

THE GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX 2023

WALK FREE



GO TO CONTENTS



Cover image:
Sydney, Australia, May 2021.

Workers install solar panels on the roof of a house. Modern slavery risks permeate every step of solar panel supply chains — from the collection of quartz through to the manufacture of solar panel modules. Solar panels, as with other renewable energy products, are key to combatting the climate crisis. However, any shift away from fossil fuels must also protect human rights and ensure a just transition and decent work for all, including those working in supply chains.
Photo credit: Brendon Thorne/Bloomberg via Getty Images.

This page:
Irpin, Ukraine, March 2022.

Evacuees cross a destroyed bridge as they flee Ukraine following the invasion by Russia. While there has not been a spike in identified cases of modern slavery, there are several reasons that risks of modern slavery could be higher than currently detected.
Photo credit: Dimitar Dilkoff/AFP via Getty Images.

50 MILLION PEOPLE

are living in modern slavery

NORTH KOREA, ERITREA+ MAURITANIA

have the highest prevalence of modern slavery globally



UNITED KINGDOM, AUSTRALIA+ NETHERLANDS

have the strongest government responses to modern slavery



US$ 468 BILLION

of G20 imports are goods at risk of modern slavery

MORE PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN MODERN SLAVERY...

On any given day in 2021 there were...

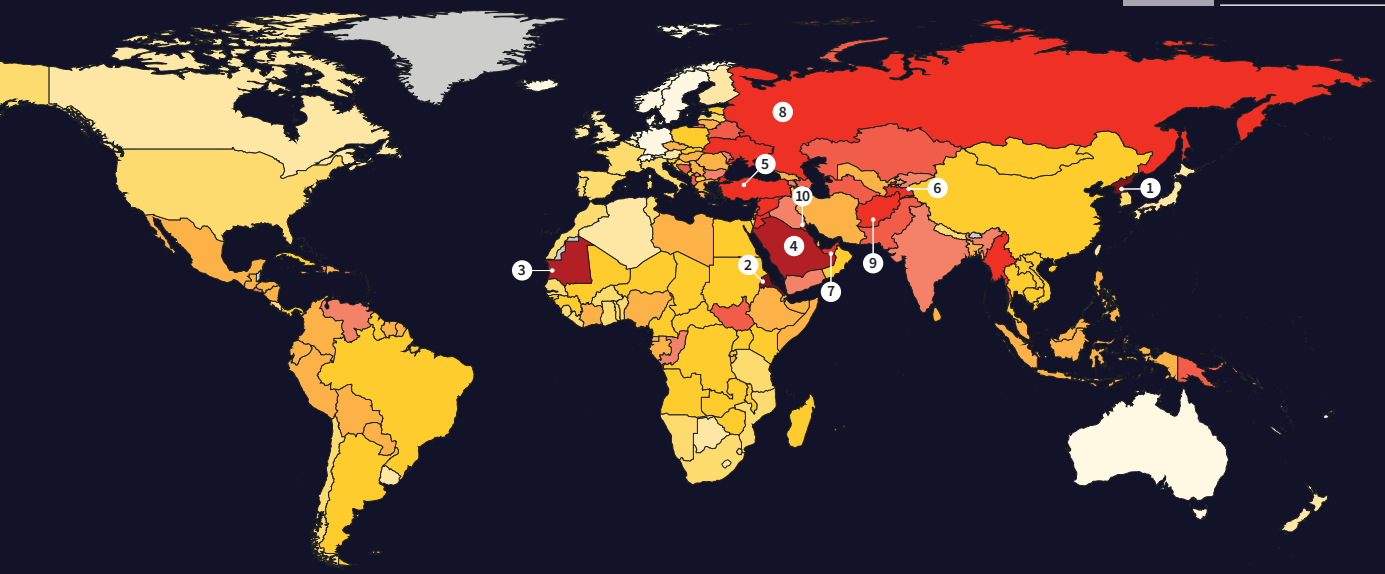
50 MILLION PEOPLE living in modern slavery

10 MILLION increase since the 2018 index

28 MILLION In **FORCED LABOUR**

22 MILLION In **FORCED MARRIAGE**

12 MILLION CHILDREN



Prevalence of modern slavery

Low — High

Highest prevalence

1	North Korea
2	Eritrea
3	Mauritania
4	Saudi Arabia
5	Türkiye
6	Tajikistan
7	United Arab Emirates
8	Russia
9	Afghanistan
10	Kuwait

Lowest prevalence

160	Switzerland
159	Norway
158	Germany
157	Netherlands
156	Sweden
155	Denmark
154	Belgium
153	Ireland
152	Japan
151	Finland

...BUT GOVERNMENTS ARE STILL NOT TAKING ENOUGH ACTION.

Most government action

68 PER CENT **UNITED KINGDOM**

67 PER CENT **AUSTRALIA**

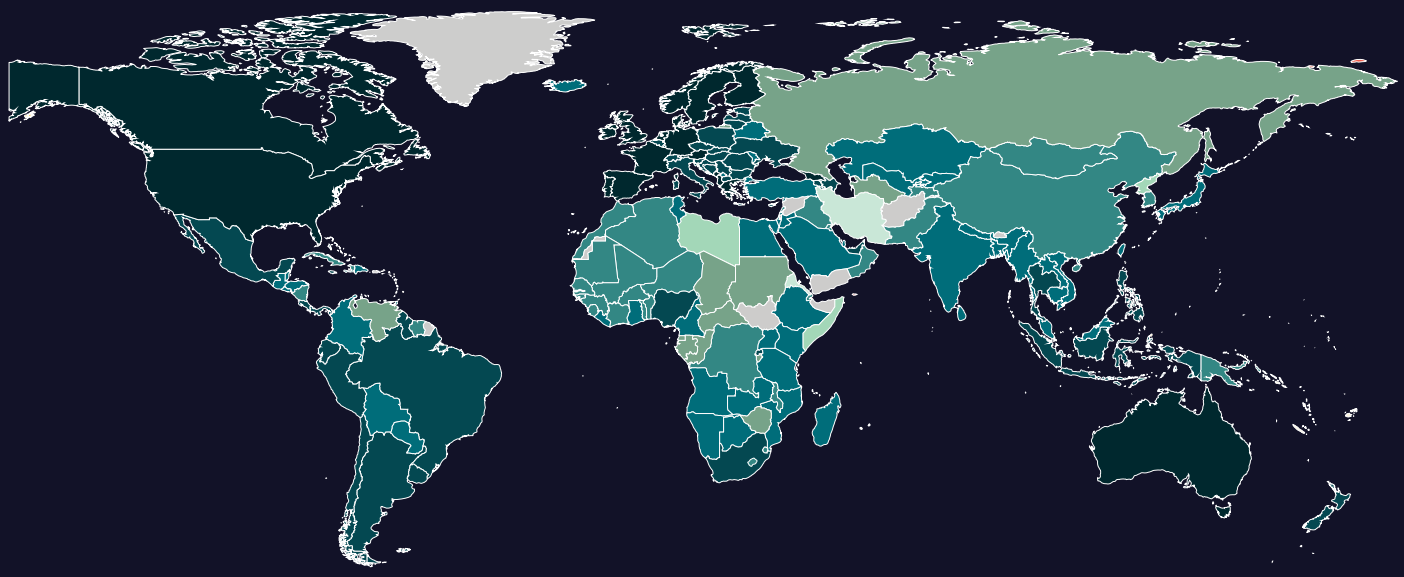
67 PER CENT **NETHERLANDS**

Least government action

5 PER CENT **ERITREA**

8 PER CENT **IRAN**

-3 PER CENT **NORTH KOREA**



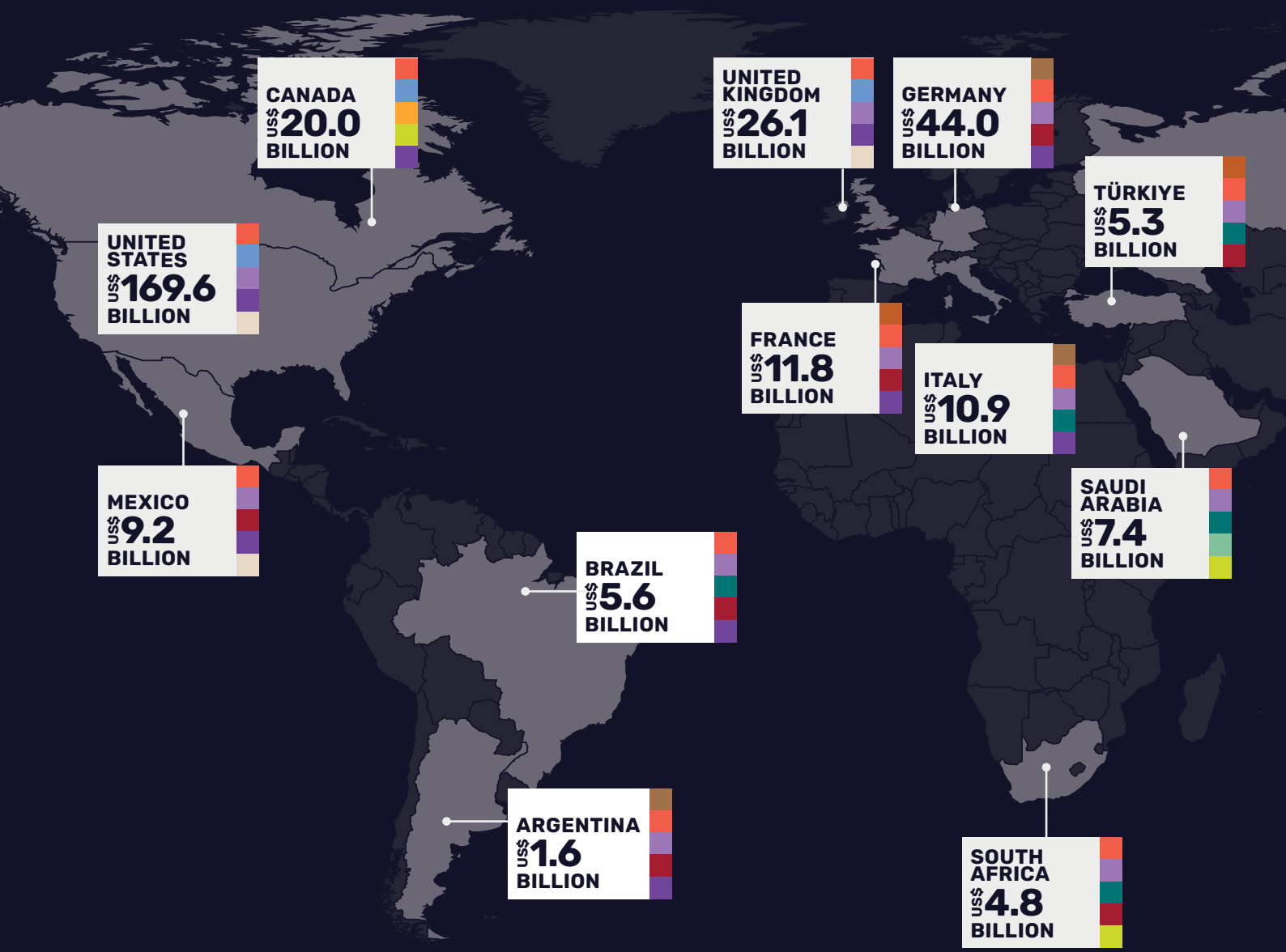
Government response

Most — Least

Most action	Least action
United Kingdom	North Korea
Australia	Eritrea
Netherlands	Iran
Portugal	Libya
United States	Somalia
Ireland	Equatorial Guinea
Norway	Russia
Spain	Gabon
Sweden	Chad

Afghanistan, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen have been excluded due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function.

THE PRODUCTS WE BUY...



At risk goods imported by the G20

US$468 BILLION

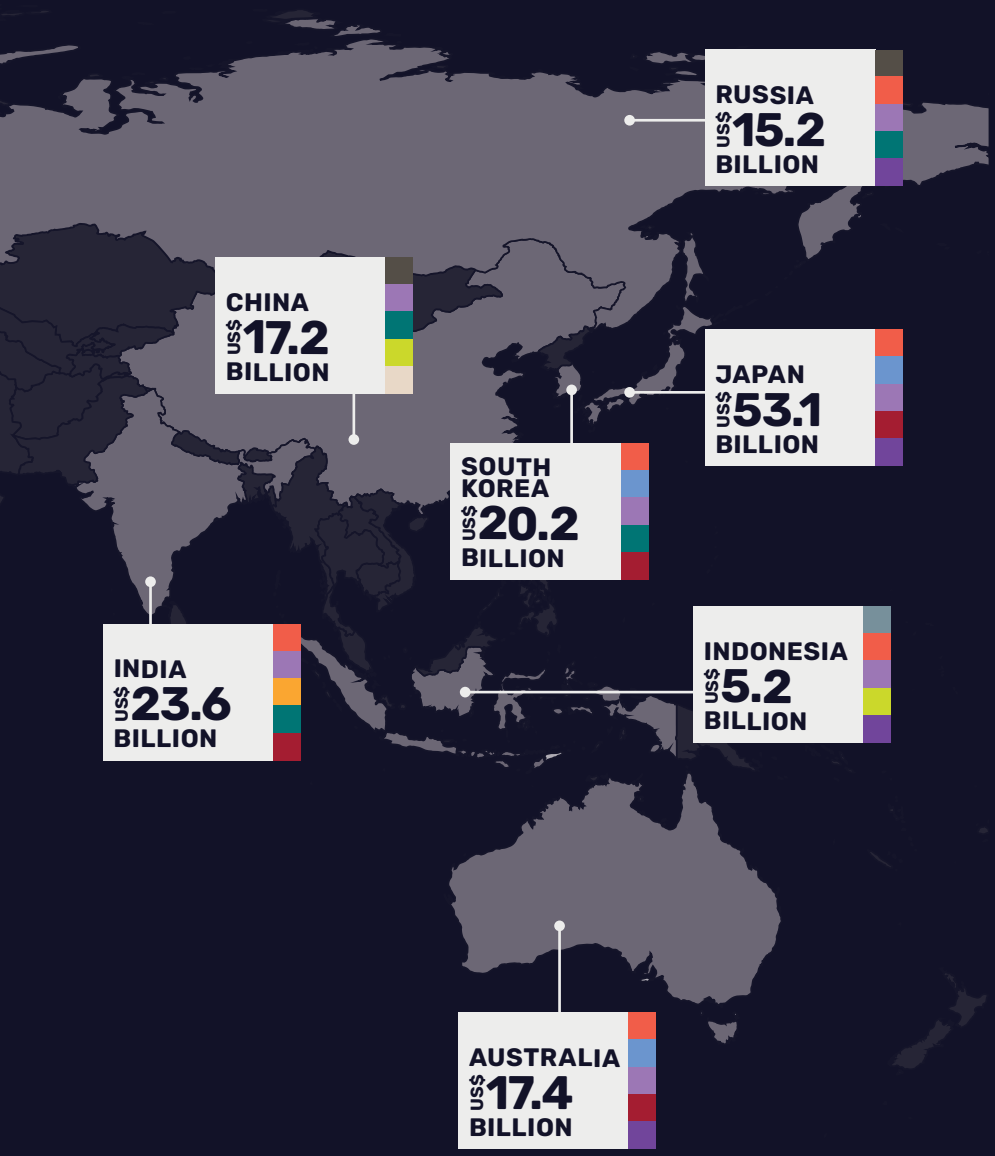
Electronics

US$243.6 BILLION

Garments

US$147.9 BILLION

...CONNECT US TO MODERN SLAVERY



Value of at-risk goods imported by G20 countries

Legend

Annual value of at-risk products imported in US$

COUNTRY US$XX BILLION — Top 5 at-risk products imported

Products

- Cattle
- Coal
- Cocoa
- Coffee
- Electronics
- Fish
- Garments
- Gold
- Palm Oil
- Rice
- Solar Panels
- Sugar Cane
- Textiles
- Timber

Governments and businesses must do more to tackle slavery in supply chains.

Palm Oil
US$19.7 BILLION

Solar Panels
US$14.8 BILLION

Textiles
US$12.7 BILLION

About Walk Free

Walk Free is an international human rights group working to accelerate the end of all forms of modern slavery. Walk Free is the creator of the Global Slavery Index, the world's most comprehensive data set on modern slavery. We use this data to mobilise powerful forces for change against these human rights abuses. We work with governments and regulators, businesses and investors, and faith and community leaders to drive systems change and we partner directly with frontline organisations to impact the lives of those vulnerable to modern slavery. We work with survivors to build the movement to end modern slavery, recognising that lived experience is expertise and they are central to identifying lasting solutions.

Our international team includes statisticians, criminologists, lawyers, and international development experts, working to create and agitate for mass systems change to address the root causes of modern slavery.



Lesbos, Greece, September 2020.

People carrying their belongings flee after a major fire broke out in the Moria migrant camp. Thousands of asylum seekers were left homeless after a fire gutted Greece's largest migrant camp, plunging the island into crisis and provoking an outpouring of sympathy from around Europe and calls for reform of the refugee system. The blaze, which began hours after 35 people tested positive for coronavirus at the Moria camp, sent thousands fleeing for safety into surrounding olive groves. Photo credit: Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP via Getty Images.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Walk Free would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the production of this report. While the nature of the contributions varied, each one was invaluable.

First and foremost, we extend our deepest gratitude to the survivors from all over the world who enriched our understanding of modern slavery, improved our efforts to measure its extent, and informed efforts to prevent modern slavery in all its forms. Our thanks go to Survivor Alliance for their partnership in bringing the Lived Experience Expert Groups (LEEGs) to life. We are proud to have worked with Survivor Alliance in the United Kingdom, and alongside Challenging Heights in Ghana and Azadi in Kenya, to run LEEGs workshops. The input of survivor leaders across these workshops led us to a clearer understanding of what a strong government response to modern slavery should be.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the frontline voices featured in this report — Nasreen Sheikh, Ashante Taylorcox, Biram Dah Abeid, Caroline Adhiambo, Shivan Pavin Alungnat, and survivor networks and individuals from around the world who wish or have to remain anonymous — for their invaluable contributions and commitment to dismantling the core drivers of modern slavery.

There is another group of survivors whose contributions were anonymous but without whom the estimates we present in this report would not have been possible. Thousands of survivors of modern slavery shared their lived experiences with us through nationally representative surveys across 75 countries. In doing so, they contributed to a deeper understanding of the extent of modern slavery and how it manifests across the world.

Special thanks go to Pablo Diego-Rosell (Gallup), Kyle Vincent (statistical consultant), and AlexStuckey (Pink Lake Analytics), whose survey methods and statistical expertise were invaluable in producing our estimates of prevalence. We also wish to thank Cristina Patriarca and Chloe Cranston (Anti-Slavery International), Kim Abbott and Claire Cozens (The Fuller Project), Zan Times, Andrew Stone (Hopeland), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Laureen van Breen (WikiRate), AnnieCannons, Regenesys BPO, Ulula, Dr Stephanie Perkiss (University of Wollongong), Clean Clothes Campaign, Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labour, Måns Carlsson OAM (Ausbil Investment Management Ltd.), Liza McDonald (Aware Super), Phil Bennett, Caroline Haughey, and the International Justice Mission for their time, expertise, and contribution of information and data to this report.

Special thanks also go to policy experts on our Government Response Expert Working Group, namely Claire Healy (International Centre for Migration Policy Development), Isabelle Johansson and Jesper Samson (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yuki Lo (The Freedom Fund), and independent researchers Jan van Dijk and Phil Marshall for their support in strengthening our assessments of government responses.

Several other organisations provided invaluable support that informed our assessment of government responses to modern slavery, including, Anusha Munasinghe (UNODC), Benu Maya Gurung (Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal), Jonathan Kojo Anderson (Challenging Heights), Sandigan Kuwait, Sheku Banguara (Advocacy Network Against Irregular Migration), Australian Red Cross, El Pozo de Vida, Empower Pacific, Hagar Singapore, Innovations for Poverty Action, Mariko Yamaoka (Not For Sale Japan), Pathfinders Justice Initiative, and Save the Children Colombia.

With the exception of contributions from external authors, the Global Slavery Index is produced by Walk Free. We are solely responsible for the contents of this report.

All survivor quotes and case studies are anonymised for their protection, unless otherwise agreed.



Yangon, Myanmar, October 2020.

A young woman in Personal Protective Equipment takes a break outside a medical facility where people were being quarantined due to suspected COVID-19 infections. Social and economic disruptions caused by the pandemic increased risks of domestic violence, labour exploitation, and forced marriage. Photo credit: Sai Aung Main/AFP via Getty Images.

FOREWORD

GRACE FORREST

Co-Founder
Walk Free

For over a decade, Walk Free has studied the number of people living in modern slavery around the world. Through each edition of the Global Slavery Index, our understanding of the problem has deepened, our estimates have become more precise, and our advocacy has catalysed global efforts. Despite having more knowledge about modern slavery than ever before, the situation has worsened.

This edition of the Index highlights how fragile hard-won human rights still are throughout the world, and how in times of crisis — be it the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing climate crisis, or ongoing armed conflict — it is the world's most vulnerable people who are hit hardest and fastest.

Modern slavery permeates every aspect of our society. It is woven through our clothes, lights up our electronics, and seasons our food. At its core, modern slavery is a manifestation of extreme inequality. It is a mirror held to power, reflecting who in any given society has it and who does not. Nowhere is this paradox more present than in our global economy through transnational supply chains. The growing demand for goods has led to the accumulation of vast wealth, with G20 counties accounting for 85 per cent of the world's GDP. It has also led to environmental degradation, deep social inequality, and prolific forced labour.

Unsurprisingly, no country in the world is effectively responding to modern slavery – an issue which the international community continues to rally against but has failed to address. Since the release of the 2018 Global Slavery Index, we have seen only four countries introduce mandatory human rights due diligence or modern slavery laws — with Australia, France, Germany, and Norway setting new standards for the type of legislation we would like to see adopted everywhere. While this progress is promising, it is nowhere near enough. Governments worldwide continue to display a shocking capacity for cognitive dissonance; for example, funding support services for women and girls while simultaneously failing to close legislative gaps that increase their risk of being forced to marry, such as not having a legal minimum age of marriage set at 18 without exception.

If modern slavery reflects existing man-made power structures, it follows that we cannot win this fight working within the bounds that those same structures created. As the effects of historical slavery are still felt today, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the millions of people suffering in modern slavery around the world. It is time for governments, businesses, and individuals to take a stand and demand change.

This report comes at a critical juncture — a time when the world is awakening to ongoing injustices and their connection to historical inequalities, while confronting unprecedented crises. At the same time, Walk Free's reporting has also grown more accurate and truly global by increasingly embedding survivor voices in our data collection, our methodology, and our advocacy.

If there is one message you should take from this Index, it is that exploitation is by design, not default. As you read through the report, remember that each statistic reflects the reality of tens of millions of people. Let this data serve as an alarm bell, one that shakes us from inaction and loudly demands that we all act now.

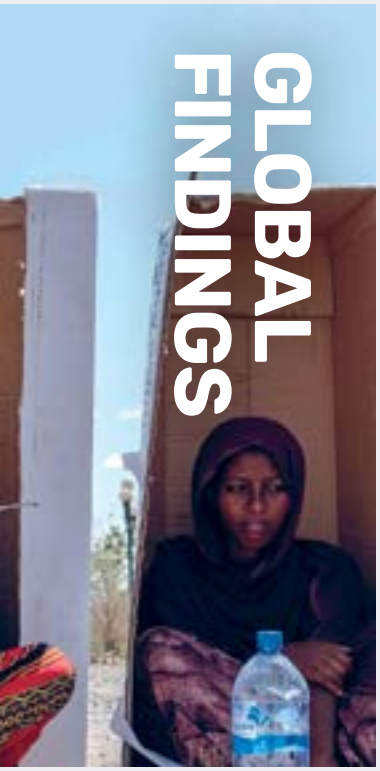
CONTENTS SNAPSHOT










GLOBAL FINDINGS


34 SPOTLIGHTS


4 IMPORTING RISK


192 APPENDICES

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

FOREWORD ix

01 NAVIGATING THE INDEX 1

Executive summary 2

About the index 8

Methodology 9

02 ESSAYS 12

Climate change and human rights: The inextricable link 14

Conflict and modern slavery: Surviving the unimaginable but thriving only when we disrupt the cycle 16

Controlling COVID-19, compounding injustice: The impact of pandemic control measures on modern slavery 18

The real price of our purchases: How consumer culture fuels modern slavery 20

03 GLOBAL FINDINGS 22

04 SPOTLIGHTS 34

Understanding forced and child marriage 36

Anti-social: Modern slavery on social media 44

Guardians and offenders: Examining state-imposed forced labour 48

Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war 58

The costs of the climate crisis 62

05 **REGIONAL FINDINGS** 68

Regional Overview 70

Africa 76

The Americas 88

Arab States 98

Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: Life under the *kafala* system 108

Asia and the Pacific 116

Orphanages as modern slavery hubs 126

Europe and Central Asia 130

06 **IMPORTING RISK** 144

Importing products at risk of forced labour 146

Spotlight on the financial sector:
Investing in exploitation 172

Spotlight on the garment sector:
Stitched with slavery in the seams 176

Spotlight on the fishing sector:
Charting progress against forced labour at sea 182

Spotlight on the cocoa sector:
Forced labour: Chocolate's hidden ingredient 188

07 **APPENDICES** 192

Appendix 1: Terminology 194

Appendix 2: Methodology behind the Global Slavery Index 196

Appendix 3: Methodology for identifying the highest value products at risk of forced labour imported by the G20 254

08 **ENDNOTES** 264

01





NAVIGATING THE INDEX

Acknowledgements ix

Foreword xi

Executive summary 2

About the Index 8

What is modern slavery? 8

Methodology 9

Jubaland, Somalia, April 2022.

A man walks in a sandstorm. After three failed rainy seasons, Somalia is experiencing the worst drought in decades, exposing about 6 million people to extreme food insecurity which has been heightened after the war in Ukraine blocked wheat exports. Food insecurity and social instability are key drivers of risk of modern slavery. Photo credit: Sally Hayden/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Modern slavery is hidden in plain sight and is deeply intertwined with life in every corner of the world. Each day, people are tricked, coerced, or forced into exploitative situations that they cannot refuse or leave. Each day, we buy the products or use the services they have been forced to make or offer without realising the hidden human cost.

Modern slavery takes many forms and is known by many names — forced labour, forced or servile marriage, debt bondage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, and the sale and exploitation of children. In all its forms, it is the systematic removal of a person's freedom — their freedom to accept or refuse a job, their freedom to leave one employer for another, or their freedom to decide if, when, and whom to marry — in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

An estimated 50 million people were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2021. These Global Estimates of Modern Slavery produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) form the starting point for the national estimates of modern slavery for 160 countries presented here in Walk Free's flagship report, the Global Slavery Index (GSI). Our estimates draw on thousands of interviews with survivors collected through nationally representative household surveys across 75 countries and our assessment of national-level vulnerability. This report, the fifth edition of the GSI, shows how the compounding crises of the last five years have impacted modern slavery and provides a road map for actions to eradicate it.

A growing global problem against a backdrop of compounding risks

Nearly 10 million more men, women, girls, and boys have been forced to work or marry since 2016. The worsening situation has occurred against a backdrop of increasing and more complex armed conflicts, widespread environmental degradation, assaults on democracy in many countries, a global rollback of women's rights, and the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have caused significant disruption to employment and education, leading to increases in extreme poverty and forced and unsafe migration, which together heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery.

The 10 countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery in 2021 are North Korea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. These countries share some political, social, and economic characteristics, including limited protections for civil liberties and human rights. Many are in volatile regions, which have experienced political instability, conflict, and/or authoritarianism. Several of these countries have governments that force their citizens to work in different sectors, in private prisons, or through forced conscription. Others are home to large numbers of refugees or migrant workers, who are often not afforded the same legal protections as citizens and are highly vulnerable to exploitation. Some, like Mauritania, live with the legacy of historical exploitation through hereditary slavery which continues to be practiced; and around the world, inherited systems of inequality continue to embed risk of modern slavery for the most marginalised groups within communities.



Strait of Gibraltar, Atlantic Ocean, September 2018.

A boat carrying migrants is pictured while stranded at sea, before being rescued by the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Salvamento Maritimo rescue agency. More people are migrating now than at any other time in the last fifty years, according to reports by the International Organization for Migration; and many of these migrants are driven to leave their homes due to crises, such as conflict or displacement caused by the effects of climate change. Photo credit: Marcos Moreno / AFP via Getty Images.

The largest estimated numbers of people in modern slavery are found in the following countries — India, China, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Türkiye, Bangladesh, and the United States. Collectively, these countries account for nearly two in every three people living in modern slavery and over half the world's population. Notably, six are G20 nations: India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Türkiye, and the US.

Most of the countries with lowest prevalence of modern slavery — Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, Japan, and Finland — are also members of the G20. Yet, even in these countries, thousands of people continue to be forced to work or marry, despite their high levels of economic development, gender equality, social welfare, and political stability, as well as strong criminal justice systems.

The widescale deterioration of civil and political rights in the face of multiple crises increases risks for those already vulnerable to modern slavery. The most vulnerable — women, children, and migrants — remain disproportionately affected. Over half of all people in modern slavery are female. A quarter are children. Women and girls are disproportionately at risk of forced marriage, accounting for 68 per cent of all people forced to marry. Migrant workers are more than three times more likely to be in forced labour than non-migrant workers. People who belong to multiple marginalised groups — such as those related to religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, caste, sexual identity, or gender expression — face even greater risks, reflecting deeply entrenched biases around the world.

Those fleeing conflict, natural disasters, or repression of their rights, or seeking to migrate for work, are particularly vulnerable. More people are migrating now than at any other point in the last five decades. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and irregular migrants face even greater risks during their precarious migration journey, during which they are typically coping with significant upheaval to social networks and economic status. Increasing anti-immigrant sentiment in many countries, including Europe, where many seek to start a new life, has led to more restrictive policies, which in turn expose displaced people to even greater risks of exploitation.

Low prevalence among the G20 masks their responsibility

While estimating prevalence of modern slavery where it occurs is critical in identifying where the need for intervention is most pressing, it does not paint a complete picture of where responsibility lies. Forced labour occurs in all countries regardless of income, with the majority occurring in lower-middle and upper-middle income countries. It is deeply connected to demand from higher-income countries. The production and movement of goods between countries — from the sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing, packaging, and transportation — creates complex and opaque supply chains, many of them tainted with forced labour.

The purchasing practices of wealthier governments and businesses fuel exploitation in lower-income countries that are at the frontlines of global supply chains. In fact, G20 nations account for more than 75 per cent of the world's trade and consume many products at risk of forced labour. Collectively, these countries import US$468 billion worth of at-risk goods per annum. The top five highest value at-risk products imported by the G20 were electronics (US$243.6 billion), garments (US$147.9 billion), palm oil (US$19.7 billion), solar panels (US$14.8 billion), and textiles (US$12.7 billion).

Spotlight on sectors

The growth of consumer culture and demand for goods has both positive and negative impacts. On one hand, it can drive economic growth and innovation, create jobs, and improve quality of life. On the other, it can contribute to environmental degradation, social inequality, and unsustainable patterns of consumption and waste. Goods produced using forced labour now travel farther around the world than ever before, with nearly two-thirds of all forced labour cases connected to global supply chains. Workers are exploited across a wide range of sectors and at every stage of the supply chain, although most forced labour occurs in the lowest tiers such as the extraction of raw materials and production stages.

