

Forum: General Assembly 3 (SOCHUM)

Issue: Measures to Combat International Modern-Day Slavery

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Introduction

Contemporary slavery, or modern-day slavery, is an issue that pervades every corner of the world. Typically, slavery conjures up images of slavery in the New World or as the rampant issue that caused the civil war in the United States in the 1900s. However, every country in the world contains some form of contemporary slavery. Slavery is usually referred to as the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain; the definition of slavery first appeared in an international agreement in the League of Nations Slavery Convention of 25 September 1926. It defined slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised” In this scenario, the person involved is unable to refuse or leave the situation to which they are bonded to their owners. Slavery is typically found in the form of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power to ‘hold’ the person in place and conform them to horrendous conditions.

Slavery is found in many places of the world. The prevalence of slavery is found even in the most developed of countries, albeit more rare than slavery found in Less-Economically Developed Countries. The Global Slavery Index, a global survey used to indicate slavery, uses specially designed probabilistic surveys involving interviews with more than 71,000 respondents in 48 countries, stated that slavery can be found in every corner of the world. According to AntiSlavery, 40 million people are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery worldwide, with almost three quarters as women and girls.

Main characteristics of slavery include ownership, which is a common theme, with the concept that control must be absolute. In the contemporary world, there are many criterias that determine the practices that constitute as slavery. These include: restriction on one’s freedom of movement, control on one’s personal belongings, nature of the relationship between both parties. These factors, often varied and difficult to determine, are key to international organizations for the identification of slaves around the world.

Slavery is intertwined with violations and other fundamental human rights. One such example is the self independence, or the lack of it, the slaves have. Whether it be a migrant worker with a

confiscated passport, a child sold into prostitution, or ‘comfort women’ forced into slavery, all these slaves have little to no control over their lives. Enslavement, involving abduction or recruitment through false promotion and duplicity is a violation of the individual’s right to liberty and security of person, while the violation of the human right to be treated with humanity and the right to not be subjected to cruel, inhumane, inhuman or degrading treatment are also regulations that one must follow.

Definition of Key Terms

Trafficking

According to the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the act of trafficking persons “*shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion...*” (Annex II: The definition of trafficking in persons and the mandate for the Global Report). In short, the use of force and coercion are key factors that differentiate trafficking from other forms of legal transportation of persons. In human trafficking, the exploitation of adults and children come hand in hand with the degradation of such persons as commodities used in sexual and labor servitude.

There exists a variety of coercive methods used to control victims. Victims may be forced to live in dehumanizing conditions or be coached on the avoidance and interactions with authorities and police. Human trafficking can come from a mass demand in private industries that are addressed easily with cheap labor. There is typically poverty in areas with slavery; a lack of financial institutions for the extreme poor pushes them toward unregulated money-lenders charging high rates, which may expose them to debt bondage and other complications.

Forced Sexual Exploitation

According to the International Labor Organization, forced sexual exploitation can be explained as “persons in forced labor and services imposed by private actors for sexual exploitation”. Of the 4.8 million victims in 2016, 99% were female, and 70%+ were in Asia and the Pacific region, with victims being exploited for an average of two years. More than 1 million of the victims of forced sexual exploitation – 21 percent of all victims – were children under the age of 18 years.

Descent-Based Slavery

Descent-based slavery, or ‘Chattel Slavery’, is a situation where people are born into slavery because their ancestors were in slavery and their families have belonged to a master ever since. Slaves are typically passed down the maternal line. Though Chattel Slavery is the least common form of slavery,

it can be found in many African societies along the Sahel belt of Africa; Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Chad, and Sudan all have a traditional hierarchy where people are known to be descendant of slaves.

Many slaves face a lifetime of exploitation: they are treated as property, work without pay, working in the fields or their masters' homes, and can be inherited, sold, or given away. Along these lines, women are typically sexually abused, forced to bear children of the masters. The children born will also belong to the master

Domestic Servitude

A form of human trafficking found in distinct circumstances that create unique vulnerabilities, victims of domestic servitude can be found working in a private residence. It is a crime when a domestic worker is not free to leave his or her employment and is abused and underpaid, if paid at all. Many domestic workers do not receive the basic benefits and protections of other workers, such as a day off

Their ability to move freely is limited, with employment in private homes increasing isolation and vulnerability. Labor officials often lack the authority to inspect employment conditions, and as such, domestic workers (especially women) face forms of abuse such as abuse, harassment, exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence.

