

## **Нарушение прав человека транснациональными корпорациями**

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### **Human rights abuse by transnational corporations**

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In our globalized economy, businesses across all sectors increasingly source all manners of goods and services from complex chains of suppliers that often span multiple countries with radically different legal, regulatory and human rights practices.

According to the latest data from the International Labor Organization (ILO), 40 million people in the world are in modern slavery and 152 million children are involved in child labor. They work in global supply chains – for example, in factories producing branded apparel and footwear for consumers worldwide, on farms growing tobacco purchased by cigarette manufacturers, or in small-scale mines digging gold that is destined for the global market.

Too many of these workers endure abuses such as poor working conditions, including minimum wage violations; forced overtime; child labor; sexual harassments, exposure to toxic substances and other extreme occupational hazards; and retaliation against workers who attempt to organize. Workers facing these abuses often lack access to complaints mechanisms, whistle blower protections or legal recourse.

Enjoying our favorite products we do not think about how they are produced, what chain of production they go through before getting to our stores.

Most of all, this problem affects children as a result of corporate struggles for a place in the world market. Children work because their own survival and the survival of their families depend on it, and often also because unprincipled adults take advantage of their weakness and insecurity for their own purposes. Child labor is also associated with poorly developed state education systems, and has roots in cultural and social representations and traditions. [3]

Almost everybody on the planet loves chocolate. Eighty percent of the cocoa comes from Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana and is harvested by children. Children have been trafficked from other conflict zones to come and work on the coffee plantations.

Uzbekistan is the second biggest exporter of cotton on Earth. Every year when it comes to the cotton harvest, the government shuts down the schools, puts the kids in buses, buses take them to the cotton fields to spend three weeks harvesting the cotton. It's forced child labor on an institutional scale.

Russia is also no exception in this issue. Labor exploitation and slavery of children takes place in almost every region of Russia. Moreover, the fields of activity are very different, but they are united by the informal nature of the employment of children and severe exploitation. These are greenhouse facilities in Omsk, where for 10 rubles a day the labor of twelve-year-old workers from a boarding school for mentally retarded children was exploited. These are household farms in the Sverdlovsk Region, agricultural enterprises using chemical materials; industrial plants using hazardous machines; construction sites with the harmful effects of dust and failure to comply with protective measures, etc.

According to the ILO Program Coordinator Rimma Kalinchenko, compared with the countries of Asia and Africa, the situation in Russia is not so critical. But "compared to the Soviet past, the problem of exploiting child labor in Russia is growing ... In conducting research, we noted a shift towards the worst forms of child labor. This is forced labor, work in hazardous industries such as construction, exploitation of children in rural areas, contact with chemicals, transfer of weights, trafficking in children." [4]

The thing is that international norms, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, recognize that companies should undertake "human rights due diligence" measures to ensure their operations respect human rights and do not contribute to human rights abuses. Human rights due diligence include steps to assess actual and potential human rights risks, and act to end abuses and ensure remedy for any that occur in spite of those efforts. Companies should also be fully transparent about these efforts.

But the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and other international norms for companies are not legally binding. Companies can and sometimes do ignore them, or take them up half-heartedly and ineffectively. Many companies have adequate or no human rights

abuses. For more than two decades, in the context of global supply chains in agriculture, the garment and footwear industry, mining, construction and other sectors.

The ILO Director-General Guy Ryder stated “New global assessments can help shape and develop measures to prevent forced labor and child labor”. [4]

The chairman and founder of Walk Free Foundation, Andrew Forrest, an Australian order officer, said: “The result of the cooperation of Walk Free and the ILO was the creation of the largest amount of data on modern slavery in history, including data from innovative surveys in 50 countries. Combined with comprehensive data based on evidence from victims of trafficking, our research has made an incredible breakthrough in this area. And now, having all this crucial information, we all - governments, businessmen, civil society - must unite to finally eradicate the greatest injustice of our time in the field of human rights".[4]

Based on the statements above, in order to identify the real extent of the exploitation and use of child labor, continuous monitoring of child labor should be carried out. Without regular research at the national and regional levels, it is impossible to assess the scale of the problem. This kind of ongoing research can be a source of information to track the main trends in the spread of the economic exploitation of children and the results of efforts undertaken by the state and civil society.

As for ordinary people, who are not as influential as the UN and ILO, ethical consumption seems to be the way out. Combined with comprehensive data based on evidence from victims of trafficking, our research can make an incredible breakthrough in this area. And now, having all this crucial information, we all - governments, businessmen, civil society - must unite to finally eradicate the greatest injustice of our time in the field of human rights.

Ethical consumption stresses the role of the consumer in preventing the exploitation of women and children in factories, plants and mines. It also considers the environmental costs of production. These costs include the depletion of natural resources, as well as human costs. For example, when a corporation like Unilever, producer of Dove soap, Care lotion, Finesse shampoo, employs women in the jungle areas of Bihar, India to collect seeds from the sal tree for use in lipsticks, women are deprived of control over what was formerly a resource for their own use. Showing our ethical consumption, we can hold actions, boycott or write a letter to company violating the norms of the production.

By consuming consciously and ethically we can realistically create change. Being aware of current issues in labor exploitation, environmental conservation, and human rights is the best way to spend ethically. Before buying something it's necessary to ask: Who makes it? Who needs it? and Who profits from it?

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