Modern slavery permeates industries that are characterised by informality, with higher numbers of migrant workers, and where there is limited government oversight. Global demand for fast fashion has spurred exponential growth in the garment industry, while garment workers, hidden deep in supply chains, face poor and exploitative work. Forced labour in fisheries is driven by the motivation to reduce costs amid diminishing profits and as the industry tries to meet the global demand for seafood. Despite the progress of some companies, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour are used to farm and harvest the cocoa beans that end up in chocolate. Perhaps surprisingly, recent investigations have uncovered troubling associations between children's institutions (including orphanages) and modern slavery.

Greater connectivity between countries, economies, and people can create new risks of exploitation. For example, modern slavery has permeated the entire digital value chain, from the raw materials that create the devices that consumers use daily to connect online to the overseas workforces processing data and even onto social media platforms themselves. The growth of new "sustainable" industries to create renewable energies to tackle the climate crisis has led to further risks of exploitation, with evidence of state-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups in China occurring in the supply chains of solar panels and other renewable technologies.

Government action is critical but current efforts fall short of the challenge

The strongest government responses to modern slavery were found in the United Kingdom, Australia, Netherlands, Portugal, the US, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. Among these countries, the most notable improvement in the last five years is the passing of Australia's Modern Slavery Act, which requires certain companies to report on modern slavery risks in their supply chain and actions they are taking to respond. However, while we commend all efforts to address modern slavery, the improvements since our 2018 assessments were far fewer and weaker than the situation requires.

During the same period in which millions more people were forced to work or marry, efforts by the wealthiest nations stagnated and, in some cases, hard-won progress has reversed. Many wealthy countries are failing in their duties to protect the most vulnerable. For example, while the UK currently has the strongest response, significant gaps in protections expose survivors to risks of re-trafficking. Some countries with strong responses, such as Brazil and the US, undermine their own efforts by forcing their citizens to work beyond the specific circumstances that international conventions deem acceptable. In the Gulf States, where eight in every ten workers is a migrant and working under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system, many of the reforms intended to provide much needed protection have not been fully implemented or fall far short of providing real protection for a highly vulnerable group. Migrants working in high-income countries across Asia and Europe are also subject to tied visa systems which offer them limited protection from unscrupulous employers. Most G20 governments are still not doing enough to ensure that modern slavery is not involved in the production of goods imported into their countries and within the supply chains of companies they do business with.

There has been some notable progress since 2018. Another 15 countries have criminalised human trafficking in line with the UN Trafficking Protocol, bringing the total to 137. Some countries, such as Republic of the Congo and Brunei Darussalam, have improved their response to modern slavery, while Albania, Georgia, and the Philippines have relatively stronger responses despite having fewer resources at their disposal. More countries are beginning to engage with survivors in the development of policies and programs, although this remains woefully low at only 16 governments. The high proportion of modern slavery connected to global supply chains, while dismaying, also presents new opportunities to drive change through businesses and investors whose actions could quickly and directly improve the working conditions and livelihoods of workers across at-risk sectors — and perhaps succeed where governments have failed.

Stagnating action on modern slavery appears to be connected more to compounding crises than to changes in attitudes or a diminishment of the will to eradicate this crime. There is no doubt that governments have faced many challenges since 2018, including those that have significantly impacted funding and delivery of modern slavery programming as national resources are diverted to tackling more immediate harms. However, the obligation of governments to protect people from modern slavery cannot be set aside when crises occur. In fact, addressing modern slavery needs to be embedded into crisis responses if we are to get progress towards ending it back on track.

The urgent need to move from intention to real action

World leaders agreed on an ambitious agenda to address the world's most intractable problems when they adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) nearly 10 years ago. This included a commitment to ending modern slavery, forced labour, and human trafficking by 2030 (Target 8.7). In 2018, we warned that progress towards ending modern slavery was too slow to achieve this goal. In the period since, a significant increase in the number of people living in modern slavery and a stagnation in government action highlights that the global community is even further from achieving the goals they agreed to make a priority. This sobering picture of the current state of progress is not necessarily a signal for the future. In fact, it likely reveals truths that can point the way to success.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world largely awakened to the need for an overhaul of current systems in order to curtail the worst impacts of the pandemic and to better respond to the climate emergency. The impacts of COVID-19 drew global attention to the points at which vulnerable populations fall through the gaps and to the structural inequalities that advocates have long highlighted as core drivers of modern slavery but that governments have failed to meaningfully address. Despite the uncertainty created during the height of the pandemic, a great deal of hope lies in an important lesson that it revealed — that the global community is, in fact, capable of rapidly responding to crisis at scale.

When it comes to addressing modern slavery, the global community must move from intention to action without delay. This requires reinvigorating the movement to end modern slavery, with survivors leading the way to identify lasting solutions. It requires recognising that the world's great challenges are all interconnected: modern slavery, climate change, conflict, poverty, gender inequality, and racial injustice. None can be effectively addressed in isolation. Recognising this interconnectedness, and resolving to act on it, presents a huge opportunity to ensure the resources mobilised go further and have lasting impact for the world's most vulnerable people.



Portland, United States, January 2018.

Cary Dyer tells her story of survival during a vigil in support of the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day held by Hope Rising in Monument Square. Dyer graduated from Hope Rising and is now the president of Survivor Speaks USA board of directors. Photo credit: Brianna Soukup/ Portland Press Herald via Getty Images.

Recommendations

1 **Governments and the international community must recognise and respond to modern slavery as an intersectional issue.**

- Embed modern slavery responses in humanitarian responses, including by providing training for humanitarian actors.
- Strengthen social protection and safety nets so vulnerable communities are more resilient to shocks, including addressing discrimination of people who belong to multiple marginalised groups, such as those related to religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, caste, sexual identity, or gender expression.
- Ensure that human rights, including right to freedom from forced labour and from other forms of modern slavery, are embedded in efforts to build a green economy to respond to the climate crisis.

2 **Governments must focus on prevention and protection for those already vulnerable.**

- Increase access to primary and secondary school education for all children and particularly girls. These programs should focus on those most at risk of not receiving an education, such as girls in conflict zones, people with disabilities, or those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Ensure survivor support services, including shelters, crisis support centres, and community-based protection. Cover all populations — including males, adults, and migrants — and make available specialised support for children.
- Strengthen efforts to protect vulnerable populations on the move by repealing hostile migration policies that place national security above human rights, expanding the provision of safe and regular migration pathways, and by screening asylum seekers and irregular migrants for modern slavery indicators, regardless of how they arrived in the country.



Newtok, Alaska, June 2019.

Indigenous women living in temporary housing, as erosion caused by climate change has displaced communities. Social instability caused by increasing volatile climate events increases risk of exploitation and modern slavery. Photo credit: Bonnie Jo Mount/The Washington Post via Getty Images.

3 **Governments must ensure effective civil and criminal protections in legislation to tackle forced and child marriage.**

- Raise the legal age of marriage to 18 without exceptions, criminalise the act of marrying someone who does not consent, regardless of age, and provide civil protections that allow survivors to choose which solution best suits their needs, as not all wish to pursue criminal actions, particularly when it can involve bringing an action against family members.
- Provide trauma-informed protection measures for survivors of forced marriage, including safe accommodation, emergency funds, and psychosocial support.
- Tackle underlying drivers of forced marriage, including engaging with communities to subvert harmful patriarchal norms and amending gender discriminatory legislation.



4 **Governments must implement stronger measures to combat forced labour in public and private supply chains.**

- Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence to stop governments and businesses from sourcing goods or services linked to modern slavery. In G20 countries, enact additional legal measures, such as import controls on products linked to forced labour, Magnitsky-style sanctions, and public lists of companies found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.
- Extend labour laws and fundamental labour rights to all groups without exception, including freedom of association and collective bargaining. Extend social protection to all workers and provide remedy for modern slavery survivors.
- Introduce and enforce laws to prohibit charging of recruitment fees to employees, register and monitor recruitment agencies for deceptive practices, and ensure contracts are made available in a language migrants can understand.

5 **Governments and businesses must prioritise human rights when engaging with repressive regimes.**

- Conduct due diligence to ensure that any trade, business, or investment is not contributing to or benefitting from state-imposed forced labour, including where it occurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.
- Where links to state-imposed forced labour are identified, and operating in line with the UN Guiding Principles has become impossible, withdraw from sourcing goods and services.
- Ensure survivors of state-imposed forced labour have access to remediation, which may include financial compensation and access to legal, health, and psychosocial services.

ABOUT THE INDEX

The Global Slavery Index presents a detailed picture of modern slavery as it exists across industries and countries today. It also indicates the actions governments are taking to combat modern slavery and the risks that populations face around the world.

The Global Slavery Index is a tool for citizens, civil society, businesses, and governments to understand the scale of the problem, existing responses, and contributing factors so that they can advocate for and build sound policies that will eradicate modern slavery.

All supporting data tables and methodology are available to download from the Walk Free website: **walkfree.org.**

What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuses of power. It takes many forms and is known by many names — forced labour, forced marriage, debt bondage, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children. Refer to Appendix 1 for full terminology.

Modern slavery is a hidden crime that affects every country in the world. It has been found in many industries, including garment manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, and in many contexts, from brick kilns and fishing boats to private homes and refugee camps.

Modern slavery affects us all, from the food we eat to the clothes we wear and across a wide spectrum of the goods we purchase. Accordingly, it is everyone's responsibility to address and eliminate this crime everywhere it occurs.

In some regions, ongoing conflict, political instability, and forced displacement are key drivers of modern slavery. Elsewhere, increased vulnerability to exploitation is driven by global events such as transformations in the world of work, climate change, and migration.

From poverty to gender discrimination and inequality, addressing risk factors is fundamental to combating and preventing modern slavery. Effective responses to modern slavery must account for these drivers and risks if we are to achieve the 2030 target for UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, which calls for the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour.

Nearly every country in the world has committed to eradicate modern slavery through their national legislation and policies. Governments have a central role to play by enacting legislation, providing safety nets to their populations, and pursuing criminals who participate in this heinous crime. But no single actor can address all these challenges. To meet their commitments, governments need the support and engagement of the private sector, civil society, and the public at large.

Figure 1:
Modern slavery is an umbrella term



METHODOLOGY

Estimating prevalence

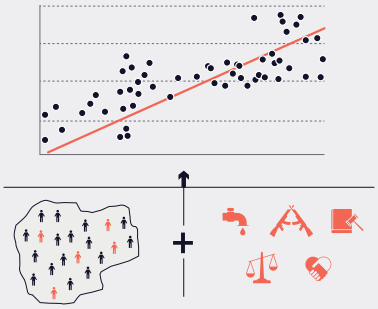
In 2022, the second edition of the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery was published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The regional estimates produced through this collaboration form the starting point for the national level estimates presented here for 160 countries.

These national estimates were calculated using individual and country-level risk factors of modern slavery. The analysis draws on data from nationally representative surveys — 68 forced labour surveys and 75 forced marriage surveys, and data from the Global Slavery Index vulnerability model. The final set of risk factors was selected from an exhaustive list of variables to optimally predict confirmed cases of forced labour and forced marriage. The model was then used to generate average predicted probabilities of modern slavery by country. The regional totals in the 2022 version of the Global Estimates were then apportioned based on each country's average predicted probability of modern slavery.

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part A.

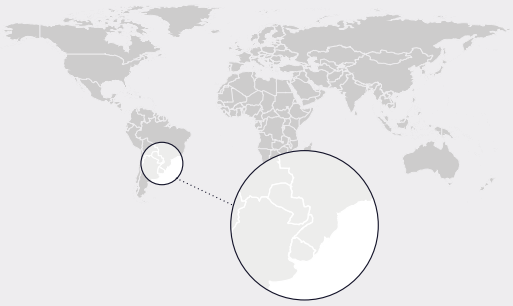
Phase 1

Individual and country-level risk factors were identified and then used to build a model that predicts modern slavery. This drew on data from the Global Slavery Index vulnerability model and nationally representative surveys.



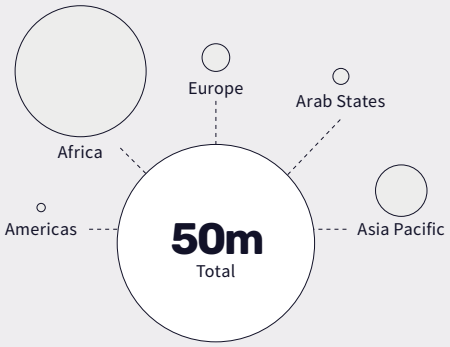
Phase 2

Individual predictions were aggregated into country-level risk scores.



Phase 3

Regional-level population estimates of modern slavery from the 2022 Global Estimate were allocated to individual countries in the region, proportionate to each country's relative risk.



Phase 4

The number of people living in modern slavery was then estimated by applying the country prevalence estimate to population data for each country.

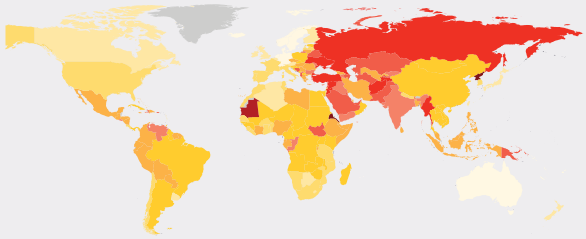


Figure 2: Estimating prevalence of modern slavery at the national level

Measuring vulnerability

The Global Slavery Index vulnerability model is built on statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery. The vulnerability model provides a risk score for 160 countries based on an analysis of data covering 23 risk variables across five major dimensions (see Figure 3).

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part B.

Assessing government responses

The government response assessment provides a comparative assessment of the legal, policy, and programmatic actions that 176 governments are taking to respond to modern slavery. This is based on data collected on 141 indicators that are relevant to understanding how each government is tracking towards achieving five milestones (see Figure 4).

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part C.

Figure 3:
Vulnerability model 2022



Identifying promising practices

The Promising Practices Database was created in 2015 to collate evaluations of anti-slavery and counter-trafficking programs in a searchable format — allowing stakeholders to quickly identify what works, and what does not, through a simple search by country, population, type of slavery, sector, or intervention. To date, the Database houses 262 evaluations, covering every region of the world.

A detailed description of the methodology is available on the Walk Free website.

Assessing business compliance with Modern Slavery Acts

We also work with WikiRate to understand the level of compliance with the UK's and Australia's Modern Slavery Acts. With an estimated thousands of companies having to publish statements per annum, this work entails reviewing modern slavery statements and creating tools for greater transparency for consumers, businesses, policymakers, and civil society organisations. We take a sector-specific approach to conduct a more tailored analysis of the statements and their quality, and to develop recommendations of what constitutes a strong statement and good business practice.

A detailed description of the methodology is available on the Walk Free website.

Figure 4:
Government response conceptual framework



02





ESSAYS

Climate change and human rights:
The inextricable link **14**

Conflict and modern slavery:
Surviving the unimaginable,
but thriving only when we disrupt the cycle **16**

Controlling COVID-19, compounding injustice:
The impact of pandemic control
measures on modern slavery **18**

The real price of our purchases:
How consumer culture fuels modern slavery **20**

Suva, Fiji, December 2022.

A woman swims off the coast of Suva. The Fijian government has been preparing to relocate more than 600 coastal communities and 42 villages when climate changes cause sea levels to rise. Climate-induced displacement is driving risks to modern slavery. Photo credit: Saeed Khan/AFP via Getty Images.

Climate change and human rights:
The inextricable link

ESSAY BY
VANESSA NAKATE
Young Leader
UN Sustainable
Development Goals

Crises heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery, and one of the greatest we currently face – the climate crisis – is no exception. In this essay, Vanessa Nakate, Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals, and climate activist from Uganda, reminds us that the climate crisis is about more than statistics and targets; it's about the millions of people around the world who are currently bearing the brunt of the crippling impacts of a warming planet.

The climate crisis is a human rights crisis. The environmental consequences of climate change — ecological degradation, increasing global temperatures, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events — have devastating impact on communities around the world. Associated effects such as resource scarcity, loss of livelihoods, increases in poverty, and unequal access to health and education, push millions of people into precarious situations, and magnifying drivers of modern slavery.

There is no escaping that rising temperatures are having a disproportionate impact on those who are already the most vulnerable in our world. During times of upheaval and fragility, any protections that women, children, migrants, and the poorest in our society have gained are more likely to be taken away.

With the climate crisis, as so often is the case, women's suffering is intensified by the structural gender inequalities that dominate their lives. The United Nations estimates that 80 percent of those displaced by climate change are female. Women in Uganda, for example are most likely primary caregivers who are responsible for feeding families and gathering water. They struggle the most when extreme weather hits. Women and girls are then especially vulnerable to sexual violence and being trafficked into sexual exploitation in and from emergency shelters, tents, or camps, that are designed to house and protect displaced communities, fleeing climate related events.

The child bride is another invisible victim of the climate crisis. Extreme weather creates economic suffering and more precarious situations for families. Increasingly, parents are being forced to give away their children for marriage in order to secure some financial stability. In the Horn of Africa, increases in the rate of child marriages in drought-affected areas have been linked to the impacts of the climate crisis, particularly family poverty and interrupted education for girls.

The irony is that these vulnerable groups are usually the least emitting in the world. The average citizen in Australia or Canada emits around 100 times more than the average citizen in Uganda, my country. And within our societies, the poorest contribute almost nothing to greenhouse gas emissions compared to the rich. Vast inequalities in energy access and usage, and carbon emissions, mean that people in the United States produce more emissions in a few days than people in many low-income countries produce in an entire year.

Yet, many people in the Western world still blame overpopulation in countries like mine for our global environmental crises. This is not a population problem, it is a consumption problem.



But it's also a not an individual problem; it is a political one. People are reliant on systems built and perpetuated by powerful corporate interests. Governments continue to give subsidies to fossil fuels, which poison our air and heat our climate, while fossil fuel companies make billions in profits.

I see my role as being to share the stories of many people I have had the honour to meet. One particular story has stayed with me and gives me motivation to keep going: in September 2022 I travelled to Turkana, Kenya, with UNICEF. I was there to meet children suffering from severe acute malnutrition as a result of years of drought caused by years of failed rainy seasons in the region. Millions of children in the Horn of Africa are suffering. One morning, I met a boy at a hospital in Lodwar, where the worst cases are referred. The boy hadn't been able to access life-saving medical care in time and that evening, sadly, he passed away.

There are many solutions that we need to fund and implement in the global south and across the world. The non-profit organisation Project Drawdown lists the most effective solutions we can take, ordered by the levels of emissions that would be saved if they were fully implemented. As well as lowering global greenhouse gas emissions and striving for the international targets, solutions in the short and long term should focus on the vulnerabilities to modern slavery and human rights infringements that so many are experiencing as a result of the crisis.

One holistic response that I am particularly passionate about is educating girls in low and middle-income countries. Providing girls and young women with a full education drastically increases their resilience to climate shocks. They are more likely to have a secure income and less likely to rely on subsistence crops that are vulnerable to extreme weather. They know how to respond to floods or droughts when they hit. And they end up having smaller, healthier families. Educating girls not only equips them to lead better lives overall, it will provide a lifeline in our fight against the climate crisis.

As an activist, my role is to highlight the human impacts of the climate crisis. I use my platform — a privilege many on the frontlines of the crisis are not afforded — to demand world leaders to act upon the reality and severity of climate change and to place human rights and justice at the heart of their efforts. In doing this, we must ensure that stories of activists, survivors, and diverse communities are being centred and heard. By prioritising emissions reductions, supporting vulnerable communities, applying a human rights lens to all responses, and working together across the global community, we can create a more just and sustainable future for all.

See page 62 "The costs of the climate crisis" for a wider discussion on this intersection, including recommendations for government action.

Stockholm, Sweden, June 2022.

Environmental activists protest with the Fridays for Future group against inaction by governments to tackle climate change. Modern slavery and climate change are interconnected issues. Increasingly intense weather events are displacing communities and spurring risks of modern slavery; while sectors at high risk of forced labour such as mining, logging, and textile and garment manufacturing, contribute to climate degradation. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzer via Getty Images.

CONFLICT

Conflict and modern slavery:

Surviving the unimaginable, but thriving only when we disrupt the cycle

ESSAY BY
NADIA MURAD
UNODC Goodwill Ambassador

Nadia Murad, a proud Yazidi woman, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, is a leading advocate for survivors of genocide and sexual violence. The Yazidi community, largely located in the north of modern-day Iraq, is an ancient population united by their ethnic and religious identity. Throughout their long history, Yazidis have faced discrimination, persecution, and severe forms of exploitation. In 2014, in the most brutal of attacks, militants from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terror group led a systematic campaign to destroy the Yazidi community. Sexual slavery was used as a weapon of the genocide.

In this essay, we learn how Nadia's own escape from ISIS captivity led to an unwavering pursuit of justice for her community and for survivors of sexual violence worldwide. Nadia explores the ways in which exploitation is both a weapon and consequence of war, and offers hope that with community-driven and survivor-centric approaches, persecuted communities can not only survive, but thrive.

Genocide does not happen by accident. The enslavement and sexual abuse of women does not happen by accident. The decision by ISIS to brutalise and break my Yazidi community in Sinjar in Northern Iraq was no accident. Centuries of persecution had exacerbated our vulnerabilities, so that when the militants surrounded us in the summer of 2014, we were left like lambs to be slaughtered.

When the terrorists entered my village of Kocho, men and women were immediately treated differently. The men were murdered and the young boys captured and brainwashed. Women and children were captured, forcibly converted, subjected to domestic servitude and many were forced to marry fighters. Through this institutionalised sexual violence — and the indoctrination of our children — they sought to destroy our community first through our bodies, and then in our minds.

As with other genocides, they did so with precision and planning. They bureaucratised rape and violence against women, first with "guideline" pamphlets for fighters, then through the use of online platforms like Telegram to buy and sell women. They opened a road between Iraq and Syria for the express purpose of trading Yazidi girls, hoping their presence might lure more fighters from across the globe.

The sexual violence ISIS unleashed on us was a weapon of war, but our experience was not wholly unique. If you look back at human history, the sexual enslavement and abuse of women and girls caught in conflict happens over and over. We read of it in Homer's Iliad, we heard about it through the testimonies of the women during the Second World War and today we still watch as journalists report on it for the news.

How can it be that, as we enter the third decade of the 21st century, a century in which society is making huge advances in so many ways, our treatment of women in conflict is still stuck in the Bronze Age?

Why is it that even though I, and others, have told our story over and over, the international community seems to have lost interest in pursuing those who perpetrate sexual violence?



Mosul, Iraq, August 2014.

Thousands of Yazidi people flee their homes in the Sinjar region of Iraq after it was invaded by Islamic State militants, who orchestrated a strategic ethnic cleansing of the community. During the invasion, over 6,000 women and children were abducted by the Islamic State, many of whom were forcibly married and traded as sex slaves by fighters. Although the extremist group was defeated in 2019, many of those taken are still missing today. Photo credit: Emrah Yorulmaz/ Anadolu Agency via Getty Images.

While I am proud to have successfully advocated for the passage of resolution 2467 at the UN Security Council, which expands commitments to end sexual violence in conflict with a survivor-centric approach, it is not enough.

Neither the International Criminal Court nor the national courts in Iraq have yet convened to formally try ISIS members for the genocide and sexual violence they perpetrated. To date, only two criminal proceedings have been brought against fighters and their co-conspirators. Both of which resulted in German courts handing down convictions for crimes of genocide, including through the systematic enslavement of Yazidi women and girls.

In the aftermath of the ISIS invasion, the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) collected evidence against more than 2,100 perpetrators of sexual violence. So, two trials from over two thousand does not seem much of a future deterrent. I believe we must use every tool we have, from sanctions through to universal jurisdiction, to show the entire world that sexual violence in conflict will not be tolerated.

My book "The Last Girl" is so-called because I want to be the last girl in the world with a story like mine. However, that will only be the case if the international community truly fights for justice, and if we address the gender inequalities and societal vulnerabilities that puts communities at risk of these kinds of barbaric crimes.

That is why rebuilding communities and advocating for survivors of sexual violence became my mission. In 2018, I founded Nadia's Initiative to create peace and safety for women and girls, and to support the healing and re-development of besieged Yazidi communities. As we approach the ninth anniversary of the genocide, more than 2,800 women and children are still missing and enslaved by ISIS.

I began this essay by writing that genocide does not happen by accident.

Sexual violence in conflict does not happen by accident. The root causes of our vulnerability as Yazidi women are achingly familiar to so many other marginalised groups whether in Afghanistan, Yemen, or Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must uproot poverty, inequality, political oppression, and the norms that legitimise such discrimination, wherever they are found.

Secondly, we must take a holistic approach to increase access to basic needs and comprehensive protections where and when they are needed most. This should include embedding gender-responsive approaches and modern slavery considerations within all humanitarian responses, including facilitating access to justice.

Finally, we must ensure that calls for justice and meaningful survivor-centric support for women and girls do not cease when global media turns its attention elsewhere. Only then will we begin to break the patterns of abuse that instil vulnerability to violence and exploitation throughout generations.

See page 58 "Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war" for a wider discussion on this intersection, including recommendations for government action.

Controlling COVID-19, compounding injustice:

The impact of pandemic control measures on modern slavery

ESSAY BY
A SURVIVOR COLLECTIVE IN INDIA

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and amplified inequality and instability across the globe. The human impact has been catastrophic, with research revealing sharp declines in health, living, and working conditions, as well as mass unemployment. As shocks rippled through communities, vulnerabilities compounded and modern slavery spiked. While many communities continue to grapple with the health and social impacts of the pandemic, members of a survivors' collective in India have shared their experiences and recommendations on how to reverse the devastating rise in modern slavery. Their observations are summarised below:

Mass unemployment, high personal debt, and limited government support created opportunities for traffickers to prey on growing numbers of people who have been pushed into survival mode during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of those desperate to stay afloat have been driven into forced and bonded labour, often in sex work and brick kilns. With many industries yet to return to pre-pandemic operations, pathways out of modern slavery remain limited. Even those who were able to stay in their existing jobs have seen their wages and working conditions plummet — meaning forms of employment that were previously safe became exploitative in nature.

"I know of people who had travelled to Bombay to work before the pandemic, who are now unemployed and homeless hundreds of kilometres from home. They are forced into exploitative work because they have no other choice. Employers say that workers can leave if they are unhappy, but they are trapped because there is nowhere else to go for better work."

With financial insecurity spreading across India, digital lending apps exploded in popularity, followed by an increase in loan sharks using heavy-handed collection tactics and extortionately high interest rates that left borrowers in further desperation. Many borrowers have been forced into precarious forms of employment to repay their loans and to avoid violent repercussions. Others have fled their homes so as not to be found by lenders, making them vulnerable to even worse forms of exploitation as they attempt to carve out a new life in isolation.

Creating new risks and abuses

Global lockdowns to try to halt the spread of the virus caused widespread social isolation. For many, this led to a sharp increase in the amount of time spent online; a trend that has been capitalised on by those with criminal intent. Shielded by online anonymity, perpetrators were able to use deceptive job advertisements and targeted outreach using chat features to recruit vulnerable people into exploitative labour. Adolescent girls became a particular target for online perpetrators, with many being lured into forms of sexual exploitation under the guise of building a romantic relationship.

In some instances, criminals have used face mask mandates to their advantage by disguising their identity, or that of their victims, from law enforcement officials or eyewitnesses.

Heightened discrimination and reversing progress on social norms

Communities are experiencing indirect effects from the pandemic, including heightened discrimination that threatens years of progress, especially for women and girls. The shockwaves to family units and restrictions on mobility have bought about a sharp rise in domestic violence. There are fears that these trends may continue long after COVID-19 eases and impact future generations. In some cases, women have been driven out of their homes



Delhi, India, April 2020.

Circles on the ground show where migrants can stand while waiting for food. The Indian government announced on March 24 that the country will go into lockdown with four hours' notice. This led to day labourers leaving major city hubs and returning to their communities, often on foot. Photo by Yawar Nazir/Getty Images.

by violence, where they become vulnerable to further exploitation and abuse. Additionally, school closures, social isolation, and rising poverty have increased the practice of child and forced marriage, with fears that this could impact millions of girls for years to come.

In India, migrant workers returning home due to COVID-19 restrictions were stigmatised for their heightened risk of carrying the virus. Despite government drives to ensure testing of all returning workers, access to facilities was limited, leading to entire households being forcibly isolated from their communities and thereby facing destitution and becoming easy targets for exploitation.

"Many parents are forcing their young daughters into marriages with older men to ease the financial burden at home. Some of these men have sold the girls into exploitation in another city, falsely claiming that she has run away. With these stories circulating, I know of situations where girls have run away from home to avoid this fate, only to then find themselves sold into exploitation on the streets."

Looking ahead

The COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example of how crises compound other crises. While it has not discriminated in its spread across the globe, as with many other disasters its effects have fallen disproportionately on the world's most vulnerable people. With the global economy still facing high levels of uncertainty, continued employment losses, and concerns of an uneven global recovery, there is an urgent need for more effective government responses.

The pandemic exacerbated the systemic economic and societal inequalities that are among the root causes of modern slavery. It is vital that this intersectionality become central to global responses. For example, solutions focused on addressing poverty, discrimination, and exploitation could prevent the proliferation of conditions that make people more vulnerable to modern slavery. Income generation schemes to help poor people earn a living, expanded access to education, targeted public awareness campaigns on gendered violence and child marriage, and tailored support to marginalised groups are examples of the responses needed to alleviate the effects of these compounded crises.

There are reasons to be hopeful. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight the experiences of those exploited by the global economy and the systems that are upholding the inequalities they face. There is a pandemic-induced realisation among governments, industries, and communities that they must reassess the way things work with a new awareness of and focus on global risks, vulnerabilities, and intersectionalities. All of this represents a renewed opportunity to galvanise commitments to action from both the public and private sectors and to mobilise resources for the task ahead.

CONSUMERISM

The real price of our purchases:

How consumer culture fuels modern slavery

ESSAY BY
NASREEN SHEIKH
CEO and Founder
Empowerment Collective

From raw materials to manufacturing, and through to packaging and delivery, modern slavery is embedded in the supply chains of the global garment industry. The clothing industry has doubled in size in the last 15 years alone, partly driven by demand for fast fashion. Garment workers, hidden deep in these supply chains face exploitative working conditions, including forced labour and debt bondage. Nasreen Sheikh is a former child labourer, forced marriage survivor, and a leader in the movement to end modern day slavery.

In this essay, she reveals the ugly truth behind consumer culture, revealing the human cost that we so often choose to ignore. While reflecting on the interconnected nature of globalisation, Nasreen offers hope that radical supply chain transparency, strong government legislation, and meaningful engagement by businesses could ultimately transform industries built on the exploitation of workers and the cognitive dissonance of consumers.

As a survivor of modern slavery who has escaped both forced marriage and child labour, over the past decade, I have trodden the long road of educating the public on these issues and working directly with those affected. I am acutely aware of how entrenched systems and societal behaviours in one part of the world can have a direct impact on communities in another. It is my belief that blind consumption is at the very centre of the exponential rise in the number of people living in modern slavery that this report highlights.

