

Human Rights Groups, Labor Unions Demand FARM Rio Drop Starbucks Over Slavery, Labour Exploitation, Union Busting

International groups send open letter to FARM Rio CEO urging retail brand to drop Starbucks partnership

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, June 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following a set of legal actions alleging slavery-like conditions in Starbucks' Brazil supply chain, a coalition of prominent

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FARM Rio is beloved for its vibrant celebration of Brazil and its commitment to doing good. But partnering with a company facing credible allegations of slavery contradicts FARM Rio's own values.”

*Etelle Higonnet, Coffee Watch
Founder and Director.*

nongovernmental organizations, labor unions, and human rights groups are demanding ethical Brazilian retail brand FARM Rio end its partnership with the coffee giant or make the partnership conditional on major reforms.

Over a dozen organizations from around the world – including Coffee Watch, UGT Brasil, and CONTRACS, the retail workers union of FARM Rio – sent a letter to FARM Rio CEO Fabio Barreto Thursday detailing mounting evidence of serious human rights violations in Starbucks' supply chains in Brazil and beyond — including allegations of slavery, child labor, and union busting.

The letter is the latest in escalating international pressure for FARM Rio to end its partnership with Starbucks. On Tuesday, June 2, Brazilian workers rallied and protested outside FARM Rio stores in protest of the partnership.

“Starbucks faces serious allegations about child labor and other severe human rights violations in its coffee supply chains in [China](#), [Mexico](#), Guatemala, and numerous other countries....Furthermore, Starbucks has refused to sign a fair contract with its unionized workers in the United States where thousands of baristas face retaliation for demanding basic rights such as fair wages, breaks and workplace safety,” reads the letter.

FARM Rio, a certified B Corporation, globally celebrated for its bold designs and sustainability commitments, recently entered a partnership with Starbucks, drawing concern and criticism from social justice, labor, and environmental groups. Starbucks and FARM Rio first announced the partnership less than one month after two different organizations filed legal actions against

the coffee giant alleging slavery-like conditions in Starbucks' Brazil supply chain.

The letter references the following reports and allegations:

- A 2025 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act lawsuit, John Doe. et al. v. Starbucks Corporation, (Case No. 1:25-cv-01261), filed by International Rights Advocates on behalf of eight Brazilian workers trafficked and forced to harvest coffee sold to Starbucks' main supplier.
- A Section 307 Petition filed by Coffee Watch (Case No. e00008801) urging U.S. Customs and Border Protection to ban imports of Brazilian coffee linked to forced labor in Starbucks' supply chains.
- Reports of child labor, deforestation, and exploitation in Starbucks' sourcing from countries including China, Mexico, and Guatemala.
- Over 100 active complaints filed by U.S. workers accusing Starbucks of union busting and labor law violations, currently under federal prosecution.



Demonstration of workers in front of a Farm Rio Store.

The organizations call on FARM Rio to either immediately end its collaboration with Starbucks or demand that the coffee giant:

- Uphold the right of all workers to freely unionize.
- Eradicate slavery and child labor from its supply chains.
- Ensure living wages for farmworkers and living income prices for smallholder farmers.
- Commit to full labor rights across its global operations.
- Engage in transparent dialogue with labor, environmental, and human rights organizations.

The letter is signed by a broad coalition including Coffee Watch, UGT Brasil, China Labor Watch, International Rights Advocates, Conectas Direitos Humanos, CONTRACS – CUT, ADERE, Empower, ProDESC, and numerous other labor and human rights organizations.

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