

FORUM:	Human Rights Council
ISSUE:	Policies to Combat Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
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Introduction

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people through force, fraud, or deception, to mistreat them for profit (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Modern slavery, similarly, is a broader term that includes human trafficking, forced labor, child slavery, forced and early marriage, and

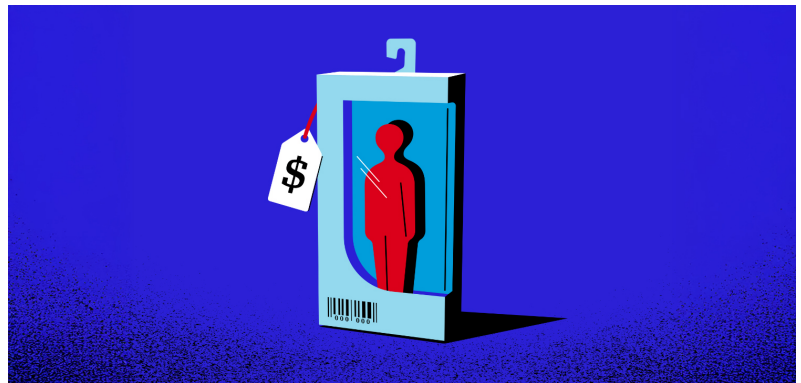


Figure 1 Understanding human trafficking (provided by UNODC)

even domestic servitude. Slavery, of course, could be seen as a thing of the past; however, more than 50 million people are going through modern slavery worldwide, which is a prevailing issue (Anti-Slavery International, “What Is Modern Slavery?”). This also means that people, regardless of gender, age, or background, can all become victims of this crime. For instance, the UK is a country where many people experience human trafficking, especially forced labor. However, in the private sector of the economy, it is hard to track the exploitation and abuse inflicted on the workers as the supply chains are intricately woven together. This is one of the reasons why nations should be aware of this issue and work together to mitigate the issue.

Background

Slavery has existed for thousands of years, but modern slavery is more hidden, which makes it harder to discover than in the past. In fact, modern slavery differs from historical slavery in ways: there are more slaves than ever before around the world, but they are a smaller proportion of the human race. However, modern slavery seems to have a greater variety of kinds of slavery, such as human trafficking, forced labor, child labor, forced and early marriage, and even domestic servitude. Moreover, modern



slavery is not only more diverse, it has led to corruption and crime continuing, and some even claim that government corruption is one of the major factors that cause the persistence of slavery, such as the cases in Libya, where the regime change led to lower political stability and thus, allowed a blank spot for modern slavery like forced labor with the migrants (BBC). The reason why modern slavery is prevailing around the world is that it is rooted and mostly hidden in various aspects of daily life. As mentioned earlier, the development in complex economic systems, including supply chains and globalization, has created an environment where human trafficking can occur. Indeed, demand for low-cost production is another reason why the complex supply chain is creating an environment where modern slavery can flourish (Laila Hoy). Due to the pressure of low-cost production, the company tends to exploit the workers, meaning that they pay less to the workers to make them work more (Laila Hoy). Moreover, the absence of strict regulation also exacerbates the problem and makes it hard to eradicate this prevailing factor. Furthermore, the increase in migration has also contributed to the rise in modern slavery (Laila Hoy). For example, the Libyan Slave Markets were possible due to the clampdown in the Libyan coast guard that trapped migrants to be sold as slaves in Libya (Platt et al.). The ongoing conflict, political instability, and forced displacement are also reasons why slavery still exists around the world (Walk Free). Ultimately, from poverty to gender and racial discrimination, there are far more causative factors of modern slavery; addressing these factors will be crucial in combating and preventing modern slavery (Walk Free).

Problems Raised

FIFA 2022 Qatar World Cup–Migrant exploitation

Amnesty International's Head of Labor Rights and Sport said, "It is shameful that FIFA and Qatar have launched their long-awaited legacy fund without any recognition of their clear responsibility towards the vast number of migrant workers who were exploited and, in many cases, died to make the 2022 World Cup possible" (Amnesty International). Recently, FIFA and Qatar announced that the \$50 million Legacy Fund post-World Cup is aimed at future worker protection, with funding to the World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization (WTO), and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency (Amnesty International). However, despite the announcement of the Fund, Amnesty



Figure 2 Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers on FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 (provided by Human Trafficking Search)



International reported that many migrant workers died while working in extreme weather in Qatar, further warning of the high risk that may arise during the preparation of the 2034 World Cup in Saudi Arabia (Amnesty International). As a result of the serious consequences of worker exploitation, the coalition of human rights organizations called for FIFA to provide at least USD 440 million in compensation to workers, which FIFA has ignored to date, leaving the issue unsolved.

