

# Newsflash

Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking



Dear friends,

This is a newsletter of the Global Trade Union Alliance to Combat Forced Labour and Trafficking. It is addressed to all interested and wants to inform you about trade union activities to fight forced labour and human trafficking around the world. The Alliance is led by the International Trade Union Confederation and financially supported by the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour of the International Labour Organisation. It promotes decent work for all and more specifically geographical and institutional commitment and cooperation to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking as its very antithesis.

[\*\*ITUC\*\*](#) WTO reports on Core Labour Standards:

[Brazil](#)  
[Fiji](#)  
[European Union](#)  
[Mozambique](#)

The Bureau for Workers' Activities ACTRAV of the [\*\*ILO\*\*](#) just published the Labour Education [bulletin](#) special issue on "Decent work for domestic workers" with information related to the ILO convention, background information on domestic work, and interviews. This bulletin is also talking about child labour, about domestic workers in Latin America and Asia, and about migrant domestic workers in Jordan.

Haitian migrants who cross the border into the **Dominican Republic** for jobs in the construction industry are among the country's most exploited workers, and many feel that union membership is the key path to decent work, according to a [new survey](#) developed by the Dominican construction workers' federation **FENTICOMMC** with [\*\*Solidarity Center\*\*](#) support. The results have carried over to CNUS affiliates that represent workers in other industries and have generated a new approach to combat human trafficking.

On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009, the Confederation of Trade Unions of **Armenia** (CTUA) adopted a [strategy](#) (only in EN) on *Labour migration, Combating Forced Labour and Human Trafficking (2009-2012)* directed to organize the activities and the timetable of the CTUA.



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More than 40 trade union leaders and representatives from solidarity support organisations convened in India last March 6-8 to evaluate the various [BWI child labour projects](#). The mission included among others [SASK](#) (Finland), [FNV Bouw](#) (Netherlands), [CLC-CTC](#) (Canada) and the trade unions from India and Nepal.

The British Home Office is currently considering the future of the *Workers Registration Scheme* which applies to A8 employees. The [TUC](#) has written to the Home Secretary outlining why it should be abolished. Click [here](#) to view the document.

Mr. G. Rajasekaran, Secretary General of the [MTUC](#), said it is time to act in a [press statement](#) on exploitation of foreign workers. On 19 March, he claimed: “Home Ministry officials are working in cohorts with several unscrupulous agents in giving work permits to foreign workers, especially from Bangladesh, for non-existent jobs here. The agents, from bogus companies established locally, have brought in about 5,000 Bangladeshi workers legally via this channel since May 2007 and then left them stranded in Malaysia”. To view another press statement on this subject, click [here](#).

**ITUC online on Burma:** An historic Trade Union Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma ([FTUB](#)) reaffirms Campaign for Democracy and Workers’ Rights. *“The Congress also pledged to carry on the fight against the systematic use of forced labour by the military, with evidence that the regime has been using forced labour on reconstruction projects following the devastating Cyclone Nargis of May 2008.”*

In a [press release](#), the [ETUC](#) strongly supports the resolution adopted by the European Parliament and the idea of having clear rules in terms of social responsibility of undertakings in subcontracting chains that cover the whole chain. This can only be achieved by introducing an instrument on joint and several liability at European level.

The [IUF](#) edited a useful [leaflet](#) on domestic/household workers to be used by organisations to support their activities on this subject. “By 2011, the ILO will adopt an international standard listing our rights as workers. Domestic/household workers want the right to be treated properly as workers. An ILO Convention would be an important step forward.”



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On 3 March, the [ITGLWF](#) edited a [press release](#) on the abolition of the trafficking of workers which is a growing problem in the labour cost conscious global garment and footwear industry. But, the sector's Global Union said that it wouldn't happen if there wasn't a market for it - if business simply outlawed the employment of slave labour and with big name brands taking the lead.

In **Paraguay**, the Ministry of Justice and Labour installed a new Commission which will ensure compliance with fundamental labour rights and will aim to eradicate forced labour in Paraguay, which mainly affects indigenous people in rural areas the Chaco. The establishment of this Commission was prompted by the harsh comments made by the International Labour Organisation ([ILO](#)) for several years (source: [ABC Digital article](#)).

With the collaboration of the [CSC-ACV](#), the Instituto Andino de Estudios Sociales [INANDES-CSTA](#) published a [report](#) on the situation of migrant workers in the **Andean region** (Americas) entitled "Un análisis a la migración laboral entre los países de la CAN incluido Venezuela ».

A new [study](#) conducted by [IOM](#) and the Catholic University of **Peru** sheds new light on human trafficking for labour exploitation in illegal logging and gold mining in the Madre de Dios region of the country. Peru is a transit and destination country for human trafficking with a predominance of internal trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. However, children and men are often trafficked to work in the mining, logging and agricultural industries.

An energetic headmistress and her school are at the center of a [Solidarity Center](#) program aimed at giving former child miners in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** the education they deserve and helping teachers earn a living wage (see the whole [article](#)).

On 27 April 2009, in Vienna, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe ([OSCE](#)) Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Eva Biaudet, called for countries to do more at the national level to prevent the slavery-like conditions often endured by agricultural workers ([press release](#)).



