

# Stop Trafficking!

# AwarenessAdvocacyAction

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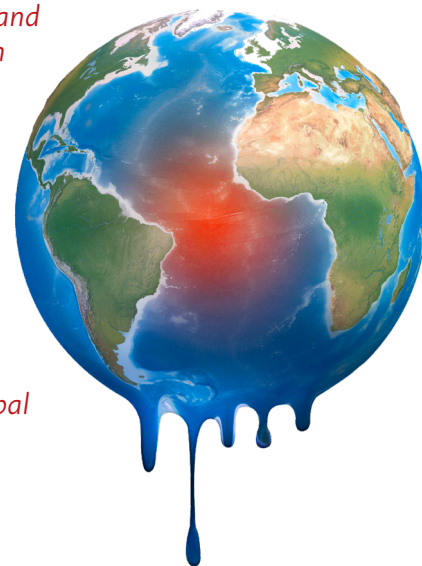
FOCUS: This month's newsletter looks at how human trafficking is part of all aspects of climate change.

*A topic of special interest in the 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report on Forced Labor and the Transition to Clean Energy has called attention to the nexus between human trafficking and climate change.*

*Those who live in poverty and, because of this, are vulnerable to trafficking, are also those most impacted by climate disaster and displacement.*

*Industries in which we find a high incidence of forced labor, such as mining and fisheries, also contribute significantly to climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.*

*The increasing demand for clean energy technologies to address the climate crisis presents an opportunity to emphasize the importance of establishing new clean energy supply chains that uphold human rights, enable countries to meet global climate targets, and generate economic growth.*



## Climate Change, Migration and Trafficking in Persons

When people are forced to migrate, the risk of becoming victims of human trafficking increases because of dwindling resources and constant insecurity. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) stresses that migrants are “particularly vulnerable to trafficking, forced labor, and modern slavery.”

People displaced for long-term climate-related reasons, such as drought, or a climate disaster, such as flooding, are not covered by the protections of the Refugee Convention and consequently not covered by the Covenant. And the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration” recognizes the need for adaptation strategies to natural disasters, adverse impacts of climate change, and environmental degradation to minimize migration drivers. Still, it refers primarily to the responsibility of countries of origin.

This puts the millions of climate-displaced persons at even greater risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Moreover, climate change is currently one of the most important drivers of migration, and it will only be more so in the future. The UN Environment Programme estimates that human trafficking could increase by 20-30% due to humanitarian and climate disasters. Moreover, people in low-income countries suffer the most from climate change. These countries experience some of the most

severe climate effects and yet have the least capacity to adapt and find it hardest to recover from the loss and damage of climate impacts.

In Cambodia, farmers whose livelihoods have been undermined by climate change have been forced into generations of debt bondage by the brick factory owners who bought out their debts. In two districts of India, people migrating to escape slow-onset climate disasters like drought are at particular risk of exploitation. This risk is higher than those impacted by sudden climate events such as flooding.

Research has found that women and children, often already marginalized, and vulnerable communities and indigenous peoples are all likely at higher risk of vulnerability to human trafficking because of climate change. For example, in Assam, northeastern India, women and girls face child slavery or forced marriage to make ends meet after annual floods.

In some cases, people who have lost their livelihoods due to environmental degradation and climate change even find themselves in situations of forced labor in climate-destructive industries, such as resource extraction, deforestation, and fisheries. In this way, there is a vicious circle between climate change and modern slavery.

# Awareness

Instability after a disaster can make people especially vulnerable to trafficking. People may be more vulnerable because they are:

- ◆ Displaced from their homes (temporarily living in a shelter)
- ◆ Separated from family and friends
- ◆ Disconnected from supportive services
- ◆ Unable to safely earn income and be self-sufficient
- ◆ People who don't speak a local language may be more vulnerable because they:
  - Can't communicate to authorities
  - Are afraid of physical harm or stigma
  - Have no access to assistance, services, or protection provided by local laws

Click [here](#) to learn more.