Libya Slave Markets (2017)–Migrant Trafficking and Auctions

Slave auctions in Libya

CNN was told of auctions in nine locations, but there are believed to be many more



Figure 3 Slave auctions in Libya (provided by CNN)

CNN has announced that two human beings were sold for 1,200 Libyan dinars—equivalent of \$800. Every year, it is known that tens of thousands of people, mostly Nigerian and Sub-Saharan African migrants, cross Libya's borders, where most of the people are refugees or economic migrants, to search for better job opportunities in Europe. But, recently, fewer boats were making it out to the sea, forcing migrants and refugees to become slaves (Platt et al.). The

main cause of this situation could be seen as political instability due to the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 (Abulhul). As the change in political regime could foster chaos in the nation, it creates blind spots that allow human trafficking and forced labor to thrive in certain areas (Abulhul). The UN Security Council mentioned that the Libyan Government should secure the borders so that the human trafficking route can be effectively blocked and encouraged cooperation between the European Union and the African Union to guarantee the protection of migrants (Nadal).

International Actions

Palermo Protocol

The Palermo Protocol, the protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, was implemented in 2000 to facilitate convergence in national approaches toward human trafficking and modern slavery, support efficient international cooperation, and provide assistance to victims of trafficking (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). It introduced the “3P” paradigm, which is Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution. A study conducted 10 years after its



Figure 4 Understanding the nature of modern slavery (provided by National Statistical)

implementation revealed that the actual protection for the victims was still weak (Kelly Hyland). For example, although 141 countries have agreed and adopted the protocol, from 2008 to 2009, only 4,166 traffickers were convicted worldwide, a small number compared to the millions of people estimated to have been trafficked (Kelly Hyland). Additionally, the study noted that the protocol primarily focuses on criminal law, with minimal emphasis on protecting victims, such as providing them with shelter, legal aid, and medical care, including physical and psychological support (Kelly Hyland). This protocol exemplifies a commendable effort to address the issue; however, its effectiveness is limited by insufficient active contributions from nations and a lack of comprehensive support for victims.

The Modern Slavery Act in the UK (2015)

The Modern Slavery Act, implemented in 2015, gives law enforcement to fight modern slavery, ensuring that the perpetrators are punished severely and providing protection for victims (GOV.UK Home Office). The act primarily aimed to consolidate and streamline existing legislation into a singular, organized statute that amplifies the court’s authority to impose restrictions on individuals, thereby safeguarding victims from the harm caused by modern slavery and human trafficking. Additionally, it introduces a new reparations framework to compensate victims whose assets are confiscated by perpetrators. Furthermore, it encourages medium to large-sized enterprises to voluntarily disclose their actions throughout the year to ensure the absence of trafficking and forced labor within their operations or supply chains, where modern slavery may be prevalent (GOV. UK Home Office). However, despite the optimistic aim that this act will cut trafficking and modern slavery involved these days, the effectiveness of this act has not been proven. The Modern Slavery Act was ineffective in its primary role of preventing



trafficking within businesses because it depends on voluntary reporting by organizations (Turner). Consequently, businesses were not compelled to disclose their misconduct, which ultimately may result in them withholding such information to avoid potential repercussions.

Key Players

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is one of the countries with many existing forms of modern slavery, such as cannabis farming, sexual exploitation, domestic slavery, forced labor in firms, and different parts of the manufacturing process. They reported that modern slavery has been rising over the years, with over 19,125 cases



Figure 5 Modern Slavery in the UK (provided by Anti-Slavery International)

in 2024 referred to the authorities, and £20 billion worth of products are assumed to be created with modern slavery (Anti-Slavery International, “Modern Slavery in the UK - Anti-Slavery International”). The UK’s government has been a global leader in anti-slavery acts by implementing the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, which helps to inspect modern slavery happening in business and criminalizes perpetrators of the crime. Unfortunately, the UK’s anti-slavery system does not include support for the victims of modern slavery; the UK’s hostility towards migrants has often led to treating the victims as “immigration offenders” instead of providing support and care to them (Anti-Slavery International, “Modern Slavery in the UK - Anti-Slavery International”).

International Organization of Migration (IOM)

As most of the modern slavery and trafficking are done towards migrants who are seeking better working conditions with higher wages, the International Organization of Migration is a crucial player in the issue of modern slavery and trafficking. Migrants are more susceptible to human trafficking because the authorities, in many cases, are unable to protect them. Therefore, IOM promoting safety for migrants when they are crossing the border to another country will be crucial in reducing the majority of modern slavery and human trafficking. António Vitorino, the Director General of IOM, stated that reducing migrants' vulnerability to forced labor and trafficking mainly depends on national policies and legal frameworks (International Organization for Migration). These must respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and potential migrants at every stage of migration, regardless of their status (International Organization for Migration). Society as a whole must collaborate



to reverse these alarming trends, including by implementing the Global Compact for Migration (International Organization for Migration).