I come from a very remote village on the border of India and Nepal, where, like most births, mine was undocumented. Growing up, I witnessed my sister and many girls forced into marriages as children. While I hope most would agree that this is an unconscionable act, I know that far fewer would be aware of how it can be connected to consumerism. You see, forcing young girls into marriage is a way to preserve the slave labour force in countries that sell cheap labour to foreign export companies.

This is because forced marriage can serve as a means of control — it impedes upon girls' education and their opportunities in life, making them more likely to be forced into exploitative work. It also supports a generational cycle of poverty and modern slavery, as children born into these circumstances are more likely to have their freedom, rights, and options restricted in a similar way. I knew as a young girl that I would be next, so I chose to escape the village to the city of Kathmandu in hopes of finding a better life.

It was in Kathmandu that I was exploited in forced child labour and fell prey to the massive organisation of illegal sweatshops in the inner-city slums. It was here that I realised my childhood, along with the childhood of thousands of others, were traded for a life of pure suffering, malnourishment, and industrial poisoning happening on a scale unimaginable to the average consumer. I worked 12 to 15 hours per day in a textile sweatshop, receiving less than the equivalent of US$2 per gruelling shift — but only if I completed the hundreds of garments demanded of me. I ate, slept, and toiled in a sweatshop workstation the size of a prison cell. Even then, I knew in my heart that people would not choose to purchase these items if they truly understood where they came from and how they were made.



Kandla, India, September 2022.

A worker sorts jeans according to grade at a used textile factory. The garment industry impacts many issues. Overconsumption and high volumes of garment waste fuels climate change, and the fast-paced industry is rife with the exploitation of workers. Photo credit: Prashanth Vishwanathan/Bloomberg via Getty Images.

After breaking free from my exploitation, I came to America and went to a large chain store for the first time. I walked the aisles in disbelief looking at the thousands of products available to purchase in one location. I had never experienced this level of both luxury and convenience, but it was horrifying to connect with the reality of how these products had likely come to be. When I gazed upon the countless consumer goods as I walked from aisle to aisle, I couldn't help but see the faces of children in each of them, of men's and women's lives marred by poverty, inhumane working conditions, and unimaginable exploitation. The suffering woven into each fibre and reflecting on every surface. That night I just wept in pain for this world.

Businesses have increasingly complex global supply chains that lack transparency of who is working where and under what conditions. Too often, this works to their advantage; by failing to meaningfully engage with modern slavery risks, businesses can turn a blind eye, avoid remediation, and continue to place profit over people. The sad fact for most businesses is that if they look hard enough for worker exploitation — or if they even look at all — they will find it.

While businesses should willingly take on the responsibility to ensure their supply chains are free of modern slavery, governments also have a role to hold them to account and to set a level playing field for our global economy. This role includes ensuring businesses and government are actively looking for forced labour in supply chains.

While some governments around the world are stepping up, there remain serious gaps in legislation which businesses can exploit. For example, research by Walk Free finds that most companies are falling at the first hurdle when it comes to even reporting on the actions they are taking.

The result is decades of corporate social responsibility that is merely voluntary, modern slavery reporting legislation with no consequence for non-compliance, and greenwashing campaigns that could convince the savviest of consumers that they are acting ethically.

The development of policy to address modern slavery will always be impeded as long as it ignores how the issues are deeply intersected with wider structures, systems, and behaviours. Focusing on issues in silos will potentially hold us back from solutions for more decades to come. Modern slavery thrives in the shadows and darkness, the unspoken truth, the hidden parts of our global society too ugly or horrific to witness in light. But truth is the key.

We need radical supply chain transparency and non-negotiable, meaningful engagement from all businesses. We need modern slavery legislation that imposes the duty to protect all workers in supply chains, that holds companies liable for breaches and inaction, and that leaves no one behind in the pursuit of a thriving global economy.

For the 50 million people living in modern slavery around the world, the time for meaningful action and renewed commitment is now. It is my life story, my life mission.

See page 176 "Stitched with slavery in the seams" for a wider discussion on this intersection, including recommendations for government action.

03



Afar, Ethiopia, February 2022.

Women seek shade from the blaring sun under boxes while waiting to be registered at the Agda Hotel compound, were millions of displaced Eritreans and Ethiopians have fled to escape violence at the Barhale refugee camp. One attack near the campsite led to "at least five refugees [being] killed and several women [being] kidnapped" according to survivors. Photo credit: Eduardo Soteras/AFP via Getty Images.

GLOBAL FINDINGS



GLOBAL FINDINGS

An estimated 50 million people were living in situations of modern slavery on any given day in 2021, according to the latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery. Of these people, approximately 28 million were in forced labour and 22 million were in forced marriages.

The most vulnerable — women, children, and migrants — remain disproportionately affected. More than 12 million of all people in modern slavery are children, and women and girls account for over half of them (54 per cent). Migrant workers were three times more likely to be in forced labour than non-migrant workers.

Modern slavery occurs in every country, regardless of wealth. More than half (52 per cent) of all forced labour and a quarter of all forced marriages can be found in upper-middle income or high-income countries.

The new Global Estimates revealed that the situation is worse than when we last measured in 2016. Since then, the number of men, women, and children forced to work against their will or in a forced marriage has risen by 10 million. The worsening situation has occurred against a backdrop of increasing conflict, environmental degradation, over a decade of global democratic decline,[1] a global rollback of women's rights,[2] and the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it. These compounding crises have led to significant disruption to employment and education, increases in extreme poverty, and forced and unsafe migration, which together heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery, particularly for those who are already vulnerable.

Overview and trends

The Global Slavery Index is a national breakdown of the extent of modern slavery in 160 countries, taking the Global Estimates as its starting point. This section presents findings of our country-level analysis of the extent and drivers of modern slavery, together with actions taken by governments to respond to modern slavery.

From global to national estimates

The 10 countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery are:

1. North Korea
2. Eritrea
3. Mauritania
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Türkiye
6. Tajikistan
7. United Arab Emirates
8. Russia
9. Afghanistan
10. Kuwait

Four of the five world regions — Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia — are represented in the list of countries with highest prevalence, which underscores the global reach of modern slavery.

The 10 countries with highest prevalence share some political, social, and economic characteristics, including limited protections for civil liberties and human rights. Many of these countries are in volatile regions, which have experienced political instability, conflict, and/or authoritarianism. Many are home to large numbers of vulnerable people, such as refugees or migrant workers. Migrant workers comprise the vast majority of the workforce in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait where they effectively fall under the control of employers due to the kafala (sponsorship) system and have few, if any, labour rights.

While our understanding of the relationship between conflict and modern slavery is growing, protracted conflict is a known risk multiplier, as breakdown in the rule of law, loss of social support networks, and the large-scale disruption that occurs during conflicts all serve to increase risk of both forced labour and forced marriage. North Korea, Eritrea, and Afghanistan have all been involved in protracted conflicts.[3] Türkiye, which hosts

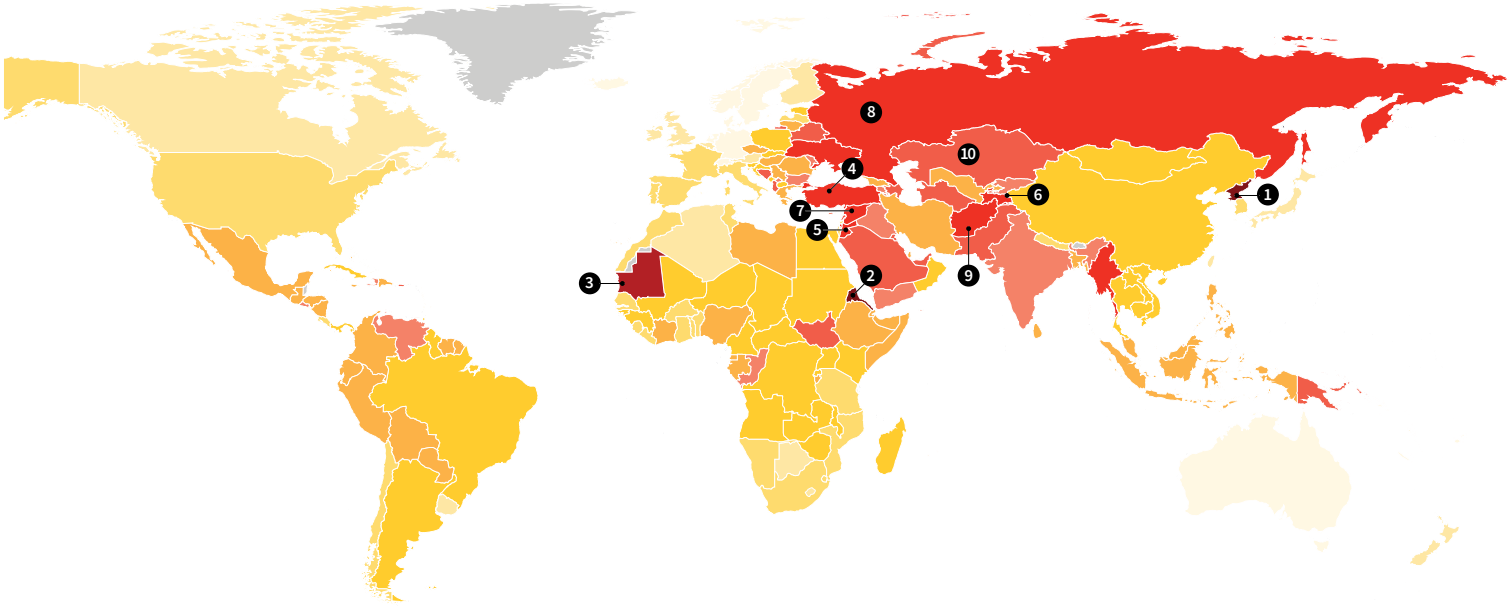


Figure 5
Estimated prevalence of modern slavery by country
(noting estimated prevalence per 1,000 population for the 10 countries with highest prevalence)

Low — High

Rank	Country	Prevalence
1	North Korea	104.6
2	Eritrea	90.3
3	Mauritania	32.0
4	Saudi Arabia	21.3
5	Türkiye	15.6
6	Tajikistan	14.0
7	United Arab Emirates	13.4
8	Russia	13.0
9	Afghanistan	13.0
10	Kuwait	13.0

millions of refugees from Syria, and Russia were both involved in the Syrian conflict. Russia also launched an invasion of Ukraine in 2022 after having annexed Crimea in 2014.[4] A lack of data in countries experiencing conflict means that estimates in these countries, and the regions they are situated in, will fall short of the true extent of modern slavery.

North Korea, Eritrea, Mauritania, and Afghanistan were among the ten countries with highest prevalence of modern slavery in the 2018 Global Slavery Index and remained in the list of countries with the highest prevalence in 2023. North Korea and Eritrea each have a high prevalence of state-imposed forced labour. While international conventions recognise that states have the power to compel citizens to work, this is limited to specific circumstances; for example, compulsory military service or obligatory work or service for citizens in emergency situations such as famine and natural disaster. A state exceeds these limits when it compels citizens to work as a punishment for expressing or acting on political views, or for the purpose of economic development, or as a means of racial, ethnic, social, or religious discrimination.

In North Korea, one in 10 people are in modern slavery, with the vast majority being forced to work by the state. This is a conservative estimate in a country that the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights found engages in widespread and systematic abuses such as torture, wrongful imprisonment, and forced labour against its citizens.[5] There are also reports of North Korean women being lured or coerced into leaving the country to be sold as brides in China. Women who escape from those situations and return to North Korea often face punishment by the authorities rather than receiving support as victims of bride trafficking.[6]

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery

Since 2016, the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have collaborated on the development of the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (Global Estimates). The three organisations worked together to harmonise definitions and methodologies to provide a single baseline estimate against which progress towards ending modern slavery could be measured.

In September 2022, the new Global Estimates were released. Each edition of the Global Estimates is based on the best available data and information about the scale and distribution of modern slavery. The estimates are derived from multiple data sources, as no single source can adequately measure the different forms of modern slavery. As was the case in 2016, the principal sources are data from nationally representative household surveys (68 forced labour surveys and 75 forced marriage surveys) and anonymised data from the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative that is collected by IOM and its partners in the process of providing services to trafficked persons.

The methodology underlying the new Global Estimates is the product of an ongoing process of refinement made possible by an improved understanding of forced labour and forced marriage and of how best to measure them. Due to the refinements in measurement and more balanced geographical coverage in data, the new Global Estimates are the most complete and comprehensive to date. Despite this, the estimate is conservative as substantial gaps remain. Forms of modern slavery, such as organ trafficking, recruitment of children by armed forces, and all child marriages, are not captured, and there remain parts of the world, such as countries experiencing profound and ongoing conflict, where using existing methods is difficult and dangerous.

Eritrea has the world's second highest prevalence of modern slavery (9 per cent of the population), representing an estimated 320,000 people. The Eritrean government runs a mandatory national conscription program through which citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 must undertake military service but typically are forced to perform work of a non-military nature.[7] The length of this national conscription is indefinite, with reports of Eritreans spending decades in service of the government. This has led to an estimated 15 per cent of the population — primarily those under 40 — fleeing the country to avoid conscription.[8] In doing so, many face further risk of exploitation.

Eritrea also has among the weakest government responses to modern slavery, second only to North Korea. Its state-imposed forced labour system fundamentally undermines any other response to modern slavery, including the ratification of relevant conventions, or existence of national legislation. Corporations have been linked to state-imposed forced labour in Eritrea. Allegations made in 2014 against Nevsun Resources, a Canadian-based mining company, claimed it was complicit in the use of forced labour by the firm's sub-contractor at the Bisha mine in Eritrea. The case, which ended in a settlement with plaintiffs for an undisclosed amount in October 2020,[9] is seen as a positive step towards corporate accountability for forced labour in their supply chains.

As the last country to abolish slavery, which it did in 1981, Mauritania continues to have one of the highest rates of slavery (32 people in every thousand). Despite this, hereditary slavery continues to impact the Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian communities, with many survivors and their descendants dependent upon former "masters" because of limited skills and lack of alternative economic opportunities.[10] The government has taken some steps to address the issue, such as criminalising slavery and creating anti-slavery tribunals, but enforcement remains weak. In addition, societal attitudes and cultural norms continue to contribute to the perpetuation of slavery.[11] In Mauritania, minority groups face discrimination in various areas, including education, employment, and access to public services, while there are also numerous reports of arbitrary detention, torture, and other forms of repression of political dissidents, journalists, and human rights activists.[12]

The 10 countries with the largest estimated numbers of people in modern slavery include some of the world's most populous. Collectively, these countries — India (11 million), China (5.8 million), North Korea (2.7 million), Pakistan (2.3 million), Russia (1.9 million), Indonesia (1.8 million), Nigeria (1.6 million), Türkiye (1.3 million), Bangladesh (1.2 million), and the United States (1.1 million) — account for nearly

two in every three people living in modern slavery and over half the world's population. Notably, six of these countries are G20 nations — India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Türkiye, and the United States.

With the exception of Japan, the countries with lowest prevalence of modern slavery are from northern or western Europe — Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, and Finland. Yet, even in these countries, thousands of people continue to be forced to work or marry, despite their high levels of economic development, gender equality, social welfare, and political stability, as well as strong criminal justice systems.[13]

A regional assessment reveals that while vulnerability to modern slavery is lowest in Europe across all dimensions, discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or migration status is the largest driver of modern slavery. Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and ethno-cultural minorities face discrimination, including limited access to services and protection. More people are migrating now than at any other point in the last five decades.[14] As more people flee conflict and abuse of their human rights, Europe has increasingly closed its borders — either physically[15] or through ever more complex and opaque migration policies. "Fortress Europe" does not stop asylum seekers and migrants from arriving, but instead forces people to take riskier routes.[16]

Part of the issue is that there is not a simple, coherent migration policy across the European Union. The Dublin system, for example, means that asylum seekers should seek asylum in the first country they reach in Europe.[17] However, the so-called "migrant crisis" in 2015, which led to approximately one million people landing on European shores to seek asylum, with thousands dying en route, exposed the weaknesses in the system. The burden disproportionately fell on states bordering the Mediterranean, such as Greece and Italy, with asylum seekers and migrants originating from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq and a significant, albeit smaller, number arriving via Libya.[18] Since then, EU countries have been negotiating a system based on "solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility,"[19] but they have not come to an agreement. In March 2023, migration ministers from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Switzerland released a joint statement to strengthen the Dublin system, reaffirming that asylum seekers would need to seek asylum in the first country they reached in Europe in a bid to curb illegal migration.[20]



Hauts-de-France, France, November 2021.

Tents belonging to refugees seeking shelter in the woodland near Loon-Plage, after a boat capsized in the English Channel and claimed the lives of at least 27 refugees. NGOs have criticised consecutive Conservative governments in the UK for their attempts to curb "illegal" migration, which increases the risk of leaving modern slavery survivors unprotected. Photo credit: Thierry Monasse via Getty Images.

What are governments doing to address modern slavery?

The last few years have taught us that the ability to respond to modern slavery in times of crisis requires governments to continually invest in modern slavery responses and to build resilient systems that can withstand external shocks. However, governments in the top 10 global responses to modern slavery in 2023 have largely stagnated.

The top 10 are traditionally characterised by having more resources at their disposal, relatively strong political will, and a strong civil society to hold government to account. Notably, in 2018 Australia passed its Modern Slavery Act,[21] which requires companies that have a consolidated revenue of over AU$100 million (approximately US$67 million) per annum to report on the actions they are taking to respond to modern slavery. In Portugal, there is evidence of an increasing number of referrals of victims to services.[22] These changes remain the exception and not the rule, with few new developments. At the very top, the United Kingdom's (UK) overall response has declined since 2018; the government saw an increase in referrals of just 1 per cent, but a worsening of measures on victim protection and access to visas, largely as a result of the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act.[23] A proposed Illegal Migration Bill[24] introduced in March 2023 is a potential violation of international law and the UN Refugee Convention and it shows that the UK is at risk of continuing its downward trend.

There is promising action outside of the top 10. In August 2020, Tonga ratified the ILO Convention, 1999 (No. 182) to reach universal ratification ensuring all children now have legal protection against the worst forms of child labour.[25] Since 2018, a further 15 countries have criminalised human trafficking in line with UN Trafficking Protocol, bringing the total number of countries to 137. Nearly 150 countries have a National Action Plan related to some form of modern slavery — a 30 per cent increase since 2018. Some countries stand out: Brunei has acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,[26] finalised a National Action Plan on tackling human trafficking,[27] and established a National Committee on Trafficking in Persons since the last Global Slavery Index.[28] Oman,[29] Qatar,[30] and Saudi Arabia[31] adopted some reforms to the *kafala* (or sponsorship) system, the Republic of the Congo criminalised human trafficking in domestic legislation in 2019,[32] and Canada amended its Custom Tariff to incorporate restrictions on forced labour.[33]

When correlated against GDP per capita PPP (current international $), countries such as Albania, Georgia, Montenegro, the Philippines, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have relatively stronger responses despite the fewer resources at their disposal. In 2021, the Philippines raised the minimum of age of marriage to 18[34] while in Albania a Victim Advisory Board was established to involve survivors in the design of awareness-raising campaigns, police interviews of victims, and the treatment of victims during court proceedings.[35]

Encouragingly, countries are starting to recognise the expertise of those with lived experience. Sixteen governments from across the globe have either consulted with survivors as part of policy development or have provided them seats on their national coordinating councils or as part of a separate survivor advisory council. Since 2015, the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking has provided a formal avenue for survivors to advise on federal policies to the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.[36] In Rwanda, the government consulted with survivors as part of the development of the National Action Plan. That said, 16 still represents a small fraction of the 176 governments[37] included in the government response assessment.

There have been positive developments in tackling the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls. A new indicator introduced in 2023 reveals that 35 countries have set the age of marriage to 18 for girls and boys with no exception, with the UK joining the likes of Ireland, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Rwanda, and Malawi by announcing in early 2023 that it will raise the age to 18 and remove the exception for 16 and 17 year-olds to marry with parental consent.[38] Fifty countries have now criminalised forced marriage, an increase of 12 since the last report. While encouraging, criminalisation should be implemented as part of a suite of legislative protections in national legislation. Less encouragingly, few governments are taking a more holistic approach to tackle the underlying drivers of forced marriage and providing protections including access to civil protection orders, safe accommodation, emergency funds, and psychosocial support. Nearly half (59 countries) of the 130 governments that provide access to public primary education are reporting lower primary enrolment rates for girls.

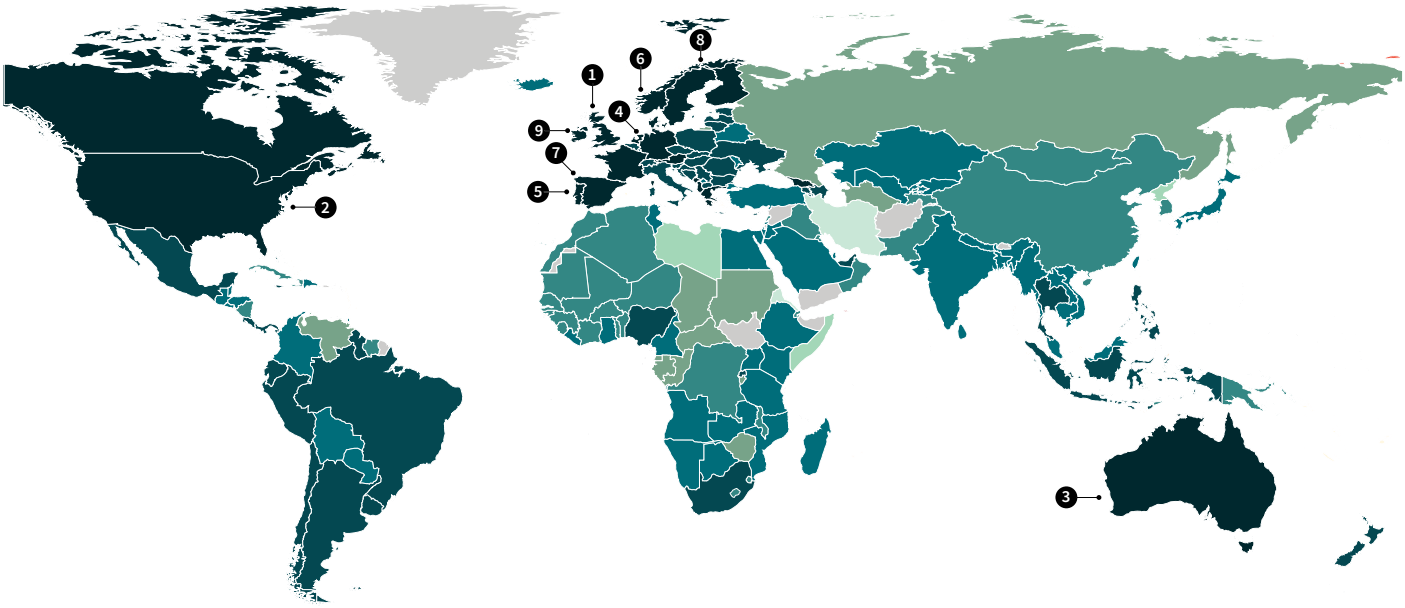


Figure 6
Government responses to modern slavery (noting scores for the countries with strongest responses)

60-69.9 50-59.9 40-49.9 30-39.9 20-29.9 10-19.9 <0-9.9%

Country	Response score
United Kingdom	68
Australia	67
Netherlands	67
Portugal	67
United States	67
Ireland	63
Norway	63
Spain	63
Sweden	63



New Jersey, United States, February 2021.

Brigitte gives an interview at a shelter, "Strengthen Our Sisters", which supports domestic violence victims. Stay-at-home orders to restrict the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in reports of domestic violence worldwide. Family and domestic violence also spur unseen risks of modern slavery. Photo credit: Kena Betancur/ AFP via Getty Images.

There is some progress on measures to hold businesses more accountable in tackling modern slavery. Four countries have implemented mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (mHRDD) legislation, which holds businesses accountable for failing to identify, and act upon, the actual and potential risks for workers in their operations and supply chains, including the risk of forced labour. Norway,[39] France,[40] and Switzerland,[41] have established mHRDD legislation, with Germany's coming into force in early 2023.[42] The Netherlands is currently exploring mHRDD[43] as an alternative to its child labour due diligence legislation.[44] The strongest mHRDD legislation includes penalties for a company's failure to prevent forced labour in supply chains and includes a right of action for those who have been impacted.

Increasingly, mHRDD is seen as part of a suite of measures implemented by governments to hold both business and public procurement accountable. Import controls, such as the Tariff Act[45] and the 2021 Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act in the US, prevent the entry of goods produced by forced labour, and specifically by Uyghurs held in state-imposed forced labour in the latter case.[46] The UK has used Magnitsky legislation to impose travel bans and sanctions on individuals who commit forced labour.[47] Other countries have identified high risk sectors and work collaboratively with the private sector to tackle exploitation; the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, created a regulatory authority to tackle child labour in cobalt and coltan mines.[48]

The countries taking the least action to respond to modern slavery remain as in 2018 — Somalia, Libya, Iran, Eritrea, and North Korea. These countries continue to be characterised by conflict and/or active involvement from the government in modern slavery either through corruption and complicity or state-imposed forced labour. Those countries with some of the weakest responses have been excluded — Afghanistan, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen — due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption.



Duzce, Türkiye, July 2019.

Heavy rains and landslides cause significant damage to homes and community infrastructure, and have even led to the disappearance of three adults and four children. Upheaval caused by increasingly erratic and volatile weather events leads some to seek employment opportunities elsewhere, increasing their risk of modern slavery. Photo credit: Ibrahim Yozoglu/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images.

Alleged complicity in modern slavery crimes was reported in 90 countries in our assessment. This ranged from active involvement in committing modern slavery crimes to turning a blind eye to the action of criminals. In Zimbabwe, for example, those working in the judicial system, including police, magistrates, prosecutors, clerks, and court messengers, allegedly take bribes for not arresting artisanal mine operators, or swiftly releasing those in custody,[49] who have purportedly kidnapped workers and forced them to work. In Tajikistan, there are allegations that endemic corruption among government officials facilitates trafficking of victims across borders.[50]

State-imposed forced labour is practiced in 17 countries in the GSI, and this greatly undermines any other aspect of a government response. The figure is likely much higher — our assessment is based on legal loopholes that enable forced labour to occur and publicly available evidence that this has occurred since 2018.

When correlated against GDP per capita, Luxembourg, Singapore, Qatar, Hong Kong, Brunei Darussalam, Kuwait, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have taken limited action despite larger resources at their disposal. The *kafala*, or sponsorship program, in the Gulf states has long been criticised for exacerbating the vulnerability of migrant populations that these countries have long relied upon. The World Cup in Qatar and Dubai World Expo in UAE spurred reforms,[51] many of which have largely remained on paper rather than being fully implemented.[52] Migrants also working in countries in Southeast Asia, such as Hong Kong,[53] South Korea,[54] and Singapore,[55] face discrimination and limited protections alongside tied visas, which prohibit migrant workers from leaving their jobs and finding employment elsewhere in the country. Tied visas are not unique to these countries, as shown by a growing hostile environment across Europe to asylum seekers fleeing persecution and discrimination. Many wealthy countries across the Index are failing in their duties to protect the most vulnerable.

Figure 7
Correlation between GDP per capita PPP (current international $) and government responses to modern slavery

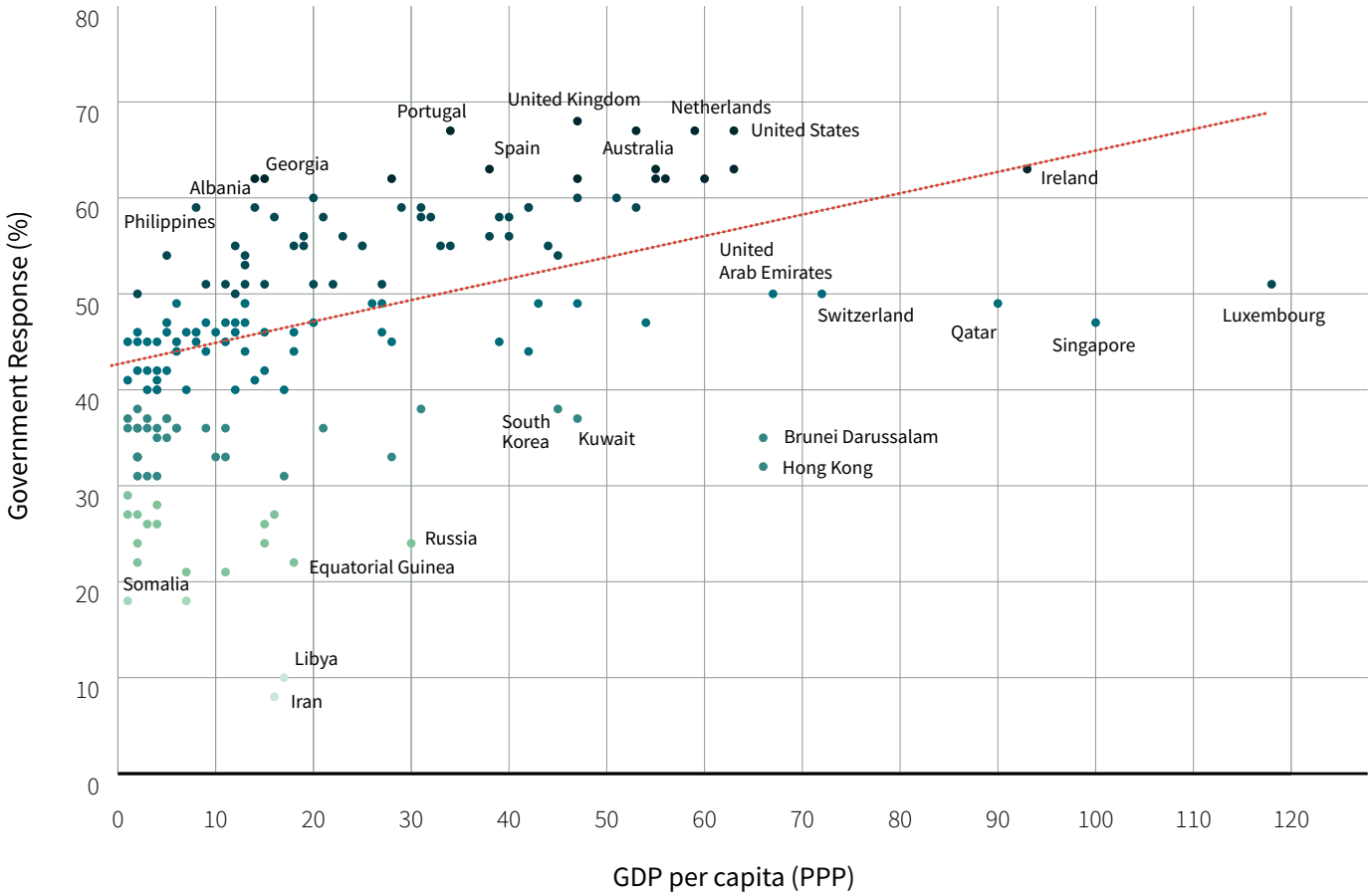


Table 1

Government response score, by country

(in order from highest to lowest within each category)*

60-69.9%	50-59.9%	40-49.9%	30-39.9%	20-29.9%	10-19.9%	<0-9.9%
United Kingdom	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Benin	Burundi	Somalia	Iran
Australia	Belgium	Malta	China	Republic of the Congo	Libya	Eritrea
Netherlands	Croatia	Paraguay	Lesotho	Central African Republic		North Korea
Portugal	Czechia	Qatar	Mongolia	Palau		
United States	Italy	Saudi Arabia	Morocco	Venezuela		
Ireland	Latvia	Sri Lanka	Senegal	Zimbabwe		
Norway	Philippines	Trinidad and Tobago	Malawi	Sudan		
Spain	Argentina	Türkiye	Oman	Turkmenistan		
Sweden	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Belarus	South Korea	Vanuatu		
Albania	Cyprus	Bolivia	Côte d'Ivoire	Chad		
Austria	Lithuania	Guatemala	Haiti	Gabon		
Denmark	North Macedonia	Honduras	Kuwait	Russia		
France	Romania	Iceland	Maldives	Equatorial Guinea		
Georgia	Slovakia	Kyrgyzstan	Niger			
Germany	Estonia	Moldova	Pakistan			
Greece	Serbia	Singapore	Algeria			
Canada	Slovenia	Tunisia	Burkina Faso			
Finland	Uruguay	Viet Nam	Democratic Republic of the Congo			
Montenegro	Bahrain	Taiwan	Djibouti			
	Bulgaria	Colombia	Eswatini			
	Chile	Dominican Republic	Gambia			
	Hungary	Fiji	Guinea			
	Mexico	India	Mauritius			
	Peru	Jordan	Nicaragua			
	Poland	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan			
	Thailand	Kenya	Brunei Darussalam			
	Armenia	Lao PDR	Mauritania			
	New Zealand	Uganda	Timor-Leste			
	Nigeria	Uzbekistan	Guinea-Bissau			
	Bahamas	Belize	Iraq			
	South Africa	El Salvador	Lebanon			
	Brazil	Ethiopia	Seychelles			
	Costa Rica	Ghana	Sierra Leone			
	Ecuador	Israel	Togo			
	Guyana	Malaysia	Hong Kong			
	Jamaica	Mozambique	Cabo Verde			
	Luxembourg	Nepal	Cuba			
	Panama	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Liechtenstein			
	Saint Lucia	Zambia	Mali			
	Ukraine	Kosovo	Papua New Guinea			
	Indonesia	Angola	Solomon Islands			
	Rwanda	Antigua and Barbuda	Suriname			
	Switzerland	Egypt				
	United Arab Emirates	Japan				
		Namibia				
		Botswana				
		Cambodia				
		Madagascar				
		Myanmar				
		Tanzania				
		Barbados				
		Cameroon				
		Liberia				

*Afghanistan, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen have been excluded due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function.