Debt Bondage

Debt Bondage is the most common type of contemporary slavery, but is relatively unknown; it has existed for hundreds of years, with it being used to trap laborers onto working in plantations in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia following the abolition of the transatlantic Slave Trade. It is common in South Asia in brick kilns and mills.

The most common in South Asia is Collateral Debt bondage, during which the labor power (and the lives of the debtor and his family) are held as collateral in the debt. The victim is the trap of bondage; all the labor power as collateral until the debt is paid, the debtor is unable to ever earn enough to repay the debt by their own labor, and it is the very nature of the agreement that transforms labor-power into collateral and stops any repayment of any kind.

One other type is Coercive Fraudulent debt bondage, which is when the work of the debtor can be applied to the debt. However, because of false accounting or extreme interests, repayment is forever out of reach. A violation of the agreement through fraudulent means that traps the debtor. In both types, the enforcement is usually backed up by force, ending any actions of freewill and enslaving the debtors

Conscription and State-Sponsored Labor

Conscription and state sponsored labor can be described as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself

voluntarily" (ILO). This is often found when persons in forced labor exploitation are imposed by the state penalties that they must complete. It can be exacted by military, compulsory participation in public works, and forced prison labor

The ILO's first instrument on forced labor was adopted in 1930; the second followed in 1957, during the height of the Cold War. Recently, the rise in the number of detected cases of forced labour imposed by private actors; much of the concern has shifted away from that imposed by States, but is still an issue

Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)

When an individual does not enter into a marriage with full and free consent, it can be seen as forced marriage; this also applies to minors, which constitutes the term 'child marriage'. According to the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, "a woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group" is one that is in a forced marriage.

This type of slavery prevents a free life from violence, robbing women and girls of their freedom of rights, making them more vulnerable to violence, discrimination and abuse, and prevents participation in social spheres. Child marriage is also accompanied by early and frequent pregnancy and childbirth; early childbirth is characterized by higher than average maternal death rate.

Child Slavery

Child Slavery includes use of children in armed conflict; this is another common form of contemporary slavery. The International Labor Organization has created a document outlining the 'Worst Forms of Child Labor', with the sale and trafficking of children, compulsory labour, serfdom, and the compulsory use of children in armed conflict listed as key concerns in the matter.

Child Slavery can be found in prostitution, pornography, other forms of sexual exploitation, which is hand-in-hand with begging, petty crime, drug trade, agriculture, factory, construction, brick kilns, mines, and forced labor. It is also a pressing concern in armed conflicts, not just as soldiers, but porters and girls taken as wives for militia members

Background Information

Origin of Slavery

The origins of slavery is based on many economic factors; manifestation of slavery has differed and changed throughout the courses of history.

There are many forms of contemporary slavery: slavery and abductions, compulsory participation in public works projects, forced labor in agriculture, domestic workers, bonded labor, forced labor imposed by the military, forced labor in the trafficking of persons, as well as some aspects of prison labor and rehabilitation through work, but amongst those, there is a common linking factor. According to the U.N. Working Group, the role that poverty plays in creating vulnerability is incredibly potent, with it being the major reason that slavery occurs in the many parts of the world. According to Kevin Bales, a Professor of Contemporary Slavery at the University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, and co-founder of the international non-governmental organisation, Free the Slaves, slavery is "the complete control of a person, for economic exploitation, by violence, or the threat of violence."

Economic of Slavery

Chattel and other types of old slavery rose as a result of a push for labor intensive goods in the 'new world', where slaves were property and an investment. As such, costs were paid by the master, with cargo, shipment, insurance during delivery, costs of food, medical treatment, clothing, being such, which often deterred all but the richest from splurging on slaves.

Along this matter, economics often determined the rise and fall of slavery. Modern conditions, capitalism and the emergence of the free market, has created mass inequality and poverty. The most profitable form of slavery will begin in the form of debt bondage. Slaves today are cheap; in 1850, an average slave in the American South cost the equivalent of \$40,000 in today's money. Today, a slave costs about \$90 on average worldwide.

Debt bondage

Debt bondage can also be called contract slavery, and can be in the form of domestic servants in the Philippines, textile workers in the United States, and sex workers in Thailand. Along these lines, the vulnerability of the poor is crucial to this type of slavery; slave traders often offer poor people employment through illegitimate contracts.

Usually found in rural areas, a contract is used to keep the slave convinced that the arrangement is valid. It can also be used to circumvent anti-slavery laws in case of problems with authorities. This problem is usually due to a lack of international enforcement that allows the problem to persist, along with the rampant poverty in the world. According to U.N, half of the world's six and a half billion people survive on less than two dollars per day.

