

Published on *International Labor Rights Forum* (<http://www.laborrights.org>)

[Home](#) > New Report Details Widespread Abuses on Firestone's Rubber Plantation in Liberia

---

# New Report Details Widespread Abuses on Firestone's Rubber Plantation in Liberia

**Date of publication:** July 18, 2008

**Source:** ILRF, IPS, SAMFU Press Release

## Attached Files

-  [Heavy Load Press Release.pdf](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

**INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM \* INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES \* SAVE MY FUTURE FOUNDATION (LIBERIA)**

July 18, 2008

Contact: Tim Newman, [tim.newman@ilrf.org](mailto:tim.newman@ilrf.org) <sup>[2]</sup>, 202-347-4100 x113, 617-823-9464 (U.S.)

Emira Woods, [emira@ips-dc.org](mailto:emira@ips-dc.org) <sup>[3]</sup>, 301-523-2979 (U.S.)

Robert L. Nyahn, [samfu1@yahoo.com](mailto:samfu1@yahoo.com) <sup>[4]</sup>, +231-6-561-955 (Liberia)

## New Report Details Widespread Abuses on Firestone's Rubber Plantation in Liberia

A [new report](#) <sup>[5]</sup> released today details a wide range of abuses occurring on a rubber plantation in Liberia owned by the Bridgestone/Firestone tire company. The report, titled "The Heavy Load: A Demand for Fundamental Changes at the Bridgestone/Firestone Rubber Plantation in Liberia" was published by Liberian-based Save My Future Foundation (SAMFU) and exposes poor living and working conditions for rubber tappers, a meager pension system, barriers to educational and health access, water and air pollution and violations of workers' right to organize. The report is also one of the first examinations of the role that several different security forces operating on the plantation play in violating the rights of workers, their families and communities surrounding the plantation.

**Robert Nyahn of the Save My Future Foundation** said, "There is time for everything, the time for exploitation and abuse is over; it is now time for Firestone to clean up the ugly and unimaginable past and begin to make fundamental changes that reflect a company committed to contributing to the growth and development of a developing country. With our hands joined together we will no longer accept this kind of evil."

**Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies** said, "This groundbreaking report shows that the heaviest load in Firestone's largest rubber operation is still being born by the women and children of Liberia. After 82 years of exploitation masked by a massive public relations campaign, Firestone must be held accountable for its continued violations of worker rights and abuse of the environment. Liberian workers and future generations need good corporate neighbors. Firestone can and must do better."

**Tim Newman, child labor campaigner at the International Labor Rights Forum** said, "This report reveals the widespread abuse of workers' rights on the Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia. As the first independent and democratically elected union leaders on the plantation negotiate a new contract, it is important that Firestone take the demands of workers and their allies to heart. Eighty two years of exploitation is enough and the time is now for a new day on Firestone's rubber plantation in Liberia."

Firestone has operated the world's largest rubber plantation in Harbel, Liberia since 1926. As the report shows, rubber tappers have a daily production quota they must meet in order to receive their daily wage which is just over \$3 a day. As a result of the unreasonably high quota, workers must bring family members to work with them or hire subcontractors using their meager salaries. Additionally, workers must carry two 75-pound buckets of raw latex on sticks on their shoulders and work without protective gear. Workers live in crowded shacks without electricity, running water, indoor latrines.

The new report is a follow up to SAMFU's 2005 report on human rights violations and environmental abuses on the Firestone rubber plantation called "Firestone: The Mark of Modern Slavery."

The complete report can be read online here: <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/stop-firestone/resources/1592> <sup>[5]</sup>

***The report will be released in the U.S. at a public event at the Institute for Policy Studies (1112 16th St. NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036) on Friday, July 18th at 12:30PM ET. The event will feature Edwin Cisco, Secretary General of the Firestone Agricultural Workers Union of Liberia, the union representing Firestone workers in Liberia. If you would like to join the event on the phone, please contact Tim Newman or Emira Woods (contact information above).***

For more information about the Stop Firestone campaign which is working to hold Firestone accountable for its abuses in Liberia, please visit [www.StopFirestone.org](http://www.StopFirestone.org) <sup>[6]</sup>. For more information about the Save My Future Foundation, please visit [www.samfu.org](http://www.samfu.org) <sup>[7]</sup>.

###

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/stop-firestone/news/11671>

**Links:**

[1] [http://www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/news/Heavy\\_Load\\_Press\\_Release.pdf](http://www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/news/Heavy_Load_Press_Release.pdf)

[2] <mailto:tim.newman@ilrf.org>

[3] <mailto:emira@ips-dc.org>

[4] <mailto:samfu1@yahoo.com>

[5] <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/stop-firestone/resources/1592>

[6] <http://www.stopfirestone.org>

[7] <http://www.samfu.org>