International Labor Organization (ILO)

Forced labor is one of the biggest facets of modern slavery, affecting 27.6 million men, women, and children across the world and all economic sectors (International Labour Organization). This issue has been at the heart of the ILO to mandate and promote fundamental principles and rights at work, so that no victims are left behind (International Labour Organization). The ILO has been tracking countries that ratified ILO instruments such as the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957. This tracking revealed that more than 60 countries have ratified all three International conventions (International Labour Organization). However, the current challenge is that the ILO must monitor each country's adherence to the conventions and protocols they have ratified, which will be its ongoing mission.



Figure 6 Picture of forced slavery (provided by The Guardian)

Possible Solutions

Mandatory Supply Chain Due Diligence Law

As mentioned in previous sections, most of the slavery is hiding in the shadows of supply chains in a business. Multiple acts, including the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in the UK, include a measure that encourages medium to large-sized enterprises to voluntarily disclose their actions throughout the year to ensure the

absence of trafficking and forced labor within their operations or supply chains, where modern slavery may be prevalent (GOV. UK Home Office). However, the outcome was largely limited since the measure states “voluntarily report”. Therefore, legislating Mandatory Supply Chain Due Diligence Law would mandate the business to disclose their actions, which, hopefully, leads to an increase in confiscation of perpetrators of modern slavery and protects the victims that are discovered during this process. Possible

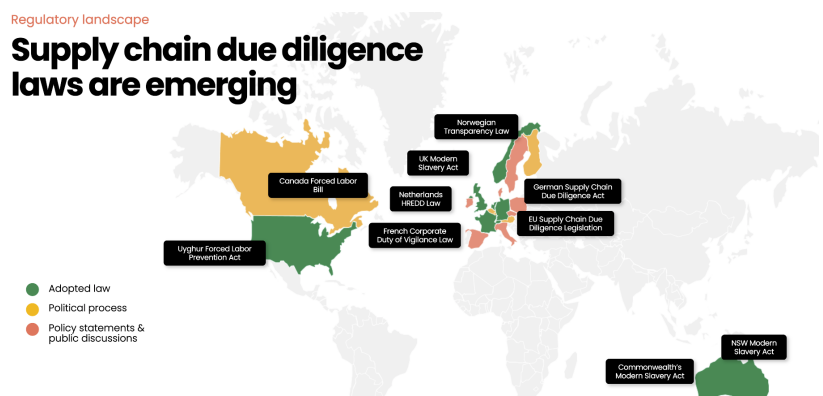


Figure 7 Supply chain due diligence law emerging (provided by worldfavor)



examples that relate to the law could be the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the United States’ Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

Establishment of Stronger Victim Protection and Supporting Mechanisms

The establishment of Stronger Victim Protection and supporting mechanisms is crucial in the current situation. Although there are numerous existing protocols and acts about the punishment and prevention of modern slavery, there isn’t much done for protection and support for the victims. Mechanisms such as non-punitive identification systems could allow efficient victim identification using debt bondage, withheld wages, and not by the victim’s ability to prove themselves as a victim. After the victim is proven to be a victim, comprehensive long-term victim assistance programs should be implemented that can include medical care, including physical and psychological, and vocational training and reintegration support to ensure the future of victims. One example that went beyond the UN Palermo Protocol is the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CoE CAHTEH), which countries such as France, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands have decided to align their laws with this convention, but not the world yet.

Glossary

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is considered as when an individual is exploited by others, whether it is for personal or commercial purposes. Whether they are tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes, but is not limited to, human trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage (Anti-Slavery International, “What Is Modern Slavery?”). It is all around the world, often hidden in the shadows, and they are mistreated by having to face violence, forced into inevitable debt, or having their passport taken away to trap them in the vicious cycle of “modern slavery” (Anti-Slavery International, “What Is Modern Slavery?”).

Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people through force, fraud, or deception, intending to exploit them for profit (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Regardless of gender, age, or background, everyone can become a victim of this



Figure 8 Human trafficking (provided by UNODC)



crime, which occurs in every region of the world (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies, and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Human trafficking includes, but is not limited to, forced labor, debt bondage, sexual exploitation, organ removal, and forced marriage.

Palermo Protocol

The Palermo Protocol is a United Nations (UN) protocol that was established in order to prevent and combat human trafficking, particularly of women and children (General Assembly resolution 55/25). This includes protecting and assisting the victims of trafficking by providing full human rights (General Assembly resolution 55/25). Moreover, this protocol aimed to promote cooperation among countries around the world to meet those objectives collectively (General Assembly resolution 55/25).

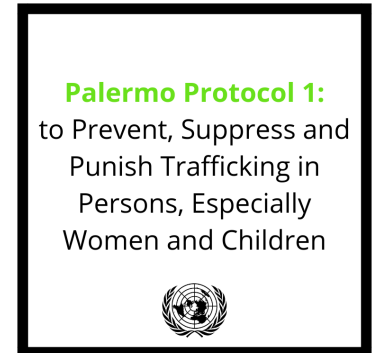


Figure 9 Palermo Protocols (provided by LIFT International)

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