

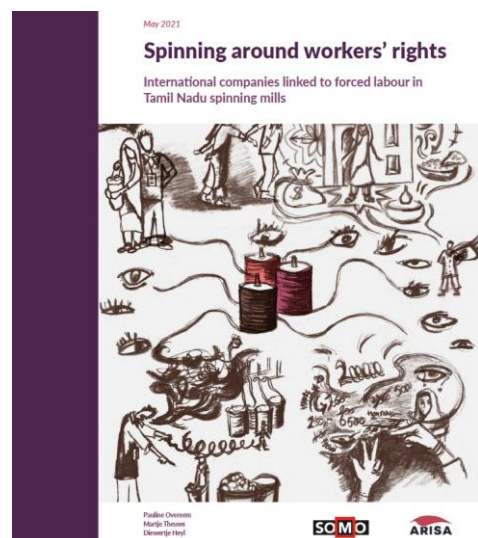


## Arisa Newsletter 14, May 2021

### New report Arisa: International companies linked to forced labour in Indian spinning mills

There is a serious risk that workers are trapped in forced labour conditions in the Indian spinning mills that produce yarn and fabrics for the international clothing and textile industry. Large-scale research undertaken by SOMO and Arisa, of 29 spinning mills in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, presented today – May 27 - in the report *Spinning Around Workers' Rights*, has revealed this exploitation. Many workers come from other states in India, do not speak Tamil and belong to the lower castes. Employers take advantage of the vulnerable position of these labour migrants, who are often recruited with false promises and end up living miserably in hostels that are by and large isolated from the outside world. On top of that, the already vulnerable workers in this sector are severely affected by the ongoing corona crisis.

Read more about this new report in the [press release](#) by Arisa and SOMO; you can also download the report here.



### Call for support for Indian partners of Arisa

In the past weeks we have seen the terrible images from India daily. Hundreds of thousands of Covid infections per day and thousands of deaths. The healthcare system is breaking down: there are insufficient hospital beds, oxygen and protective equipment. Last year, during the first wave, with your help we were able to help thousands of families of migrant workers through our partners Manjari, SAVE and READ. Again, we have already collected € 12,000 and are supporting the following actions by our partners:

- **Cividep India** supports garment workers in the Bangalore region affected by the lockdown with emergency aid. Cividep is also committed to getting garment workers vaccinated as soon as possible.
- **READ** particularly supports the Dalit workers in the garment industry in Tamil Nadu with food, beds and protective equipment. READ is also helping migrants who want to return home now that the garment factories in Tamil Nadu are closed.
- **MV Foundation** provides emergency relief in the communities in Telangana and Bihar, the states where they operate. Unfortunately, the organisation itself has also been hit hard by the crisis. Last weekend, a Child line coordinator from MVF died of Covid in a Hyderabad hospital.
- In addition to emergency aid, **SAVE** also provides information to migrant workers in Tamil Nadu. There is a lot of misinformation and SAVE tries to inform workers about the disease, the possibilities for prevention and about vaccination.
- **Manjari** and **ARAVALI** are active in the natural stone sector in Rajasthan. They support families in these communities through the *Sustainability Forum on Natural Stone*. They provide emergency relief and train local NGOs to help the most vulnerable groups: the workers suffering from silicosis and their families, single mothers and migrant workers.

These organisations will continue their efforts in the coming weeks and can use financial support to do so. We would like to thank everyone who has already made a contribution and make another appeal. You can transfer your donation to bank account **NL 81 TRIO 037 931 3200** of Arisa Foundation in Utrecht, with specification "Donation". BIC-code is **TRIONL2U**.

Many thanks on behalf of our partners in India!

## Arisa is looking for a communications expert

Arisa's activities are growing and expanding. An important part of the work is communication to the outside world, through reports, press releases, parliamentary questions, social media, the website and the newsletter. To streamline this even better, we have created a new post for a communications expert effective 1 July 2021. The vacancy is still **open until June 7**. Do you know someone who could strengthen Arisa or are you interested yourself? The vacancy can be found on our [website](#). Spreading this vacancy is highly appreciated!



## Petition legislation for Corporate Social Responsibility

Your phone, T-shirt or cup of coffee... In the Netherlands we can still buy products that are made at the expense of people and the environment. The stuff we use every day comes from all over the world. Extraordinary of course. At the same time, in all these production chains, there are still terrible working conditions for millions of people as well as destruction of nature. In order to ensure all products are produced sustainably and responsibly, it is important governments oblige companies to do so. A legislative proposal has been submitted in the Dutch parliament that obligates companies to respect human rights and the environment in their supply chains.

