



# Weekly news email

31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

## News headlines

**Bangladesh** – Over 300 factories incl. garment workers face mass layoffs leaving over 44.000 workers unemployed amid reduced orders from brands because of the cost-of-living crisis.

**Cambodia** – After Ministry of Labour intervention, dispute between food delivery workers and the Company is resolved with reinstatement of original driver fees.

**Saudi Arabia** – Retired Saudi teacher sentenced to death for criticising ruling family on social media.

**Russia** – Heineken completes exit from Russian market with a symbolic €1 sale of operations & 3 years guaranteed work for its employees.

**Australia** – The ESG landscape in Australia is continually evolving following heightened enforcement and proposed regulatory regimes focused on ESG matters including: - Sustainable Finance and Low Carbon Economy, Biodiversity; Modern Slavery and Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.

**USA** – Unbridled surveillance of US public housing residents raises human rights concerns. These surveillance systems subject some of the most economically disadvantaged citizens to an excessive level of observation leading to power imbalances between those being surveyed and those surveying.

**EU** – Over 40 businesses and networks reaffirm support for the ambitious EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive in line with international standards. The statement comes from the group who are from a range of countries and sectors.

**France** – France to ban female students wearing abayas in state schools – BBC News

**UK** – Women still have right to equal pay according to UK Government despite scrapping the EU law

**UK** – Womens match fees are increased to match men's by England and Wales cricket board

**UK** – New figures show there has been a 17% rise in number of potential modern slavery victims in South Yorkshire, according to reports.

**UK** – From sanctions to aid cuts, UK foreign policy is fuelling rising migration with calls for the overseas budget to be increased.

**UK** – Immigration and Asylum. Children reaching UK in small boats are being placed in a prison that holds adult sex offenders

**UK** – Wilko store closures and job losses put on hold as administrator considers rescue bids. Restructuring specialist M2 makes a potential offer alongside HMV owner Doug Putman.

**UK** – Brexit border checks. Government confirms further delays. Delayed for a fifth time amid fears it would drive inflation, now pushed back to January 2024.

## Human rights and ethical trade news

**Ethiopia** – Will the EU and its Member States stand for Justice in Ethiopia? Since conflict broke out the EU said that accountability would be central to any renewed engagement with Ethiopian government. With the commissions renewal up for discussion in September, the jury is still out on whether the EU will continue to support critical investigations. Read further here.

**West Bank** - The Israeli military and border police forces are killing Palestinian children with virtually no recourse for accountability.

**Africa** - US sanctions Rights Abusers in Eastern Congo. The US government has imposed financial and property sanctions on six individuals, including senior Rwanda military commander for their roles in backing abusive armed groups in the conflict.

**Vietnam** – Free Democracy Campaigners. Rights activist appealed verdicts in politically motivated cases

## Sustainability/climate

**Dramatic Climate Action Needed** – Off the chart's records and extreme weather events of wildfires, floods and heatwaves are destroying lives of the US, Europe, India, and China and beyond. There is worse to come but a tiny window of hope remains say leading scientists.

**UN Sustainable Development Goals** – The Grocer reports that it's halftime for the UN SDG's and we are not even close to halfwav point. The next world leaders' summit is 18-19<sup>th</sup> September which is halfway point to the 2030 deadline for achieving the goals. Here is some useful advice for food and drink businesses.

**Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi** - Rich Nations need to put vital funds into Africa for all our sakes

## Resources / Reports

**ETP report** - Sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) in the global tea sector. The report follows a one-day event held on 30<sup>th</sup> May attended by 151 people from 80 companies where discussion covered Gender Equality in Tea. The objective of the event was to

convene key actors to explore collective and systemic actions to eliminate SEAH from the sector. The report highlights opportunities for collaboration and examines ETP's approach to creating empowered, safe communities.

**Fairtrade** – [A new guide by Fairtrade and B Lab](#) supports responsible business practices in small companies. An easy guide to how small and micro companies can start or strengthen their due diligence in identifying, preventing, and mitigating negative impact on their business on human rights and the environment.

## Podcasts/video/blogs

**LinkedIn** – How can we travel more sustainably? A growing number of people are showing an interest in taking the “slow travel” approach, [here](#) Vicky McKeever discusses the options and creates interesting discussion.

**LinkedIn** – EV charge points on the rise. As the Government looks to encourage higher EV take up, [hundreds of charges have been installed across the UK](#).

**LinkedIn** – Stronger Together shares a [video of Silvia Bianco as she introduces the Italy Programme](#). Discover how Stronger Together is working in Italy supporting Italian wineries to prevent, identify and effectively remedy labour exploitation.

**Saudi Arabia** - [Mass Killings of Migrants at Yemen Border](#). Saudi border guards have killed at least hundreds of Ethiopian migrants and asylum seekers who tried to cross the Yemen-Saudi border between March 2022 and June 2023, Human Rights Watch said in a report.

## Events and webinars

**Modern Slavery Intelligence Network (MSIN)** – [MSIN annual conference](#) is coming up on 6<sup>th</sup> September, hosted by Tesco. Keynote speakers Theresa May, MP, and Caroline Haughey, KC. [Register here](#).

**IHRB event in SE Asia** - [Advancing the Responsible Recruitment of Migrant Workers in Southeast Asia](#). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 6<sup>th</sup> September, 8:30 am - 6 pm. Attend to gain insights into responsible recruitment practices and challenges in the Southeast Asian migration corridor. & discover how companies can eradicate forced labour through ethical recruitment models.

**FDF webinar** - Driving sustainability through digital transformation within the baking industry: The Necessity and Benefits. Discover why embrace digital transformation to support sustainability goals and unlock critical insights and benefits. From scaling and digitising internal operations to making sustainable decisions for your supply chain, learn how digital transformation can revolutionise your approach to sustainability. 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 14.00 - 15.00 hrs. [Register here](#).

**BHRRC'S** - Mary Robinson Speaker Series 2023 | Raising the bar: Regulating to end corporate abuse. Date & time: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, London 14:00. [Click here for more information](#). [Link to event](#).

**Business Fights Poverty – [Global Goals Summit 19 – 21](#)** September 2023 – Online, New York, Nairobi, London. Attend to gain invaluable insights, connect with global peers, and learn from best practices in sustainability. You will leave equipped with practical advice and the inspiration to drive sustainable development within your organisation. [Reserve a place here](#).

**International RBC / SER Webinar - [Access to remedy- integrating worker voices into grievance mechanisms](#)**. 21-09-2023. The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) and the Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS), project implemented by GIZ. On **21<sup>st</sup>** September 2023 at 10:00-11:30 CET

**ISSARA'S GLOBAL FORUM - 8 -10** November 2023, Bangkok. Forum will provide a space for participants to exchange and learn cutting-edge best practices and innovations in human rights and responsible sourcing worldwide, including critical insights from on the ground perspectives of workers, NGOs, and suppliers. [Register here](#).