## Trafficking in Extractive Industries

The extractive energy industries, such as for non-renewable oil and gas, not only degrade the environment but have led to gender and other inequalities, including forced labor and human trafficking. In addition, mining, drilling, and quarrying activities, along with pipelines, often occur in relatively remote areas with minimal infrastructure and the limited rule of law, leading to the development of makeshift communities, such as mining “boom towns,” that are vulnerable to crime. Meanwhile, oil pipeline construction brings the growth of so-called “man camps” to house workers along the pipeline route.

Forced labor in extractive industries has been well-documented, and the link between these industries and sex trafficking is increasingly an issue of grave concern among governments and advocates. For example, women and girls are forced into sex trafficking in the mining areas of Peru, near the gold mines in Suriname, Guyana, and Madagascar. In Colombia, organized crime control sex trafficking in some mining areas. Investigators from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota in the United States report that sex traffickers have exploited women in the area, including Native American women.

Traffickers take advantage of work settings that are culturally isolated or physically remote to compel adults and children to work in unsafe and often abusive situations and exploit them in sex trafficking. Sex trafficking usually occurs with impunity due to a lack of government oversight and community support and protective services.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

*“Some of these hotels along this strip actually have floors that are bought out by pimps, and girls are in those rooms, and it operates pretty much like a brothel . . . it’s a very dangerous environment for the women. The girls that are being trafficked here are not from here. If a girl shows any sign of wanting to exit . . . there are consequences for that.”*

Winnie Jo Lazenko,  
regarding human trafficking  
around the oil fields in  
Williston, North Dakota



## Solar Panels

The 2022 Trafficking in Person Report cites “credible evidence indicates that manufacturers of silicon metal, used by the solar supply chain and other sectors, in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), directly engage in state-sponsored forced labor programs.” These programs target predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups amid the ongoing genocide and other crimes against humanity. The silicon metal is refined from rock and turned into solar panels on rooftops in the United States and Europe.

Some of the world’s largest suppliers of solar panel materials and components reportedly have ties to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corp. This state-owned economic and paramilitary organization has been sanctioned by the U.S. government for serious human rights abuses. President Biden signed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) into law on December 23, 2021.

The law establishes a presumption that the importation of any goods, wares, articles, and merchandise mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China, or produced by certain entities, is prohibited to entry to the United States. The presumption applies unless the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) determines that the importer has complied with specified conditions and, by clear and convincing evidence, that the goods, wares, articles, or merchandise were not produced using forced labor.

GCL-Poly is the world’s second-largest polysilicon maker, and other solar panel industries have operations in Xinjiang. They are directly involved in state-sponsored forced labor programs in the region. Evidence indicates that solar products and input at nearly every step of the production process in the PRC, from raw silicon material mining to final solar module assembly, are linked to known or probable forced labor programs despite

the companies’ touting of the housing and training provided for their workers.

The Chinese government disputes the presence of any forced labor in its supply chains, arguing that employment is voluntary.

China carries out a vast program of detention and surveillance of Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other minorities in Xinjiang. Up to a million or more minorities may have been detained in indoctrination camps and other sites where they are forced to renounce religious bonds and risk torture, assault, and psychological trauma.

As of December 2022, equipment was piling up at the U.S. border. It was predicted that nine to 12 gigawatts of modules would be detained by the end of 2022. Moreover, many top Chinese manufacturers have stopped exporting to the United States.

## Wind Turbines

Copper, one mineral used in the production of wind turbines, is mined in Zambia. Women and children face specific challenges and are the most adversely impacted by copper mining, and those living in poverty have not benefitted from this natural resource in their country. Forced displacement and air and water pollution caused by copper mining have been found to affect women more than other community members. These include psychological, social, economic, health, and physical stress.

Gender-based violence and prostitution are common in communities around large-scale mining.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

## The 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report highlighted the transition to clean energy alternatives and the impact on human trafficking.

