

Dear supporters of IRAdvocates,

Those of you who know me are aware that I have been working to stop child slavery since the late 1980s when I was first traveled to the carpet belt of India with Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi. Together we started Rugmark, now Goodweave, a very successful independent monitoring and certification program that has resulted in thousands of formerly enslaved children being freed from carpet looms and it has provided them with rehabilitation and education programs.



Children trafficked to Côte D'Ivoire from Burkina Faso harvesting cocoa in 2019.

Unfortunately, after over 35 years of fighting child slavery, I'm still at it. The lawlessness of the global economy does little to protect vulnerable children from exploitation.

Earlier this year, IRAdvocates [filed a new lawsuit](#) against Nestlé, Cargill, Mars, Hershey, Olam, Barry Callebaut, and Mondelez on behalf of eight formerly enslaved children who were trafficked from Mali and brought to Côte D'Ivoire where they were forced to perform hazardous work harvesting cocoa for one or more of these giant multinationals.

The case was filed using a relatively new law, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (“TVPRA”). Under this broad law designed to shut down the horrific practices involved in modern slavery, our plaintiffs merely need to show the chocolate companies acted together and knowingly benefited from forced labor or trafficking. In response to the companies’ truly shocking [Motion to Dismiss](#), we just [filed our Opposition brief](#).

We demonstrate in great detail that these companies have been working together since 2001, when they signed the Harkin-Engel Protocol and promised to end their reliance on the “worst forms of child labor” by 2005. **Instead of ending their use of enslaved children, taking a cue from Big Tobacco, the companies have engaged in a massive and misleading scheme to continue profiting from enslaved children while they lie to the public and regulators about their progress.**

The chocolate companies gave themselves four extensions of time and now claim by 2025 they will “reduce by 70%” their reliance on child labor. Think about that – **after 20 years, they admit they are still using child labor and won’t even stop in 2025.** They have given themselves permission to profit from child slavery until they decide they will stop enslaving children. During the 20 years they have been claiming to consumers that they are making progress, the U.S. Department of Labor-funded study found the number of children harvesting cocoa has increased and [today 1.56 million children are harvesting cocoa](#) .

We are working to stop them. I will devote my nearly 40 years of experience as a lawyer, but I need your help.

We are taking on seven powerful multinationals and the giant corporate law firms they have hired [to preserve their slavery and labor exploitation scheme](#). They are looking to spend billions to continue to profit from child slavery. We are able to stretch a dollar a long way in this fight but [any dollar you can add for us to be able to preserve pressure on these companies to stop child slavery in the cocoa sector will go a long way](#).

Right now, we also need to raise \$15,000 before the end of Novembre to fund a case research trip to Côte D'Ivoire in November that will help both gather evidence and shed light on the violations of human rights in the cocoa sector.

If you're able to [chip in](#) to help us tackle this, it will help move us forward. You can also donate by sending a check to International Rights Advocates, 621 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

Thanks for your support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Terry Collingsworth

Executive Director, IRAdvocates

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