



Weekly news email

5th October 2023

News headlines

Australia - Voice to Parliament: Early voting begins in historic Australian referendum

Bangladesh - Human Rights Watch finds exploitative conditions on shipbreaking yards, including severe safety violations

Bolivia - Bolivian president expelled from own party amid political feud. Conflict erupted after Luis Arce and ex-president Evo Morales both showed interest in the party's presidential nomination.

China - Fears China 'closing in on itself' amid crackdowns, rising nationalism. From new laws on espionage and public security to fewer foreign films and arguments on clothing, is China turning away from the world?

DRC - Denis Mukwege, DRC's Nobel Prize winner, announces presidency bid. The Nobel Peace Prize-winning doctor worked with victims of rape and brought attention to role of sexual violence during conflicts.

Europe - Europe's olive oil supply running out after drought – and the odd hailstorm. Heatwaves around Mediterranean have damaged harvests and forced producers to import from South America

Europe - EU member states reach deal on migration policy. EU members hope to finalise a migration and asylum overhaul before upcoming elections bring an expected rightward shift to the continent.

Europe - More than 2,500 dead, missing as 186,000 cross Mediterranean in 2023. UN refugee agency says 'no end in sight' to the lives lost in Mediterranean and on land routes to sea departure points.

Germany - Truckers In Germany End 'Unprecedented' Strike. Truck drivers who transport goods around Europe ended a weeks-long work stoppage in Germany including a hunger strike after reaching a pay deal at the weekend, labour representatives said.

India - Raids on Indian media 'aim to muzzle free speech' Tuesday's police raids on the homes of prominent journalists in India are an attempt by the government to "muzzle" free speech, campaigners have said.

Serbia/Kosovo - [Vucic 'wants war': Kosovo PM accuses Belgrade of inciting violence](#). In an interview with Al Jazeera, Albin Kurti says Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic aims to create 'another Republika Srpska' in Kosovo by attempting to start a conflict.

Tunisia - [Tunisian farmers pay the price for Europe's attempts at energy transition](#). Activists criticise deals that allow foreign companies to use agricultural lands for green energy production

UK - Thousands of refugees could be made homeless in UK's asylum backlog clearance. Red Cross warns 28-day 'move-on' process is not enough time for asylum seekers to find new accommodation

UK – food prices [UK food prices fall in September for first time in two years](#). Average food basket down by 0.1% amid fierce supermarket competition, says the British Retail Consortium

USA - [US sues Tesla over alleged 'pervasive racial' abuse against Black workers](#). The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages, compensation and an order that Tesla curb racism at its plant in California.

Vanuatu - [Paradise prison: How 107 Bangladeshis became enslaved on a Pacific island](#)

Instead of being given legitimate jobs, 107 men from Bangladesh were enslaved in Vanuatu working under the threat of violence and even death.

Human rights and ethical trade news

Responsible sourcing - Riverford's [Fair to Farmers Charter](#) asking all supermarkets to commit to 5 sourcing principles.

Bananas & living wage - [Brighter future for banana plantation workers as Fairtrade launches 'game changing' new offer for traders and retailers](#). It aims to ensure that banana workers earn as a minimum the living wage for their country, whilst helping retailers fulfil their commitments to a sustainable banana industry.

Benchmarking - [2023 Food and Agriculture Benchmark and Nature Benchmark](#) from WBA. [Research finds more than 90% of food and agriculture companies don't do enough to farm sustainably or provide healthy food](#) - summary of agriculture benchmark.

[Nature benchmark summary and report](#)

Compensation - [Unilever to make payments to Kenyan tea pickers over 2007 plantation attacks](#). UK law firm Leigh Day says money given to 77 workers for murders and rapes 'sidesteps' multinational's responsibility over attack

Tea and land rights - [Bengal government halts tea land survey and other work related to granting land rights](#), after Anit Thapa plea

Indigenous People - [Brazil Potash says Mura accept Amazon mine, prosecutors disagree](#). Brazil Potash Corp, the Canadian firm planning to build Latin America's largest fertilizer mine

in the Amazon rainforest, says a local Indigenous people, the Mura, have agreed to the project, but federal prosecutors insist the community is still divided.