Comparability to the 2018 Global Slavery Index

While the methodology used in this edition of the Global Slavery Index (GSI) is broadly consistent with what was applied in the 2018 edition, some changes were made to reflect updates to the methodology of the Global Estimates, new data sources for measures of vulnerability, and stronger scoring systems for assessments of government response. These changes are likely to have some impact on comparability between the 2023 and 2018 editions of the GSI and are summarised below. A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2.

Estimating prevalence

As was the case in 2018, the regional estimates produced through the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery[56] provide the starting point for the national level estimates presented in this edition of the Global Slavery Index. As a result, changes in the methodology for the Global Estimates will have some impact on the GSI. Although both editions of the Global Estimates draw on nationally representative household surveys and administrative data, for the most recent edition, surveys were conducted in a larger number of countries, including in regions for which there was previously a data gap. For example, surveys were conducted in high and upper-middle income countries across Europe and the Arab States.[57]

Other changes in the methodology of the most recent Global Estimates were due to improvements in the statistical treatment of the underlying data.[58] Most notably, an imputation model was adopted to create estimates for countries in which national surveys were not conducted. While the refinements to the Global Estimates methodology do not affect the overall comparability between the results presented in 2017 and 2022, there was an impact on the estimates of forced labour at a regional level, which is reflected in the national estimates presented in this edition of the GSI and should be considered when comparing changes in forced labour at the national level.

Changes to methods of data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic may also have had an impact on comparability. Some surveys were conducted after the emergence of COVID-19, which shifted the face-to-face mode of data collection that was used for all pre-pandemic surveys, to conducting the surveys via telephone. While measures were taken to minimise and assess mode effects, this may have impacted the comparability of the prevalence estimates.

Measuring vulnerability

The model of vulnerability to modern slavery developed for the 2018 GSI was maintained for the 2023 edition of the Index. Changes to the model instead reflected shifts in data sources, particularly in instances where data sources had been discontinued (refer to Appendix 2: Part B); as a result, the vulnerability model had to incorporate new source data for four indicators. While every effort was made to replace discontinued data sources with others measuring the same phenomena, these updates likely contributed to country-level differences in vulnerability. Every effort was made to select consistent and ongoing replacement data sources to minimise the impact on future editions of the GSI.

Assessing government responses

Similarly, the assessment of government responses remains broadly comparable with previous assessments used in the 2018 GSI. However, due to changes in both the conceptual framework underpinning this study, which outlines what constitutes a strong response to modern slavery, and the method of analysis. Extensive reviews by Lived Experience Expert Groups and our Expert Working Group led to edits to the conceptual framework. Refer to Appendix 2: Part C for more detail.

The method of analysis changed in 2023, specifically in relation to calculating total scores for milestones to better reflect a government's commitment to completely achieving an activity. This signified a recent improvement to the methodology that was used in the 2018 GSI, where milestone scores reflected the number of indicators met. While the data remains comparable at the indicator level, changes at the milestone level are impacted by the new scoring system. Accordingly, comparing indicator ratings would be the most accurate way of understanding how much better or worse a government has performed in eradicating modern slavery between the 2018 and 2023 GSI.

04





SPOTLIGHTS

Understanding forced and child marriage.....36

Anti-social: Modern slavery on social media 44

Guardians and offenders: Examining state-imposed forced labour 48

Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war.....58

The costs of the climate crisis.....62

Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, May 2018.

"Before the Storm" depicts a family of Rohingya refugees awaiting the impending monsoon. Thousands of Rohingya people were forced to flee from their homes in the Rakhine State, Myanmar to refugee camps in neighbouring Bangladesh, after being persecuted for their religious beliefs. The protracted displacement has led to higher rates of poverty and social instability which worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, exposing entire families to greater risks of modern slavery.
Photo credit: Paddy Dowling.

FORCED MARRIAGE

Understanding forced and child marriage



Guerrero, Mexico, May 2021.

A woman carries a child in the street. In this part of Guerrero, an ancestral practice allows girls to be sold as brides, for prices ranging from $2,000 to $18,000 to other men in the region. Once married, girls are forced to work by their spousal family, including on farms and as domestic servants. Many also experience sexual abuse. While the practice still occurs, many Indigenous people are calling for it to end as it creates a cycle of abuse for girls and poverty for men. Photo credit: Pedro Pardo/AFP via Getty Images.

The ability to freely choose who, when, and whether to marry is an essential human right,[1] yet forced marriages still occur in almost every country. Globally, an estimated 22 million people were living in a forced marriage on any given day in 2021.[2]

This estimate is conservative. UNICEF estimates there are 650 million women and girls who were married before the age of 18.[3] While men and boys are also forced to marry, women and girls remain disproportionately at-risk and account for 68 per cent of all people forced to marry.[4] While almost two-thirds of all forced marriages occur in the Asia and the Pacific region, the highest prevalence of forced marriage is in the Arab States.[5] Despite this, forced marriage risks are present in all countries and are often exacerbated for members of marginalised groups.[6]

Family, survival, and social value

While actors such as traffickers, marriage brokers,[7] and armed groups[8] can be involved in forced marriages, they are often a family matter. Seventy-three per cent of people in a forced marriage were forced to marry by their parents, with a further 16 per cent forced by other relatives. Over half (53 per cent) were coerced through emotional abuse and threats, including the threat of estrangement from family members and of self-harm by parents.[9]

Complex and intersecting factors increase the risk of forced and child marriage. These factors include gender biases, harmful cultural practices, poverty, sexuality, gender identity, socio-political instability, conflict, climate change, irregular migration, and a lack of access to education and employment, among many others.[10] Geography also plays a large role in magnifying risk, as inequalities within and between countries can impact vulnerability to exploitation.[11] Broadly, these risks are a function of survival needs or social value, although in practice these drivers are often intertwined.

When basic needs are threatened, struggling families may turn to negative coping mechanisms to survive. Forced and child marriages are seen as practices that can reduce the economic burden on a household living in extreme poverty,[12] protect vulnerable (and typically female) family members from sexual violence,[13] ensure access to critical and limited resources,[14] and provide certainty for a child's future in times of crisis.[15] Shocks spur risk as they exacerbate existing inequalities. Conflict can directly result in forced marriages, including where women and girls are abducted and forced to marry fighters.[16] For people fleeing crises, risks can arise while on the move or in refugee camps.[17] Among displaced populations, and in the absence of other opportunities, marriage can be seen as the best option to provide future security. At times, children themselves have made the decision to marry: for example, some Syrian refugee girls living in Lebanon have reportedly chosen marriage to escape poverty and abuse.[18] Further, protracted instability can increase risk of forced and child marriage long after the initial ceremony and can entrench vulnerability across generations.[19]

Social values dictate when and for whom vulnerability to forced and child marriages increases. The risk of being forced to marry is typically higher for people who belong to multiple marginalised groups, based on sex assigned at birth, sexual preferences, gender identity, ability status, and belonging to a religious or ethnic minority group.[20] Women and girls are disproportionately affected due to widespread gender biases that devalue girls from conception and throughout their lifetime.[21] These biases are reflected in deeply entrenched patriarchal norms surrounding female purity, pre-marital sex, and traditional roles that keep women and girls out of work and the schoolroom, and limit them to roles of wives, mothers, and homemakers.[22] In some communities, reaching menarche signals a girl is "ready" for marriage.[23]

Patriarchal gender roles also influence access to resources in the home. Parents who are unable to afford to send all of their children to school will prioritise the education of sons over daughters due to beliefs that boys have a greater future earning potential, while daughters are destined for another family.[24] Globally, one out of every four adolescent girls aged between 15 to 19 years are neither in education, employment nor training, as compared to one-tenth of boys of the same age.[25] However, these gender roles also influence boys' risk of child marriage. While they are valued as economic contributors, and when resources are scarce, typically receive greater resources including access to food and schooling,[26] an early start into economic independence can make boys more vulnerable.[27] Much like norms that dictate girls' physical maturity is a sign that they are "ready" for marriage, boys who enter the workforce and fill the role of "family provider" at a younger age face greater risks of child marriage.[28]

"I was in love with another girl and got married ... my mother refused and forced me into a traditional marriage."

35-year-old Egyptian male on his forced marriage at age 24

Harmful cultural practices, in turn, reinforce patriarchal social values and are closely linked to forced and child marriages. Norms that dictate heteronormativity can increase risks of forced marriage for LGBTQIA+ people, who may be coerced into heterosexual marriages by their families to "cure" them of their sexual orientation or gender identity.[29] Similarly, norms that pigeonhole men and boys into hyper-masculine roles mean that male victims of forced marriage may not seek help for fear of being seen as effeminate or offending family honour.[30] While less likely than females to be coerced into marriage through physical or sexual violence, nearly three-quarters of men and boys in forced marriages were coerced through threats or verbal abuse.[31]

Similarly, norms that prioritise chastity and sexual purity for women and girls increase risk of forced and child marriage. For example, female genital mutilation (FGM), which involves the cutting, injury, removal, or modification to female genitalia for non-medical purposes,[32] is seen as a rite of passage into adulthood and can act as a precursor to a girl child marriage.[33] FGM is performed on girls to promote chastity by reducing female sex drive.[34] Similarly, fears of social stigma and the threat of damage to familial honour can force women and girls to marry their kidnappers in countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, regions where bride kidnapping occurs.[35] Of females living in a forced marriage on any given day in 2021, one in 10 had been forced through kidnapping or after being coerced to travel abroad.[36]

Breaking the cycle: A child marriage survivor's story

Sharon* never had the opportunity to go to school in Kenya, where she lived. From the age of six, she was working to support her family. Her parents told her that if she stopped working to attend school, as she wanted, then her siblings would go hungry. When Sharon was nine years old, her father forced her to undergo FGM. Sharon was married only two years later when she was just 11 years old.

Once Sharon was married, her family would receive her bride dowry. Her father was particularly excited to receive the dowry and would "*brag about it to the other elders who had many cows.*" However, at the time, Sharon did not understand that she had been married — she believed that she was being sent to live with another family to help them with their chores.

At the beginning of her marriage, Sharon's new husband lived and worked away in Mombasa and so she spent most of her time with her kind and elderly mother-in-law who she called Grandmother (*Koko*). The situation changed when her husband returned from work, as not only was it clear that he was unwell, but Sharon was obliged to live with him: "I was afraid of him. I didn't want to live or sleep with him in the same bed. [B]ut they told me that as a wife I was supposed to live with my husband. It was then that the reality dawned on me that I was married."

They lived together for three years while grappling with her husband's mysterious illness. Despite trying, they never had children. One day when Sharon was fetching water from the river, she overheard her neighbours gossiping about her husband having "a disease with no medicine" and that he had given it to his wife. Sharon did not know what HIV or AIDS were, and her husband never discussed it. Shortly after he died, the village elders informed Sharon that she needed to have children, who according to local custom, would be given the name of her deceased husband. Sharon refused many times, but eventually was coerced into having sex with men from the village. It was only when she became pregnant and attended an antenatal clinic for the first time that Sharon was told she was HIV positive.

While *Koko* was alive, Sharon began taking antiretroviral medication and went on to have another two children to continue her husband's name. When *Koko* passed, there was no one to support Sharon, and she moved away to find work. However, as she became increasingly sick and had limited opportunities, she had to leave her children to go house-to-house begging for food. She was often abused by her neighbours. Despite her worsening health, Sharon continues to provide for her children as she wants to see them receive the education she missed out on.

"For now, though, I am very weak but have decided to be strong for my children. I want them not to blame me, but to blame my culture. A culture that oppresses women. A culture that forces women to marry men they don't choose. A culture which forces young girls to marry old men. A culture that does not ever listen to women and girls."

**Not her real name*

Region	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (%)	Forced marriage criminalised in national legislation (%)	Minimum legal age of marriage when all exceptions considered is 16 or older (%)	Minimum legal age of marriage when all exceptions considered is 18 or older (%)
Africa	24	18	29	18
Americas	34	22	59	28
Arab States	11	11	11	0
Asia and the Pacific	16	31	47	25
Europe and Central Asia	46	44	77	17
All countries	**30**	**28**	**51**	**20**

*Data current as of 31 August 2022

Table 2
Protections in international and domestic law by percentage of countries in each region

Pandemic-driven reversals

While the number of people living in a forced marriage increased since the 2017 Global Estimates, current figures only partially account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.[37] Prior to the spread of COVID-19, UNICEF estimated that one in five girls were married before the age of 18.[38] While a significant population, it is a reversal of previous trends, meaning there were 25 million fewer child marriages than estimated in the previous decade.[39] However, following the spread of COVID-19, UNICEF and UNFPA estimated an additional 10 million[40] to 13 million[41] girls will be married due to the impacts of the pandemic.

Vulnerability has increased around the world in the aftermath of the pandemic, and particularly in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Americas, where there are already higher risks of forced and child marriage.[42] Not only has the level of extreme global poverty risen for the first time in 20 years[43] as a result of increased global unemployment, job losses,[44] and increased indebtedness,[45] but food insecurity[46] and gender-based violence have also increased as a direct result of COVID-19 and related mitigation measures.[47] For example, a greater number of women and girls have been exposed to sexual, physical, and psychological abuse from family members and intimate partners because of lockdown restrictions,[48] thereby increasing their risk of forced and child marriage. Additionally, 24 of 26 Protection Clusters — coordinated groups of humanitarian organisations working to meet the diverse needs of people affected by crises — reported an increase in gender-based violence since the pandemic began.[49] This reflects broader global trends as rates of violence against women increased since the pandemic,[50] corresponding with a lack of access to social services[51] and the impact of stay-at-home orders confining victims to spaces with their abusers.[52]

Efforts to prevent the spread of the virus have also created barriers to services, including identification mechanisms.[53] Public health measures reduced the ability of grassroots and service delivery organisations to undertake their work, resulting in the closure of services or reduced budgets to support vulnerable people and survivors of forced marriage. For example, in Niger and Kenya, safe houses were closed, creating a gap in the protection of girls at risk of gender-based violence.[54] In Morocco, at-risk individuals were reluctant to access services due to fears of contracting COVID-19.[55] Further research on the impact of COVID-19 on risks to forced marriage among marginalised groups is urgently required, including on delivery of services for hard-to-reach populations.

Ending forced and child marriages

A strong, multifaceted global approach is needed to end forced and child marriage and achieve the SDG targets, in particular SDG 8.7 on the eradication of modern slavery, SDG 5.3 on eliminating child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilations, and SDG 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against children. This will require norms change across national, community, and household levels to ensure that harmful norms that perpetuate risk are dismantled. It will also require empowering vulnerable communities to be resilient in the wake of shocks that spur risk of forced marriage.

Globally, there are insufficient legal protections against forced and child marriage. Most countries have not ratified the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Marriage Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages, nor fully criminalised forced marriage in national legislation. Further, only 35 countries have set a minimum age of marriage at

18 without exception (Table 2). Harmful attitudes and practices that increase women's and girls' risk of forced and child marriage remain entrenched in laws around the world. Examples are legal loopholes that exonerate rapists from punishment if they marry their victim,[56] customary laws that allow widowed women to be inherited by a male relative of their deceased husband,[57] laws that leave women or their children stateless or those that do not allow women to hold or inherit land and property.[58]

While important, legislation alone will not end forced and child marriages.[59] For example, it was found that legislation banning child marriage and imposing fines for non-compliance in Malawi drove the practice underground and led to methods such as marriage hiding or marriage withdrawal, which involves parents or community members intervening to forcibly return a married girl to her natal home, being used to avoid fines.[60] Legal protections must be diversified beyond criminalising forced marriages. Such measures should include civil protection orders that are independent of other legal proceedings.[61] To ensure protection measures are trauma-informed and put survivors at the centre, survivors must be able to choose which solution best suits their needs as not all wish to pursue criminal actions, particularly when it can involve bringing an action against family members.[62]

Programs to reduce child marriage should target underlying drivers such as poverty and the lack of alternatives to child marriage.[63] Interventions are also needed at the community and household levels to challenge social norms that create risk of forced marriage. These interventions should involve a range of advocates, including faith and community leaders, and must also combat harmful understandings of masculinity that silence and shame male victims[64] and prevent them from seeking assistance.

"My parents though I was old enough for marriage and I needed to marry to reduce the family burden."

Nigerian female on her forced marriage at age 15

"I had to leave the situation or be killed. I know I can never return home because I am considered a dead person for breaking the culture and bringing shame to the families. According to my father, I am dead."

Afghan female survivor of three forced marriages.[65]

Ensuring adolescent girls have access to education is essential: when a girl receives an education, her earning potential increases by almost 12 per cent per year of schooling, helping to alleviate household poverty.[66] However, current estimates predict that 20 million adolescent girls will never return to the classroom when schools reopen after the pandemic.[67] To ensure girls enter and return to the schoolroom, multi-generational behaviour change campaigns that specifically target heads of family must be delivered together with education and poverty alleviation measures.[68] Additionally, new pathways to education and employment must be opened for already-married girls to return to school and for adult women to be economically empowered.[69] This is critically important in the wake of learning losses caused by COVID-19, which saw 1.6 billion students around the world having their learning disrupted,[70] left 129 million girls out of school in 2020,[71] and led to a higher rates of teen pregnancy in lower and lower-middle income countries.[72]

In addition to enhancing access to education, reducing the risks of exploitation faced by vulnerable groups, such as people living in crisis situations, will require efforts to combat forced marriage to be embedded, prioritised, and adequately resourced within broader humanitarian actions.[73] This should be context-specific, so as to enhance effectiveness in addressing risk factors for the impacted population, and will require coordinated and comprehensive action across all appropriately trained[74] stakeholders from the beginning of a crisis through to recovery.[75] In the aftermath of COVID-19, it is clear that existing institutions must be "future-proofed" to better respond to crises.[76] This will require strengthening institutions that support the most vulnerable people, including social services and welfare,[77] as well as enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health services[78] and dismantling legal frameworks that embed norms which create risks to forced and child marriage.

Promising Practices to end forced and child marriage

There were 38 evaluations of programs that aimed to combat forced or child marriage in the Promising Practices Database, which covered 32 countries, with the majority delivered in countries in Asia and the Pacific, followed by Africa. Most programs were targeted to females and most often focused on adolescent and child girls. Only one program solely targeted adults who were forced to marry. Interventions commonly included some aspect of risk-based prevention or service delivery and included activities such as preventative education, awareness-raising campaigns, training for service providers, community groups, and conditional cash transfers. Conditional and unconditional cash transfers, specifically, have had some success in delaying the age of first marriage and to improve educational outcomes for girls.[79] While some reliable lessons can be learned from this subset of evaluations, there is a clear need for stronger methodologies and pre – and post-implementation analyses to make more effective decisions about what works.

Effective programs included preventative education, community or support groups, and training for service providers. Among the programs evaluated was the Tostan Community Empowerment Program (CEP), which has reported promising impacts in Somalia and Senegal.[80] The CEP is a community-led program that aims to transform harmful gender norms and empower women and girls to become leaders in their communities and be able to make their own decisions regarding health, education, and finances, promoting better life outcomes for themselves, their families, and future generations.[81] In Senegal, the program was linked with changed attitudes towards forced and child marriage among community leaders and other participants, as well as a subsequent decline in child marriages within the community.[82] Similar results were identified in Somalia, where changes in attitudes led to the abandonment of FGM and forced and child marriage.[83]

Recommendations for governments

1. **Enshrine a suite of trauma-informed and survivor-centred measures in legislation, and ensure these measures are available for survivors of forced and child marriage. It should include criminalising the act of marrying someone who does not consent, regardless of their age, and civil protections that protect the individual from marriage without having to penalise the perpetrators, who are often family members.**

2. **Ensure the minimum legal age of marriage is set at 18 years of age without exception, including in customary and religious laws.**

3. **Conduct community-driven attitude change campaigns to subvert harmful patriarchal norms that subjugate women and girls and confine men to rigid stereotypes of masculinity, all of which work to increase their risk of forced and child marriage.**

4. **Amend gender discriminatory nationality laws including those that allow the denial, loss, or deprivation of nationality on discriminatory grounds. Grant protection status to stateless migrants, facilitate their naturalisation, and ensure all infants are registered at birth to prevent statelessness.**

5. **Increase access to primary and secondary school education for all children and particularly girls, which may include the removal of school fees, provision of cash or in-kind transfers, and raising awareness among families of the benefits of educating girls. These programs should focus on those most at risk of not receiving an education, such as girls in conflict zones, people with disabilities, or those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.**

FRONTLINE VOICES

Frontline voices: Modern slavery and gender

CAROLINE ADHIAMBO
Membership and Research Coordinator, Azadi Kenya

Although modern slavery affects everyone, there is no escaping the fact that it is a gendered issue. Fundamentally, modern slavery is enabled by power imbalances. For women and girls, this imbalance is exacerbated by gender inequality and discrimination that is deeply engrained into the fabric of our lives. For these reasons, integrating a gender perspective into research, policy, and practice is essential to ensuring effective solutions to modern slavery and to achieving gender equity. Here, survivor leader and researcher Caroline Adhiambo reflects on the gendered aspects of modern slavery and why applying a lens that recognises the unique lived experiences of all genders is integral to tailoring effective solutions.

The laws and social norms we live by, and the different expectations imposed on daughters compared to sons, have contributed to there being more women and girls living in modern slavery than there are men and boys. Crucially, when looking at what increases a person's vulnerability to modern slavery — factors such as lack of access to education and health services, poverty, and working in the informal economy — more women are exposed to multiple risk factors than men. Exacerbating these factors are structural imbalances, ingrained into legislation in many instances, which stack the odds against females. Examples include laws impeding women's rights to autonomy, freedom of movement, and access to employment.

As the causes of modern slavery are interconnected, putting structures in place that foster gender equality and ensure equal access to resources is essential as it creates a platform for empowerment. Also essential are inclusive data and research that focus on the perspective of all genders. Data allows for the creation of gender-sensitive approaches and interventions when addressing the issues faced by survivors of modern slavery.

Despite these gendered imbalances, it is vital to recognise and respond to the aspects of modern slavery that uniquely affect men. For example, societal expectations and gender roles in many parts of the world can make it difficult for men to speak up when they are exploited.

Those who do are often exposed to stigmatization, which can act as both a barrier to reporting and accessing support services and can lead to conditions that create and maintain vulnerabilities. Accordingly, there is a need for safe avenues for men to report cases of exploitation.

Championing inclusion and addressing gender inequality should not be done at the expense of either gender but should be aimed at empowering both. Recognising that both men and women often have different experiences of modern slavery, and therefore can require different responses, is necessary if equity is to be achieved.



Creating spaces where the voices of all genders can be heard with equal representation is essential, including in research, as is raising awareness of the impact of intersectionality on lived experience. Putting the unique experience and expertise of survivors at the heart of solutions is critical to bringing these objectives together, which in turn will go a long way towards ensuring that the root causes that expose women, men, boys, and girls to modern slavery are addressed.

Azadi Kenya is a survivor-led, counter-trafficking NGO that focuses on the provision of long-term support for survivors of trafficking who, too often, find a lack of community support and understanding when reintegrating into society ensuing their experience with trafficking. Our goal is to create spaces and programmes that enhance the agency of survivors of trafficking, to support long term recovery from trauma, and to sustain their reintegration into society.

Nairobi, Kenya, March 2022.

Campaigners march on International Women's Day and call for an end to gender-based violence. Women and girls remain disproportionately vulnerable to all forms of extreme exploitation, including modern slavery, due to discrimination that devalues them from birth and throughout their lifetimes. Photo credit: YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP via Getty Images.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Anti-social:
Modern slavery on social media

While social media has enabled unprecedented levels of global connectivity and delivered many socio-economic benefits,[1] greater connectivity has also brought new risks, with consequences that transcend the digital world. There is mounting evidence social media is used to facilitate modern slavery,[2] with perpetrators able to simultaneously target multiple people in different geographic locations, access their personal information, and exploit vulnerabilities while shielded by online anonymity.[3]

At the same time, rapid technological advancements have outpaced the development of regulatory frameworks, resulting in a lack of effective governance and accountability that enables modern slavery risks to flourish online.

The facilitation of forced commercial sexual exploitation (FCSE) of adults and children using social media is well documented.[4] Social media users may be recruited through deceptive job advertisements or targeted outreach using chat features, typically under the guise of building a relationship.[5] In June 2021, for example, 11 people were arrested for trafficking women and girls from Bangladesh to India for sexual exploitation after luring them via TikTok with the promise of work.[6] Following recruitment, social media may be used to track victims' locations, control their movements, and to record, advertise, and distribute FCSE material.[7] In 2023, shareholders launched litigation against Meta, arguing that the company's leadership and board failed to protect shareholder interests by purportedly turning "a blind eye" to widespread evidence of sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation on Facebook and Instagram.[8] Some measures intended to curb FCSE online have also exacerbated risks. For example, legislation introduced in the United States in 2017 to combat sex trafficking online reportedly increased the vulnerability of sex workers.[9] In effect, the law placed greater pressure on platforms to censor users, thereby removing safer spaces for sex workers to communicate and reduce their risk of harm, while increasing their risk of violence and poverty.[10]

Less is known about how social media impacts forced labour;[11] however, increasing use of social media to search for employment and the growing perception of it as a reliable source of information has created new opportunities for exploitation.[12] Fraudulent recruiters and traffickers may target potential victims via social media business pages,[13] recruitment advertisements,[14] and direct outreach on social media platforms.[15] Key word searches of some popular video-sharing platforms reveal the presence of unverified accounts posing as government-approved recruitment agencies which poses significant risks. Traffickers may also use social media to lure victims onto end-to-end encrypted platforms, such as WhatsApp,[16] where oversight by law enforcement for prevention and evidence collection is both legally and technically difficult.[17]

Harrowing accounts of trafficking for labour exploitation and domestic servitude via social media have emerged in recent years. In 2021, leaked Facebook documents revealed that Instagram and Facebook were used to recruit migrant workers from low-income countries via deceptive job advertisements and traffic them to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries for domestic servitude and forced sex work.[18] This followed a 2019 investigation which found that migrant domestic workers employed under the *kafala* system in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were bought and sold via Instagram and other applications listed by Google Play and the Apple App Store.[19] Instagram's algorithm reportedly promoted hashtags used to advertise domestic workers on the platform.[20]

Building and abusing trust online: Experiences of a domestic worker

Cherry*, a 25-year-old from the Philippines, migrated to Kuwait in 2013 to earn a better income as a domestic worker.

"I accepted the job opportunity to help my family be able to stand poverty."

Cherry's first employer treated her well; however, they paid her less than the salary of KWD 120 (approximately US$390) she was promised, so they agreed to release her at the end of her contract. Meanwhile, Cherry used social media, especially Facebook, to connect with family and friends back home.

"My employer didn't mind it as long as I finished my daily tasks. It is where I met Joan, a domestic worker who lived in Salwa, Kuwait. We spoke a lot, shared videos, thoughts, and family life. We became very close."

With her contract coming to an end, Cherry told Joan she was looking for a new employer. They continued to talk, send greetings, and occasionally make video calls, and their friendship grew deeper. Then suddenly, Joan stopped sending messages. When she eventually came back online, she refused to accept video calls, claiming her employer forbid them.

One day, Cherry received a message from Joan saying that she had found an employer willing to pay Cherry KWD 250 (approximately US$815) if she went immediately. Cherry sought permission from her employer but was told she needed to wait three more months before she could transfer to a new job. So, she ran away, believing this was her only chance to change her fate.

"I went to the *jamiya*, the location we agreed to meet. I was excited to meet Joan for the first time."

Yet, when Cherry called Joan, she said she could not come. Instead, a man in a white car picked Cherry up and brought her to an old building, and told her Joan was inside waiting for her.

"The place was dark and scary. The man locked the door behind me. Grabbed me and pushed me in one of the rooms. I was abducted and forced to have sex with men…I felt like I am no longer human."

The perpetrators had taken the Facebook accounts of Joan and the other women trapped in the building and forced them to call their friends.

"They took my Facebook account and stole my identity just like they did to Joan. They sent KWD 120 monthly to my family so they would not report that I am missing to the OWWA [Overseas Workers Welfare Administration]. They let me talk to my family sometimes, but for a very short time with a knife pointing at me not to say anything suspicious. I was scared and helpless."

One day, a tip off led to a rescue operation. Cherry was taken to the police station and then a shelter where she received assistance and a medical check-up.

"I got deported for running away from my employer. I was thankful being deported and seeing my family."

The men who operated the scheme were captured and imprisoned by the Kuwait authorities.