Arisa would like this law to be approved by the parliament. Do you agree? Then let your voice be heard now and sign the petition *#WetgevingNu* ("Legislation Now"): <https://arisa.nl/petitie/> [in Dutch].



## Publication on trends in production and trade of leather products from India

On May 18 Arisa published *Trends in production and trade: Leather products from India*. It presents information on the production of leather and leather products in India, where these are shipped to and which international companies purchase them. The publication was published as part of the *Together for Decent Leather* program, which focuses on improving the working conditions of leather workers in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The publication can be downloaded [here](#). Similar research was carried out by SOMO for Pakistan and Bangladesh. All publications can be found on the [Together for Decent Leather website](#).



## First workers' committees established and trained in a collective project in Tamil Nadu

Prénatal is one of the first companies to have started a training program at a supplier in Tamil Nadu, India. The training is part of a collective project of the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile coordinated by Arisa, intended to improve working conditions in the garment industry in the region. In addition to Prénatal, six companies, the Mondiaal FNV trade union and NGOs SAVE and Arisa are participating in the project. [Read more...](#)



## Bangladesh: Continuation of effective security agreement uncertain while much remains to be done

A new report from Clean Clothes Campaign and three other organisations on the garment industry in Bangladesh, *Unfinished Business: Outstanding safety hazards at garment factories show that the Accord must be extended and expanded*, reveals that progress in factory safety is at risk. The "Bangladesh Accord" was created after the Rana Plaza tragedy, in which more than 1,130 garment workers were killed. It has produced exceptionally good results in eight years. The current agreements will expire on 31 May and there is still no agreement between international trade union federations and the relevant garment brands on how to proceed.

A proposal to continue the agreement under the current conditions is rejected by the garment brands: they want to get rid of the agreements that are legally enforceable for each individual company, while according to the unions, SKC and other 'co-signers' this is essential for the effectiveness of the agreement.

More about this report:

<https://cleanclothes.org/news/2021/remaining-safety-hazards-in-bangladeshi-factories-show-that-apparel-brands-must-not-abandon-binding-safety-programme>.



## Website “40 years ICN/Arisa” live!

This year we are paying attention to the 40th anniversary of our organisation. We do this in the newsletter, and also on a special page on our website. For an overview of the history of ICN/Arisa, visit <https://arisa.nl/40jaarliw-arisa/>.



Any special memories of the India Committee of the Netherlands? We would like to include responses from our network in our newsletter. Send your story (max. 250 words) to [info@arisa.nl](mailto:info@arisa.nl). Photos are of course also welcome. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!

## India Committee of the Netherlands: the years 1990-1995

In the 1990s, a large part of the Dutch population came into contact with the activities of the India Committee of the Netherlands. ICN disseminated information about India through articles and announcements in newspapers and magazines, at events, on national or regional radio, and through libraries and bookstores. ICN gave lectures and was present with an (information) stand at various festivals such as the annual well-attended Festival Mundial in Tilburg. The library in the office was well visited by students and India travelers and materials were lent out. Magazine India Nu had over 800 subscribers at that time. In January 1995 there was a one-time trial edition of Masala, a magazine about South Asia, created through a collaboration with other country working groups. This did not receive a follow-up.

Dozens of volunteers were committed through the local India working groups, and the secretariat now had five paid employees.

[Read more...](#)



## **Retrospective by former ICN chairman Ipe van der Deen**

*After our call for stories related to 40 years of Arisa / ICN, we received several contributions. In the coming period we will share this with you via the special webpage and the newsletter. In this newsletter a contribution from former ICN chairman Ipe van der Deen.*

It must have been somewhere in the mid-1990s when during a General Assembly of the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) the discussion about chain responsibility for garment traders was introduced. Contractors were already aware of that concept at the time. Chain responsibility would be an opportunity to hold textile retailers here responsible about their misconduct when sourcing elsewhere on the planet. Among the members at the time were some hard-core supporters of the Communist Party who didn't believe that that would ever happen. They were partly right with their doubts, now a quarter of a century later something similar is only beginning to emerge.

[Read more....](#)

## **Follow Arisa on social media**

Arisa is active on social media. Under the name 'Arisa Foundation' we share messages about human rights violations in South Asia, especially in relation to the global supply chains of garment and textile, natural stone and seed production. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)!

With this newsletter, Arisa wants to keep you specifically informed about her own activities.

*May 27, 2021*

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