



Weekly news email

26th October 2023

News headlines

Australia - Melbourne council ditches Christian prayer after concern about potential human rights breaches

Brazil - Brazil food sector accounts for 74% of emissions: study reports. The world's biggest bean and soybean exporter.

Cambodia - Microfinance was meant to reduce poverty, but borrowers allege they have been victims of 'predatory' loans and repayment tactics, which have led to desperation and deaths. Since the 1990s, Cambodia's microfinance industry has received hundreds of millions of dollars directly and indirectly from the IFC and US and European governments to provide microloans intended to lift Cambodians out of poverty, these not for profit are now making millions from vulnerable Indigenous Cambodian farmers.

Dubai - Migrant workers toil in perilous heat to prepare for Cop28 climate talks in UAE according to *FairSquare* a human rights research and advocacy group.

Ecuador – Son of banana magnate wins presidential election on a promise of security, amid national crisis that has hit small producers hard

Europe - Europe will never discourage African migration while it funds the corruption that drives it. Amid all the musings about slavery reparations, Europe has not yet listened to African people. Maybe we could start with that.

Gaza Strip - Israel Should Learn from US Mistakes. In war, it is civilians who often pay the highest price. International humanitarian law, or the laws of war, dictate to all warring parties what they are obligated to do to protect civilians. The international community created these laws, rooted in the Geneva Conventions, in the wake of World War II.

Iceland - PM will take part in stoppage by women and non-binary people calling for pay equality and action on gender-based violence in Iceland's first full day women's strike in 48 years aims to close gender pay gap.

Italy – How the Italian Mafia make millions from tinned tomatoes. A video explains the use of migrant labour and the use of caporalato recruitment system and its links to modern slavery.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman – [IHG responds to allegations of migrant worker exploitation in hospitality.](#)

Singapore - [Shein opens up about forced labor, data privacy](#) as it looks to clear key hurdles before U.S. IPO (Initial Public Offering)

Switzerland - Swiss government to [tighten rules against greenwashing](#)

Thailand – [The Thais caught up in the Israel – Gaza war.](#) Around 25,000 Thais were working in the farms and orchards in Israel when the war broke out.

UK - Exhausted Amazon staff fight back against retail giant at global UK summit. [Meeting in Manchester is part of worldwide action](#) – including Black Friday protests – over tax, market abuse and workers' rights

UK – [Modern slavery helpline calls surge from care staff as reported by Unseen UK](#) who said over 700 care workers contacted the helpline in 2022

UK – Modern slavery survivor who has been in UK for 18 years finds lifeline in volunteering but still not entitled to remain in UK. [Read his story.](#)

UK - [TUC uses UK Domestic Advisory Group to raise concerns about anti-strikes law](#) in UK after leaving the EU. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has warned the UK that it must ensure legislation adhered to ILO conventions.

UK – [Slavery is ever present](#) – The UK must step up. Last week saw the much-delayed appointment of the 3rd UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner, a position that has been vacant since April 2022. The appointment of Eleanor Lyons, a former Government Advisor, is timely.

UK – State of the food and drink sector 2023 and beyond. This [report](#) covers food security, cost of living crisis, and how inflationary trends are affecting consumer choices.

USA – [Consumer reports](#) find high levels of lead, cadmium in chocolate and cocoa powder and urges suppliers to reduce the levels.

Human rights and ethical trade news

Asylum Seekers - UK to stop [housing asylum seekers](#) in 50 hotels by early next year

Gaza Strip – Israel's unlawful blockade sparks [Womens Rights Crisis](#)

Heat Stress – Employers in Singapore are to implement [new govt. guidance](#) for outdoor workers to reduce heat stress risk.

Human Rights – [Indigenous teen dies in Australian adult prison despite intervention by lawyers 2 weeks before his death.](#)

USA – [41 states sue META claiming social media leads to harm in kids.](#), contributing to mental health issues in children.

World Food Day 2023 – Observed annually on 16th October, this year's theme is that “food and water are fundamental human rights. Water is life, water is food.... leave no one behind.

Sustainability/climate

Water Usage – Does the paper industry need to cut its water usage? Paper is often seen as a green alternative to plastic, but the industry that produces it uses enormous quantities of water, and this can cause drinking water shortages in some communities such as Uruguay.

Clean Energy/Renewables - World shift to clean energy is unstoppable, IEA report says, with predictions that renewables will produce 50% of the world's electricity by 2030. But warns that emissions are still too high to stop temperature rising above key threshold of 1.5°C.

Bird Flu - Hope in fight against lethal bird flu as scientists discover some species developing immunity.

River Pollution - Organic chicken manure polluting River Wye, court hears. This region is home to 25% of UK poultry population. A judicial review has been launched.

European Football – What will 177 more matches in Europe mean for the planet?. Here Michele Uva UEFA's Sustainability chief shares what it means for clubs and how they are supporting to reduce impact. BBC analysis of the data.

Bitcoin Mining - Bitcoin mining consumes more electricity than most countries, study suggests. To offset the carbon footprint of mining the leading cryptocurrency, a UN report has said more than 3.9 billion trees would need to be planted.

Resources / Reports/Blogs

AIM Progress - Keeping up to date with the rapidly evolving CSR legislation landscape - AIM-Progress releases its latest semi-annual update. The autumn covers quite a few developments since the last update, including proposed US state and federal legislation on eradication of forced labour and transparency in supply chains, climate reporting obligations in Switzerland and Singapore, as well as updates to the chapters on EU-based legislation, such as corporate sustainability reporting, the deforestation regulation, and the US Uyghur forced labour prevention act.

WWF - The world is off track to protect and restore forests by 2030, according to the new Forest Pathways 2023 report from WWF and the Forest Declaration Assessment.

WWF - Water is central to life on earth, yet we are facing a worsening water crisis. Billions of people still lack access to clean water or proper sanitation. Growing water risks threaten food security and livelihoods. Read the newly released report on high cost of clean water from WWF.

Events and webinars

Sustainable Commodities and Landscapes Forum - Towards nature positive: how business can adapt to regulatory pressure, protect livelihoods, and take an integrated approach to climate, nature, and biodiversity

31st October 2023 - 1st November 2023 - Amsterdam

Action through Collaboration: IDH Market Transformation Summit 2023. IDH will recognize 15 years of public-private collaboration at our Action through Collaboration Summit in Geneva, Switzerland where we will be welcoming 200+ committed front-running leaders, ministers, investors, innovators, and practitioners that have the most influence over global value chains to accelerate action towards market transformation.

15-16th November, Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights. 27 - 29 November 2023

Location - hybrid – in person element in palais des nations, Geneva (Switzerland)

The future of trade: trade justice in a changing political landscape – Trade Justice Movement

Exploring the changes that we should be fighting for in 2024. a bumper election year.

Wed, 15 Nov 2023 13:00 - 14:00 GMT