

# International Labor Rights Forum

November 2013

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## New ILRF Report Supports Palm Oil Workers' Call for Reforms

Hundreds of palm oil workers and their allies [crashed the 11th annual meeting of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#) in Medan, Indonesia, this week. RSPO is a multi-stakeholder organization that promotes so-called “sustainable” palm oil, [though research published today by ILRF and Sawit Watch](#) reveals wide-spread abuses, including bonded labor, child labor, union suppression and land grabs. The workers, led by an alliance of labor unions and community organizations called Serbundo, presented a list of demands to RSPO Secretary General Darrell Webber.



## Colombian Trade Unionist Assassinated, Others Face Immediate Risk

[Oscar López Triviño](#) was murdered on Nov. 9 in the Colombian city of Bugalagrande a day after he and other members of his union, SINALTRAINAL, received death threats from paramilitaries. The union had been on hunger strike at Nestlé beginning Nov. 5. ILRF joins with the United Workers Center (CUT), the Industrial Union of Food Workers (IUF) and unions around the world in condemning this assassination of yet another Colombian trade unionist and calls on the government to swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice through a full and transparent investigation, and to provide all necessary security for other union members at high risk. [Send a message](#) to the Colombian authorities demanding justice.



## Pay the People who Feed us a Just Wage

This Thanksgiving, say “thanks” to the workers who put the food on your table by [signing a petition](#) calling for a rise in the minimum wage that many food workers earn. More than 20 million people work in the food system in the United States (farmers, processors, cooks, servers, etc.), where the median wage is only \$9.90 an hour. The federal minimum wage for tipped workers is only \$2.13 – and hasn’t increased in more than 20 years! [Sign the petition](#) to raise the minimum wage today and help these workers earn a decent living.



## Airline Workers in Philippines Reach Victory

Two years ago, when 2,600 groundcrew workers were locked out and fired from their jobs, ILRF joined the boycott of Philippine Airlines, in solidarity with members of the Philippine Airlines Employees’ Association (PALEA). We brought Gerry Rivera, the head of the union, to the US for a speaking tour and through our [Labor Rights Defenders Program](#), helped raise funds to sustain the protest. We are now announcing an end to the boycott, as the airline and union finally [reached a settlement agreement today](#). PALEA members will be rehired as regular employees and receive an improved offer. We congratulate PALEA on their perseverance in this struggle against outsourcing: It took months and months of camping out near the Manila airport and solidarity actions in a number of cities to bring about this victory.



## Hold Walmart Accountable for Bad Behavior Around the Globe

Black Friday – the biggest Walmart shopping day of the year – is coming up, and it’s time to tell Walmart that enough is enough. Join Walmart workers and activists around the world to demand Walmart respect its workers and pay fair wages. Take part in the [Global Week of Action](#) Nov. 18-24. If you’re in the United States, look for a protest near you on Nov. 29, using this [handy tool](#). Regardless of where you live, make sure to vote Walmart into the [Corporate Hall of Shame](#), track [#walmartstrikers](#) and [#walmartsolidarity](#) on twitter and follow [@ILRF](#). Walmart still owes compensation to the victims of the Tazreen fire that killed 112 garment workers in Bangladesh, and we’ll make sure they know we’re paying attention as the anniversary of the fire (Nov. 24th) nears!



## **Upcoming Events:**

### **[The Rana Plaza Disaster in Bangladesh: Taking Stock Half a Year On](#)**

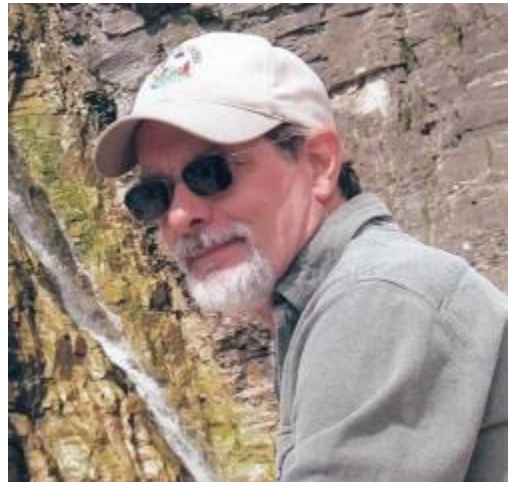
Nov. 20th, 3-5pm - Ford Foundation, 320 E 43rd St, New York, NY  
Join ILRF Executive Director, Judy Gearhart, at the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre's 4th annual event. Our long-time partner, Kalpona Akter of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, will keynote and then join Judy on a panel moderated by Steven Greenhouse of the *New York Times*. This promises to be an important conversation on the rights of workers in the garment sector. What are the root causes of these tragedies? What has to change to prevent them from happening again? And what are the wider implications for companies and governments?



### **[Memorial for Stephen Coats](#)**

Nov. 26th, 5:30-7:00pm – Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Ave NW, Washington, DC

The Board of Directors of USLEAP invites you join us in honoring Stephen Coats, executive director of the U.S. Labor Education in the Americas Project since 1990. Many of Steve's friends and colleagues could not attend the services in Chicago so we are organizing a gathering to remember, celebrate and honor his life, family and work. Steve's wife and sons will join us. We'll also spend a little time talking about the next steps for the goals and mission of USLEAP as we join with the International Labor Rights Forum. RSVP to [tbeaty@teamster.org](mailto:tbeaty@teamster.org). [Click here for the USLEAP @ ILRF newsletter.](#)



## **Please Support Our Fall Campaign**

ILRF's Fall Campaign is critical to sustaining our responsiveness to labor rights defenders around the world. [Please click here to contribute](#) and enable us to stand by our partners, when the road to justice gets long and the funders change their focus. Please also consider becoming a [sustaining donor](#) this year so we know we can rely on you in the months ahead. And look out for announcements about cool holiday gift ideas, some of which we'll gift to you if you join our sustaining donors program.



*With gratitude and in solidarity,  
ILRF staff*