Child slavery - Mighty Earth calls for Cargill's Brazilian CEO to be sacked after revelations of child slavery. Appeal comes after Brazilian court convicted the US commodities giant for "pretending not to see" slave and child labor

Greenwashing - Banks behind 70% jump in greenwashing incidents in 2023. The number of instances of greenwashing by banks and financial services companies around the world rose 70% in the past 12 months from the previous 12 months, a report on Tuesday showed.

Sustainability/climate

Coffee - Starbucks develops coffee seeds that can withstand climate change effects. Starbucks-developed seeds of arabica, which accounts for 70% of global coffee production, are cultivated to resist diseases.

Litigation - Green groups target TotalEnergies over Tanzania, Uganda projects. 4 environmental groups have taken legal action against French giant TotalEnergies on claims of "climaticide" over a controversial oil project in Tanzania and Uganda

Fish stocks - British diners warned off more fish types due to low populations in waters. Pollack from the Channel and dover sole from the Irish Sea among those to avoid.

Indigenous People & energy transition - Respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities can advance the energy transition

Aquaculture - Thousands of salmon escaped an Icelandic fish farm. The impact could be deadly. Aquaculture is bringing jobs and money to rural regions, but a huge escape of farmed fish in August could devastate local salmon populations

Resources / Reports

The Food Foundation - Election 2024 manifesto: Nourishing the Nation

Meta - Meta's Annual Human Rights report

Food & Drink Federation - State of industry report Q2 2023. Significant labour shortages have cost businesses £1.4bn over the last year, with companies being forced to leave vacancies unfilled and reduce production – all of which contributes to rising wage bills, higher prices and stifles growth, which is vital for a strong economy.

Podcasts/video/blogs

Farmerama podcast - This month we learn how some people importing Brazil nuts to the UK is supporting the indigenous people of the amazon. We visit a restaurant who are making use of spare growing space in their community and learn about agro-ecological approaches to managing vineyards across Australia.

Seafarers - [What steps can businesses take to protect seafarers in their maritime supply chains?](#) ETI blog.

Child labour - [Nine Ways to Mitigate Risk of Child Labor Across the Supply Chain](#) – blog by BSR

Double materiality - [Double materiality: Broadening corporate sustainability reporting to encompass societal and environmental impacts.](#) Blog by CISL

Corporate responsibility - [Conflict and exodus in Nagorno-Karabakh: bp's urgent responsibilities.](#) Blog by BHRRC

UN Binding Treaty on business & human rights - [Building momentum: Critical considerations in the Binding Treaty 2023 negotiations.](#) Blog by BHRRC

Human Rights in SE Asia - [Southeast Asia: Agribusiness snapshot.](#) Blog by BHRRC

ESG ratings - [ESG ratings: whose interests do they serve?](#) Regulators and politicians are focusing on the accuracy, transparency and potential for conflicts of interest with sustainability scores. Article in the FT

TV - [Human rights due diligence of TV productions.](#) Blog by Amelia Knott

SDGs - [From dithering to dynamism: how UK businesses can ramp up progress on the SDGs.](#) From Positive News

Events and webinars


Unpacking the CSDDD: responsibility, climate and justice – [in-person event](#) 11th October, Brussels. Organised by The European Coalition for Corporate Justice; co-hosted by Frank Bold, Friends of the Earth Europe and Justice is Everybody's Business.

Webinar Supply Chain Traceability and Labor Rights Due Diligence: Introducing the Supply Chain Traceability Matrix. By Verite.

Do you have questions about traceability in #supplychains? Are you interested in learning about how traceability can support labor due diligence?

This webinar will introduce the Supply Chain #Traceability Matrix, a free resource developed by Verite's Supply Chain Tracing and Engagement Methodologies (#STREAMS) Project for leveraging traceability to support labor rights in global supply chains.

During the webinar you will learn how to access the Supply Chain Traceability Matrix and how it can help you be better informed about traceability methods and tools and how they can be used for human and labor rights goals in diverse global supply chains.

 When: October 12, 2023 @ 10 AM ET

 [Register](#)

Jobs

BSR - Manager, Membership Engagement. New York, NY; Copenhagen, Denmark; Paris, France; London

The Rights Practice - The Rights Practice are looking for a new trustee.