Forced labor in supply chains is found in most, if not all, industries in our global market. The renewable energy sector faces a monumental task: power the transition to clean energy economies needed to stem the tide of climate change while ensuring the move creates opportunities for establishing new clean energy supply chains that uphold human rights and the dignity of every human being in the process.

Human trafficking and forced labor are significant risks in the supply chains supporting wind, solar, and rechargeable battery production.





Click [here](#) to learn more.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

## The United States Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) recently published a document on Combatting Child Labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) Cobalt Industry (COTECCO) project which works to reduce child labor in the cobalt supply chain by supporting efforts to:

- ◆ raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities to combat child labor;
- ◆ build the enforcement capacity of government and other relevant stakeholders at the national, provincial, and local levels; and
- ◆ improve private sector monitoring and remediation of child labor violations in the cobalt supply chain.

COTECCO also supports efforts to enhance implementation and enforcement of laws, policies, and action plans that address child labor and working conditions in artisanal and small-scale mining in the DRC's cobalt supply chain. In addition, the project works to increase transparency and monitoring of child labor and working conditions in cobalt mining supply chains, particularly in artisanal and small-scale mines. As such, the project is assisting the Government of the DRC to develop and implement a multi-stakeholder, sector-wide child labor monitoring system. COTECCO also is establishing Workers' Rights Centers to provide information and free legal assistance to support workers in the mining sector in the fight against child labor.

### Results to Date

The COTECCO project supported the Government of the DRC in its development of a national decree to create the Interministerial Commission in charge of Monitoring Child Labor in Artisanal Mining and a second decree for the creation of the provincial commission in Lualaba.

The project has established a formal partnership between the Congolese Mining Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Enterprises of the Congo, which jointly represent both formal large-scale mining companies and artisanal miners in the cobalt supply chain. The partnership will promote best practices around remediation efforts in mining and enhance dialogue between the two groups.

The project trained more than 150 representatives of government, civil society, the private sector, and implementing partners have received training on child labor and the worst forms of child labor. These trainings provide participants with monitoring and remediation tools to combat child labor.

Twenty-eight mining companies and cooperatives have begun using ILAB's Comply Chain app and are implementing other monitoring and remediation efforts on child labor in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga regions.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



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*"Emotionally an EV (electric vehicle) is supposed to be a good deed — you're buying an EV you're thinking you are saving the planet — the last thing you want to hear is that the car is not clean. Companies who work with us are starting to understand what the risks are — and asking what do we do about it. But this is an enormous challenge as we're starting at such a low base: if people aren't dying and there are no children then that's a positive."*

*— Nicholas Garrett, Chief Executive of RCS Global*



# Action

## Boom — A Documentary



Boom is the story of a recent college graduate who moves to North Dakota to get a job in the oil fields as a trucker. While immersed in the community he is confronted by a problem bigger than he could imagine: a vast network of human trafficking and criminal activity. Join him on his journey and some of the friends he makes along the way. Explore the social impact on residents and the surrounding industry. Go undercover into the night life, club scenes, and prostitution rings. Journey into the darkness of his thoughts as he gives personal monologues about his experiences, work, and struggles. Experience firsthand accounts from

locals, truckers, and those prostituted in the area. Enter with us into some serious problems that are happening right under our noses. Please click [here](#) for preview.

## COP 27

*Five United Nations human rights treaty bodies issue a joint statement on human rights and climate change during the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).*

The United Nations Human Rights Council has stressed that human rights obligations, standards and principles have the potential to inform and strengthen international, regional and national policymaking in the area of climate change, thereby promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes. However, human rights, and the financing required to realize these rights, have yet to be mainstreamed in climate change discussions, including the annual COPs.

Climate change is negatively impacting the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Climate change is having a major impact on a wide range of human rights today, affecting mostly marginalized groups, and could have a cataclysmic impact in the future, unless ambitious actions are undertaken immediately.

