

## Traidcraft's Justice Campaign: briefing for MPs

### Background

Many British companies have a positive impact in developing countries where they operate. However a minority get away with serious abuses which would not be tolerated if they happened in the UK.

Traidcraft's report '*Justice: time to call in the law*' has more detail.

This continuing poor business practice:

- Damages the lives of people in developing countries
- Undermines the actions of more responsible companies
- Weakens sustainable development to which the UK is committed.

At the moment there is nothing in UK criminal law to stop these abuses.

**Traidcraft is calling for the government to update the law so that companies can be prosecuted for the most serious harms.**

**303** allegations of serious harms made against **127 UK companies** in the last **ten years**.

**11** known civil court cases in the same period.

**0** prosecutions.

Data: Business & Human Rights Resource Centre  
[www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org)

### What is happening now

In May 2016, the government published an update to the UK's **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights**. Despite a long consultation process, the plan does not contain any strong commitments to hold companies to account for any harm they cause abroad.

However, there is a **consultation process on legislation on prosecute companies for 'failing to prevent' economic crimes** such as fraud, and this might be included in legislation planned for autumn 2016. Such economic crimes are often part of a wider picture of corporate malpractice and the gap in legal accountability for both needs to be closed. Traidcraft believes that this is an opportunity to extend legislation to cover exploitation and abuse of people abroad.

### What can you do as an MP?

- **Write to the Attorney General and the Secretary of State for Justice** and ask them to include exploitation and abuse of people abroad in the consultation on corporate economic crimes.
- Use your membership of any relevant **Select Committees or All Party Groups** to raise concerns about the impact of some British companies abroad and gaps in legal accountability.
- If you would be prepared to **ask a Parliamentary Question or initiate a backbench debate**, please contact Traidcraft's policy and campaigns unit for more information – details below.

### About Traidcraft

Traidcraft Exchange is the UK's only development charity specialising in making trade work for the poor. In collaboration with local partners Traidcraft works to create opportunities for poor people to harness the benefits of trade, helping them to develop sustainable livelihoods. Traidcraft uses the experiences of its sister fair trade company, Traidcraft plc, to improve wider trade practices and to inform campaigns for trade justice and corporate accountability.

[www.traidcraft.co.uk/justicecampaign](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/justicecampaign)

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