**Not her real name*

While it is clear that social media exacerbates modern slavery risks, it can also provide an avenue for vulnerable users and survivors to share their experiences and access support.[21] In 2021, for example, a Kenyan woman who was exploited while working as a cleaner in Saudi Arabia reported receiving assistance from an international organisation after posting about her situation on Facebook.[22] She was also recruited via Facebook, and claimed that the platform saw her into and out of the situation.[23] Migrant domestic workers experiencing abuse and mistreatment in the Gulf have also used Facebook and TikTok to share their experiences, ask for information, and raise awareness.[24] While this has reportedly helped domestic workers connect with other workers on the platforms, without the necessary safeguards in place, domestic workers can be exposed to further harms such as re-trafficking by exploitative recruiters who are also active on the platforms, employer retaliation, and even deportation.[25]

Modern slavery risks permeate the entire social media value chain — from sourcing raw materials, such as cobalt,[26] to the exploitation of workers in data labelling[27] and overseas data centres,[28] and into the digital platforms themselves.

The international community has recognised the need to safeguard human rights in the digital era.[29] In 2011, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) established the "corporate responsibility to respect," which requires businesses, to (a) avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities and to address such impacts when they occur, and (b) seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products, or services by their business relationships, even if they themselves have not contributed to those impacts.[30] As a result, social media companies have a duty to respond to any harm they cause or contributed to, including

harm caused by a third party using their platform.[31] Despite this, little is being done to protect social media users from modern slavery risks. Under current Modern Slavery Acts (MSAs) in the UK and Australia, certain companies are required to report on modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains,[32] however there is no requirement for social media companies to report on how they are addressing modern slavery on their digital platforms.[33] Further, several companies with significant reach in the UK and Australia, but with no operations in either country, are not required to report. Gaps in the application of MSAs allow social media companies to evade responsibility for potential violations linked to their platforms.

In 2023, Walk Free assessed statements[34] published under UK and Australian MSAs by 10 companies. These companies cover 10 social media platforms and two e-stores distributing social media applications.[35] Our assessment found that social media companies are not doing enough to report on modern slavery within their direct operations or supply chains.[36] In their most recent statements (current as of 28 February 2023), no company complied with all minimum requirements under the Australian[37] or UK MSAs.[38] Supply chains are opaque: while all companies had some form of modern slavery policy, only four had a policy that extended beyond the first tier of their supply chain. Although five companies reported conducting risk assessments and risk management activities, with these same companies also identifying modern slavery risks, only two disclosed potential incidents of modern slavery. This suggests these companies should be doing more to actively identify risks and remediate incidents of forced labour where they occur.

Beyond requirements in the MSAs, we also reviewed the statements to understand how well companies are engaging with modern slavery risks on their social media platforms. While companies are not presently required to report on these aspects under the MSAs, we wanted to understand if companies were going beyond compliance to effectively engage with known risks.

Half of the statements assessed made specific disclosures relating to modern slavery risks on their platforms. Four companies reported having modern slavery policies relating to social media, including policies against apps, content, and behaviours that facilitate human trafficking, child exploitation, and human exploitation. Further, only three companies reported activities to detect modern slavery on social media, including through use of image matching technology and mechanisms allowing users to report slavery-related content.

One company reported making information on support services available for all users, however no other prevention measures were reported. Some of the companies assessed reported having policies against sexually explicit advertisements, however none reported assessing advertisements for indicators of modern slavery, despite known risks and the significant control companies have over paid promotions and advertisements. None reported including modern slavery considerations into product design and development, where such efforts are crucial to addressing risks before impacting vulnerable end users.

Concerningly, only four companies reported remediation strategies for incidents identified on social media: measures included cooperation with law enforcement and removal of content, user accounts, or apps. Without further action to investigate and remove the source of risk, content removal merely displaces risk. Multi-stakeholder cooperation is vital to lifting industry standards, fostering greater transparency, and ensuring that modern slavery risks are effectively removed.[39] Three companies assessed reported participation in industry collaborations seeking to combat modern slavery on social media. Tech Against Trafficking[40] and the Tech Coalition,[41] for example, represent industry initiatives to combat human trafficking and child sexual exploitation online. More targeted efforts must be made to combat all forms of modern slavery that manifest on social media.

An assessment of statements released by social media companies shows that they must take more action to understand how modern slavery manifests online and to address the modern slavery risks that occur. Social media companies, with more than 4.5 billion users now active across the globe, have enormous influence worldwide.[42] There is an urgent need for them to stop perpetrators from operating with impunity and to prevent modern slavery from flourishing online.

Recommendations for governments

1. Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence laws, similar to the French Duty of Vigilance law,[43] which require businesses and other organisations to conduct due diligence to proactively identify and remediate forced labour risks and which cover the entire value chain including end-users.

2. Strengthen existing MSAs to require social media companies to report on how they are addressing modern slavery on their platforms (including companies with a significant user base in Australia and/or the UK, regardless of annual revenue) and to issue detailed guidance to support implementation.[44]

3. Cooperate with other governments to strengthen governance and accountability frameworks for social media companies. Such frameworks must consider the constantly evolving nature of digital technologies and ensure sufficient geographic coverage.

4. Consider potential unintended consequences, such as the removal of safeguards for sex workers, in all legislative and policy responses to regulate online digital spaces, and include those with lived experience in any consultations regarding addressing human rights and modern slavery risks on social media.[45]

5. Ensure all legislative and policy responses are informed by research and developed in consultation with survivors, social media experts, and anti-slavery stakeholders.

Recommendations for social media

1. Develop and publish clear and specific policies to detect, prevent, and remedy modern slavery risks across the entire value chain, including their social media platforms.

2. Conduct due diligence, including implementing and reporting on measures to systematically detect modern slavery on their platforms. These efforts should include dedicated monitoring for indicators of modern slavery, as well as mechanisms for users to report modern slavery and for local support providers to reach at-risk users safely and securely.[46]

3. Provide effective remediation for incidents that occur on their platforms through removing violating content and accounts, transparent reporting on content moderation, cooperating with law enforcement (while safeguarding privacy and human rights), and referring affected persons to support services.

4. Actively prevent modern slavery risks on social media through verifying recruitment advertisements and social media business pages, targeting awareness-raising on risks, promoting anti-slavery hotlines,[47] providing identity verification options for all users, and requiring compulsory modern slavery training for product and third-party software developers.

5. Engage in industry collaborations to lift industry standards for preventing, identifying, and mitigating modern slavery risks. These collaborations must involve consultation with survivors and anti-slavery experts.

Guardians and offenders: Examining state-imposed forced labour



Birlik, Uzbekistan, October 2021.

An Uzbek man hauls cotton buds through a plantation. After decades of systemic forced labour, the government in Uzbekistan successfully eradicated this widespread abuse from the annual cotton harvest in 2021. Photo credit: Vyacheslav Oseledko/AFP via Getty Images.

In 2021, an estimated 3.9 million people were forced to work by state authorities.[1] It is among the most egregious forms of modern slavery as it involves states not only failing in their duty to safeguard human rights,[2] but actively using their power to perpetrate abuse.

While international conventions recognise that states have the power to compel citizens to work, this is limited to specific circumstances; for example, compulsory military service or obligatory work or service for citizens in emergency situations such as famine and natural disaster. A state exceeds these limits when it compels citizens to work as a punishment for expressing or acting on political views, or for the purpose of economic development, or as a means of racial, ethnic, social, or religious discrimination.

State-imposed forced labour can be categorised into three major types: abuse of compulsory prison labour, abuse of conscription, and forced labour for economic development (Figure 8). Abuse of compulsory prison labour accounts for over half (56 percent) of all state-imposed forced labour.

Our assessment of government responses to modern slavery found evidence of all forms of state-imposed forced labour across 17 countries. While most governments have taken some action to end modern slavery, these responses vary widely (Figure 9). All these actions are fundamentally undermined by the practice of state-imposed forced labour.

Abuse of compulsory prison labour

Abuse of compulsory prison labour includes compulsory labour for those convicted of a non-violent political offence, participating in non-violent strikes, breaches of labour discipline, or as a means of discrimination. It also includes compulsory labour in administrative detention and abuse of prison labour for private interests. Reports indicate that state-imposed forced labour occurs in public and private prisons around the world, including Brazil,[3] China,[4] North Korea,[5] Poland,[6] Russia,[7] Turkmenistan,[8] the United States,[9] Viet Nam,[10] and Zimbabwe.[11] It also occurs in migrant detention centres in Libya,[12] re-education camps in China,[13] administrative detention camps in North Korea,[14] and in medical labour centres in Belarus[15] and Viet Nam,[16] in which citizens struggling with drug addiction are forced to work as part of their recovery.

The US has both the resources and longstanding political will to lead the fight against modern slavery, receiving the fifth highest government response score globally. However, these positive actions are belied by laws that allow state-imposed forced labour to occur. Under the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution: Abolition of Slavery (1865), a sentence of involuntary servitude can still be handed down for an offence.[17] Prisoners are summarily excluded from the scope of labour law protections — including those that prohibit forced labour — given that compulsory prison labour is considered a legal punishment rather than an economic activity.[18] While international law permits compulsory prison labour under certain conditions, it cannot be used for the benefit of private parties, unless additional requirements are met.[19] Detainees in US private prisons, including pre-trial detainees, allege that they have been forced to work without pay under the threat of punishment.[20]

While noting a lack of recent and available data in some countries such as China and North Korea, the US has the world's largest rate of imprisonment, therefore the risk of state-imposed forced labour is particularly concerning.[21] The burden of risk is disproportionately borne by people of colour, who are overrepresented among US

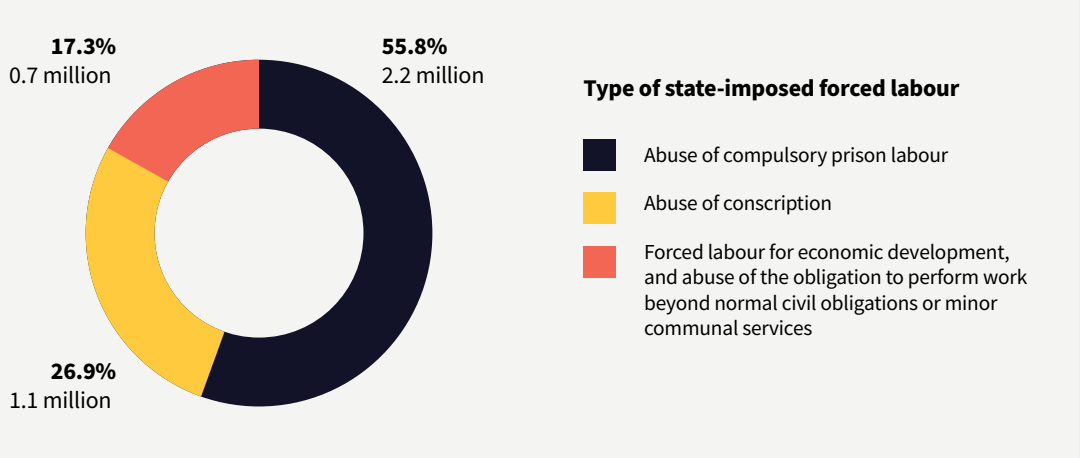


Figure 8
Types of state-imposed forced labour

prison populations, in part due to over-policing and historical mass criminalisation of their communities.[22] This is particularly true for black men living in the US, who in 2020 were 5.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than white men.[23] The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has urged the government to take steps to ensure prison sentences involving compulsory labour are not disproportionately issued due to racial discrimination in the criminal justice process.[24] In December 2020, a joint resolution was introduced in the US Congress to amend the Constitution and prohibit involuntary servitude from being used to punish offenders.[25]

"... I had to work. You don't get days off. You don't get to have sick days. And if I didn't go to work, it was a rule violation."

Dominique Morgan, a former inmate of Omaha Correctional Center, US, 2020[26]

Abuse of conscription

Conscription constitutes state-imposed forced labour where conscripts are forced to perform work of a non-military nature.[27] Abuse of conscription is evident in Egypt,[28] Eritrea,[29] Mali,[30] and Mongolia.[31] In 2022, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea reported that the Eritrean national service systematically subjects conscripts to forced labour.[32] This followed a 2015 investigation by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, which found that the national service effectively served to "abuse, exploit and enslave" citizens.[33] Forced labour in the national service is reported in the construction of roads, dams, and mines,[34] teaching,[35] and other sectors. Young people in their final year of secondary school are forced to combine exam preparation and military training at the Sawa military camp, with many also made to perform agricultural work on surrounding farms owned by government and military officials,[36] and are later conscripted directly into the national service.[37] In addition to intensive forced labour, conscripts receive harsh punishments and abuse, with females also experiencing sexual violence and harassment.[38] Eritreans who flee to evade forced conscription, including unaccompanied children,[39] face heightened vulnerability to modern slavery along dangerous migration routes[40] in addition to the threat of detention, torture, and extrajudicial killing if they are caught.[41]

"Although some conscripts perform purely military roles in the army, most draftees are assigned to work in civilian administration, infrastructure projects, education and construction and perform other duties, without any free choice about the area of their employment."

Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, 2021[42]

Compulsory labour for the purpose of economic development, and abuse of the obligation to perform work beyond normal civic obligations or minor communal services

States may perpetrate forced labour through abuse of the obligation to perform work beyond normal civic duties. This is reported in Myanmar, for example, where members of Chin and Rakhine ethnic groups report being forced to work by military forces (*Tatmadaw*) as labourers and porters.[43] In 2019, four villages in Chin state were required to supply one worker per family to transport food rations for the military.[44] Rohingya were also reportedly forced to construct security camps for the Tatmadaw under inhumane conditions and the threat of violence.[45] In 2020, disturbing evidence emerged of children being forced by the Tatmadaw to clear landmines and work in portering, with some children reportedly used as human shields.[46]

Compulsory labour is also exacted by state authorities for the purpose of economic development. In Turkmenistan, workers and students are forced to participate in the annual cotton harvest, which runs from September to November, for little or no compensation or under the threat of punishment.[47] Public sector workers including doctors and teachers are enlisted to pick cotton, or are made to send others in their place.[48] The private sector may also be required to supply workers, while vulnerable groups such as migrants and students are also forced to work.[49] An estimated 198,000 metric tonnes of cotton are produced in Turkmenistan per year, making cotton the fourth most valuable export for the government.[50] The cotton — and the state-imposed forced labour through which it is harvested — enters the global

market through complex supply chains.[51] Activists such as the Cotton Campaign are increasing pressure on the government to reform this system and call on other governments to adopt robust import controls and businesses to avoiding sourcing Turkmen cotton.[52]

In Rwanda, compulsory labour is present in *Umuganda*, a national community service that takes place once every month.[53] While *Umuganda* is widely believed to benefit the community,[54] the practice is compulsory for those age 18 to 65 years and failure to participate may result in a fine or other penalty under Law No. 53/2007 Establishing Community Works in Rwanda.[55] While the prescription of fines in practice is unclear, the law establishes a threat of penalty for non-participation. In 2021, CEACR requested that the Rwandan government ensure community works are limited to "minor services" in line with international standards.[56]

While there is much progress yet to be made, there were significant positive developments since 2018. In Uzbekistan, following years of collaboration with the ILO and civil society,[57] a global boycott of Uzbek cotton,[58] and a commitment from the government to end its use of forced labour in the annual cotton harvest,[59] independent civil society monitoring by the Uzbek Forum for Human Rights found that no forced labour was imposed by the central government in 2021.[60] In 2022 however, the Forum reported that despite firm political will to prevent forced labour, risks persist in the tightly controlled cotton harvest due to pressure to meet production targets.[61] Continued engagement is needed to create an enabling environment for labour rights by strengthening civic participation and protections for freedom of association and expression.[62]

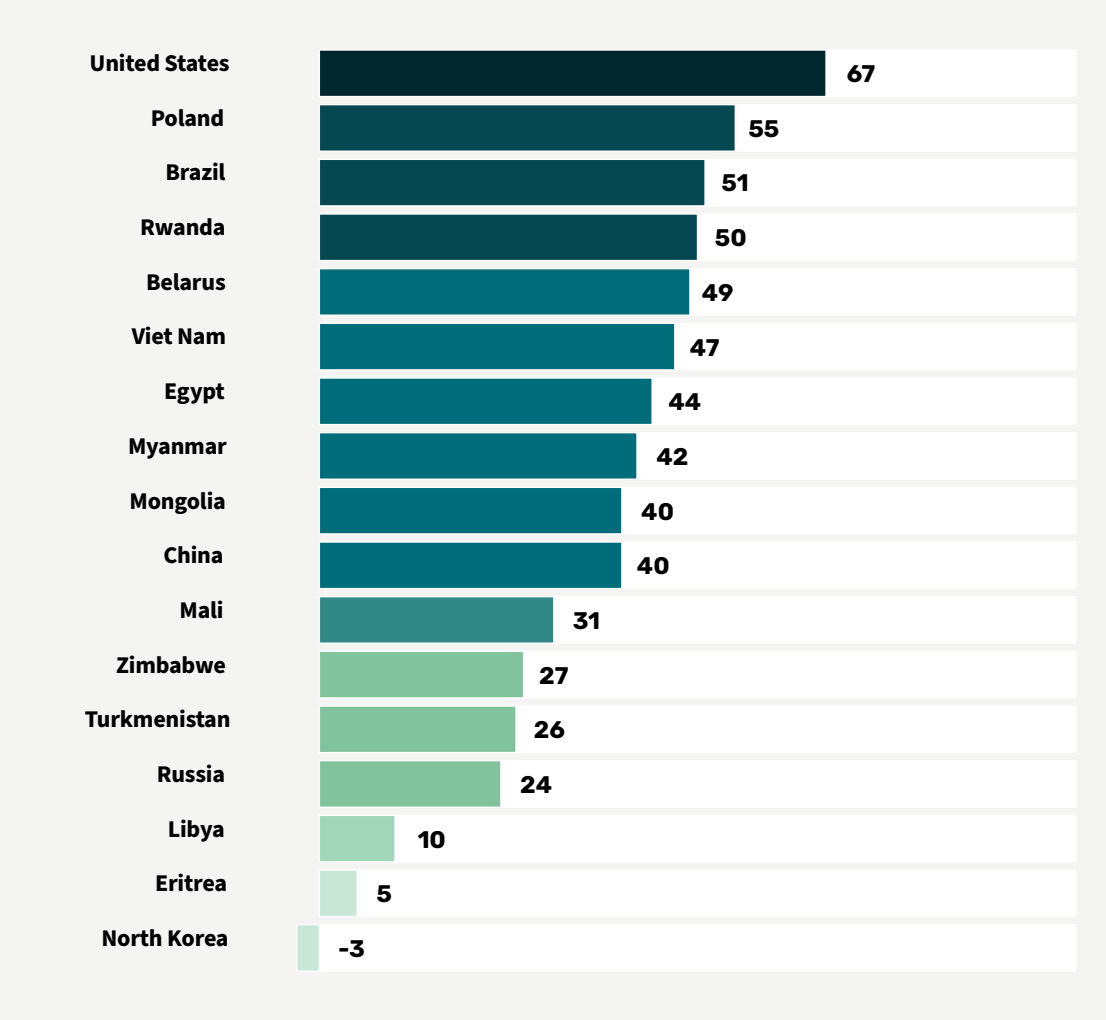
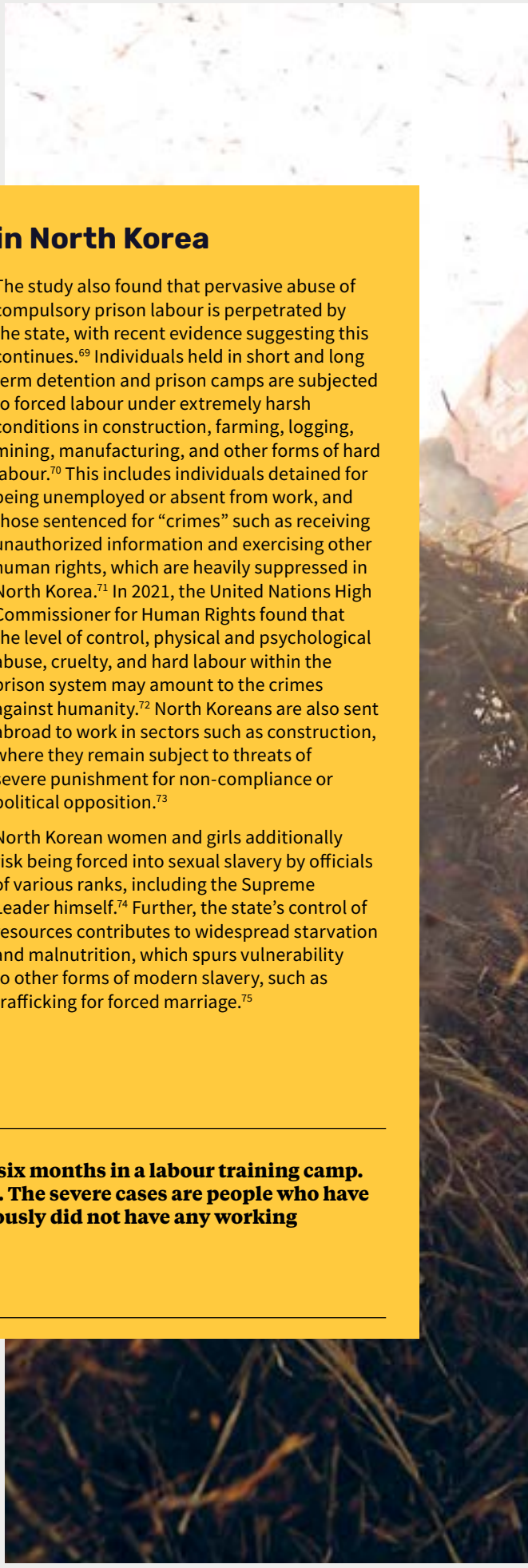


Figure 9
Government response scores among countries with reports of state-imposed forced labour (per cent) (higher score reflects stronger response)



State-imposed forced labour in North Korea

North Korea's ostensibly socialist system is upheld by widespread state-imposed forced labour of citizens.[63] Under the authoritarian rule of the Supreme Leader, work is centrally organised and the nature of employment is determined by an archaic social class structure that facilitates forced labour.[64] Forced labour is used as a punishment for expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system. It is also used as a method of mobilising labour for the purpose of economic development and as a means of labour discipline.

In 2017, Walk Free and the Leiden Asia Centre interviewed 50 defectors to better understand the reality of modern slavery in North Korea. The study found evidence of forced labour for economic development and abuse of the obligation to perform work beyond normal civic obligations or minor communal services. According to the study, adults and children are forced to work in mandatory, unpaid communal labour, including in agriculture, road building, and construction.[65] For children, this may involve daily or month-long agricultural work under the threat of punishment at school, while adults may be mobilised for "battles" lasting up to 100 days.[66] Those who refuse face deprivation of food rations or further taxes, and bribery is the only escape.[67] Among the general population, workers are paid in rations, if at all, and in many cases workers report paying for their own employment to avoid imprisonment in labour camps, while also trading labour on the black market to survive.[68]

The study also found that pervasive abuse of compulsory prison labour is perpetrated by the state, with recent evidence suggesting this continues.[69] Individuals held in short and long term detention and prison camps are subjected to forced labour under extremely harsh conditions in construction, farming, logging, mining, manufacturing, and other forms of hard labour.[70] This includes individuals detained for being unemployed or absent from work, and those sentenced for "crimes" such as receiving unauthorized information and exercising other human rights, which are heavily suppressed in North Korea.[71] In 2021, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights found that the level of control, physical and psychological abuse, cruelty, and hard labour within the prison system may amount to the crimes against humanity.[72] North Koreans are also sent abroad to work in sectors such as construction, where they remain subject to threats of severe punishment for non-compliance or political opposition.[73]

North Korean women and girls additionally risk being forced into sexual slavery by officials of various ranks, including the Supreme Leader himself.[74] Further, the state's control of resources contributes to widespread starvation and malnutrition, which spurs vulnerability to other forms of modern slavery, such as trafficking for forced marriage.[75]

"The punishment for being unemployed was six months in a labour training camp. In more severe cases, it was one to three years. The severe cases are people who have never worked. Those are people who continuously did not have any working experience and stayed only at home."

Lea, a North Korean defector forced to work by the state



Pyongyang, North Korea, January 2020.

Men work on farmland during the year's first "Friday labour" program, under which while-collar workers are made to undertake physical labour every Friday. Photo credit: Kyodo News via Getty Images.

STATE IMPOSED LABOUR



Akto, Xinjiang Province, China, June 2019.

Vehicles pass through a checkpoint on a road near a facility believed to be a government re-education camp detaining Uyghur peoples. Various reports allege that Uyghurs, and other Muslim ethnic groups, are forcibly held in a network of internment camps in the province, where they reportedly face abuses including forced labour. The government claims the facilities are simply "vocational education centres" to steer people away from extremism. Photo credit: Greg Baker/AFP via Getty Images.



State-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups

State-imposed forced labour can be used as a means of racial, social, national, and religious discrimination, political coercion and education, and as punishment for expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social, or economic system.[76] Since the 2018 Global Slavery Index, there has been a growing body of evidence of state-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Uyghur region) of China.[77] Abuse of compulsory prison labour and forced labour for economic development forms part of a wider, decades-long campaign to exercise control of Uyghurs.[78] State-imposed forced labour reportedly occurs alongside political indoctrination, religious oppression, mass surveillance, forced separation of families, forced sterilisation, sexual violence, and arbitrary detention in so-called "re-education camps" within the Uyghur region.[79] Several governments have stated that China's treatment of Uyghurs amounts to genocide.[80]

Under the guise of poverty alleviation and vocational training,[81] state-imposed forced labour is reported in cotton picking[82] and the production of textiles, garments,[83] electronics,[84] polyvinyl chloride (PVC),[85] and other goods.[86] An estimated 45 per cent of the world's solar-grade polysilicon (a critical component in solar panels) is manufactured in the Uyghur region and is therefore at high risk of being produced with forced labour.[87] While globally there has been a shift towards renewable energy to meet sustainability targets,[88] the use of state-imposed forced labour prevents a just transition to protect both planet and people.

Reports indicate that forced labour also occurs through the transfer of rural populations to work in farms and factories, as well as the involuntary placement of detainees and ex-detainees in factories located inside or near "re-education camps" in the Uyghur region and in factories across China.[89] For example, a 2020 report identified 27 Chinese factories across nine provinces that had used forced labour of Uyghurs since 2017.[90] State-imposed forced labour has been linked to factories supplying large global brands and is reportedly fuelled by political and financial incentives for local governments and businesses to participate.[91] Those in forced labour face threats of arbitrary detention as well as physical barriers to escape.[92] Similar patterns of abuse are evident in the Tibet Autonomous Region as a means of religious discrimination against and political indoctrination of Tibetans.[93]

State-imposed forced labour is also reported in the prison system administered by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), an economic and paramilitary organisation that exercises administrative authority in several parts of the Uyghur region.[94] The XPCC operates several farms, factories, and enterprises out of its prisons that produce coal, cotton, textiles, chemicals, plastics, and other products using forced labour of Uyghurs.[95] Han Chinese imprisoned within the XPCC system are also reportedly subject to forced labour.[96]

The Chinese Communist Party denies the use of forced labour in its factories, and state-controlled media claims that participation is voluntary.[97] However, state-imposed forced labour in China has received heightened attention in recent years, with calls for all companies to restrict sourcing from the Uyghur region as it has become impossible to operate in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).[98] The European Union and several countries have introduced sanctions and measures such as divestment in response to the abuse.[99] In the United States, specific legislative measures have been adopted to prevent the import of goods made with state-imposed forced labour in the Uyghur region.[100]

"I was sent to the factory, a kind of sweatshop, I suppose, making gloves. … The products were exported abroad, we were told, and sold to foreigners. You made some money, but if you stopped working, they sent you back to the camp. So, there wasn't much of a choice."

Gulzire Auelkhan, Khazakh woman in forced labour in the Uyghur region, China, 2019[101]

Tainted supply chains

State-imposed forced labour may seem like an issue contained within national borders, yet many products associated with forms of state-imposed forced labour end up in global supply chains, with implications for governments, businesses, and consumers around the world. During the pandemic, for example, personal protective equipment (PPE) at risk of being produced using forced labour of Uyghurs was reportedly imported to Australia[102] and the United Kingdom,[103] and PPE produced using forced labour of North Korean women in China was reportedly procured by the UK government.[104]

Businesses that profit from state-imposed forced labour are increasingly exposed to associated legal, financial, and reputational risks.[105] As noted above, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in February 2020 that a mining company could be prosecuted in Canada for using the forced labour of conscripts at their mine in Eritrea.[106] A confidential settlement was reached following the decision.[107] At the time of writing, other legal actions are underway in Germany, the Netherlands, and France against companies that allegedly used state-imposed forced labour in their supply chains.[108]

State-imposed forced labour is arguably the most challenging form of modern slavery to address. Ending abuses by the state against the very citizens it is entrusted to protect requires strong political commitment. While governments imposing forced labour must ultimately take action to reform the systems that enable their abuse, the reality is that change is most likely to arise from sustained external pressure from other governments, businesses, and civil society.



Hebei, China, October 2021.

A farmer tends his sheep near solar panels installed on a hillside. Modern slavery risks permeate the supply chains of renewable energy products like solar panels and wind turbines. Photo credit: Greg Baker/ AFP via Getty Images.

Recommendations for governments

1. Governments committing state-imposed forced labour must immediately publicly acknowledge the existence of serious human rights violations that are tantamount to state-imposed forced labour and take actions to end it. This must include addressing underlying persecution and discrimination driving state-imposed forced labour practices and repealing legislation and criminalising practices that allow state-imposed forced labour to occur.

Other governments must prioritise human rights and take action, including:

1. Leverage bilateral relations, trade, and other diplomatic measures to pressure perpetrators of state-imposed forced labour to eradicate the practice, including introducing Magnitsky-style and other coordinated sanctions.
2. Strengthen public procurement systems to prevent sourcing goods made with state-imposed forced labour and ban companies from tendering if they are connected to state-imposed forced labour.
3. Introduce legislation requiring businesses to conduct mandatory human rights due diligence to avoid sourcing goods made with state-imposed forced labour, banning import of goods made with state-imposed forced labour, and prohibiting the export of goods to companies using state-imposed forced labour.
4. Introduce restrictions on investments connected to state-imposed labour.

Recommendations for business

1. Where state-imposed forced labour exists in a country, region, industry, or company and if operating in line with the UN Guiding Principles has become impossible (for example, conducting due diligence or providing effective remediation), withdraw from sourcing goods and services from that country, region, industry, or company as necessary.
2. Avoid investing in companies connected to state-imposed forced labour, for example, private equity investments that might contribute, or listed equity investments that might be directly linked, to state-imposed forced labour.

CONFLICT

Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war



Gumuruk, South Sudan, June 2021.

A woman from Murle ethnic group stands near her burnt tea shop after an attack on her village by an armed youth group. In the wake of conflict, thousands have been displaced in South Sudan, which has deepened humanitarian needs in a country already dealing with famine. Photo credit: Simon Wohlfahrt/AFP via Getty Images.

Each year, people living in warzones and those fleeing them are subjected to horrific violence and abuse. For children, the elderly, and everyone in between, sexual and gender-based violence, psychological trauma, torture, family separation and disappearance,[1] recruitment and use by armed groups, abductions and kidnapping for ransom, forced marriage, forced labour, starvation, and being left for dead,[2] are a daily risk. Perpetrators range from the organised to the opportunistic, including smugglers, traffickers, parties to the conflict, community members, and sometimes state actors.

