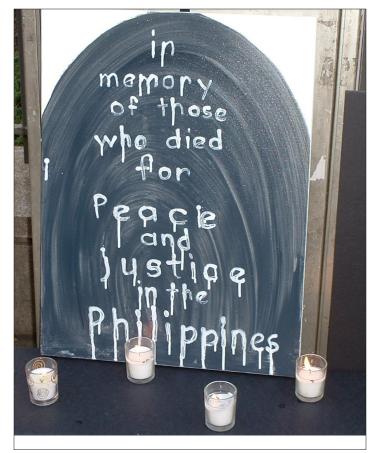
End Violence Against Trade Unions

While freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are recognized as core labor standards by the ILO and theoretically protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, members of trade unions are targets of brutal government and paramilitary violence around the world. Under the threat of violence, it is impossible for workers to exercise their rights to organize for better working conditions.

While trade unions face violence and repression all over the world, some countries are especially brutal in their attacks. **Colombia** is by far the most dangerous country in the world for union organizing; more trade unionists are murdered in Colombia every year than in the rest of the world combined.

To increase awareness of the problem and support trade unions facing violent repression, ILRF conducts public education, legislative advocacy, and urgent actions targeted to Colombia and the Philippines, including presenting testimony before the US Congress and advocating for the protection of worker rights in the context of trade negotiations. In response to escalating violence against unions in the **Philippines** in recent years, ILRF has concentrated its efforts on this country in 2007.

In 2007, the ILRF, in cooperation with our allies in the Philippines, filed a petition against the Philippines government under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, alleging that the Philippines systematically denies workers the rights of freedom of association, the right to organize and to form and join unions. The basis of the petition was a recent spike in the number of political killings in the Philippines where over 86 trade union leaders and activists have been killed since 2001. Also, the petition seeks to ensure that Philippine workers, especially in the Export Processing Zones, are allowed to join unions and exercise their collective bargaining rights. The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) accepted the petition for review and, in October, representatives from the US Departments of State and Labor traveled to the Philippines to investigate the allegations contained in the ILRF's complaint.



Also, in an effort to bring an end to the political killings of labor leaders and other human rights advocates in the Philippines, the ILRF helped organize and spearhead a loose coalition of faith-based, human rights and Filipino-American organizations in an effort to ensure that US military aid provided to the Philippines is conditioned upon a respect for the human rights and labor rights of the Filipino people by the Philippine government.

First, we were able to secure a hearing in the U.S. Senate to look into the political killings in the Philippines. Then, we were able to convince Congress to place human rights conditions on this year's military spending in the Philippines that requires the State Department to certify that the Philippine government is (1) implementing human rights reforms, (2) opening investigations into extrajudicial killings allegedly committed by military units, and (3) ending the spate of political killings of church leaders, labor leaders, and other political activists that has increased dramatically over the past five years. This marked the first time ever that the U.S. Congress has placed human rights conditionality to military spending in the Philippines, something that did not happen even in the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship. As a result of the growing international pressure to end the killings, the number of extra-judicial killings in the Philippine fell by over 70% between the beginning and end of 2007.

U.S. Americans placed on Filipino watch list ILRF news spotlight

In December 2006, while researching and investigating the rise in trade union murders in the Philippines, ILRF staff was blacklisted from traveling to the Philippines along with over 60 other U.S. Americans and over 500 people from around the world, including pastors and priests, Filipino-Americans, trade unionists, and human rights workers. Though the official reason for the blacklisting is still unknown, each person on the list had stood prominently in solidarity with Filipinos calling for an end to the extra-judicial killings. As a result of the pressure placed on the Philippine government by working hand in hand with our allies, the Philippine government was forced to publicly reveal the content of the blacklist in August 2007.

Since then, we have continued to work hard to ensure that the U.S. foreign policy is aimed at ending the Philippine government heavy handed approach to silencing its critics, whether through listing its own citizens on order of battles, which lead to their eventual murder, or whether through the use of immigration blacklists as an attempt to isolate their citizens from international support.

2007 Financials

| REVENUE | 2006 | 2007 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Churches | \$2000 | \$ 7,000 |
| Foundations | \$202,550 | \$308,680 |
| Other institutions | \$4,450 | \$31,914 |
| Individuals | \$43,273 | \$51,773 |
| Donor advised funds | - | \$150,000 |
| Trade unions | - | \$12,000 |
| Government | \$147,802 | \$295,237 |
| Honoraria | _ | \$13,425 |
| Interest | \$7,508 | \$3,183 |
| Reimbursements | \$173,160 | \$16,052 |
| Service fees | \$8,651 | \$4,549 |
| Other | \$47 | \$203 |
| In-Kind contributions | \$155,000 | \$1,000 |
| Gain on investments | <u>\$1,487</u> | \$2,245 |
| Total revenue | \$745,928 | \$ 897,261 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Program services | \$1,168,876 | \$735,557 |
| Supporting services | | |
| Management and general | \$257,326 | \$223,020 |
| Depreciation | \$4,281 | \$7,908 |
| Fundraising | <u>\$13,147</u> | <u>\$18,994</u> |
| Total expenses | \$1,143,630 | \$985,479 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | \$(697,702) | \$(88,218) |
| NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR | \$789,000 | \$91,298 |
| NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR | \$91,298 | \$3,080 |

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ASEPROLA partner spotlight

ASEPROLA is a Costa Rica-based non-profit organization dedicated to developing and strengthening workers' rights in Central America through research, training, advice and communications. Founded in 1985, it works in three principal areas: women's participation and gender equality, the impact of free trade and globalization, and labor flexibility. Throughout the years, ASEPROLA has continuously upheld ILRF's principles and collaborated on related projects from pineapple company misconduct to maquila worker's rights. Omar Salazar, Executive Director of ASEPROLA, is also on the ILRF's board of directors; and contributes to our understanding of Central America's struggle for labor rights.



ASEPROLA Executive Director Omar Salazar speaks at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. (April 2008).

Contributors

Our work would not be possible without the contributions of our dedicated supporters who share our commitment to making social and economic justice a reality for millions of workers worldwide. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following institutions and individuals for their generous support in 2007.

Foundations, Labor Unions, Government Entities, and Organizations

Anonymous Computer Technologies Group Communication Workers of America General Service Foundation International Brotherhood of Teamsters International Union of Bricklayers/Allied Craft. Jeht Foundation Open Society Institute Presbyterian Church Ramsay Merriam Fund Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. Seafarers International Union, Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District/NMU Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries United States Department of State

Individuals

Labor Rights Believer Up to \$249

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Labor Rights Executive Circle \$5,000 to \$9,999 Stephen and Melissa Murdoch

Labor Rights Champion Roundtable \$10,000+ Kathleen Ruff

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