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The [ILO](#) published a resource kit (“Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation: A resource kit for policy-makers and practitioners”) which captures over 10 years of work by ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child labour (IPEC) and its partners, and makes the Programme’s experiences and knowledge available to those who design and implement policy and programmes to fight child trafficking. This resource kit can be downloaded [here](#): versions in French and Spanish are under preparation.

The Governing Body of the [ILO](#) adopted a [report](#) on 25 March 2009 made by the Committee on Freedom of Association supporting the right of migrant workers in **Korea**, regardless of status, to form and join labour union and calling for an end to measures such as targeted arrests and deportations aimed at interfering with their union activities. This report, issued in response to a complaint submitted by the International Trade Union Confederation ([ITUC](#)) and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions ([KCTU](#)) concerning the case of the Migrants Trade Union, is an important victory for migrant workers seeking to organize, not only in Korea, but also around the world. Statements within the report demonstrate unequivocal support for undocumented migrant workers’ right to freedom of association by the most authoritative international voice on labor rights. (Source: [IUF press release](#) and Seoul-Gyeonggi-Incheon Migrants Trade Union)

The **Pastoral Land Commission** ([CPT](#), linked to the Catholic Church) states in its annual report on violence in the countryside that over 5,266 workers employed in conditions similar to slavery in large farms in **Brazil** were released by the Labour Inspectorate in 2008. The CPT also reported that agrarian conflicts caused 28 deaths last year, the same number as in 2007.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, police raided a company that hired approximately 450 undocumented workers, mainly from **Brazil** and **Ecuador**, under the “service vouchers” system. The employees, who were hired to clean private houses, were told by the evangelical pastor who hired them that their chances for regularisation would be better if they registered under his company. Nonetheless, the workers still remain undocumented and many have not received their most recent wages. The organizations [OR.C.A.](#), CIRE and Abraço, and unions [CSC-ACV](#) and [FGTB-ABVV](#) pointed out in a joint press release that the workers are the victims of the long uncertainty about the regularisation agreement in **Belgium** and demand a quick implementation. For more information, see related documents from



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[Socialeconomie.be](#) (only in Dutch), Abraço asbl [article](#) (only in FR) and [brochure](#) (only in Portuguese) and [CSC](#) (only in Dutch).

In March 2009, [ver.di](#), the German service sector trade union, opened a contact point specialised in the concerns of undocumented workers in Berlin with office hours held twice a month. Undocumented workers and their supporters have been campaigning for trade union recognition for several years. The Hamburg office is now the second such contact point to open within a year. In return, undocumented workers may become members of the ver.di trade union. For more information, see the office's information [leaflet](#). (source: [PICUM](#) Newsletter)

On 12 February 2009, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) has released its [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#), a very detailed report based on data gathered from 155 countries and offering the first global assessment of the scope of **human trafficking** and what is being done to fight it. According to the report, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is **sexual exploitation** and its victims are predominantly **women** and girls.

In the face of numerous elections taking place in **Germany** in the so-called bumper election year 2009, the Interculturelle Rat (Intercultural Council), PRO ASYL, and the German Trade Union Federation ([DGB](#)) have issued a [joint position paper](#) on **migration** policy issues directed at the German political parties, including the demand for a perspective for undocumented migrants and the decoupling of basic social rights and residence status. (source: [PICUM](#) Newsletter)

A new [ILO](#) global report on forced labour entitled "[The cost of coercion](#)" will be published on 12 May. This report points out, for instance, that victims of forced labour lose an estimated USD 20 billion ever year in unpaid earnings. This and other findings provide a powerful economic argument for stepping up global action against forced labour.



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## Events:

- **27 May 2009:** 2009 Anti-Slavery Award (Anti-Slavery International are delighted to announce that the winner of the 2009 Anti-Slavery Award is SOS Esclaves), Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria – Everyone is welcome but please register your attendance by contacting Gemma Wolfes at [g.wolfes@antislavery.org](mailto:g.wolfes@antislavery.org) or +44 (0)020 7501 8936
- **23 April 2009:** MTUC organise a National Consultation on ILO Decent Work Agenda for Domestic Workers, Malaysia

## Useful information:

- Press statement from [UNNews](#) on the celebration in New York of the world's common humanity and in commemoration of the victims of the African slave trade. "Break the Silence, Beat the Drum" brought together artists from Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Caribbean and the United States, as well as students, diplomats and UN officials, to launch a series of events to mark the **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**.
- Dominican amendment bans human trafficking, On April 20, the **Dominican Republic** constitution has been amended to include a law that will prohibit human trafficking in all its forms. The law was approved with 180 votes in the 201-member constitutional reform assembly ([press statement](#)).

If you know other people interested in the issue please forward this newsletter and invite them to subscribe by emailing [lyris@forum.ituc-csi.org](mailto:lyris@forum.ituc-csi.org) and write "subscribe forcedlabour" in the message body or send an email to [forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org](mailto:forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org) .

You are kindly invited to send any relevant information to be included in the next issue.

For more information please contact [forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org](mailto:forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org)

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