

# Striving for slavery-free tea and coffee

I see you: each individual trapped in slavery to provide me with cheap tea and coffee



Nestlé and Jacobs Douwe Egberts say beans from Brazilian plantations using slave labour may have ended up in their coffee



"My heart has been burning, it got broken many a time, but being a man I tried to keep my tears inside," said Ramesh after his 16 year old daughter Somila was kidnapped from the tea plantation where her parents worked.

(The photo captures the moment when Ramesh and Somila are reunited)

## YOUR STORY: Elaina

Elaina was enslaved because her parents, who picked the world-famous Assam tea on an estate in Lakhimpur district, were paid so little they could not afford to keep her. There are thousands like her, taken to Delhi from the tea plantations in the north-east Indian state by a trafficker, sold to an agent for as little as £45, sold on again to an employer for up to £650, then kept as slaves, raped, abused.

There are thought to be 100,000 girls as

young as 12 under lock and key in Delhi alone: others are sold on to the Middle East and some are even thought to have reached the UK.

The exploitation of worker's rights within the tea and coffee industries fuels the world-wide slave trade both directly, through forced labour, and indirectly, through

creating the poverty that leads to stories such as Elaina's.

Every tea plantation pays the same wages. Every leaf of every box of Assam tea sold by Tetley and Lipton and Twinings and the supermarket own brands – Asda, Waitrose, Tesco, Sainsbury's and the rest – is picked by workers who earn a basic 12p an hour.

(<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/20/poverty-tea-pickers-india-child-slavery>)



## Some more facts...

- The dominant and best value for money products in the tea and coffee industry are often produced by an unethical process.
- Coffee farmers earn a disproportionate, unfair and fluctuating income.
- Many classify as 'forced labourers', suffering verbal or physical abuse and threats of loss of work, wages or food, if they do

not perform to a certain – often unrealistic – standard... Their identification papers may be confiscated, which keeps them trapped in that location.' (Worldvision Factsheet Coffee)

- Tea pickers are equally exploited: very little of the profits included in the retail price of a box of tea goes to the tea-producing country. Instead, whilst multinational corporations reap large rewards, tea

workers are condemned to a life of penury. A tea picker makes just 1p for each £1.60 box of tea bags sold in a British supermarket. (<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/tea-industry-report.aspx>)



# I PLEDGE TO CHANGE MY HABITS BECAUSE YOUR STORY MATTERS

**WE NEED TO WAKE UP TO HOW OUR DAILY CONSUMPTION CHOICES ARE FUELLING THE GLOBAL SLAVE TRADE, AND WORKING COUNTER-PRODUCTIVELY TO THE BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY!**

## My life...

- Buy tea and coffee marked with the Fairtrade logo - Fairtrade supports farmers and workers as they work to improve their lives and their communities. The production has to meet various social, economic and environmental stands, including protection of workers' rights and the environment, payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price and an additional Fairtrade Premium to invest in business or community projects.
  - ⇒ Look for the brand mark on products
  - ⇒ Find Fairtrade products

(<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/buying-fairtrade/coffee>)

  - ⇒ Rate Tea is a fantastic site that stores a wealth of information on many different aspects of every sort of tea you could think of. Check out their list of weird and wonderful Fairtrade teas at [www.ratetea.com](http://www.ratetea.com)
- Check if cafés use Fairtrade coffee and tea before buying In Oxford, Fairtrade cafés include Combibos and the Art café.
- Research other ethical brands of tea and coffee:

## Is Fairtrade the best option?

Benefit:

- Fairtrade works to benefit small-scale farmers and workers, who are amongst the most marginalised groups globally, through trade rather than aid to enable them to maintain their livelihoods and reach their potential. (<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/what-is-fairtrade/what-fairtrade-does>)

Draw-backs:

- Sometimes, it may be more beneficial for a farmer to sell their coffee on the open-market, if it is very high quality. This is because there is no guaranteed standard for quality in Fairtrade coffee, so little inducement for farmers to invest in growing high-quality coffee.
- Questions raised about effectiveness of community work
- For more information on the debate:
  - ⇒ [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bruce-wydicke/10-reasons-fair-trade-coffee-doesnt-work\\_b\\_5651663.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bruce-wydicke/10-reasons-fair-trade-coffee-doesnt-work_b_5651663.html)
  - ⇒ [http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_problem\\_with\\_fair\\_trade\\_coffee](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_problem_with_fair_trade_coffee)
  - ⇒ [http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_future\\_of\\_fair\\_trade\\_is\\_there\\_one](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_future_of_fair_trade_is_there_one)
  - ⇒ [http://ssir.org/podcasts/entry/alberto\\_irezabal\\_bringing\\_fair\\_trade\\_to\\_indigenous\\_farmers](http://ssir.org/podcasts/entry/alberto_irezabal_bringing_fair_trade_to_indigenous_farmers)
  - ⇒ <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/alternative-trade-models-live-discussion>

Many companies have created their own systems and standards for treating traders with dignity and equality, often exchanging DIRECTLY with farmers, a widely accepted means to be a more effective model for real poverty reduction. (Clear explanations of the various coffee certifications: <http://www.ethicalcoffee.net/>)

- ⇒ eg. Union Roasted Coffee work in partnership with farmers to improve the quality of both the coffee and the lives of the farmers ([https://www.unionroasted.com/union\\_direct\\_trade.html](https://www.unionroasted.com/union_direct_trade.html))
- ⇒ Beautiful Taiwanese Tea trades directly with farmers through Face to Face trading and provides superb quality and unique teas.
- ⇒ The Good Trade have made a list of ethical coffee brands, mostly Direct Trade. Buying from these perhaps more expensive but almost certainly more effectively poverty-reducing
- ⇒ The problem with direct trade is that there is no external body to measure standards or hold the company accountable. The company has to be trusted to do what it says. See articles presenting various views on the authenticity of World Fair Trade Organisation ([http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/tags/wto?gclid=CjwKEAjwxc4BRDE2dG4ueLArHMSJADStCqMbdf4yhiMpp7UeWZte9VrYPocfFKjBSjIR-YZVzpFxoC2jHw\\_wcB](http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/tags/wto?gclid=CjwKEAjwxc4BRDE2dG4ueLArHMSJADStCqMbdf4yhiMpp7UeWZte9VrYPocfFKjBSjIR-YZVzpFxoC2jHw_wcB))