



HUMAN TRAFFICKING & THE TEA INDUSTRY

Tea Industry Facts

- Tea has become a major cash crop in the global economy.
- Large numbers of seasonal workers are hired but not legally registered.
- Tea bushes are generally grown and cultivated on large plantations, and cultivation requires labor intensive work such as prepping the land, transplanting seedlings, and using mulch, fertilizer, and pesticides.

Where is Tea Produced?

- Major producers of tea are China, India, Kenya, Malawi, South Asia, and Latin America
- However, the US Department of Labor only found the use of forced labor and/or child labor in the tea industries in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- According to the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, forced labor in tea plantations and tea shops occurs in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Sri Lanka.
- The International Labor Rights Forum states that forced labor is also a problem in Indian tea plantations.
- In China, a majority of the tea comes from the Laogai penal camps.

Types of Abuses

- Forced labor
- Debt bondage
- Nonpayment/wage theft
- Restrictions to movement
- Inconsistent benefits, including denial of education, medical attention, food, and water

Regional Abuses

- Africa
 - Male migrant and seasonal labor represent the majority of workers.
 - Eritrean children are often subjected to forced labor in local tea shops.
- Asia
 - Children often help their parents pluck leaves.
 - Indian families are forced to work in the tea industry in Bangladesh.
 - Child tea workers in Tamil, Sri Lanka are subject to physical, sexual, and mental abuse.
- South America
 - The US Department of Labor reported child labor in the Brazilian tea industry in 2014

© Human Trafficking Center 2015 By Nicky Mades, HTC Associate. Sources:

- US Department of Labor; "2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor." www.dol.gov