Forced exploitation

According to the ILO, forced labour is “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. This applies to work or service exacted by governments and public authorities as well as private bodies and individuals.

Supply Chain Slavery

Everyday, millions are exploited for cheap products to feed the hunger of rampant consumer-culture in the world. 24 million are trapped in forced labor worldwide, with 16 million exploited within the private sector, serving the supply chains of the international businesses supplying our goods and services.

Slavery exists in all stages of the supply chain: the picking of raw materials, manufacturing of goods, and the later stages of shipping and delivery to consumers. In fact, almost 20% of the world’s global cotton production is linked to China’s forced labour. Products pass through a long chain of producers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers, so it is very difficult to track a product’s component back to a particular producer and oversee who is working where and under what conditions. In fact, though the UK Modern Slavery Act forces big businesses to report on the steps they take to tackle modern slavery in their supply chains, the act lacks effectiveness, and 40% of companies located within the United Kingdom have been found to not comply with the Act.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

North Korea

The Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea has the highest prevalence of modern day slavery in the world. A tally and calculation of the citizens of North Korea concluded that of the citizens of North Korea, one in ten, or ten percent, of the citizens, were victims of slavery. According to a Global Slavery Index in 2018, there are over 2.6 million people in slavery within the nation of North Korea under state-imposed labor. The DPRK government has the weakest response to slavery out of every country surveyed, the Index concluded.

Over one million North Koreans are estimated to be in modern-day slavery, with around 100,000 to 200,000 slave working internationally for KimJong Un’s regime. The practice of international slavery was made more common under Kim in 2012, with an estimation of 45 countries in Asia using slaves working in construction, mining, logging, and textiles. These slaves are subjected to long hours, poor

conditions, and constant oversight from government authorities. North Korea has made 2.3 billion dollars from this practice.

The United States

As one of the most politically influential countries, the United States should harness that influence in slavery combatting efforts. In 2017, the Trafficking in Persons office (TIP) started the Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS). A U.S. foreign assistance program authorized and funded by Congress, PEMS is given a total of \$125 million. The money is used to reduce modern slavery in targeted populations in specific countries or regions worldwide.

There were also efforts to address human trafficking in the seafood sector. The Department of State and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seeks to address human trafficking in the seafood supply chain; it lists countries at risk for having human trafficking in their seafood catching and processing industries, as well as providing detailed descriptions, risk assessments, and recommendations for all parties involved.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is very active in the fight against modern-day slavery; in fact, the 2019 Global Slavery Index placed the UK as the country taking the most action to fight slavery. It is one of the handful of nations working to introduce legislation targeting slavery in the last 10 years. Though this a big step forward, critics are quick to point out problems with this legislation.

There are shortcomings that leave slaves behind the system, along with a lack of care surrounding the agriculture industry or brothels without any governance. According to Kevin Hyland, U.K.'s first anti-slavery commissioner for three years, the role created in country's 2015 Modern Slavery Act has "an understanding, but that understanding is still niche."

One other example of the United Kingdom's efforts is reflected in its Modern Slavery Act of 2015, which consolidates a variety of criminal offenses into a single piece of legislation under the umbrella term of modern slavery. It requires business organizations in the U.K. with worldwide revenues of \$45 million to produce and publish annual slavery and trafficking statement. However, it faces difficulties in compliance, as businesses are not forced to investigate or pinpoint slavery in their supply chains and do not receive penalties.

Iran

Iran has one of the highest number of victims in regards to human trafficking. Iranians are vulnerable--especially women and children--as poor communities with low work and education are exposed to many factors of debt bondage and trafficking.

Additionally, the Iranian government does not provide adequate information to relevant agencies regarding the situation in the country, but enough information points to the fact that main victims in trafficking are women. The State Department Annual Trafficking in Persons Report of the United States designated Iran as a Tier 3 country, describing it as a “worsening economic and environmental conditions have significantly exacerbated Iran’s human trafficking problem, particularly for vulnerable communities such as ethnic minority groups, refugee and migrant populations, and women and children.”

Australia

The Global Slavery Index of 2018 estimates that on any given day in 2016, there are 15,000 living in conditions of modern slavery in Australia. Though this number may seem threatening, there is a prevalence of 0.6 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people in the country, something that the Global Slavery Index praises.

In 2019, the Australian government introduced a Modern Slavery Act, similar to the one within the United Kingdom, which requires businesses to publish a statement on the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains. According to Carolyn Liaw, a researcher at Anti-Slavery Australia, a research center supporting victims of trafficking and slavery, “It [the act] is still very early days, but we have seen increased awareness of and engagement around modern slavery since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, particularly from the business community.”

