



Research Report

Cals Model United Nations 2017

“Creating pathways to new opportunities”



Forum: Economic and Social Council

Issue: Abolishment of modern enslavement and forced labor

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Introduction

The earliest records of slavery can be traced back to 1760 BC. It has developed since, and even become legal in a lot of countries in the early 1600s. These slaves were mainly used on the lands, or in wars, and were severely misused by the owners. Eventually, throughout the 18th and the 20th century, slavery was abolished by many countries. However, we currently live in a world where slavery still exists. It is illegal, but through means such as human trafficking there are still around 20 to 30 million people who are in slavery at this moment. Slavery by descent, bonded labour, sex slavery, forced marriage and child labour are all major forms of modern day slavery.

Men, women and children are all victim of modern day slavery. The women are mainly used for sexual exploitation, and the children are sometimes even used to act as drug dealers or in bonded labour. This can be referred to as child slavery. The estimated number of children in slavery or practices similar to slavery is 8.4 million. This is equal to the entire population of Switzerland.

Definition of Key Terms

Modern day slavery:

Modern day slavery, also known as contemporary slavery, refers to the practice of slavery that still exists in the present day.

Forced labour:

Forced labour is any type of work or labour that someone is forced to do against their will, under threats and abuses. Almost all forms of modern day slavery contain some element of forced labour.

Bonded labour:

Bonded labour is a form of forced labour and is also known as debt bondage. The cycle of bonded labour begins when people take extreme loans under the condition that they work off the debt. The loan is so big that it is practically impossible to pay off, so the loan is often passed down for many generations. They usually work under extreme conditions, while suffering threats and abuse. This form of modern day slavery is prominent in South Asia.

Child slavery:

Child slavery is the enslavement of children. Most of the children in child slavery are domestic workers in cocoa, cotton or fishing industries. Many are usually trafficked and sexually exploited. Some children are used as child soldiers, and are sometimes even used to act as drug couriers. A lot of children are also used in bonded labour, when their parents have passed away but haven't worked enough to pay back their loans.

Slavery by descent:

Slavery by descent is the term most associated with 'slavery'. It stems from enslavement, when the enslaved become their own social class. This social class may be the subject of discrimination long after they've been freed. This type of slavery still persists in some West African countries.

Sex slavery:

Sex slavery is a form of slavery where the victim is used for sexual exploitation. It is generally associated with rape and prostitution, as the victim is forced to perform sexual acts against their will. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is also a form of sex slavery.

Forced marriage:

A forced marriage is a marriage where one or both participants are married against their will. Different types of slavery can occur in a forced marriage. For example, if the bride were to be married against her will and were to be used for sexual exploitation by the groom or his family, it would be a form of sex slavery. If she were forced to work or act as a servant, it would be an example of forced labour.

General Overview

Trafficking:

People usually end up in slavery through human trafficking. They are sold off by their family, or promised money in return for manual labour or sexual exploitation. Victims are sometimes even abducted. They often don't receive the money they are promised and are forced to do

Trafficking of Females

A map of the legality of slavery in the world



certain acts against their will, under threats and abuses. The majority of trafficking victims are women. They are victim of sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Some children that are trafficked are used for sexual exploitation as well, but also in forced labour. The men that end up in slavery are prominently used for manual labour, and are often trapped in the cycle of bonded labour. Slaves are currently bought for just \$90. They are mainly found in Asian, African and South American countries. There are estimated to be around 14 million slaves in India, making it the country with the biggest amount of slaves. The highest proportion of slaves to population is in Mauritania. In this country, an estimated 17% of the population is enslaved.

Areas:

Africa

Africa is one of the most problematic regions, in terms of modern day slavery. The last country to abolish slavery, Mauritania, lies in Africa and officially abolished slavery in 1981. While other regions in Africa face the same problem of slavery, the situation in Mauritania is “unusually severe”, according to Bruce Hall, an African history professor. The highest amount of slaves is found in West-Africa, in countries such as Mauritania, Mali and Niger. While slavery is illegal and there are several types of punishments, it still persists, resulting in huge numbers of slaves.

Asia

There is also a lot of slavery in Asia. Specifically, in India, where there are currently an astonishing 14 million slaves. This is half of all the slaves in the world, making India the country with the most slaves in the world. Furthermore, there are about 2.9 million slaves in China, and 2.1 in Pakistan. Most of these slaves are trafficked from Russia, and are usually victim of sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Major Parties Involved

Mauritania:

Mauritania has the highest proportion of slaves. The government of Mauritania denies this, stating that everybody in Mauritania is free and has freedom of thought. There are several reasons why slavery in Mauritania still persists. For example, many people believe that slavery is part of the natural order of society. It is also almost impossible for the government to enforce any laws in the country's vast desert. Furthermore, many of the slaves do not know that life outside servitude is possible and the poverty limits opportunities for slaves to support themselves if freed. The slaves in Mauritania are mainly used in forced labour and there is also a lot of child slavery.

India:

As stated above, India has the highest amount of slaves in the whole world. India is a prime example of modern day slavery. There are about 14 million slaves in India, and they are most commonly forced into bonded labour and sexual exploitation. They are mainly trafficked from Russia into India, and then further into South Asia.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

The UNODC is working on several levels to eradicate modern slavery. It is the guardian of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and also provides funds to help victims of human trafficking and slavery directly.

Timeline of Events

1502 - First reported African slaves in the New World

1640 - Beginning of large-scale introduction of African slave labour

1803 - Denmark is first to ban slave trade

1807 - Britain, the principal slave-trading nation, bans the Atlantic slave trade

1926, September 25 - Slavery Convention is signed

1956, September 7 - Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery is signed

1981 - Mauritania is the last country to abolish slavery in all forms

Previous attempts to solve the issue

In many countries where modern day slavery still persists, the government has tried to put an end to this. Sadly, this hasn't been very effective. Especially third world countries struggle with this, as their government isn't capable enough to put a complete end to modern day slavery. Human traffickers keep discovering new ways to enter countries with new slaves, and the countries on the receiving end of this trafficking can't stop it. The biggest action that has been taken is increasing border security, but this simply isn't enough. Increasing border security would decrease human trafficking and thus slavery, but this hasn't worked so far.

There have also been some United Nations events and resolutions on the topic. These are listed below:

The 1926 Slavery Convention is an international treaty created by the League of Nations and was first signed on the 25th of September. It was created to advance the suppression of slavery and slave trade.

The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery is a treaty which builds on the convention mentioned above. It is still operative and was signed and proposed to further and secure the abolishment of slavery and slave trade. It was signed on the 7th of September in 1956.

Furthermore, two United Nations Resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council and a United Nations Treaty.

- Children and armed conflicts, 22 April 2004 (S/RES/1539)
- Threats to international peace and security, 19 December 2014 (S/RES/2195)

Possible Solutions

A possible solution to this issue would to encourage sustained government leadership on the issue. There are not many treaties or resolution that primarily focus on slavery, so encouraging government leadership may further this. Furthermore, strengthening and supporting the anti-slavery advocacy may encourage them to continue with their work and double their efforts. This can also be done by raising awareness, and showing how many people are affected by and involved in this issue. Engaging the private sector to become a part of the solution might also achieve this. Moreover, providing support for the victims of forced labour and sexual exploitation would really help in their rehabilitation, and would help them get their life back on track. Lastly, cooperating on international level would contribute greatly to solving this issue. Modern day slavery should be investigated more deeply, and this could be done by multiple governments working together.

Useful Documents

"Audio Interview Download Here." Modern Slavery. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Jan. 2016. <<http://modernslavery.calpress.org/>>.

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