

## Unilever's response 8 September 2023 to BHRRC

We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to reports of alleged human rights violations within our tea supply chain.

### **India**

In India, we source from the 12 tea estates named, as of September 2023. These are all listed on our tea supplier list on our website\*. We reached out to all of these tea estates and have had responses from ten. We have stopped sourcing from the suppliers who have not responded and will not source from them until we receive a satisfactory response.

We were already aware of the tragic incident on the **Pabhoi Tea Estate** and had reached out to our supplier back in June. The management of the tea estate confirmed that they would compensate the family of the deceased worker and are looking into how to prevent such terrible incidents in the future. They shared that they have started a bottom-up approach of training all sardars, drivers, and staff members to identify workers suffering from any pre-medical conditions in order to assign them non-hazardous work.

**Lepetkata Tea Estate** clarified that tea bushes are being uprooted because the land was ageing and unproductive. They informed us the land is being considered for an eco-tourism project, which would involve replanting and restoring much of the land. They also shared that that no retrenchment of the workforce will take place and that the proposed development of this project shall generate higher employment opportunities for the local populace.

The supplier at the **Hatigaon division of the Kellyden Tea Estate** acknowledged the terrible incident of an elephant attack. The family of the worker has received compensation for the death and has liaised with local authorities. The estate is close to a reserve forest and has a demarked elephant corridor. The estate management has asked the spotters to be more vigilant to monitor elephant herd movement. They are also working with the local Forest Department.

You acknowledged that the factory accident that is listed as happening in **Namdang Tea Estate** took place in the **Samdang Tea Estate**, at Doomdooma. We are awaiting response on this.

The **Furkating Tea Estate** told us that the incident took place in a village some distance away, contrary to what the article reports. Nevertheless, a police report has been lodged for necessary clarification, and a copy has been shared with us. Similarly, our **Bamadanga-Tondu Tea Estate** supplier has confirmed that the said leopard attack happened outside the tea estate and did not involve tea workers.

**Tamulbari Tea Estate** management assured us that the injured worker was given medical treatment, with paid leave. The worker has returned to work after a recovery period, and the forest department is taking action to prevent such incidents in the future.

**Dufflaghur Tea Estate** informed us that they have raised the incident with the police and the accident has been registered. Additional health and safety measures have been taken, including extra CCTV cameras, additional guards and health and safety training for all factory workers.

**Bhatpara Tea Estate** management assured us that housing was being maintained properly by the company. Mahipal Dorji mentioned in the article is not a worker of Bhatpara Tea Estate.

**Garganda Tea Estate** management responded that they are not aware of any such leopard attack incident on their estate.

**Tasati Tea Estate** shared that a lock-out, which rendered workers jobless, has been resolved; the management has signed an agreement with the labour union and tea production has resumed.

### **Sri Lanka**

The plantation company in Sri Lanka, Bogawantalawa, informed us they are making it compulsory that workers travel safely in groups, following a leopard attack.

### **Bangladesh**

We can confirm that our Indian tea business does not source from tea estates in Bangladesh. This includes the two estates mentioned.

### **Collaboration and responsible sourcing**

We continue to believe that collaboration across the industry is critical to address these issues, such as through the Ethical Tea Partnership. Tea is a priority crop in our commitment to ensure workers earn at least a living wage or income in global supply chains. In turn, this will help to improve working conditions and raise living standards.

Unilever's Responsible Partner Policy mandates that all business partners have in place a Code of Conduct or Responsible Sourcing Policy for their own supply chain. There is a process to communicate this throughout the supply chain and to monitor compliance. Tea certification also helps to ensure that human and labour rights are met. We continue to support the increased certification within our value chain.

Unilever is taking proactive responsibility on the health and wellbeing of our plantation workers through nutrition and women safety partnership programmes. These social impact programmes are live examples of sectoral changes in making tea a truly sustainable sector. It is key that we create a positive impact for people whose livelihoods depend on tea.

For example, we are working with partners to improve diet diversity and access to nutritious foods in tea producing communities in Assam, covering 160,000 workers across tea estates.

Here is a link to Unilever's Tea Suppliers list, that ensures we are being transparent: [unilever-tea-suppliers-2022.pdf](#)

ENDS