A Survivor's Perspective
The Double Pandemic: COVID-19 & Racism

"The world has turned upside down. I am a survivor of human trafficking. I – and so many other trafficking survivors – feel that we have been hit by two pandemics, not just one. The first is COVID-19. The second is racism. Both harm trafficking survivors in our community.

"Just as the world began to re-open, the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others revealed another pandemic: racism. It was always with us. Black people – including Black trafficking survivors – have lived with this all along. Racism has made Black trafficking survivors and other survivors of color feel invisible.

"This double pandemic has hit the trafficking survivor community hard. But survivors are resilient. We are building a new normal. We are grateful for our communities. And, as leaders, we still have much to give."

Authored by Fainess Lipenga, survivor leader and consultant for the Human Trafficking Legal Center. Read Ms. Lipenga's full message here.
• Arguing Against Forced Labor Before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals
• Trade Remedies to Combat Forced Labor
• Leadership Spotlight: New Members of the Board
• Supreme Court Grants Cert in Nestle Case
• Congratulations and Farewell to Humphrey Fellow Daisy Nabasitu!
• Survivors Learn to Protect Their Stories and Navigate the Publishing World
• Meet Our Summer 2020 Legal Fellows

Arguing Against Forced Labor Before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals
On June 4th, our pro bono counsel, Stuart Raphael, argued on behalf of the Human Trafficking Legal Center in a forced labor case pending before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Raphael, a partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth, argued that threats of deportation can be considered coercion under the forced labor provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. The case involves veterinarians from Mexico who have alleged that they were held in forced labor on a dairy farm in Idaho.

Raphael argued powerfully that "threats of deportation alone suffice to establish a forced labor or abuse of process claim, and that is in concert with what five other circuits have said."

Watch the full argument here. Read the amicus brief the Human Trafficking Legal Center filed in the case last Fall here.

Thank you to plaintiffs' counsel, Edgar Iván Aguilasocho, Esq., of Martínez Aguilasocho & Lynch, for sharing oral argument time with amici.

---

Using Trade Remedies to Combat Forced Labor
Last month marked the 90th anniversary of the U.S. Tariff Act of 1930. As an op-ed published by our staff argues, the law remains one of the most underused – but most promising – tools to combat forced labor in supply chains. The law allows the government to block imports of goods made with forced labor.

“The Tariff Act prohibition on forced labor has tremendous potential as a tool to eradicate forced labor in supply chains,” says Anasuya Syam, human rights and trade policy advisor at the Human Trafficking Legal Center and co-author of the guide.

To help bridge the gap between advocates and the potential of this law, the Human Trafficking Legal Center released a practice guide and template to submit a petition to the U.S. government.

“Advocates have the power to petition the government to block goods made with forced labor from entering the U.S. market. The guide seeks to unlock this remedy,” stated Sarah Bessell, deputy director of the Human Trafficking Legal Center and contributor to the guide. “The ultimate goal is to end forced labor in supply chains.”

Publication of the guide is supported by a generous grant from Humanity United. Read the full announcement here and our op-ed here.

Leadership Spotlight:
New Members of the Board

The Human Trafficking Legal Center is thrilled to announce the addition of Evelyn Chumbow and Kathy Vizas to the Board of Directors. Both Chumbow and Vizas have served on the organization’s Advisory Committee for years. Read below to learn more about these two wonderful leaders as they answer the question, What inspires you to dedicate your time to the anti-trafficking community?
Evelyn Chumbow
As a former child victim of labor trafficking turned survivor leader, I know all of the things I lost as a child - education, not being able to see my family. I never forget the lawyers and advocates who were with me and made it clear to me that my story could make an impact and change other survivors’ lives. I also felt that there weren’t many voices representing the African community. I want to bring this issue to light, especially for this community. It inspires me to know that by speaking out, it can help others find a way to fight.

Kathy Vizas
I have seen the Human Trafficking Legal Center’s impact in this field. As a lawyer, I am also incredibly pleased that our organization offers lawyers a chance to do some good for those vulnerable people who have been trafficked. The idea that we still have modern-day slavery is infuriating.
Supreme Court Grants Cert in Nestle Case

International Rights Advocates (IRA) filed the case in federal court in 2005. Pictured above is one of the photos provided by IRA.

In June, the Supreme Court granted cert in the Doe v Nestle, which alleges claims of child slave labor on cocoa plantations in the Ivory Coast. At issue is whether U.S. corporations are liable for overseas human rights violations, including aiding and abetting, under the Alien Tort Statute (ATS). Previous U.S. Supreme Court decisions have continuously narrowed the reach of the ATS. This decision will have significant implications for U.S. corporate accountability. For press coverage and analysis, see The Washington Post, Just Security, and Corporate Accountability Lab.
Congratulations and Farewell, Daisy Nabasitu!

Congratulations to Daisy Nabasitu on her graduation from the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship at the American University Washington College of Law. Ms. Nabasitu is a Ugandan human trafficking prosecutor and legal fellow at the Human Trafficking Legal Center. We are grateful for Ms. Nabasitu’s excellent work and congratulate her on her graduation.

As part of her fellowship, Ms. Nabasitu authored a guest blog for Human Trafficking Search (HTS) on the effects of COVID-19 on domestic workers, particularly those in the Middle East.
She writes, "As the world responds to the global shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown means that work has moved indoors, into homes, behind locked doors. For domestic workers, this means living in an unregulated workplace 24 hours each day, seven days a week. These domestic workers provide indispensable services. But many face discrimination, violence, and forced labor."

Read full blog post here.

Last month, the third installment of the Survivor Leadership Program responded to numerous requests from the survivor community for resources on publishing a book. The seminar, co-sponsored with Survivor Alliance, featured author, editor, and self-publishing expert Nekisha Pickney on "A Survivor's Guide to Publishing Your Story." Roxie Farrow, Operations Manager of the Human Trafficking Legal Center, spearheads the Survivor Leadership Program.

Ms. Pickney was joined by Savannah Sanders of Survivor Alliance. Both experts drew on their personal experiences to share tools with survivors for working with publishers, identifying target audiences, and maintaining control of their stories.

Meet Our Summer 2020 Legal Fellows
Rachel Rein conducts research on civil litigation to hold perpetrators of trafficking accountable in the federal courts. See Rein’s full bio here.

Bekah Carey researches use of the CEDAW Optional Protocol to hold states accountable for failure to protect trafficking victims’ human rights. See Carey's full bio here.

Support Trafficking Survivors Today

The Human Trafficking Legal Center continues to the fight for justice every day - inside and outside the courtroom. We are grateful for our supporters who champion social justice and the courageous survivors we serve. Please consider making a gift today so that every survivor has the chance to thrive.

Yes, I want to make a donation today

Copyright © 2020 The Human Trafficking Legal Center, All rights reserved.