Among the human rights being threatened and violated are the rights to life, adequate food, safe drinking water and sanitation, the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, adequate housing, self-determination, just and favorable conditions of work, development, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and livelihoods, as well as the right to education and cultural rights.

Climate change is also contributing to human rights violations with specific adverse impacts on women and

girls and against groups in marginalized situations, such as migrants, minorities, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, older persons and persons with disabilities including albinism.

Climate change is exacerbating the risk of other human rights violations, including violence against women and girls, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, excessive use of force in the context of policing climate rallies and protests, racism and discrimination. Systemic racism and contemporary legacies of colonialism negatively impact the right to a healthy environment and therefore continue to have an impact on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the right of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Lawyers and others working to address climate change face abuse, threats to their lives, and other risks. Climate change is also a major driver of forced displacement and renders the search for durable solutions significantly more challenging.

The negative effects of failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are disproportionately suffered by persons and communities who are already in a disadvantageous situation, and not enough financial resources are being allocated to these high priority concerns.

To read the full statement, please click [here](#).

## Take Action: Tell world leaders that clean energy must be free of forced labor

Urge the Chinese government to end the persecution and exploitation of Uyghurs and other marginalized groups through the use of forced labor. Join the campaign by clicking [here](#) to sign the petition.



## Achieving a just transition: Human rights and renewables

Authors: Abigail McGregor, Grace Do, William L. Troutman, Stuart Neely  
United States | Publication | June 2022

## What can companies do?

With the transition to renewable energy, including wind and solar, businesses are transforming their corporate strategies, operations, and supply chains to meet unprecedented demands for clean energy. At the same time, the renewable energy sector faces increasing criticism in connection with allegations of human rights abuses in the supply chain, most notably forced labor.

There has been a global legislative response to improve environmental and human rights due diligence, with a strong focus on supply chains. As a result, many nations have imposed due diligence or reporting obligations on businesses concerning human rights risks in their operations and supply chains.

Laws in different countries vary and may include the following:

### Sanctions

Countries have also introduced, or plan to teach, import control measures. For example, Canada has proposed an amendment to the Tariff that will prohibit the importation of goods manufactured or produced wholly or in part from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Similarly, the US Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, effective June 21, 2022, creates a rebuttable presumption that the importation of any goods produced or manufactured wholly or in part in the XUAR or in connection with XUAR-identified entities are the product of forced labor and therefore banned from entering the United States. In addition, Australia, the European Union, and the United Kingdom are contemplating adopting similar import bans.

The US Tariff Act of 1930 prohibits the import of goods produced or manufactured, wholly or in part, by forced or child labor. In addition, the US Bureau of International Labor Affairs maintains a list of products it considers having been produced with forced and child labor. Several critical inputs for the renewable sector are on that list, including cobalt, polysilicon, and copper. The US and the

European Union have also placed import bans on conflict minerals from the DRC and neighboring regions.

Government sanctions have the potential to block all imports of critical supplies for the renewable energy sector unless the industry works together to find solutions.

### Investor Perspective

Beyond legislation requiring businesses to conduct due diligence and report on their human rights impacts, companies in the clean energy sector will also need to respond to greater due diligence from investors and financiers regarding their human rights policies and procedures.

Finally, there are indications that a bifurcated supply chain may be emerging, with 'slavery-free' supply chains serving markets that exclude goods made with forced labor and 'slave-made' supply chains supplying the rest. This may increase costs and reduce innovation without necessarily addressing the underlying risks of human trafficking.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Fair Trade

Buying Fair Trade is one way to help prevent human trafficking for labor and also care for our planet and sustainability. Not only does fair trade certification guarantee that products are made without slave labor and child labor, as well as ensuring fair wages, it also requires product creation and/or harvesting to be done using methods that are environmentally friendly. Fair trade certification support means that support for strong stewardship of the environment grows, and that will lead to a dramatic decrease in air, ground and water pollution, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.



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