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**HUMAN RIGHTS NONPROFIT PERSISTS IN LEGAL BATTLE AGAINST TECH GIANTS
DESPITE JUDICIAL SETBACK**

[Washington, DC], March 5, 2024 – International Rights Advocates (IRAdvocates) expressed profound disappointment today in the wake of the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit's decision, which upheld the dismissal of the claims against major tech companies Apple, Tesla, Google, Microsoft, and Dell. This pivotal ruling means these tech giants will not face liability for failing to protect children forced into labor as artisanal miners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), despite having policies that profess "zero tolerance" for child labor.

The legal challenge, undertaken on behalf of 16 families whose children were either killed or gravely injured while mining cobalt – a critical component for the lithium-ion batteries powering devices produced by these tech corporations – sought accountability under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). However, the court's interpretation necessitated a more explicit connection between the tech companies and the mining operations, a prerequisite the plaintiffs' allegations did not sufficiently meet according to the judges.

This ruling not only emphasizes the legal complexities in holding multinational corporations accountable for their supply chains but also signals a concerning incentive for these companies to diminish transparency, directly contravening their publicly stated commitments against child labor. "This decision, though disappointing, will not deter us from our mission to protect vulnerable children and ensure that multinational corporations do not benefit from forced labor and human trafficking," expressed Terry Collingsworth, Executive Director of IRAdvocates.

The organization is now scrutinizing potential appellate routes and considering the filing of new complaints tailored to the court's stringent criteria for establishing a "venture" under the TVPRA. IRAdvocates is also buoyed by the potential of their ongoing TVPRA case against major chocolate producers like Nestle, Cargill, Mars, Hershey, Mondelez, Barry Callebaut, and Olam, which involves allegations of using slave labor in cocoa

harvesting in Côte d'Ivoire. This case, still pending in the Court of Appeals, could benefit from the clarified standards of liability.

The ruling also underscores the critical role of continued advocacy from investors, consumers, policymakers, and the broader international community to hold these tech giants accountable. "We remain steadfast in our commitment to seeking justice for the victims of these egregious human rights abuses and call upon people everywhere to join us in this fight," Collingsworth stated, urging supporters to learn more and engage in their advocacy efforts through the IRAdvocates website.

About International Rights Advocates:

International Rights Advocates (IRAdvocates) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting human rights and corporate accountability through strategic litigation and advocacy efforts. By challenging the practices of multinational corporations, IRAdvocates aims to foster a just and equitable world.

Press Contact:

Terrence Collingsworth
tc@iradvocates.org
202-255-2198