While protracted conflict is a known risk multiplier, our understanding of the intersection between conflict and modern slavery is beginning to grow more nuanced. In the immediate aftermath of crises, including the outbreak of conflict, where governments and systems break down, we may see a temporary suspension of modern slavery and related crimes.[3] However, as conflict becomes more protracted, large-scale disruption increases the risk of forced labour and forced marriage. This complexity is evidenced in Ukraine. There has not been an increase in the number of trafficked persons identified largely due to a proactive early warning system, and, unlike many communities who experience conflict, refugees from Ukraine have been largely welcomed into their host communities. Even here, however, there is a need for the international community to stay vigilant due to concerns of under-reporting and ongoing challenges associated with the conflict (see case study on Ukraine in the European and Central Asia regional section). There is a need for more data to truly understand the intersection of conflict and modern slavery in both acute and protracted settings.[4]

In protracted situations, people struggle to provide for their basic needs or to safely seek protection[5] as conflict damages infrastructure and disrupts services.[6] At the same time, the breakdown in the rule of law enables perpetrators to act with impunity.[7] Parties involved in conflict may recruit children into their ranks, forcibly marry women and girls to their members, or force civilians to perform labour or sexual services.[8] Those who try to flee conflict-affected areas may be targeted by traffickers at any point on their journey.[9] The countries with protracted conflicts have some of the highest overall vulnerability to modern slavery, and relatedly, a high prevalence of modern slavery. These countries include Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Pakistan, Iraq, Central African Republic, Sudan, and Libya.

Women and children are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery in conflict.[10] High levels of displacement following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to concerns that predators masking as volunteers were targeting vulnerable Ukrainian refugees, particularly women and children, in border towns.[11] Ukrainian women have been targeted for exploitation,[12] including cases of deceptive offers of work abroad that result in sexual exploitation.[13] In Afghanistan, the erosion of women's rights following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul compounds vulnerabilities to modern slavery, including forced marriage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labour.[14] Under the laws of the Caliphate established by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014, 6,000 Yazidi women and children were captured, forcibly converted, and subjected to domestic servitude and forced marriage.[15] Many are allegedly still enslaved in Iraq, Syria, and Türkiye,[16] or held captive in ISIS widow camps, such as the al-Hawl detention camp in north-eastern Syria.[17] The ways in which children and adolescents are vulnerable to modern slavery also manifest differently depending on gender. While girls are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, or forced marriage, boys are typically at risk of forced labour, forced begging, or of being used in combat or support roles by armed groups or forces.[18]

Although conflict and forced displacement are known to exacerbate vulnerabilities to modern slavery,[19] there is little data on the scale of modern slavery among displaced populations. To address this evidence gap, Walk Free, together with the ILO and IOM, set out to measure the prevalence of certain forms of modern slavery among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in three countries facing protracted conflict and widespread displacement: South Sudan, Nigeria, and the DRC. Surveys on experiences of modern slavery and related abuses were conducted among IDPs residing in displacement sites in North Kivu province in the DRC, South Sudan, and Northeast Nigeria.[20] These surveys captured experiences before and after displacement.

The results indicated that not only were modern slavery and related abuses prevalent among the IDPs surveyed, but they were inherently linked to conflict. One in five IDPs surveyed in North Kivu experienced either forced labour, forced recruitment, or abduction in the preceding five

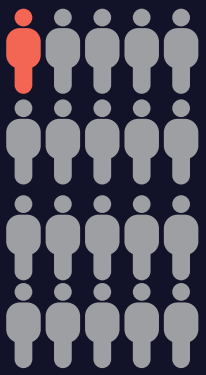
IDPS AND MODERN SLAVERY

IDPs who experienced forced labour, recruitment and abductions

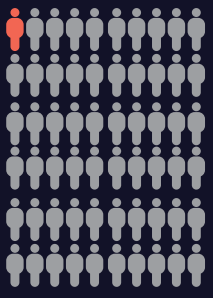
NORTH KIVU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
1 IN 5*



SOUTH SUDAN
1 in 20



NORTH EAST NIGERIA
1 in 60



*Among the sample of IDPs in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

years. In South Sudan, an estimated one in 20 IDPs experienced at least one of these slavery-related abuses, and an estimated one in 60 IDPs in Northeast Nigeria. In all three settings, perpetrators were most often members of the armed groups or armed forces who deliberately exploited displaced populations to further their operations.[21] In South Sudan and North Kivu, most forced labour activities (63 per cent and 75 per cent respectively) directly supported armed groups and armed forces, including through fighting, military service, or providing support services such as portering or spying.[22] Armed groups also use modern slavery and related abuses as weapons in conflict. In Northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram and its factions have recruited thousands of children to undertake support roles or engage in violence, including suicide attacks. The group has also abducted girls to be forcibly married or provide sexual services to its members.[23]

"On four occasions I was taken to clear the forest next to the military soldier's houses and to build their huts. We could not refuse because we would be whipped to death."

Respondent, DRC, 2017

In conflict situations, IDPs are at risk of modern slavery following their displacement, including at displacement sites. For instance, in North Kivu, half of respondents who reported forced labour were living in a displacement site when the forced labour began. Similarly in South Sudan, more than half of forced recruitment cases, 61 per cent of abductions, and 21 per cent of forced labour cases occurred after displacement.[24] Though sufficient data was not available for Northeast Nigeria, similar experiences are likely.[25] The need for urgent action to address the vulnerabilities inherent in forced displacement is increasingly apparent as understanding of modern slavery in conflict settings grows,[26] and the number of IDPs displaced due to conflict and violence increases.[27]

No safe path: Perspectives from a former child soldier

James*, 17, is the eldest of three brothers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their father died and their mother worked in the fields to support their family. One day, James was walking home from school with three friends from his village when he heard someone calling his name. As they crossed the fruit plantation, a boy of about 10 years old suddenly appeared. He amused James by telling him stories and asking strange questions, so James told his friends to go ahead. Then, everything changed.

"...four armed men appeared and forced me to go with them, knocking me about and striking me with a whip. That is how I found myself recruited into an armed group."

While held by the armed group, James was forced to learn their ideology and received training in military intelligence, armed robbery, weapons, livestock theft, and intimidation methods for robbing people on the road or in the fields or abducting them. He was forced to perform many jobs, starting as a cook before being promoted to bodyguard of the camp commander, and was eventually made to lead operations on a national road. He was sometimes sent with other children to support joint operations with different armed groups.

"There were times when I cried, especially when I thought about my mother and my two brothers, but I couldn't leave the bush because all the paths out were watched by members of the armed group. They also kept a watch on me."

One day, during an operation to steal livestock, James seized his opportunity to escape. He left his weapon on the roadside and reported to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who took him to Uvira where the International Committee of the Red Cross helped him to find his family.

James was happy to be reunited with his mother. He received assistance from an NGO to start his own hairdressing salon, which now enables him to support himself and his mother. He is starting to think about having his own family.

"I think the armed groups should lay down their arms and stop recruiting children because it's not right."

James shared his story for the 2019 International Review of the Red Cross, which features the experiences of former child soldiers recruited in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, their difficulties, and hopes for a new life.[28]

**Not his real name*

Responses to modern slavery in conflict settings

Much more needs to be done to prevent modern slavery in conflict-affected areas and to protect those fleeing warzones. Significant gaps remain in the humanitarian response and in peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts to ensure adequate support to at-risk persons; in fact, humanitarians and peace actors are often denied access.[29]

To address this gap, Walk Free supported the development of the Global Protection Cluster's 2020 Guidance to support Protection Clusters to detect, identify, refer, protect, and assist trafficked persons in internal displacement settings.[30] Following dissemination of the guidance and the training of humanitarian protection actors, Protection Clusters are increasingly reporting risks of modern slavery and related crimes — abduction, sexual and gender-based violence, recruitment and use of children by armed groups, forced labour, and child and forced marriage — in the areas where they are carrying out their work.[31]

Despite this, there remains limited data about what works to tackle modern slavery in times of conflict. Systematic reviews have found few peer-reviewed studies exploring the connection between humanitarian disasters and modern slavery[32] and even fewer that have made subsequent policy recommendations.

Responding to specific forms of modern slavery in conflict settings requires equally tailored programming. To date, the evaluations[33] of programs providing support to former child soldiers[34] highlight that traditional disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programs are not enough to successfully reintegrate child soldiers into their communities. These evaluations emphasise the significance of community-based interventions, non-formal education, and apprenticeships for affected children, in addition to support for host communities.[35] Likewise, responding to child and forced marriage requires gender and age-sensitive approaches, and in the context of humanitarian settings, should be introduced at the early stages of the crisis.[36] An analysis of lessons learned emphasises the importance of enhancing the agency of girls, promoting access to support and referral services, empowering girls through education, coordination among relevant actors, and long-term community engagement.[37]

There is a need for increased action to prevent modern slavery in conflict settings and protect victims and survivors.[38] This will require better coordination among humanitarian actors, those working in protection and the anti-slavery sector. Addressing this complex crime within equally complex contexts requires concerted action.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Support the integration of anti-slavery action into humanitarian and peacebuilding responses, including humanitarian response plans, action plans to address grave violations against children in armed conflict, Women, Peace and Security agendas, and transition measures for peacebuilding and peacekeeping.[39]**

2. **Work with humanitarian actors to raise awareness of modern slavery among populations at high risk of displacement. Ensure that needs-based, protection-specific assistance is provided in areas of high displacement, which includes facilitating access to livelihood opportunities, education, medical services, and legal counsel.**

3. **Activate safe referral and incident reporting mechanisms in humanitarian settings. Ensure frontline humanitarian and peacebuilding actors are trained on modern slavery concepts and responses, particularly how to identify and refer cases of exploitation to support services.[40]**

4. **Ensure effective access to international protection and family reunification for those affected by conflict and expand resettlement and planned relocation opportunities.**

5. **Take urgent action to address the drivers of conflict by reducing gender-based discrimination and violence, improving women's access to social and economic opportunities, reducing poverty, combating climate change, and taking measures to address community violence based on religious, ethnic, racial, or other statuses.**

The costs of the climate crisis

anti-slavery X WALK FREE



K'elafo, Ethiopia, January 2023.

Ethiopia, along with Somalia and Kenya, has sustained its worst drought in the last four decades due to failed rainy seasons. The UN estimates that drought has led to 12 million Ethiopians experiencing acute food insecurity. Coupled with an ongoing conflict in the north, in Tigray, risks of exploitation have risen. Photo credit: Eduardo Soteras/AFP via Getty Images.

Compounding crises serve to heighten the risks of all forms of modern slavery. The COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate change have led to unprecedented disruption in employment and education, as well as increases in inequalities, distress migration, and reports of gender-based violence and forced marriage.[1]

Climate change intersects with modern slavery in multiple ways. The impact of climate change hits hardest those who are already in precarious situations, such as women, children, indigenous people, and members of marginalised communities, increasing their vulnerability to modern slavery. Its effects may push people to migrate and magnify drivers of displacement such as loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, and a lack of access to water and other natural resources.[2] Migration in these contexts can be unplanned, with people lacking the resources they need to move safely. The greater precariousness that is generated out of these situations exposes populations to higher risks of modern slavery.[3]

Modern slavery is also linked to environmentally degrading industries with high climate change impacts. Forced labour is pervasive in key industries that are driving deforestation around the world.[4] Conversely, there is increasing evidence that renewable industries vital to our urgent transition to clean energy are also reliant on forced labour for the mining, processing, and manufacturing of critical minerals and inputs.[5]

Yet modern slavery is seldom mentioned in the intensifying debate over how to protect the world's most vulnerable people from climate change while accelerating the global transition to clean energy. As a global community, we must give more focus to these issues to ensure that we understand the different ways climate change is driving modern slavery and how at-risk and affected communities can be brought into the process of designing better solutions.

Anti-Slavery International is the world's oldest human rights campaign, founded in 1839. It exists to challenge contemporary forms of slavery wherever they exist by tackling slavery's root causes. Working in partnership with survivors, experts and its members, Anti-Slavery International manages projects in countries worldwide to help communities to understand and eliminate the causes and adverse effects of modern slavery, through legislative change, research and advocacy. Anti-Slavery International is a UK-registered charity (No. 1049160) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 3079904).

For more information
visit https://antislavery.org.

The intersection between modern slavery, climate change, and migration

In recent years, the negative effects of climate change have forced millions of people to leave their homes and move elsewhere. People on the move, a group already vulnerable to severe exploitation[6] are at particular risk when moving in the context of climate change. This is because they are likely migrating as their livelihood and survival opportunities at home are severely threatened or have ceased to exist. In these circumstances, migration takes place "in distress," meaning in a situation of severe need and precariousness. As a result, people become more vulnerable to forced labour as they are already lacking adequate livelihood options and may be more easily tricked into accepting risky opportunities for survival. Overall, research by Anti-Slavery International and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) demonstrates that "climate change acts as a stress multiplier to factors driving modern slavery."[7]

Governments are failing to respond to the challenges that migration in these circumstances poses to individuals. The latest summary report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),[8] the United Nations expert body providing scientific evidence on climate change, suggests that severe climate events are pushing people to migrate in most of the world's regions. People are moving across borders as well as within their country's national boundaries. In 2021, climate-related disasters led to the displacement of nearly 24 million people globally. Most were attributed to rapid-onset weather-related events such as storms, floods, wildfires, droughts, landslides, and extreme temperatures.[9] The World Bank highlights that unless urgent climate action is taken soon, then by 2050 more than 200 million people will have moved within their country's borders as a result of climate change.[10]

How do climate change events push people to migrate?

While climate change is rarely the only reason people migrate, migration can be a response to either slow or rapid onset climate events, and sometimes both.

Rapid onset events

Rapid onset events, such as floods or hurricanes, are events that destroy livelihood opportunities and households resources suddenly. In these instances, climate events push people into sudden or heightened situations of need to earn an income, thereby leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers and other criminal organisations.

For example, modern slavery risks dramatically increased in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Rai, which hit the Philippines in December 2021 and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.[11] The typhoon caused widespread damage in the agricultural sector and decimated the livelihoods that depended on it, exacerbating vulnerabilities particularly for indigenous populations.[12] Risks of violence and exploitation were also identified among women and girls,[13] who are disproportionately vulnerable in the face of the climate crisis.[14] In Bangladesh, an increased risk of early marriage among girls from impoverished families has been attributed to extreme weather events. The practice is seen as a means of alleviating economic pressure and providing protection from the heightened risk of sexual violence during crises.[15]

Leaving to survive, fighting to return: the impact of climate change

In 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Typhoon Yolanda, struck the Philippines, destroying millions of homes and livelihoods, killing more than 6,000 people, and leaving many more displaced. Luwalhati*, who is 31 years old, and her family were among those who survived; however, the aftermath of the disaster left them in poverty and Luwalhati was forced to seek work abroad to support her ailing mother and two younger brothers in Tacloban City.

She met a local recruiter who offered her a well-paid position in a factory overseas, promising all her expenses would be covered as well. Yet after arriving in Manila for training, Luwalhati was forced to work in a house there without pay. The man who later accompanied her to obtain her passport instructed her to apply with the name written in the papers she was holding if she wanted to go abroad, otherwise she should go back home at her own expense.

"How can I go back to Tacloban? I do not have the money...My family is hoping that I will be able to help them cope from what the typhoon had left us."

Luwalhati left the Philippines for Thailand holding a tourist visa. From there, she travelled to Dubai. After working in Dubai for some time, she was sold as a domestic worker to an employer in Kuwait, a country she had never even heard of. Upon arrival, her passport was confiscated and she was left feeling confused, depressed, and isolated.

She was forced to work for 12 to 15 hours a day and her salary was often withheld if she made a mistake. Her employers did not allow her to talk to anyone nor leave the house, and she was physically abused by them. All she could do was stay strong for her family and not give up.

Luwalhati was forced to work in Kuwait for five years. Every time she disposed of the waste outside, a young Kuwaiti woman next door smiled at her. One day, the neighbour told her to contact an NGO on social media to help her. Luwalhati contacted them secretly and they helped her escape.

"I saw hope, for almost five years of not seeing my family. This was the chance for me to set myself free."

She was brought to the authorities, who helped her file a case and she was repatriated back to her country. At present, Luwalhati has set up a small store to support herself and family using the reintegration livelihood assistant program that the NGO helped her to acquire, while attending vocational education in Tacloban City.

**not her real name*

Slow-onset climate events

Slow-onset events, such as droughts and rising sea-levels, result in lands becoming increasingly inhospitable. In these instances, loss of livelihood opportunities and extreme climate conditions can push individuals to move elsewhere for survival. Under these circumstances, their need to earn income can lead them to accept risky, exploitative employment solutions and incur debts to finance their migration journeys, in turn pushing them into situations of debt-bondage.

While rapid-onset severe weather events or climate shocks typically receive greater attention due to the visibility of their impacts,[16] the nexus between slow-onset climate events, migration, and modern slavery should not be ignored.

A 2022 study of two climate-affected locations in India found a higher prevalence of trafficking among migrants from a district suffering from slow-onset events compared to a district experiencing rapid-onset events.[17] In Palamu district, increasing drought and frost in recent decades have damaged the sustainability of agriculture and forest resources, leading to higher unemployment and pushing community members to migrate in search of work. Meanwhile, in Kendrapara district, communities have been affected by cyclones, floods, sea water intrusion, and salinity. The study showed that 42 per cent of migrant households from Palamu had experienced trafficking in comparison to 16 per cent in Kendrapara, which could be partly explained by the nature of the climate events. A lack of support and social protection for communities facing slow-onset events exacerbated the vulnerabilities they already faced.[18] In both locations, caste and class-based discrimination is driving disparity of access to resources, exploitation, and land grabs, which contributes to leaving some groups at greater risk than others.

In the Horn of Africa, increases in the rate of child marriages in drought-affected areas have been linked to the impacts of the climate crisis, particularly economic and food insecurity, displacement from homes, and interrupted education for girls.[19] In families unable to cope with climate-induced food insecurity, girls are at greater risk of being sold into sex work or early marriage to ease the financial strain on the household,[20] sometimes through payment of bride price.[21]

In some cases, slow-onset climate change threatens the existence of entire nations, such as among the Pacific Island countries and territories, where environmental factors have been forcing people from their homes. In 2014, the entire town of Vunidogoloa in Fiji was permanently relocated by the government as a result of the impact of climate change,[22] including encroaching sea water, regular flooding, and soil erosion. In atoll countries – a ring or chain of islands formed by coral – such as Kiribati and Niue, permanent relocation as a coping strategy for climate change has been on the political agenda for more than a decade.[23] Across the Pacific Island countries, risks created by environmental hazards increase as intensifying weather events and rising sea levels lead to greater food and water insecurity, crop loss, loss of arable land, overcrowding, poor health and sanitation, and increased competition for limited jobs.[24] These conditions create opportunities for traffickers to exploit vulnerable individuals,[25] particularly where avenues for regular migration are not readily available.[26] Women and girls with limited land rights are particularly vulnerable in these situations because they already face discrimination and become at greater risk of exploitation, particularly forced commercial sexual exploitation.[27]

A vicious circle driven by extractive industries

Environmental degradation, often a side-effect of the economic activities of extractive industries such as mining and oil extraction, can similarly become a driver of migration that causes higher vulnerability to severe exploitation. In these cases, individuals can become trapped in a "vicious circle" where people flee their homelands due to environmental degradation caused by extractive practices, but end up working in these very same extractive industries, often experiencing exploitation. This is evidenced by Anti-Slavery International's research in Peru and Bolivia.[28]

Extractive industries not only continue to destroy the environment and exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change, fuelling migration from affected communities, but also heavily rely on the severe exploitation of people. Often, people who have lost their livelihoods are then left with no option other than accepting exploitative conditions to earn some income to feed their families.

Compounding vulnerabilities

Who is most vulnerable to these impacts?

The impacts of climate change, particularly on decisions to migrate and on heightened risks of modern slavery, are not felt equally. They hit much harder on people who already experience limited access to resources, representation, and participation in society, both in terms of the immediate impacts from climate-induced weather events and ongoing risks associated with migration and exposure to severe exploitation.

Further research conducted by IIED in two states in India suggests that lower caste households, such those of India's Dalits, who are significantly discriminated against, are three times more likely to migrate than higher caste households.[29] When inequalities, discrimination, and marginalisation exist, resilience to external shocks generated by the impact of climate change is low, precariousness increases, and so does vulnerability to modern slavery. Lack of inclusive access to support mechanisms often means that specific characteristics – such as a person's gender, age, or disability – creates further barriers to accessing support. This can increase vulnerability to severe exploitation.

When the negative impacts of climate change are combined with immobility, vulnerability to modern slavery can also be amplified as local resources and networks are eroded. Immobility can arise from lack of options to move elsewhere (such as due to lack of means) or from an unwillingness to migrate. Immobility is also found among already displaced people (who lack safe return options to their country of origin or access to resources) and in communities that hold a strong link with their ancestral lands.

What other factors can play a role?

Separately, other structural factors, such as conflict, persecution, or political instability, can combine with climate change and other drivers to push people to migrate in situations of precariousness and make them more vulnerable to modern slavery.[30]

The negative impacts of climate change can also be among the factors fuelling tensions between local populations, as basic resources become scarce and the arrival of new groups puts pressure on existing infrastructure.[31] This can create competition over resources and in turn increase social tension and conflict, resulting in heightened modern slavery risks. In Somalia, extreme weather disrupts access to water and increases food insecurity.[32] Simultaneously, internally displaced people seek refuge from conflict and droughts by fleeing to Mogadishu, thereby increasing the strain on host communities.[33] These factors have contributed to escalating tensions between clans and are among those which can lead to the proliferation of illegal armed groups, which in turn drive further displacement[34] and migration[35] while recruiting people affected by famine and food insecurity.[36] Extreme weather and climate-related resource scarcity are among the factors that have contributed to recruitment into non-state armed groups such as al-Shabaab,[37] Boko Haram,[38] and Islamic State,[39] which have been linked to modern slavery, including forced marriage[40] and the recruitment and use of children.[41]

Climate change can also exacerbate vulnerability in displaced settings. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, flooding and landslides during monsoon season destroyed thousands of shelters occupied by Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar, further increasing humanitarian needs in the camps.[42] For a group already vulnerable to exploitation, the impact of climate events is significant, with further spikes in exploitation linked to increasing scarcity of resources and precarious living conditions.

More widely, where conflict has weakened institutions or aggravated drivers such as economic and food insecurity, communities and governments may also find themselves struggling to cope with the adverse effects of climate change and unable to adequately support individuals at greater risk of modern slavery.[43]

"From South Sudan, to the Sahel, to the Dry Corridor in Central America, refugees, internally displaced and stateless people are often among the first to be affected by the climate emergency."

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021[44]

Exploitation's circular economy

In a separate, but related, issue to climate-induced migration, it is well-known that modern slavery is pervasive in some of the world's most environmentally- and climate-damaging industries. The charcoal, cattle, and palm oil industries are associated with forced labour, where workers in debt bondage are forced to clear forests; the illegality of this deforestation means that workers are unable to report such exploitative practices.[45] Moves to replace fossil fuels with biofuels, such as palm oil, have had unintended environmental and social impacts.[46] In Indonesia and Malaysia — the world's leading producers of palm oil — increased production has led to deforestation and loss of biodiversity[47] and has been linked to forced labour.[48]

Conversely, those industries most necessary for our urgent transition to clean energy are also sadly currently reliant on exploitation and forced labour. For example, risks have been identified throughout the solar energy value chain, from evidence of forced and child labour in cobalt artisanal mines

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo[49] to the production of polysilicon in the Uyghur region of China,[50] which evidence shows is reliant on systemic state-imposed forced labour of the Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim-majority groups.[51] The need to include just transition measures, such as ensuring decent work for all in the transition to a low-carbon economy, has been enshrined in international treaties on climate change such as the Paris Agreement[52] but has yet to be fully realised. With global temperatures almost inevitably set to continue rising,[53] government and business action to address both climate change and modern slavery — and its intersections with conflict, displacement, gender, and industry supply chains — are critical.

What are the solutions we need?

There are still significant gaps in our understanding of how climate change and modern slavery interact with one another in different contexts and what solutions we need to eradicate the risks. In fact, the exact manifestations of vulnerability to severe exploitation emerging from climate change impacts, including climate-induced migration, are highly context specific. For example, they change depending on the type of climate emergency and the existing structural and individual factors that can amplify the impacts of climate events, as well as on the degree of precariousness and need that individuals experience. While the problem is global, solutions need to be local and driven by those affected.

This also means that we need to better understand who is most affected and vulnerable in the context of climate-change, including climate-induced migration. To do so, practitioners and policymakers need to direct their focus to listening and understanding the experiences of those who are traditionally not represented in societies and who often are excluded in blanket approaches to climate responses. This includes groups that are highly dependent on natural resources, such as indigenous people and rural communities, but also communities that face multiple forms of discrimination.

As we learn more about the intersection of climate change and modern slavery, we need to define specific solutions to reduce vulnerabilities. Anti-Slavery International is investigating these elements and collating evidence that can inform the design of solutions that are effective and speak to the needs of the most vulnerable. Meanwhile, the global community should move forward swiftly on actions that can be taken now. Policymakers have a key a role to play in reducing the risk of modern slavery in the context of climate change. Responses must be people-focused, rights-centred and integrated. If we act quickly in response to the linked challenges posed by climate change and modern slavery, we can make real progress toward a more just and equal society that is free of exploitation.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Take decisive climate action to put a halt to the worsening of climate change and the negative effects it has on communities across the world. This includes making the necessary, science-based reductions in carbon emissions in accordance with internationally recognised timelines.**

2. **Design climate solutions with an intersectional and inclusive approach that takes into account human rights violations, including vulnerability to modern slavery.**

3. **Develop safer and more legal routes for migration, to increase protection from vulnerability to severe exploitation. This should include removing barriers that prevent migrants from seeking refuge[54] from the impacts of climate change. National policies should address the vulnerabilities to modern slavery of internal migrants, including by improving accessibility to social protection mechanisms.**

4. **Support local communities to become more resilient to climate events, through introducing risk management strategies, livelihood protection support, collective bargaining support, and social protection initiatives to ease pressure on households to adopt risky coping strategies amid climate-related displacement.[55]**

5. **Ensure that the transition to a carbon-free global economy provides decent work for all by addressing and preventing forced labour risks in the value chains of sustainable energy products.**

6. **Ensure that climate finance through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is allocated to addressing climate-induced vulnerability to modern slavery.[56]**

05





REGIONAL FINDINGS

Regional Overview 70

Africa 76

Frontline voices:
Modern slavery and the LGBTQI+ community **86**

The Americas 88

Frontline voices:
Black and Brown like me:
Racial roots of modern slavery **96**

Arab States 98

Spotlight: Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: Life under the *kafala* system **108**

Asia and The Pacific **116**

Frontline voices:
"I have no way out": Forced into marriage,
Afghan girls fear for their future **124**

Spotlight: Orphanages as modern slavery hubs **126**

Europe and Central Asia **130**

King City, California, April 2020.

Socially-distanced migrant farm labourers rest in their dormitory. Restrictions on movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with rising unemployment rates, poverty, and inequality across the United States, exposed vulnerable workers to greater risks of exploitation.
Photo credit: Brent Stirton via Getty Images

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery across the world's regions?

Globally, nearly one in every 150 people are in modern slavery. Modern slavery affects every region in the world. More than half the men, women, and children living in modern slavery globally are in the Asia and the Pacific region (29.3 million). However, when the size of regional populations is considered, prevalence of modern slavery is highest in the Arab States (10.1 per thousand people) (Figure 11). This is followed by Europe and Central Asia (6.9 per thousand), Asia and the Pacific (6.8 per thousand), Africa (5.2 per thousand), and the Americas (5 per thousand).

Although comparisons between regions are impacted by data gaps, particularly in countries experiencing profound and current conflict (see Appendix 2: Part A for a fuller discussion of limitations), interesting differences emerge when forced labour and forced marriage are considered separately. For forced labour, Arab States has the highest prevalence (5.3 per thousand people), followed by Europe and Central Asia (4.4 per thousand). The prevalence of forced labour is lowest in Africa (2.9 per thousand). For forced marriage, prevalence is again highest in the Arab States (4.8 per thousand), followed by Asia and the Pacific (3.3 per thousand), and lowest in the Americas (1.5 per thousand).

At the regional level, the impact of conflict and state-imposed forced labour on prevalence of modern slavery remains consistent with the global findings, with the highest prevalence occurring in countries with several reports of state-imposed forced labour or are otherwise impacted by protracted or recent conflict. The countries with highest prevalence across the regions include Eritrea, Mauritania, and South Sudan (Africa); Venezuela, Haiti and El Salvador (Americas); Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait (Arab States); North Korea, Afghanistan, and Myanmar (Asia and the Pacific); and Türkiye, Tajikistan, and Russia (Europe and Central Asia).

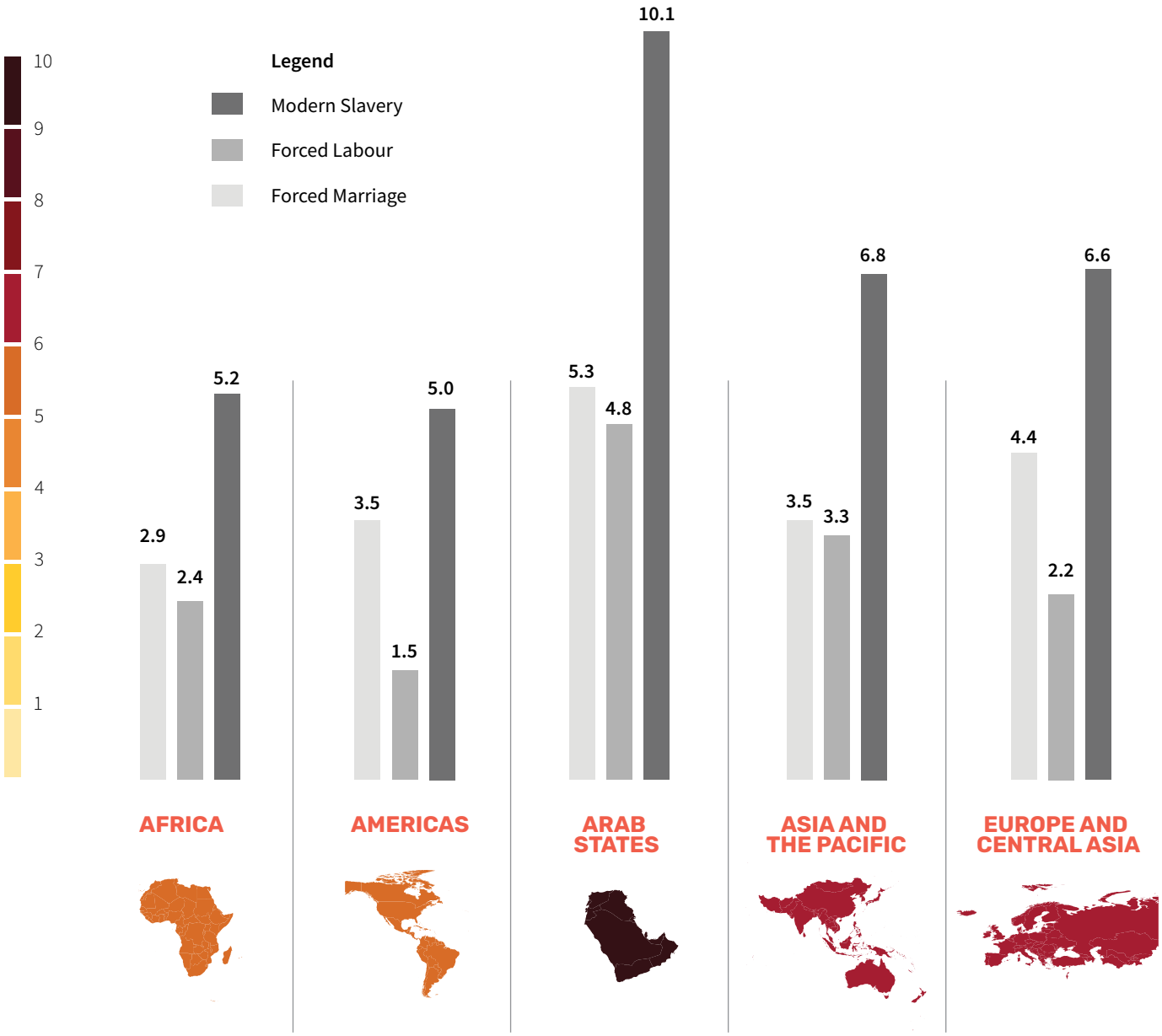


California, United States, October 2019.

