



TYPHOO RESPONSE TO BBC PANORAMA

6th March 2023

The BBC Panorama programme aired on Monday 20th of February reveals horrific and deeply concerning events surrounding women working on tea estates in Kenya. At Typhoo, we take these allegations extremely seriously, take a zero-tolerance approach to human rights abuses, and condemn all violence and abuse, particularly against the most vulnerable.

Since being made aware of the allegations against these tea producers on the 2nd of February, Typhoo kept in close contact with James Finlays and specialised NGOs to discuss their progress, immediate corrective actions and investigation plan. In the meantime, we had the tea from these producers placed on hold, until the severity and cause of the issues were fully understood and appropriate steps taken to protect and address the abuse victims' needs.

We remain in fluent communication with other tea brands through the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) and industry stakeholders since the solution to gender-based violence in tea-producing countries' rural areas is multidimensional and will only come through industry collaboration.

Through our responsible sourcing programme¹, we are deeply conscious of the magnitude of the tea industry's deep-rooted issues and its workers' experience. These issues have different faces; unfortunately, women, girls and other marginalised groups are more at risk of violence and harassment.

At Typhoo, we work to ensure we have a responsible and ethical supply chain. We believe fewer people are at risk of vulnerability when they grow the tea that goes into your Typhoo cup than if they were farming something else. Today's news confirms that we must keep up and reinforce this work.

The ethical challenges within the tea supply chain are similar to other agricultural products and equally complex to resolve. The prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse is one of many urgent elements to consider, together with overall gender equality, the prevention of any other form of discrimination or harassment, access to fundamental rights such as healthcare and education around tea estates, the provision of a living income for farmers, a guarantee of proper health and safety measures.

¹For further information on Typhoo's approach to ethical sourcing, please refer to our Ethical and Human Rights Policy, Supplier Code of Conduct and Modern Slavery Statement.

<https://www.typhoo.co.uk/typhoo-csr>



We expect our suppliers to do their best at all of the above. Typhoo sources Rainforest Alliance-certified tea because it means our producers have a progressive social and environmental standard to match, and they are independently measured and audited on their continuous improvement. Unfortunately, this does not mean that serious issues will not continue in tea estates. It means there will be channels for reporting, addressing, remediation and change.

Typhoo works closely with NGOs, producers, and other tea brands, to ensure we are participating in a long-term systemic change. We are members of non-profit bodies such as the Ethical Tea Partnership and the Ethical Trading initiative to ensure we understand, take part, and influence the way forward in how tea businesses do business. We visit tea estates and run social audits personally. We monitor human rights locally following updates from The International Roundtable for Sustainable Tea (THIRST). At Typhoo, we have a robust onboarding process for new suppliers to ensure they align with our values. Whilst we do not own or operate any tea estates, we encourage our suppliers to be open with us on what happens on their tea estates so that we can be part of the solution. When we hear of specific allegations, we will investigate and work on the issue with the producer when possible. We would only consider removing a supplier from our approved list when they are not committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of tea communities.

In this instance, we have seen the Producer, James Finlay, take immediate action over the alleged perpetrators, reinforce their existing prevention and reporting systems and commission an independent NGO to investigate, understand and address the issues whilst directly supporting the victims of abuse. Lipton has publically committed to taking a similar approach.

Typhoo will continue to monitor the immediate situation and progress on these tea estates.