



TAKE ACTION TO SUPPORT TROPICAL FRUIT WORKERS

MAKE FRUIT
FAIR!



Fair Supply Chains.
Decent Conditions.
Sustainable Development.

BananaLink 

Violations of workers rights and human rights are a daily occurrence in tropical fruit producing countries.

“Union members were facing discrimination and daily persecution; they got moved onto the lowest paid jobs or the jobs with most contact with agrochemicals and sometimes individual union members would get sacked for no reason.”

Aquilles Rivera - Costa Rican pineapple worker

What conditions do the workers that grow and harvest our bananas experience?

Migrant workers

Workers on banana plantations in many countries such as the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica are migrants whose labour and other social rights are given little if any respect. Many workers are also hired through subcontractors making the workforce cheaper, more flexible and much harder to organise into trade unions.

Women workers

Women workers are particularly vulnerable, often working for 14 hours a day without overtime pay, without the freedom to organise and without their rights being respected. Women can be sacked for being pregnant, be denied ante or post-natal maternity rights and many suffer sexual harassment in the workplace. Women workers can represent as few as 13% of the workforce as employers view women as ‘high cost, high risk’ employees.

“As women workers we are marginalized. If we complain or say something we are marginalized, we would be fired, or moved from work crew to work crew until the lunch that is provided for us doesn’t reach us any more.”

Viera Sanchez Santos Jeuoa,
Peruvian plantation worker

Trade unions and labour rights – importance of an independent voice

Trade union membership is low in some banana exporting countries due to the widespread anti-union tactics used by national and multinational banana companies. In Guatemala banana workers face some of the worst conditions and trade union activists regularly suffer discrimination, violence and even assassination.

Across the industry national and international labour laws – such as the right to join an independent trade union – are regularly violated, despite their ratification by producing country governments.

If any real improvements are to be seen on the ground workers must first be ensured the freedom to organise into trade unions, providing the capacity to improve their own working conditions through collective bargaining and the subsequent implementation of their basic labour rights.

“I’m the only union member in my work team. Other workers want to join but they are scared they will lose their job and won’t be able to feed their families. They change my shifts regularly. I’m now forced to work the night shift, from 4pm to 12pm. I live outside the plantation and travelling back home late at night is very dangerous. They’ve also changed my work to the lower paid jobs, such as weeding or collecting waste.”

Pablo Lopez - Costa Rican pineapple worker

Make Fruit Fair!

The Make Fruit Fair! campaign consists of fifteen organizations from Europe working in partnership with four plantation worker unions and small farmer organisations in the Global South. Together we contribute to a global movement for change.

Participate in urgent online actions

Make Fruit Fair! receives many urgent requests from our partner organisations asking for support. Sign up to receive our newsletter for progress updates about campaign actions, news from our trade union partners in Latin America and Africa and invitations to take part in urgent online actions.

Among the successes of previous Urgent Actions are:

- ▶ Restoration of protection for SITRABI (Guatemalan banana workers union) General Secretary Noe Ramirez, with a commitment from the Guatemalan government to establish a ‘security perimeter’ for other SITRABI leaders, following the killing in 2011 of six members and ex-members of SITRABI.
- ▶ Intervention by Chiquita, Rainforest Alliance and the Honduran Labour Ministry in response to the failure of the owners of the Tres Hermanas plantations in Honduras to recognise the legality of the SITRAINBA union.
- ▶ Positive steps taken by Chiquita to improve the situation for women on their plantations. In particular, a Framework Agreement including development and employment opportunities for women, and zero-tolerance of sexual harassment.

<http://makefruitfair.org/newsletter/>

Further information and contact

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