International Labor Organization

The International Labor Organization is the only tripartite UN agency, working to set labor standards and make policy and programmes for the promotion of work. The agency describes themselves to have the ability to bring governments, employers, and workers of 187 UN member states to create the aforementioned criteria.

The International Labor Organization also creates conferences advising the UN member states on feasible actions in an International Conference of Labor Statisticians. One such example comes in the 19th ICLS in 2013, during which the statisticians recommended the Human Rights Council to set up a working group, sharing practices on forced labor surveys to encourage more surveys in more countries, and engaging participating member states and experts in the creation of guidelines.

International Cocoa Initiative

The International Cocoa Initiative is a swiss-based foundation that unites cocoa/chocolate industry, civil societies, farming communities, and governments in cocoa-producing countries in order to fight for a better future for children and eliminate child labor. It works with partners to ensure cocoa-growing communities are protective of children, make sure that the cocoa supply chain manages child exploitation responsibly, and that knowledge is spread transparently throughout the supply chain.

The multi-stakeholder structure and governance, the Initiative, claims, will offer perks such as its independence and freedom from the influence of powerful slave-holders. Since the year of 2007, 742 cocoa communities have been assisted, with 800,000 children benefited from the Initiative. Its Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System cover 127 farmers' groups and targets over 90,000 cocoa-farming households.

Walk Free Foundation

The Walk Free Foundation undertakes research to build an evidence base on modern slavery, creating the Global Slavery Index, which examines the scale of modern slavery at the country level, reviews government involvement and slavery prevalence, along with a scale with the vulnerability to modern slavery, and uncovers scale of problems and enables robust solutions at the country level by working with political, business, community leaders to drive changes.

Through direct implementation, grassroots engagement, and working in partnerships, it jointly produces measures of the global and regional extent on modern slavery, or the Global Estimates, by focusing on two main issues: forced labor and marriage. It includes a breakdown by region, age group, and gender, with it being produced using data from 54 national surveys and drawn from interviews with more than 71,000 respondents from 48 countries, data from the International Organization for Migration, and the International Labor Organization.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 25, 2003	The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons as part of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is passed by the United Nations.
2002	Establishment of the International Cocoa Initiative, which is a joint effort between chocolate companies and organizations fighting slavery.
September 28, 2007	A Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery is passed by the United Nations, which replaces and updates a previous rapporteur created in 1974. This better addresses the issues within the United Nations system.

January 2, 2008	The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is ratified by 10 member states and governmental organizations alike, which widens the scopes of international assistance to victims worldwide, whether national or transnational.
June 16, 2011	Introduction of the Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 within the International Labor Organization, ensuring the basic rights of domestic workers and further working to reduce the issue of misinformed workers.
2013	The publishment of the first Global Slavery Index by the Walk Free Foundation, which documents and calls out government incompetence in the reports.
January 1, 2016	The official implementation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - one of which seeks to end slavery and other forms of forced labor.

Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, 28 September 2007 (6/14)
- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, 26 September 2019 (A/HRC/RES/42/10)
- Trafficking in persons, especially women and children; strengthening human rights through enhanced protection, support and empowerment of victims of trafficking, especially women and children, 16 July 2020 (A/HRC/RES/44/4)

Possible Solutions

Modern Slavery Acts that regulate companies, attempting to lower rates of supply chain slavery by requiring companies to publish statements on the risks of modern slavery addresses slavery by 'boycotting' and limiting the imports that are created by slaves. It is carried out by only a handful of nations, including France, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom, but is able to tackle the problem at its root. However, it is difficult to carry out and detect, businesses in the UK are not forced to investigate nor receive penalties, and transparency does not lead to a feasible action plan.

The Publication of Global Indexes, such as the Global Slavery Index and the Global Estimate, that seek to outline and call out slavery in the world. By outlining and revealing the problems with governments at hands, indexes and databases can outline and create criteria for the

improvement of workers' lives. It is carried out by relevant NGOs and IGOs. Its limitations are that data collection is difficult in regions with a data vacuum, ineffective as it does not have any outlined action plan, and are difficult to compare due to substantial differences in scope, methods, and data sources.

The creation of alliance to end slavery and trafficking, composed of NGOs and IGOs working together to solve the issue. This is comparable to the International Cocoa Initiative or the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking; a collaboration between NGOs and relevant parties; it targets the issues directly (the ICI focuses on the single goal of ending forced labor within the cocoa industry, thereby simplifying the process), but are limited in the way that NGOs and IGOs have difficulty changing a country's laws, and that lobbying is difficult with limited funding.

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