

Stop Firestone Campaign



Student Action Kit

www.StopFirestone.org

For more information, please contact:

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TOP 5 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION!

- 1) EDUCATE yourself**
- 2) SPREAD the word**
- 3) JOIN the Stop Firestone Picture Protest**
- 4) RAISE your voice to Firestone**
- 5) FLYER at your local Firestone**

1) EDUCATE yourself:

- You can learn more about Firestone's history in Liberia by visiting the Stop Firestone campaign website: www.StopFirestone.org. You can watch videos online at www.YouTube.com/StopFirestone and read the latest blog entries at www.laborrightsblog.typepad.com.

2) SPREAD the word:

- You can spread the word by tabling on your campus, showing the CNN and Al-Jazeera video reports from our YouTube page, organizing a teach-in and inviting a speaker to your campus.
- Join the Stop Firestone Facebook group and friend us on MySpace (www.MySpace.com/StopFirestone)

3) JOIN the Stop Firestone Picture Protest:

- We are organizing the Stop Firestone Picture Protest, check out <http://www.stopfirestone.org/action/pictureprotest> for more information (flyer also available in the action kit).
- While you are tabling on campus, take photographs of supporters holding a "STOP Firestone" sign available online (and in this kit), post them on Flickr.com and tag them with "StopFirestone"

4) RAISE your voice to Firestone:

- Send a letter to Firestone online (www.StopFirestone.org) or use the attached sample letter and organize a letter-writing event
- Distribute the Stop Firestone petition in this action kit and get signatures while you are tabling. Then, send it back to us!

5) FLYER at your local Firestone:

- Using the informational flyer in this action kit, distribute them to customers and on cars at your local Firestone Complete AutoCare Facility. Find your nearest store here: www.firestonecompleteautocare.com. Corporate locations can be found at www.bridgestone-firestone.com.
- Get creative! Organize other events and let us know!

SAMPLE LETTER TO FIRESTONE

Dear Dan Adomitis and Mark Emkes,

As a consumer, I am very concerned about the situation facing workers and their families on Firestone's rubber plantation in Liberia. I join US and Liberian-based organizations in calling for your company to:

- 1) Respect worker's rights, stop child labor, in particular, renegotiate the quota, and work with the newly elected union leadership;
- 2) Improve the quality of living and working conditions;
- 3) Stop polluting the environment and redress past damage;
- 4) Stop the secrecy and fully disclose all of your agreements in Liberia.

Thank you for your time. I will not rest until all of the demands are met.

Sincerely,

Contact address:

Firestone Natural Rubber Company
310 E 96th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Phone: 317-575-7000
(CEO: Dan Adomitis)

Bridgestone Americas Holding, Inc.
535 Marriott Drive.
Nashville, TN 37214
Phone: 615-937-1000
Fax: 615-937-3621
(CEO: Mark Emkes)

Join the fight to



Firestone's Exploitation of Liberia

Be Part of our Picture Protest!

Here's what YOU can do:

- **Take YOUR photo!** Here are 3 options:
 - Take a picture of yourself with our "Stop" poster, which you can find at <http://www.labourrights.org/files/StopSign.pdf>
 - Take a picture of yourself next to a stop sign in your neighborhood
 - Write "Stop Firestone" on the palm of your hand and take a picture
- **Post your photo on Flickr.com and tag it with "StopFirestone" or e-mail your picture to Tim Newman (tim.newman@ilrf.org) with your full name and contact information**
- **Take more photos of your faith group, community group, union local or even at your summer BBQ!**

The Stop Firestone Picture Protest is part of the larger Stop Firestone Campaign. We are fighting to put an end to Firestone's abusive labor practices, including the use of child labor and damaging environmental practices.



BASIC FACTS ON FIRESTONE IN LIBERIA

A HISTORY OF EXPLOITATION:

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company has operated the world's largest rubber plantation in the world in Harbel, Liberia for over 80 years. Firestone signed a concession agreement with the government of Liberia to lease over one million acres of land in 1926 for 6 cents per acre for a period of 99 years. In 2005, Firestone signed a new 37-year agreement with a transitional government in Liberia to lease the land for 50 cents per acre. All rubber produced in Liberia is sent to the United States for processing into tires and no processing or manufacturing is done in Liberia.

FIRESTONE USES CHILD LABOR:

Firestone workers must tap trees in order to extract the latex necessary for making rubber tires. The rubber tappers must meet a daily production quota or their already low wages will be halved. By Firestone Natural Rubber Company CEO Dan Adomitis' own admission on CNN, it would take over 21 hours to meet the quota. As a result, tappers are forced to bring their children and wives to work. Children are forced to carry two 70 pound buckets of rubber on their shoulders for miles. Tappers and their children must apply toxic pesticides without protection.

