

The Faith Community's Role in Ending Modern Slavery

About the Global Freedom Network

The Global Freedom Network is committed to the eradication of modern slavery through engagement with faith leaders around the world and working with them to take spiritual and practical actions to eradicate modern slavery. We empower them to mobilise their efforts and work in collaboration with the private, public and civil sectors to fight modern slavery. We also work with the governments of the ten leading economies of the world to support them to enact laws, and ensure budget and capability for enforcement, to hold organisations accountable for modern slavery in their supply chains.

Our Impact

The Global Freedom Network is continuing to build on the momentum achieved through the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery in events in Vatican City, Delhi, Canberra, Jakarta, Buenos Aires, Medellin and Auckland between 2014 and 2018. We believe that the actions and testimony of the faith leaders will inspire other leaders and their communities around the world to also unite in this vision of ending modern slavery, for all times. Engagement is ongoing with other world faiths that share the aspiration for a world without modern slavery. Faith Leader forums are planned in other countries in 2018/2019.



Over 40 million people around the world are trapped in modern slavery (Global Estimates of Modern Slavery), more than at any time in history and despite slavery being illegal in almost every country. Those enslaved have had their rights and freedom stolen from them in horrendous circumstances. They are often subjected to abuse, both physical and mental. They are treated as commodities to be bought, sold and traded.

Slaves can be found in every country in the world – in factories, in fields and brothels, on fishing boats, within private residences and a multitude of other places where greed and corruption have overridden human values.

People trapped in slavery live brutal existences in cities and villages, slums and rural areas. From Thai fisherman trawling fish, to the Congolese boy mining diamonds, from the Uzbek child picking cotton to the Indian girl stitching footballs – modern slavery is a profitable business generating more than US\$150 billion a year (International Labor Organization). Acknowledging the problem and advocating against it is our responsibility.

Change is long overdue, and that change has begun.

WHAT CAN YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP DO?

SEE IT, SPEAK OUT

So what can we do? How can we make a difference? Faith communities are often seen as places of safety and refuge to vulnerable people in crisis. Often we are first responders. Where people are vulnerable and are seeking our help we must be prepared to act, to bring our passion for God's mission to help those in need. In his Lenten message of 2015, Pope Francis prayed that churches would "become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference". What would it mean for your church to be an 'island of mercy'? Is your church looking outward to engage with vulnerable people who could be victims of this injustice?

LEARNING TO SPOT THE SIGNS OF MODERN SLAVERY:

Appearance

- Show signs of physical or psychological abuse and untreated injuries
- Look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn and neglected
- Seem under the control or influence of others
- Wear the same clothes every day or no safety equipment even if their work requires it
- Lack of personal belongings or official ID documents

Work

- Withholding of identity documents
- Lack of earnings, or withholding of wages or underpayment
- Working to pay off significant debts
- Abusive/ substandard working and living conditions
- Excessive overtime or no time off

Accommodation

- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation
- Living and working at the same address
- Appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work

Travel

- Rarely allowed to travel on their own
- Collected and dropped off at irregular hours in a crowded transport with other workers
- Have no control of their identification documents such as their passport
- Reluctant to seek help and avoid eye contact

Seeking Help

- Frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of police, don't know who to trust or where to get help
- Afraid of deportation, and of the risk of violence to themselves or their family

REPORT IT –

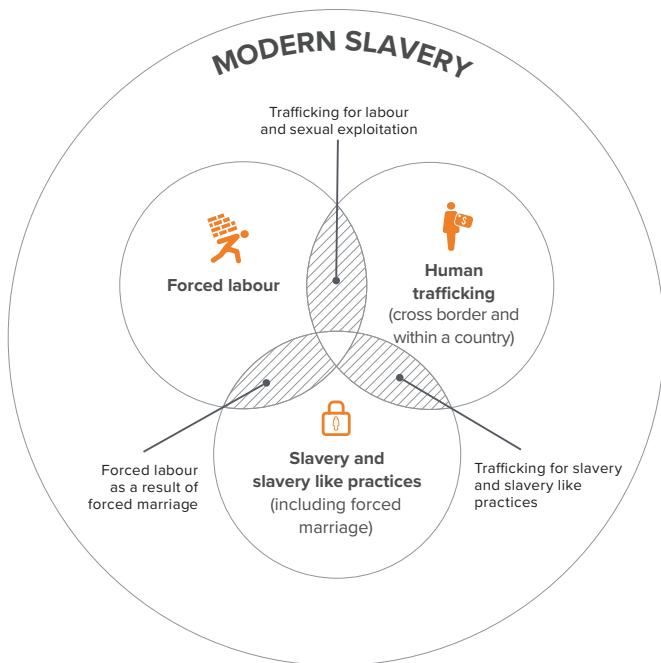
If you suspect someone is a victim of modern slavery, contact the local police immediately.

The difference between a bad job and modern slavery is the freedom to leave... Look for the signs!

Questions to Ask

- Can you leave your job or situation if you want? If not, why not?
- What do you think would happen if you tried to leave or told anyone?
- Can you come and go from work as you please?
- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?
- Have you been physically harmed in any way?
- Are you paid wages? Are you forced to work off debt?
- Where do you sleep and eat? Do you sleep in a bed, on a cot or on the floor?
- Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom?
- Are there locks on your doors and windows so you cannot get out?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- Has your identification or documentation been taken from you?
- Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?

What is Modern Slavery?



Modern slavery is an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, trafficking and related exploitation

It refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power and deception. Survivors of modern slavery tell stories of being sold a false promise for a better life. They are often vulnerable, coming from areas where there is little possibility of work or fleeing from conflict regions. They are offered a job, a chance to make money and to build a new life for themselves. The job they are offered turns out to be a lie and instead they are forced to work in difficult and degrading conditions, with little or no pay. The threat of violence, to themselves or their families, hangs over them and traps them in their situation. Even if their trafficker does not physically control them, a mistrust of authority, shame and embarrassment may stop them seeking help.



Signatories at the faith leaders event,
2 December 2014 in the Vatican City