FIRESTONE KEEPS WORKERS IN TERRIBLE CONDITIONS:

Firestone workers in Liberia live in cramped shacks which have not been renovated since the 1920s and lack electricity, running water and indoor latrines. Meanwhile, Firestone managers have huge houses with all modern conveniences and even golf courses! Educational and health facilities are understaffed and lacking resources and are often located much too far from housing units for workers and their families to access. Additionally, Firestone uses the labor of a large number of subcontractors who are not offered benefits. Historically, Firestone has negotiated with a union that is not democratic or independent from the management. In July 2007, the first free and fair union elections were held in the plantation's history, but it took five months, a two week strike, a Supreme Court lawsuit and international outcry for Firestone to recognize the elected union leadership. The union is currently negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement with Firestone management.

FIRESTONE DUMPS TOXIC CHEMICALS ON THE COMMUNITY:

As the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia recently confirmed, Firestone dumps toxic chemicals into local rivers, like the Farmington River, used by the community for bathing and fishing. The pollution has caused serious health problems for communities surrounding the plantation and has killed off some forms of river life.

80 YEARS OF EXPLOITATION IS ENOUGH! STOP FIRESTONE!



FIRESTONE



**STOP
FIRESTONE**

ATTENTION STUDENTS!

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO STOP FIRESTONE!

BACKGROUND:

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company has operated the world's largest rubber plantation in the world in Harbel, Liberia for over 80 years. Since workers are expected to meet a production quota that would take over 21 hours to complete or their wages of \$3.19/day will be halved, the rubber tappers are forced to bring their children to work. These workers have to carry buckets weighing 140 pounds on a stick on their back for miles and are not given the necessary protective gear. Workers must house their entire families in shacks without running water, electricity or indoor latrines while managers live in large houses with all these amenities and even access to golf courses! Educational and health facilities are understaffed and lacking resources and are often located much too far from housing units for workers and their families to access – plus, there is no high school for children of rubber tappers. Meanwhile, the company is dumping toxic chemicals into local rivers used for bathing and fishing.

FIRESTONE GETS AN "F" FOR FAILING TO RESPECT WORKER RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT!

STUDENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

Firestone's policies directly exploit young people in Liberia by making child labor inevitable and denying many people access to a quality education. As a result, young people living on the Firestone plantation are trapped in a cycle of poverty and the company's environmental damage ensures that children of rubber tappers will be dealing with the effects of exploitation for generations to come. As students and consumers in the US, raising your voice in solidarity with the communities affected by Firestone in Liberia can make an enormous difference in creating change.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- *Send a letter to Firestone at www.StopFirestone.org;*
- *Join the Stop Firestone Picture Protest by posting a photo of yourself holding a Stop Firestone sign on Flickr.com – check out www.StopFirestone.org for more information. Amplify your impact by tabling at events at your school and collecting photos and petitions from other students;*
- *Find a Firestone Complete Auto Care facility near you (www.firestonecompleteautocare.com) and deliver protest letters or if you live in Indiana, Tennessee or Ohio, go straight to Firestone headquarters (www.bridgestone-firestone.com);*
- *Check us out at MySpace.com/StopFirestone or Youtube.com/StopFirestone and keep checking the campaign website for new ways to take action!*

80 YEARS OF EXPLOITATION IS ENOUGH! STOP FIRESTONE!



Stop the Exploitation of Liberia!

Dear Dan Adomitis,

Eighty years of exploiting workers and the environment of Liberia is enough! We call on you to:

- ***Stop child labor and respect workers' rights!*** Eliminate the onerous quota system that forces workers to use their children in the tapping process and respect workers' rights to form an independent union without intimidation and to a collective bargaining agreement.
 - ***Increase quality of social services!*** Build decent housing with running water, indoor plumbing and toilet facilities for workers, increase access to and quality of health care for *all* those working at Firestone and their families and investment more in education including high schools for workers and their families.
 - ***Stop polluting the environment!*** Stop the flow of toxic pesticides into local rivers and redress environmental damage caused by production.
 - ***Commit to fair taxation!*** Pay appropriate fees and taxes to the government of Liberia. These arrangements must be publicly disclosed to the Liberian government, legislature, and people.

(PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY!)

Please return this petition to: International Labor Rights Forum, 2001 S St. NW #420, Washington, DC 20009

www.StopFirestone.org