An inmate firefighter crew works during the Palisades Fire which scorched at least 40 acres and threatened hillside homes. News media reports indicate that inmates work under exploitative conditions, receive little firefighter training, and are paid as little as US$2.90 per day. Photo credit: Mario Tama via Getty Images.

Figure 10

Prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 people), by region and type



What drives vulnerability to modern slavery across the world's regions?

Improving our understanding of which factors increase vulnerability to modern slavery is essential to developing and implementing successful interventions. Our assessment of country-level risk factors covers five dimensions — governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict — and is scored as a percentage where 100 represents extremely high vulnerability (see Appendix 2: Part B).

A regional analysis of our vulnerability measures suggests higher risk of modern slavery in Africa and the Americas than is evident in the prevalence data (Table 3). Africa has the highest vulnerability (64 per cent) of any region, despite having relatively low prevalence scores for both forced labour and forced marriage. The lowest levels of vulnerability are found in Europe and Central Asia (27 per cent). While regional risk differs across the dimensions, every region performs poorly on measures of acceptance of minority groups. In Europe and Central Asia, where there is relatively strong governance, access to basic needs, and low levels of inequality, there remain gaps in protection on the basis of migration status, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic groups. Figure 11 shows how countries in the region scored in relation to the regional average on each dimension of vulnerability.

Table 3
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by region and dimension

Regions	Governance issues (%)	Lack of basic needs (%)	Inequality (%)	Disenfranchised groups (%)	Effects of conflict (%)	Total (%)
Africa	61	53	52	70	37	**64**
Americas	44	35	55	52	25	**44**
Arab States	60	38	40	71	40	**56**
Asia and the Pacific	48	42	39	61	35	**48**
Europe and Central Asia	31	25	30	51	23	**27**



Idlib, Syria, December 2020.

A young boy crushes stones to sell as construction materials and help support his family living in a tent camp for internally displaced people. Thousands of civilians fled from attacks by the Assad regime to the camps and are struggling to survive in the harsh conditions as winter approaches. Photo credit: Muhammed Said/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images.

Figure 11

Level of vulnerability to modern slavery with regional averages



What are governments across the world's region doing to address modern slavery?

Our assessment of government responses to modern slavery covers five milestones of a strong response — identification and support for survivors, effectiveness of criminal justice mechanisms, national and regional level coordination, efforts to address underlying risk, and government and business supply chains. This is scored as a percentage, where 100 represents the strongest possible response.

Europe and Central Asia has the strongest response to modern slavery, with an average score of 54 per cent. These governments, particularly those from the European subregion, generally had both high levels of political will to combat the issue and the required resources to enact comprehensive responses. Comparatively strong legal frameworks, including on monitoring business supply chains (for which scores were profoundly low across all regions), characterised the responses of these governments. However, there is not much difference in these scores in comparison to 2018; the actions of many governments in this region had largely stagnated due to competing priorities in the intervening years.

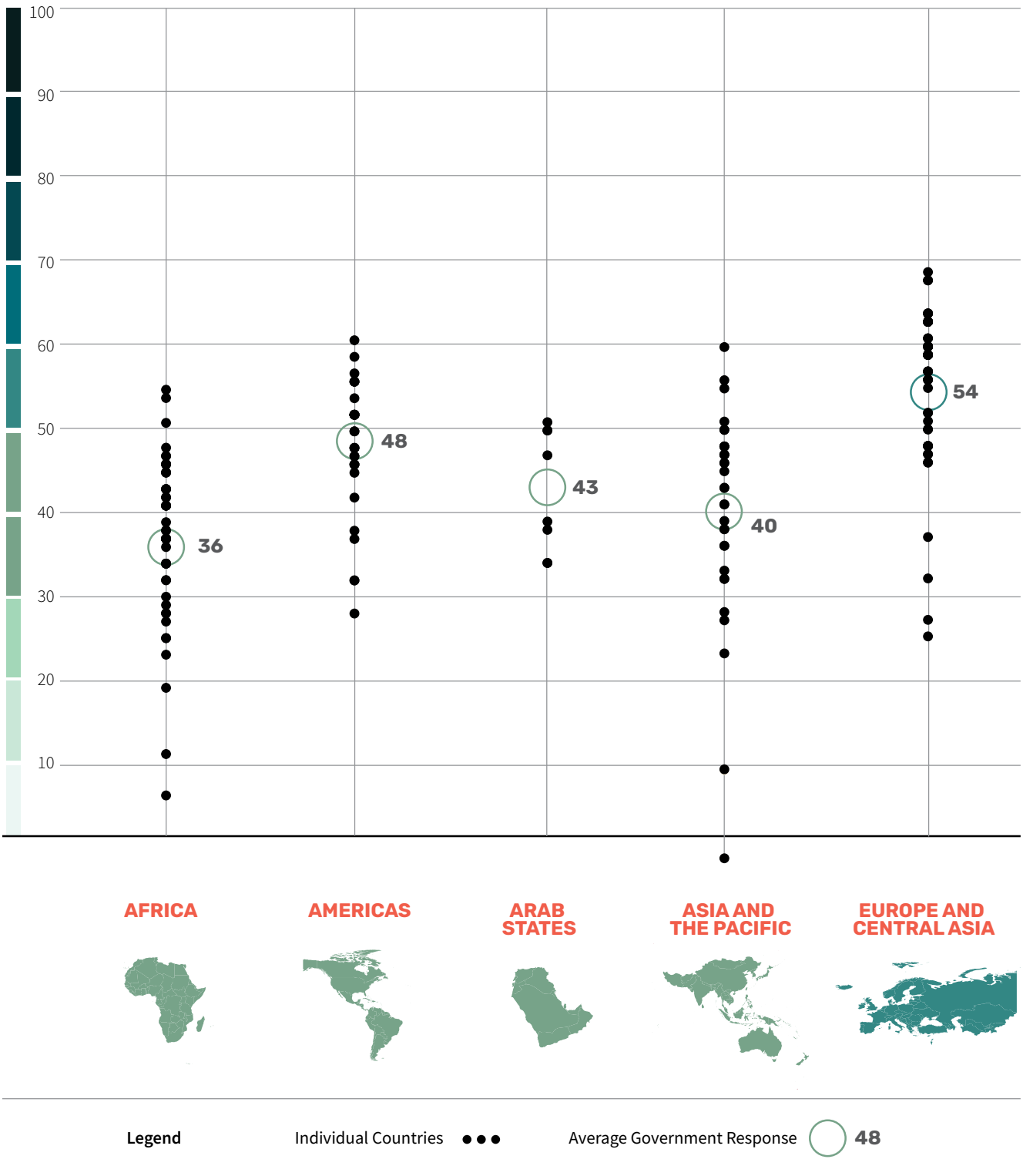
The Americas region has the second strongest response to modern slavery, reflecting continued improvements in both criminal justice frameworks and coordination of support services. The Arab States, while having the highest prevalence of modern slavery, has an average government response score of 43 per cent, driven by significant improvements in planning and coordination of responses against modern slavery, but also reflecting that few governments in the region are directly tackling the vulnerabilities associated with the *kafala* system.

While Africa has the lowest average government response score across the regions, it is outperforming Arab States on criminal justice mechanisms (Table 4). Average scores also hide great regional variability with some nations in Africa (Nigeria and South Africa) performing at a similar level to European nations. Implementing more comprehensive responses to combat modern slavery is still limited across all regions by resource constraints and the multiple and converging crises, such as ongoing conflicts, climate change, and the slow recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4
Government response score, by region and milestone

Regions	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total (%)
Africa	34	46	42	37	1	**36**
Americas	46	58	56	52	5	**48**
Arab States	51	45	56	48	0	**43**
Asia and the Pacific	38	48	51	45	4	**40**
Europe and Central Asia	54	62	64	58	17	**54**

Figure 12
Government response score with regional averages



AFRICA



Regional heat map: prevalence

Low — High

Africa is a vast and diverse region that accounts for 17 per cent of the world's population. Modern slavery in Africa is driven by ongoing political instability, poverty, displacement of people due to conflict and climate change, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Modern slavery manifests differently throughout Africa; it occurs in every country in the region, while those with higher prevalence typically experience compounding vulnerability factors. More than 3.1 million Africans are in forced marriage, the drivers of which depend on factors in their location, such as the presence of conflict, poverty, or persistence of certain traditional practices. There are more than 3.8 million people in forced labour across Africa. At particularly high risk are adults and children who travel from rural and remote areas to urban centres seeking work. Higher rates of descent-based slavery and forced begging continue to occur in parts of the Sahel.

Over the past four years, many African countries have taken actions to improve their response to modern slavery. Nigeria and South Africa have taken the most action, while Eritrea and Libya have taken the least. South Sudan was excluded from the assessment of government action on modern slavery due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function. Much more needs to be done to provide support for survivors, strengthen laws to protect people, and develop national strategies to combat modern slavery.

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery in the region?

On any given day in 2021, an estimated 7 million men, women, and children were living in modern slavery in Africa, a prevalence of 5.2 people in modern slavery for every thousand people. Africa had the fourth highest prevalence of modern slavery among the five regions of the world, following the Arab States (10.1 per thousand), Europe and Central Asia (6.9), and Asia and the Pacific (6.8). Forced labour was the most common form of modern slavery in the region, at a rate of 2.9 per thousand people, while forced marriage was at 2.4 per thousand.

When considering the total number of people in forced marriage worldwide, 13 per cent (3.2 million) were in Africa, second to Asia and the Pacific, which at 65 per cent has by far the highest share of the world's forced marriages. Fourteen per cent of all people in forced labour were in Africa (3.8 million), the third highest behind Asia and the Pacific (55 per cent) and Europe and Central Asia (15 per cent).

The countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery in Africa are Eritrea, Mauritania, and South Sudan. The countries with the lowest prevalence of modern slavery in Africa are Mauritius, Lesotho, and Botswana.

Nearly 4 million men, women, and children experience forced labour in Africa, particularly in the mining, agriculture, fishing, and domestic work sectors.[1] African job seekers misled by traffickers with false promises are subjected to forced labour abroad, such as in the Gulf states.[2] Children are also exploited in their pursuit of education. For example, under the *confiage* (trust) system in Togo, children from rural areas are sent to cities to complete their education and live with relatives, who may force them into domestic servitude.[3] Nigerian girls seeking employment as domestic helpers to help pay for schooling are also subjected to domestic servitude.[4] In Senegal, *talibe* (student, seeker) children in Quranic schools are forced to beg.[5]

In Africa, forced marriage particularly impacts women and girls. One in every 300 females in the region was in a forced marriage compared to one in every thousand males.[6] In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of child marriages increased in Sudan, Egypt,[7] and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),[8] and they nearly doubled in communities across Senegal and Uganda.[9] Women and girls living in conflict zones also experience forced and child marriage, including as a negative coping mechanism by families to protect them from further violence[10] and by fighters who abduct, marry, and exploit women and girls as domestic and sexual slaves.[11] Forced commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls is used as a weapon of war by both state and non-state groups, reportedly in the Central African Republic, the DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan,[12] and by both parties to the civil war in Ethiopia's Tigray region.[13]

> **"My father introduced me to husbands since I was twelve."**
>
> *Sudanese female on her forced marriage at age 17*

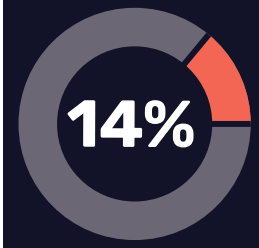
Although these figures are the most reliable to date, they are conservative estimates given the gaps and limitations of data collection in Africa. It is not possible to conduct nationally representative surveys in countries experiencing profound conflict, which leads to an underestimate of forms of modern slavery such as the recruitment of child soldiers. Despite gaps in data, reports indicate children have been recruited into armed groups in the DRC, Mali, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Nigeria, Libya, South Sudan, Sudan, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Somalia.[14]

Estimated number living in modern slavery:

7.0 MILLION

(5.2 per thousand)

Regional proportion of global estimate:



Forced labour

54%

Forced marriage

46%

Average vulnerability score:

64%

Average government response rating:

36%

Top 3 countries:	
Nigeria	54%
South Africa	53%
Rwanda	50%
Bottom 3 countries:	
Eritrea	5%
Libya	10%
Somalia	18%

Table 5
Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Regional rank	Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
1	Eritrea	90.3	320,000	3,546,000
2	Mauritania	32.0	149,000	4,650,000
3	South Sudan	10.3	115,000	11,194,000
4	Republic of the Congo	8.0	44,000	5,518,000
5	Nigeria	7.8	1,611,000	206,140,000
6	Equatorial Guinea	7.8	11,000	1,403,000
7	Gabon	7.6	17,000	2,226,000
8	Burundi	7.5	89,000	11,891,000
9	Côte d'Ivoire	7.3	193,000	26,378,000
10	Djibouti	7.1	7,000	988,000
11	Libya	6.8	47,000	6,871,000
12	Gambia	6.5	16,000	2,417,000
13	Ethiopia	6.3	727,000	114,964,000
14	Somalia	6.2	98,000	15,893,000
15	Chad	5.9	97,000	16,426,000
16	Cameroon	5.8	155,000	26,546,000
17	Central African Republic	5.2	25,000	4,830,000
18	Mali	5.2	106,000	20,251,000
19	Zambia	5.1	94,000	18,384,000
20	Kenya	5.0	269,000	53,771,000
21	Zimbabwe	5.0	74,000	14,863,000
22	Malawi	4.9	93,000	19,130,000
23	Niger	4.6	112,000	24,207,000
24	Madagascar	4.6	127,000	27,691,000
25	Democratic Republic of the Congo	4.5	407,000	89,561,000
26	Guinea-Bissau	4.5	9,000	1,968,000
27	Egypt	4.3	442,000	102,334,000
28	Rwanda	4.3	55,000	12,952,000
29	Uganda	4.2	190,000	45,741,000
30	Angola	4.1	136,000	32,866,000
31	Guinea	4.0	53,000	13,133,000
32	Sudan	4.0	174,000	43,849,000
33	Burkina Faso	3.7	77,000	20,903,000
34	Eswatini	3.6	4,000	1,160,000
35	Sierra Leone	3.4	27,000	7,977,000
36	Togo	3.3	28,000	8,279,000
37	Liberia	3.1	16,000	5,058,000
38	Benin	3.0	37,000	12,123,000
39	Mozambique	3.0	93,000	31,255,000
40	Senegal	2.9	49,000	16,744,000
41	Ghana	2.9	91,000	31,073,000
42	Tanzania	2.9	171,000	59,734,000
43	South Africa	2.7	158,000	59,309,000
44	Namibia	2.4	6,000	2,541,000
45	Tunisia	2.3	27,000	11,819,000
46	Morocco	2.3	85,000	36,911,000
47	Algeria	1.9	84,000	43,851,000
48	Botswana	1.8	4,000	2,352,000
49	Lesotho	1.6	4,000	2,142,000
50	Mauritius	1.5	2,000	1,272,000

What drives vulnerability to modern slavery in the region?

Africa has the highest vulnerability to modern slavery of all regions and is home to the four most vulnerable countries: South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, and the DRC (Table 6). Mauritius had the lowest vulnerability in the region. The largest driver of vulnerability was discrimination towards migrants and minority cultural and ethnic groups. Common to the most vulnerable countries are issues such as conflict, political instability, mass displacement, and poverty. The impacts of COVID-19 have compounded risk of modern slavery across the region.

Vulnerability to modern slavery was driven by a higher risk of discrimination on the basis of migration status, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. Contemporary reports of slavery exist in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and Sudan, where people, often from minority ethnic groups, are born into slavery and bought, traded, and sold.[15] In Mauritania, Niger, and Mali, widespread ethnic or caste-based discrimination manifests in descent-based slavery.[16] In Mauritania, for example, slavery tends to follow racial lines, as black Haratine people are typically forced to work for the lighter-skinned "white Moor" community in agriculture and domestic work.[17] Despite some legal reforms, the practice of *Wahaya* (put in the bedroom) continues in northern Nigeria and Niger, where girls born into slavery are sold as a "fifth wife" and subjected to domestic and sexual servitude.[18]

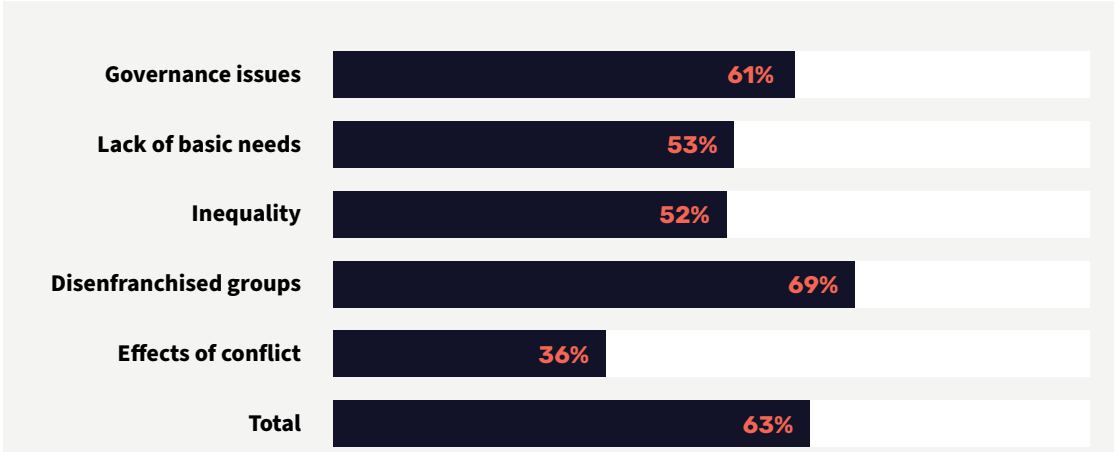


Figure 13
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by dimension



Lome, Togo, June 2021.

A young fisherman pulls the net with his catch from the water to the beach. Children reportedly as young as five years are trafficked from within the country as well as from neighbouring countries such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, and Niger, and are forced to work in sectors like fishing, agriculture, and domestic work, among others. Photo credit: Ute Grabowsky/Photothek via Getty Images.

Table 6
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by country

Country	Total (%)
South Sudan	100
Somalia	98
Central African Republic	98
Democratic Republic of the Congo	94
Chad	84
Sudan	82
Libya	80
Guinea-Bissau	80
Republic of the Congo	77
Burundi	77
Niger	76
Nigeria	76
Zimbabwe	75
Mali	73
Cameroon	71
Equatorial Guinea	69
Ethiopia	67
Mozambique	67
Kenya	66
Mauritania	66
Eritrea	66
Guinea	66
Uganda	62
Angola	61
Madagascar	60
Lesotho	59
Eswatini	59
Gabon	59
Egypt	59
Côte d'Ivoire	59
Zambia	58
Gambia	58
Djibouti	57
Togo	57
Liberia	56
Burkina Faso	56
Sierra Leone	55
Malawi	55
Tanzania	53
Rwanda	53
Senegal	53
South Africa	52
Benin	48
Tunisia	48
Namibia	47
Ghana	45
Botswana	45
Morocco	44
Algeria	43
Mauritius	20

Some countries in the region continued to exhibit political instability, weak rule of law, and corruption, all of which increase the risk of modern slavery. Overall, governance issues were the second greatest driver of vulnerability in the region. South Sudan and Somalia have faced violent clashes and political instability.[19] From 2020 to early 2022, there have been multiple military takeovers in the region: in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan,[20] in addition to failed military coups in Niger and Guinea-Bissau.[21] This political unrest can cause displacement and disrupt national responses to modern slavery, putting people at higher risk.

Poverty and economic inequality drive vulnerability in the Africa region. Thirty-five per cent of people in Sub-Saharan Africa live in poverty.[22] Poverty can drive desperate families to marry off daughters to reduce household costs and generate an income through obtaining a bride dowry.[23] Families living in extreme poverty may also require their children to enter the workforce. In 2020, there were more child labourers in Sub-Saharan Africa than in the rest of the world combined.[24] Widespread child labour increases the risk of the worst forms of child labour.[25] Poverty and limited job opportunities in Africa also drive migration, which increases risk of exploitation by labour recruiters.[26] This migration is predominantly intra-regional and marked by the movement of low-skilled workers, particularly in sectors characterised by high demand such as agriculture, aquaculture, construction, resource extraction, and domestic work.[27]

Compared to other regions, parts of Africa are heavily impacted by conflict. At the end of 2020 there were more than 24 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa, most of whom were displaced due to conflict and violence.[28] In Nigeria, the DRC, and South Sudan, modern slavery and related abuses were not only prevalent among IDPs but were inextricably linked to conflict. Perpetrators of slavery-related abuses were largely members of the armed groups or armed forces who deliberately exploited displaced populations to further their conflict-related operations.[29] Risks also persist within IDP camps. For example, some camps in Eastern Sudan have decreased security, thereby becoming targets for traffickers.[30] The number of people displaced from their homes will only increase further with climate change. It is estimated that without any action on climate change there will be 86 million internal climate migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2050.[31] Displaced populations are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

"When [armed group] kidnapped me, I was forced to marry one of their leaders."

Nigerian female on her forced marriage at age 28



Manica Province, Mozambique, May 2022.

A woman sits outside of a dormitory at a refuge for women and children who have survived sexual violence, gender-based violence, and abandonment. Studies estimate that half of all Mozambican woman are married before the age of 18, and more than one in five have experienced violence. Photo credit: Alfredo Zunigo/AFP via Getty Images.

What are governments in the region doing to address modern slavery?

Walk Free assessed government responses to modern slavery in 51 countries in the region. Governments across the region scored an average of 36 per cent, the weakest average response of all regions. Overall, while governments improved identification measures and legal frameworks, gaps in services available to survivors remained and only limited action has been taken to address systemic risk factors to modern slavery. While three countries have identified and taken action with high-risk sectors to address modern slavery, no country has taken further action to combat modern slavery in government and business supply chains. South Sudan was excluded from the assessment of government action on modern slavery due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function.

GDP per capita PPP (current international $) varies widely across the region. Of the four countries with the strongest responses (Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, and Tunisia — see Table 7), it varies from US$2,494 in Rwanda to a high of US$14,420 in South Africa.[32] Relative to their wealth, both Nigeria and Rwanda are outperforming their wealthiest neighbours in Africa, such as Seychelles, Libya, Mauritius, Equatorial Guinea, and Botswana.[33] Given Rwanda has the lowest GDP per capita of all four countries, but with relatively strong government responses to modern slavery, it is outperforming all countries in the region on action taken to address modern slavery relative to its wealth.

Nigeria (54 per cent), South Africa (53 per cent), and Rwanda (50 per cent) have the strongest responses to modern slavery in the region. Nigeria and South Africa both strongly address risk factors to modern slavery and provide adequate protection to citizens overseas.

Eritrea has the weakest government response to modern slavery in Africa and the second weakest response globally (5 per cent), followed by Libya (10 per cent). Eritrea's and Libya's responses are undermined by state-imposed forced labour. Eritrean citizens aged 18 to 40 years are forced into labour indefinitely in the government's compulsory national service scheme.[34] They are threatened with torture, prison, or harm to their family members for refusing to comply.[35] In Libya, migrants continue to be trafficked and sold in "slave markets" where they are then tortured for ransom or exploited in forced labour.[36] In some instances, the only way out of detention centres for migrants is to be sold to employers.[37]

Many countries in Africa have taken action to improve their response to modern slavery since our 2018 assessment. Angola introduced the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and allocated funding and support to the operation of shelters.[38] Namibia implemented a National Referral Mechanism and provided police and immigration officials with pocket manuals on procedures.[39] The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and Similar Practices in Guinea introduced standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral, however it is unclear if these procedures have been operationalised.[40]

Table 7
Government response score, by country and milestone

Country	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total (%)
Nigeria	68	58	50	57	0	**54**
South Africa	45	69	63	57	0	**53**
Rwanda	55	62	38	57	0	**50**
Tunisia	50	54	50	57	0	**47**
Kenya	55	50	50	50	0	**46**
Uganda	50	50	75	43	0	**46**
Ethiopia	41	54	50	57	0	**45**
Ghana	45	54	63	36	13	**45**
Mozambique	50	54	50	43	0	**45**
Zambia	50	46	50	57	0	**45**
Angola	59	46	63	29	0	**44**
Egypt	55	42	38	57	0	**44**
Namibia	55	46	25	57	0	**44**
Botswana	32	54	63	50	0	**42**
Madagascar	41	65	25	36	0	**42**
Tanzania	45	54	50	36	0	**42**
Cameroon	55	46	38	36	0	**41**
Liberia	50	42	50	43	0	**41**
Benin	32	54	50	43	0	**40**
Lesotho	36	50	50	43	0	**40**
Morocco	23	54	50	57	0	**40**
Senegal	36	50	63	36	0	**40**
Malawi	55	46	38	21	0	**38**
Côte d'Ivoire	18	50	63	43	13	**37**
Niger	23	54	50	43	0	**37**
Algeria	23	54	38	43	0	**36**
Burkina Faso	45	42	38	29	0	**36**
Democratic Republic of the Congo	32	42	50	36	13	**36**
Djibouti	41	46	38	29	0	**36**
Eswatini	27	38	50	57	0	**36**
Gambia	23	58	25	43	0	**36**
Guinea	36	50	38	29	0	**36**
Mauritius	32	50	25	43	0	**36**
Mauritania	27	54	38	29	0	**35**
Guinea-Bissau	32	35	25	57	0	**33**
Seychelles	23	46	38	43	0	**33**
Sierra Leone	27	46	38	36	0	**33**
Togo	27	42	38	43	0	**33**
Cabo Verde	23	35	50	43	0	**31**
Mali	23	50	50	14	0	**31**
Burundi	23	42	63	14	0	**29**
Republic of the Congo	41	27	38	21	0	**28**
Central African Republic	23	42	25	21	0	**27**
Zimbabwe	27	35	38	21	0	**27**
Sudan	9	46	38	21	0	**26**
Chad	14	38	13	36	0	**24**
Gabon	27	31	25	21	0	**24**
Equatorial Guinea	27	27	25	14	0	**22**
Somalia	9	27	25	21	0	**18**
Libya	-9	35	25	-7	0	**10**
Eritrea	-5	23	25	-21	0	**5**

"After I reported [my employer] to Labour, they bribed someone at Labour and I was told to return to work."

29-year-old female domestic worker in Botswana

No country in Africa has fully criminalised all forms of modern slavery, yet legal frameworks have improved in Africa over the last four years. For example, during this period the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 has entered into force in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Madagascar, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Côte d'Ivoire.[41] Further, the Republic of the Congo criminalised human trafficking in domestic legislation in 2019.[42] Encouragingly, 48 out of 51 governments we assessed have provided basic training on victim identification to general police. Only Mauritania, Libya, and Sudan have not.

"Governments should be providing training to government officials, public awareness campaigns, outreach education and advocacy campaigns, and prosecute human trafficking by providing training and technical assistance for law enforcement officials such as police."

Survivor of modern slavery, Kenya, 2020

The coordination of modern slavery responses has shown some improvement across the region. While 12 countries in the region introduced or implemented National Action Plans (NAPs) to address modern slavery over the past four years, three countries failed to renew their previous plans, and 10 countries remained without formal strategies to combat any form of modern slavery. Only nine of the countries with NAPs have fully funded the activities within those plans (Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali). Just under half of the governments we assessed in Africa ensure services are provided to all survivors of modern slavery and 28 governments ensure child-friendly services are provided. In Kenya, five child protection centres provide child trafficking and child labour survivors with specialised services.[43]

Risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are weakly addressed in the region. There are only five countries in Africa where all children have access to birth registration systems and where over 95 per cent have a registered birth certificate (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Republic of the Congo, and Algeria). No government in the region ensures universal access to healthcare. Further, children under the age of 18 can legally marry in all countries except Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. A draft bill in Somalia was proposed in August 2020 that allowed minors to marry based on reproductive maturity, independent of age.[44] While the bill was ultimately not passed, it reveals a backwards step in terms of gender equality.

Systems are in place that allow asylum seekers to seek protection in 22 countries in the region. No country in Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia) has appropriate systems in place for those seeking to flee humanitarian crises, despite the subregion being a regular migration route. The Libyan and Egyptian coastguards are supported by the European Union to intercept those fleeing and return them to Libya and Egypt where there is evidence of systemic discrimination, arrest, detention, and deportation. In Libya, migrants are additionally vulnerable to being bought and sold in slave markets.[45] Corruption and complicity also impede efforts to combat modern slavery in 36 out of the 51 countries. In Libya, officials working for coastguard, defence, immigration, and security authorities commit modern slavery crimes without fear of investigation or consequence.[46] In addition, state-imposed forced labour reportedly occurs in Libya,[47] Eritrea,[48] Egypt,[49] Mali,[50] Rwanda,[51] and Zimbabwe.[52]

"The government should be aware of the people migrating, know the reasons why they are migrating, ensure that the contracts and agreements made are valid, and ensure safety and work with the family to know that the migrant is safe."

Survivor of modern slavery, Kenya, 2020

Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and more recently the DRC are the only countries in the region that have identified high-risk sectors and have taken action to eradicate modern slavery within supply chains. Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are part of the Harkin-Engel Protocol to combat child labour in the cocoa sector,[53] while in 2019 the DRC created a regulatory authority to tackle child labour in cobalt and coltan mines.[54] However, governments in Africa have not taken broader action such as the introduction of legislation or human rights due diligence laws to ensure government and businesses stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.

Freedom through faith

Faith leaders play an important role to identify, prevent, and remediate modern slavery in their communities. They occupy a unique position as they can see into the hearts of communities and are often a trusted source of information and advice.

"As faith leaders...you can see changes in people that would pass many others by. And you understand what poverty and desperation can do to men, women, and children. So you are uniquely placed to identify victims and help victims by putting them in touch with professionals who can help them and who can help deal with the perpetrators."

Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu, spokesperson for Ghana's national chief Imam addressing fellow faith leaders at a Global Freedom Network event in Ghana, 2021

Faith leaders, together with faith-based organisations already working to protect vulnerable people, can empower their communities to act by providing them with the information and tools to understand modern slavery. Walk Free, through its faith-based arm the Global Freedom Network, works with religious leaders across the world to address modern slavery.

In 2014, faiths leaders from many Christian denominations, including Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox, and representatives of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths came together to sign the "Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery," pledging to do everything in their power to eradicate modern slavery. Since then, more than 100 of the world's most influential faith leaders from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania have also pledged to help end modern slavery. The Global Freedom Network is developing a range of tools to support their efforts.

One tool, the Faith for Freedom smartphone app, was developed in consultation with a faith leaders advisory panel and gives faith leaders and their staff information on how to identify, respond to, and prevent modern slavery within their communities. The app has been launched in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, and will expand to other countries. Further information on Walk Free's work with faith leaders and religious organisations is available from the Walk Free website: https://www.walkfree.org/projects/global-freedom-network/.

GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK



Nouakchott, Mauritania, June 2018.

Mabrouka was a child when she was taken from her mother, also a survivor of forced labour, and was made to work as a domestic servant for a family in the Rosso area. When Mabrouka was 11 years old, she was badly burned while cooking for her abusers. Although freed in 2011, she was never able to go to school, and was married two years later when she was aged just 16. Now a mother, she is pictured with her own child. Photo credit: Seif Kousmate.

Promising Practices in Africa

Over 20 per cent of evaluated programs housed in the Promising Practices Database are delivered in Africa. These programs cover 42 countries in the region and target several types of modern slavery, including human trafficking, forced, servile or early marriage, the worst forms of child labour, and the use of child soldiers or exploitation of children by armed groups. Awareness-raising awareness campaigns and formal education were the most common interventions delivered in the evaluated programs. Overall, more than 80 per cent of programs delivered in Africa met some or all of their objectives, yet only 13 evaluated programs had a reliable evaluation methodology, scoring 3 or above on the Maryland Scale.[55]

Spotlight on what works

An evaluation of the impact of two government-run unconditional cash transfers programs on early marriage and fertility rates in Malawi and Zambia raises interesting questions about the role of cash transfers in tackling modern slavery. The evaluation found that the impact on safe transition of youth aged 14 to 21 to adulthood (i.e., delayed pregnancy and marriage) was limited in both countries, with the exception of protective impact on marriage for male youth in Malawi.[56] This might point to the limited impact of cash transfers; however, the Promising Practices Database[57] and other systematic reviews have found that cash transfers are some of the most promising interventions, particularly when viewed as part of a multisectoral and holistic suite of interventions.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Ensure support services are available for all survivors of modern slavery — women, men, and children — and that these support services are appropriately resourced.**
2. **The governments of Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mali, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe should immediately end state-imposed forced labour by repealing legislation and criminalising practices that allow it to occur.**
3. **Raise the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 without exception and support the economic empowerment of women and girls through increasing access to education and providing community empowerment programming.**
4. **Strengthen social protections, such as birth registration, access to education, unemployment insurance, universal healthcare, and sick leave to reduce vulnerability to forced marriage and to provide workers with basic income security. Extend social protection to workers in the informal sector in particular.**
5. **Identify sectors at high risk of forced labour and work with businesses and civil society to develop initiatives to eradicate forced labour and labour exploitation.**

Frontline voices:
Modern slavery and the LGBTQI+ community

SHIVAN PAVIN ALUNGNAT
Musician, artist, queer activist, feminist and survivor leader. Founder of Africa Nalia.

Experiencing marginalisation and discrimination is a key factor that can drive people into forms of modern slavery, intensify the lived experience of exploitation, and create barriers to accessing support. Despite some progress, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) community still faces discrimination and marginalisation around the world today, which increases their vulnerability to modern slavery. Shivan Pavin Alungnat is a musician, artist, queer activist, feminist, and survivor leader based in Kenya. Shivan is the author of upcoming research on the intersection between queer communities and human trafficking. Here, Shivan shares their experience and expertise on how the modern slavery movement can best recognise and respond to the unique experiences of the LGBTQI+ community.

Being LGBTQI+ has been viewed as criminal as well as politically, religiously, and traditionally "un-African" across the African continent. The LGBTQI+ community faces systemic discrimination, violence, and exclusion, with society maintaining conservative views on gender identities and roles. Because these factors contribute to vulnerabilities to modern slavery, LGBTQI+ individuals are more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation.

In many African countries, members of the LGBTQI+ community are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and enslavement due to legislation that limits, and in some cases eliminates their rights. For example, some countries, such as Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, and, more recently, Uganda, have laws that criminalise homosexuality and impose severe punishments, including imprisonment and even the death penalty. In many other countries, such as Kenya and Zimbabwe, there are laws that restrict the rights of LGBTQI+ people by prohibiting "promoting" homosexuality or denying them access to health services. These laws have a devastating impact on the LGBTQI+ community, making it difficult for them to access basic services, such as healthcare and education, and putting them at risk of violence and persecution. Despite ongoing efforts by human rights organisations and LGBTQI+ activists, the rights of LGBTQI+ people remain under threat in many African countries. To compound this issue, LGBTQI+ people who flee their home countries to escape persecution may find themselves trapped in exploitative situations, including forced labour and sex trafficking, in countries of asylum.

As well as facing legal barriers to inclusion, research has revealed widespread social intolerance and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community in Africa. According to one survey, the vast majority of respondents across 34 countries said they would not want to live next door to homosexuals.[1] Only 7 to 14 per cent of respondents in a similar study conducted in Kenya, Tunisia, and Nigeria agreed that homosexuality should be accepted by society.[2] Wage discrimination and underemployment related

to sexual orientation and gender expression persists across Africa, with one study estimating that such disparity costs South Africa alone US$316.8 million each year.[3]

For many LGBTQI+ people, structural disadvantages and societal rejection begin in childhood. Cultural responses can force young members of the LGBTQI+ community into early and forced marriages to "convert" their identities, and access to education can be restricted.

The intersection between the LGBTQI+ community and modern slavery in Africa highlights the need for greater recognition of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in the global fight against slavery. To date there has been limited knowledge sharing between both the modern slavery movement and the LGBTQI+ community. As a result, LGBTQI+ people are not always adequately informed about modern slavery risks to which they are likely more vulnerable and service providers in the space frequently lack the required knowledge and training to effectively respond to their needs. This creates multiple barriers to LGBTQI+ survivors accessing support and increases the risk of survivors returning to their situations of exploitation.

In order to address this intersection, it is crucial for governments, NGOs, and the LGBTQI+ community to work together to raise awareness and implement effective prevention and response strategies. This should include:

- Providing safe spaces for LGBTQI+ individuals who are at risk of exploitation, including shelters and support services for survivors of slavery.
- Developing anti-trafficking laws and policies that are inclusive of LGBTQI+ individuals and address their unique needs and experiences.
- Strengthening anti-trafficking efforts by working with LGBTQI+ organisations and advocates to increase awareness and advocacy on this issue.
- Providing training and education to law enforcement, immigration officials, and other relevant stakeholders on the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in the context of modern slavery.
- Implementing modern slavery programs and services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ individuals and ensure their access to justice and protection.



Kigali, Rwanda, May 2022.

Prince, a Rwandan model gets his make-up done before the Isano Fashion Show in Kigali to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia. "Families are rejecting their family members because they're gay, and we are in 2022, people need to get used to LGBTQI+ people", says model Tonia. Around the world, many LGBTQI+ people face increased risks to modern slavery, included forced into 'corrective' marriages. Photo credit: Simon Wohlfahrt/ AFP via Getty Images.

THE AMERICAS



Regional heat map: prevalence

Low — High

The Americas region is home to 13 per cent of the world's population, with varying levels of wealth, mobility, and security across and within countries in the region. Modern slavery in the region is driven by inequality,[1] increasing poverty,[2] discrimination against migrants and minority groups, political instability, and conflict. The situation has been exacerbated by economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it,[3] as well as the impacts of climate-related displacement.

An estimated 3.5 per thousand people in the region are in forced labour and 1.5 per thousand in forced marriage. Mass migration fuels forced labour, particularly in the world's largest migration corridor from Mexico to the United States (US). Migrants flee countries such as Venezuela and others and congregate on the border between the US and Mexico.[4] Forced marriage is linked to increased poverty and lower educational attainment,[5] and is driven by longstanding patriarchal norms and fundamentalist religious beliefs within the region; for example, in North America forced marriage is reported in conservative religious sects.[6]

The US has taken the most action to tackle modern slavery in the Americas, followed by Canada, Argentina, and Uruguay. Cuba, Suriname, and Venezuela have taken the least action. Of the five G20 countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and the US), Brazil, Canada and the US have taken action to tackle modern slavery in supply chains. Much more needs to be done to strengthen legislation to hold businesses to account and to tackle gender inequality that drives modern slavery of women and girls.

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery in the region?

An estimated 5.1 million men, women, and children were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2021. The Americas had the lowest prevalence of modern slavery among the five regions, with 5 in every thousand people living in modern slavery. The Americas had the third highest prevalence of forced labour (3.5 per thousand) and the lowest prevalence of forced marriage (1.5 per thousand) compared to other regions.[7]

Within the region, Venezuela, Haiti, and El Salvador had the highest prevalence of modern slavery. In Haiti[8] and Venezuela[9] modern slavery is intertwined with migration, political instability, and drug trafficking routes from South America to Central and North America,[10] while in El Salvador it is associated with gang violence and gender-based violence.[11]

The largest estimated numbers of people in modern slavery include some of the region's most populous countries — Brazil, the US, and Mexico. Three of every five people in modern slavery in the Americas are exploited in one of these countries. The countries with the lowest prevalence in the region are Canada, Uruguay, and Chile.

Children in the Americas are at particularly high risk of all forms of modern slavery. They have been recruited as soldiers in protracted civil conflicts in Colombia and Venezuela, resulting in long-lasting trauma.[12] Child recruitment by armed groups, gangs, and organised crime has increased in the region, impacting children in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and El Salvador.[13] Moreover, children are reportedly involved in hazardous labour in industries such as mining in gold and tin,[14] drug trafficking,[15] and agriculture, most notably in cotton, cattle, fishing, and tobacco.[16] Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs in the region. In the Caribbean, sex tourism,[17] particularly involving children[18] remains an issue, with sex tourists, primarily from the US, seeking to exploit children in countries such as Belize.[19] UN estimates reveal that child marriage is prevalent in the region with 22 per cent of women between ages 20 and 24 having been married before the age of 18 years.[20] In the US, recent research estimated that 300,000 children were married between 2000 and 2018.[21]

Seasonal, temporary, and undocumented workers in the agricultural sector are vulnerable to forced labour, including workers in higher-income countries such as the US and Canada.[22] This is particularly true in informal or rural labour contexts where there are limited regulations and few labour inspections.[23] Forced labour in US supply chains remains an issue in the Americas,[24] with agricultural workers in countries that supply products to the US market vulnerable to exploitation. Moreover, there are reports of compulsory prison labour in public and private prisons in Brazil[25] and the US.[26]

Although these estimates are the most reliable to date, they are conservative given the gaps and limitations of data collection in the Americas. These figures do not capture all forms of modern slavery, such as recruitment of child soldiers, trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, and all child marriages.

"The farm owner hired me...[and] he used to say to me to wait when the work was done then he would pay me, but at the end he did not pay."

42-year-old Brazilian male agricultural worker

Estimated number living in modern slavery:

5.1 MILLION

(5 per thousand)

Regional proportion of global estimate:



Forced labour

71%

Forced marriage

29%

Average vulnerability score:

44%

Average government response rating:

48%

Top 3 countries:	
United States	67%
Canada	60%
Argentina	58%
Bottom 3 countries:	
Venezuela	27%
Cuba	31%
Suriname	31%

Table 8
Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Regional rank	Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
1	Venezuela	9.5	270,000	28,436,000
2	Haiti	8.2	94,000	11,403,000
3	El Salvador	8.1	52,000	6,486,000
4	Guatemala	7.8	140,000	17,916,000
5	Colombia	7.8	397,000	50,883,000
6	Ecuador	7.6	135,000	17,643,000
7	Nicaragua	7.3	49,000	6,625,000
8	Jamaica	7.3	22,000	2,961,000
9	Bolivia	7.2	83,000	11,673,000
10	Peru	7.1	234,000	32,972,000
11	Honduras	7.0	69,000	9,905,000
12	Dominican Republic	6.6	72,000	10,848,000
13	Mexico	6.6	850,000	128,933,000
14	Paraguay	6.4	46,000	7,133,000
15	Cuba	5.4	61,000	11,327,000
16	Brazil	5.0	1,053,000	212,559,000
17	Trinidad and Tobago	4.7	7,000	1,399,000
18	Panama	4.7	20,000	4,315,000
19	Guyana	4.2	3,000	787,000
20	Argentina	4.2	189,000	45,196,000
21	United States	3.3	1,091,000	331,003,000
22	Costa Rica	3.2	16,000	5,094,000
23	Chile	3.2	61,000	19,116,000
24	Uruguay	1.9	7,000	3,474,000
25	Canada	1.8	69,000	37,742,000



Recife, Brazil, October 2022.

A transgender woman, who works as a sex worker in Brazil, sits outside overlooking the water. While sex work is not criminalised in Brazil, many rights were rolled back under the conservative government of President Bolsonaro. Today, the industry remains heavily stigmatised and workers suffered significant hardship during the pandemic, exposing them to greater risks of labour exploitation. Photo credit: Natália Corrêa/ Freedom Fund.

What drives vulnerability to modern slavery in the region?

Vulnerability to modern slavery in the Americas region is driven largely by inequality, political instability, and discrimination against migrants and minority groups (Figure 14). Conflict disproportionately impacted two countries in the region, Mexico and Colombia, while vulnerability was further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters across the region. At the country level, vulnerability to modern slavery is highest in Haiti and lowest in Canada (Table 9).

Inequality represents the greatest driver of vulnerability in the Americas. Certain populations, including women, children, migrants, and Indigenous people, face heightened vulnerability as a result of systemic discrimination. In Haiti, children known as *restavecs* (stay withs), who are given away by their parents to a host household, are vulnerable to exploitation in domestic servitude, with girls particularly at risk.[27] *Restavec* children are trafficked and are at increased vulnerability to sexual abuse.[28] Across the region, Indigenous populations are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery. For example, although Indigenous women make up only 4 per cent of the population of Canada, they comprise at least 50 per cent of identified survivors of human trafficking.[29] Migrant workers are also at greater risk, with the absence of protections in several countries, such as the right to form a union or laws prohibiting recruitment fees.[30]

Governance issues, such as political instability, lack of political rights, and poor regulatory quality, also drive vulnerability to modern slavery by causing displacement and hampering the national response. Violent protests in Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, the assassination of the President of Haiti in 2021 and increasing control of the country by street gangs and growing political polarisation in Brazil and the US[31] drive vulnerability across the region. High rates of violent crime in several countries including Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Jamaica,[32] and weak confidence in judicial systems in Mexico, Haiti, and Venezuela, diminish accessibility to legal rights, representation, and prosecution.[33] In Venezuela, political instability and corruption among the prosecution and judiciary undermines law enforcement efforts,[34] while armed groups continue to commit acts of violence against civilians, thereby driving mass migration.[35]

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by governance issues across the region, as patriarchal attitudes that suppress women's agency persist at both the household and institutional levels.[36] Such attitudes contribute to the absence of laws protecting women and girls — for example, laws that set the minimum age of marriage at 18 without exception[37] — and a lack of enforcement of existing legal frameworks covering violence against women.[38]

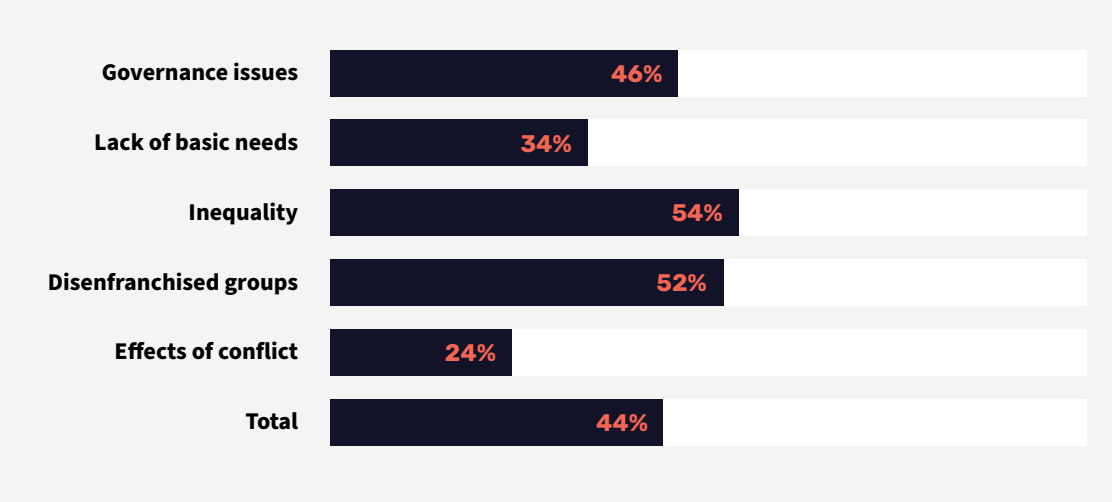


Figure 14
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by dimension

Violence, poverty, political dysfunction, and environmental degradation across the region have led to a substantial increase in refugees, asylum-seekers, and other vulnerable and displaced populations.[39] The continual movement of migrants and refugees is a pressing issue in the Americas, which hosted 26 per cent of the world's international migrants in 2020.[40] Venezuela's political instability and socio-economic breakdown has pushed more than 6 million citizens to flee the country as of November 2021.[41] The Mexico-US border is the world's most popular migration corridor;[42] over the five years from 2016 to 2021, some 4 million migrants were apprehended along the Mexico-US border, nearly half of whom came from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The remaining came predominately from Mexico and other nations.[43] In Mexico, migrants are held in crowded detention centres, while those who had sought assistance in shelters reported experiencing robbery, extortion, bodily harm, kidnapping, and abuse of authority while migrating, all factors which make these individuals vulnerable to modern slavery.[44] As many countries in the Americas have restrictive immigration policies, which force migrants to take increasingly precarious routes, thereby further exacerbating their vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.[45]

Table 9
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by country

Country	Total (%)
Haiti	66
Venezuela	66
Honduras	62
Mexico	58
Guatemala	57
Nicaragua	54
El Salvador	53
Colombia	51
Ecuador	48
Paraguay	48
Peru	47
Brazil	47
Bolivia	47
Jamaica	45
Cuba	43
Guyana	41
Dominican Republic	41
Trinidad and Tobago	38
Argentina	36
Panama	33
Uruguay	27
United States	25
Costa Rica	24
Chile	22
Canada	11

What are governments in the region doing to address modern slavery?

Walk Free has assessed government responses to modern slavery in 32 countries in the Americas. Governments across the region scored an average of 48 per cent, second only to Europe and Central Asia. National responses in the Americas are mixed. Despite some strong responses in the region, there is evidence of weak criminal justice systems and inadequate protection for survivors, which are compounded by government crises, corruption, and large migration flows.

Wealth disparity impacts government responses to modern slavery within the region. Wealthier countries typically demonstrated stronger responses to modern slavery, with the US (67 per cent) and Canada (60 per cent) — the region's wealthiest countries — ranking first and second respectively. The US also performed well at the global level, ranking within the top five. At the same time, some countries with comparatively lower wealth also demonstrated strong responses to modern slavery. Argentina's response (58 per cent) ranked third in the region, only just below Canada, despite having less than half the GDP per capita PPP (current international $) (US$20,769 compared to US$46,572).[46] Some of the countries that demonstrated the least action to respond to modern slavery had the lowest GDP per capita among countries assessed and had experienced political and economic disruption; for example, Venezuela (27 per cent) and Cuba (31 per cent).

The US, Canada, Argentina, and Uruguay demonstrated the strongest responses to modern slavery. Compared to others in the Americas, these countries are generally taking concrete actions to improve certain aspects of survivor support, strengthen criminal justice systems, and address risk factors. The Canadian government routinely releases annual reports describing actions to combat modern slavery and has an independent oversight mechanism in place for monitoring the functioning and effectiveness of its National Action Plan.[47] In 2019, Canada also ratified the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 with its ratification entering into force on 17 June 2020.[48] Venezuela demonstrated the weakest responses to modern slavery. Venezuela continues to be affected by protracted economic and political instability, which hampered the government's ability to respond.[49]

"My employer took away my passport, locked me in the house and disconnected the phone whenever she left home. I was made to sleep on the basement floor. I was so isolated from the outside world that I had no idea there was help available."

Fainess Lipinga, United States [50]

Saint Lucia, Canada, and Uruguay have all taken further action to combat modern slavery since the previous assessment of government responses in 2018. In Saint Lucia, the government introduced a hotline that facilitates reporting to specialised human trafficking task forces, federal authorities, local law enforcement, and service providers.[51] This was accompanied by a widespread awareness campaign to promote the hotline.[52] Since the last report, Peru, Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, and Suriname have also ratified the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930,[53] while the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) entered into force in Mexico, Peru, and Antigua and Barbuda.[54]

The strength of legislative frameworks to combat modern slavery in the Americas is varied. Across the region, 21 countries criminalise human trafficking, 12 countries criminalise forced labour, and only seven countries criminalise forced marriage (Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Saint Lucia, Bahamas, Canada, and Belize). The US provided up to US$10 million in funding for programs to prevent child marriage around the world from 2017 to 2020,[55] yet most of its states still allow children under the age of 18 to marry and eight have not set a minimum age.[56] In most countries assessed, governments provided training for the judiciary and prosecution, however only 11 countries provided this training regularly. When considering protections for children, 15 countries have criminalised child commercial sexual exploitation; however, only Colombia, Nicaragua, and Panama have criminalised the use of children in armed conflict. Only Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago are yet to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

While the majority of countries in the region had specialised law enforcement units to investigate modern slavery, 16 of them did not have the

Table 10
Government response score, by country and milestone

Country	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total (%)
United States	86	62	63	64	38	**67**
Canada	59	58	75	79	25	**60**
Argentina	50	73	75	64	0	**58**
Uruguay	55	73	50	64	0	**56**
Chile	55	69	50	64	0	**55**
Mexico	50	65	88	57	0	**55**
Peru	59	65	63	57	0	**55**
Bahamas	68	65	25	50	0	**53**
Brazil	45	50	75	57	38	**51**
Costa Rica	50	62	63	50	13	**51**
Ecuador	50	58	63	57	13	**51**
Guyana	50	65	63	50	0	**51**
Jamaica	41	62	88	57	0	**51**
Panama	41	65	50	71	0	**51**
Saint Lucia	45	69	50	57	0	**51**
Paraguay	41	69	63	43	0	**49**
Trinidad and Tobago	50	65	63	36	0	**49**
Bolivia	32	58	75	57	13	**47**
Guatemala	59	50	63	43	0	**47**
Honduras	45	54	50	64	0	**47**
Colombia	45	46	63	57	13	**46**
Dominican Republic	32	62	63	57	0	**46**
Belize	50	58	38	43	0	**45**
El Salvador	45	58	50	43	0	**45**
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	59	50	63	29	0	**45**
Antigua and Barbuda	36	54	63	50	0	**44**
Barbados	36	54	38	50	0	**41**
Haiti	41	38	38	50	0	**37**
Nicaragua	27	50	38	43	0	**36**
Cuba	27	38	50	29	0	**31**
Suriname	36	35	25	36	0	**31**
Venezuela	14	46	25	29	0	**27**

resources to operate effectively. In El Salvador, both the anti-trafficking police and prosecution units did not have enough resources to investigate and prosecute cases and were further impeded by the lack of an electronic case management system.[57] Additionally, there is evidence that survivors of modern slavery have been treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under the control of criminals in the US, Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, and Honduras. In the US, survivors are criminalised and face challenges finding employment and housing because of charges laid against them while they were under the control of criminals.[58]

All countries in the Americas are involved in a regional response to modern slavery. National coordination bodies exist in all but two countries (Cuba and Venezuela); however, only the US, Guyana, and Canada include survivors of modern slavery in this coordination. Almost all countries in the Americas have a National Action Plan to combat modern slavery; only Chile does not. Chile's draft National Action Plan has not been formally approved or made public, while after years of awaiting approval, Paraguay finally implemented a National Action Plan covering the period from 2020 to 2024.[59]

While nearly all countries in the Americas have criminalised corruption, allegations of official complicity in modern slavery cases were reportedly not investigated in 17 countries. In Mexico, where an anonymous hotline to report corruption of officials received no tips despite reports of government officials facilitating modern slavery, some officials have been investigated but there have been no convictions.[60] Labour inspections specifically targeting modern slavery occur in 24 countries, although none have sufficient labour inspectors to cover the entire population or to allow labour inspectors to enter premises unannounced. Only in Honduras are labour inspectors able to enforce fines. In 12 countries, not all children are able to access birth registration systems, which creates significant vulnerability due to related barriers to accessing education and employment.

There is evidence of awareness campaigns targeting known modern slavery risks in all but two countries in the region. In 2021, Canada launched a five-year awareness campaign based on a survey of public attitudes and awareness on human trafficking.[61] There is also evidence that governments have facilitated research on modern slavery in 19 countries, including, for example, a 2021 study on the state of human trafficking in Honduras[62] and a 2020 study to reduce vulnerability to human trafficking and crime in Saint Lucia.[63] That being said, state-imposed forced labour, such as abuse of compulsory prison labour, undermines any government efforts to tackle modern slavery in Brazil[64] and the US.[65]

Although the Americas has the second strongest response in terms of addressing forced labour in global supply chains in comparison to other regions, the level of action remains low. Recently, Mexico and Canada joined the US in enacting legislation that prohibits companies from importing goods produced through forced labour. The US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement came into effect in July 2020 and prohibited the importation of goods produced with forced labour into each country's territory.[66] In the same month, Canada amended its Customs Tariff to incorporate the restriction on goods produced with forced labour,[67] and, more recently, passed its own "Modern Slavery Act" which imposes a mandatory reporting obligation on certain government institutions and private sector entities.[68] The US also passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in 2021, which entered into effect in June 2022, to prevent goods made with forced labour of Uyghurs from entering the US market.[69]



Mexico City, Mexico, August 2021.

A young boy searches through waste for fruit, vegetables and any food that is in good condition to take home. While many children are returning to the classroom after pandemic-related restrictions have lifted, he and his brother are not able to as their family's economic situation has been affected by lockdowns and they have had to work with their parents to be able to eat. Photo credit: Aidee Martinez / Eyepix Group/Future Publishing via Getty Images.

Promising Practices in the Americas

In the Promising Practices Database, 53 of 262 evaluations cover 20 countries in the Americas. Most evaluated programs target human trafficking, child labour, and the worst forms of child labour. Only one evaluation focused on forced, servile, or early marriage, despite it being a significant issue within the region. While the majority of evaluated programs in the region met some or all their objectives, fewer than half of the evaluated programs had reliable methodologies that featured a control or comparison group. However, of these reliable evaluations, the majority had some success in providing insights into what works to address modern slavery in the Americas.

Spotlight on what works

The *Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH)* cash transfer program has provided unconditional cash transfers to families in Ecuador since 1998 and offers valuable lessons for reducing child labour through economic empowerment. The program randomly assigned money to low-income families, while others in the target area who did not receive a transfer were used as a control group. The transfers involved monthly payments of US$15 to female heads of household, which accounted for 7 per cent of monthly expenditure. The evaluation included a sample of 1,488 randomly selected households and conducted baseline and follow-up surveys. The program led to a 78 per cent decline in child labour outside the home among all participants. Inside the home, child labour decreased by 32 per cent. Reducing child labour can lead to a reduction in children who are at risk of the worst forms of child labour, a form of modern slavery. The program demonstrates the importance of unconditional cash transfers in empowering and protecting vulnerable individuals.[70]

Recommendations for governments

1. **Introduce legislation requiring governments and businesses to take steps to identify and address modern slavery in their supply chains, including mandatory human rights due diligence.**
2. **Enact or strengthen existing legislation to ensure that all forms of exploitation are criminalised and penalties for crimes associated with forced labour, forced marriage, and human trafficking are appropriate for the severity of the crime.**
3. **Improve support and identification efforts for all victims throughout the Americas by providing services to all survivors of modern slavery, including men, children, and migrants.**
4. **Establish bilateral agreements protecting labour migrants between countries of origin and destination.**
5. **Adopt and distribute national guidelines for identifying and screening victims and provide systematic and regular training for police and other first responders, as well as border guards, immigration officials, labour inspectors, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, and tourism sector workers, with a particular emphasis on countries receiving large influxes of migrants fleeing crisis in the region.**

Frontline voices:

Black and Brown like me: Racial roots of modern slavery

ASHANTE TAYLORCOX
Founder and Executive Director of You Are More Than Inc.

Ashante Taylorcox is the Founder and Executive Director of You Are More Than Inc. – a US-based organisation that aims to transform the growth and potential of marginalised survivors of modern slavery. It does this through survivor-centred aftercare support that provides barrier-free access to mental health services, education, and financial stability. In this essay, she focuses on the unique experiences of survivors of colour and offers solutions for how the modern slavery movement can best respond and adapt to ensure true racial equity.

Historically, slavery has been deeply rooted in racial inequity. To justify the trafficking and exploitation of Black women and girls during and prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, we were often sexualized at a very early age and seen as "jezebels," "promiscuous," and "sexual deviants." Today, Black women are disproportionately represented in trafficking statistics and the sexualisation of Black women and girls continues. Racial tropes deeply rooted in slavery still impact survivors' access to services throughout the anti-trafficking movement.

When disclosing experiences of sexual violence to service providers, survivors of trafficking often face culturally specific barriers. This is due to systemic and individual biases and stereotypes throughout the anti-trafficking movement. These biases can look like the "Strong Black Women" trope, in which Black youth and women of colour are seen as less deserving of support because of stereotypes that sexual violence is normal for Black survivors.

It follows that we cannot feel harm from these experiences because it is "normalised" within Black communities. Black men and boys often face gendered racism and are more than likely to be seen as perpetrators and/or criminals rather than as potential victims. As young as five years old, Black girls are adultified, seen as needing less nurturance, and more knowledgeable about adult experiences and topics, and because we develop more quickly than our white peers, we are often over-sexualised. Finally, many service providers struggle with understanding the deep-rooted correlation between exploitation and the racial trauma that many survivors face in their daily lives that can impact their sustainability out of the commercial sex industry. This, in turn, leads to minimising the impact that racial trauma has on survivors and they often face microaggressions and further racial discrimination when reaching out for support.

When marginalised survivors exit their trafficking situations, they often enter a world not built for them to succeed. Survivors need access to services and provisions that can support them in finding long-term employment, sustainable housing, and higher education. Additionally, it is vital to hold space for understanding and dismantling systems of oppression, power, and privilege and to address society's often discriminatory view of Black and Brown survivors when accessing services. Placing marginalised survivors at the forefront of the movement and supporting them in building their own tables rather than forcing them to sit at ones



New York, United States June 2020.

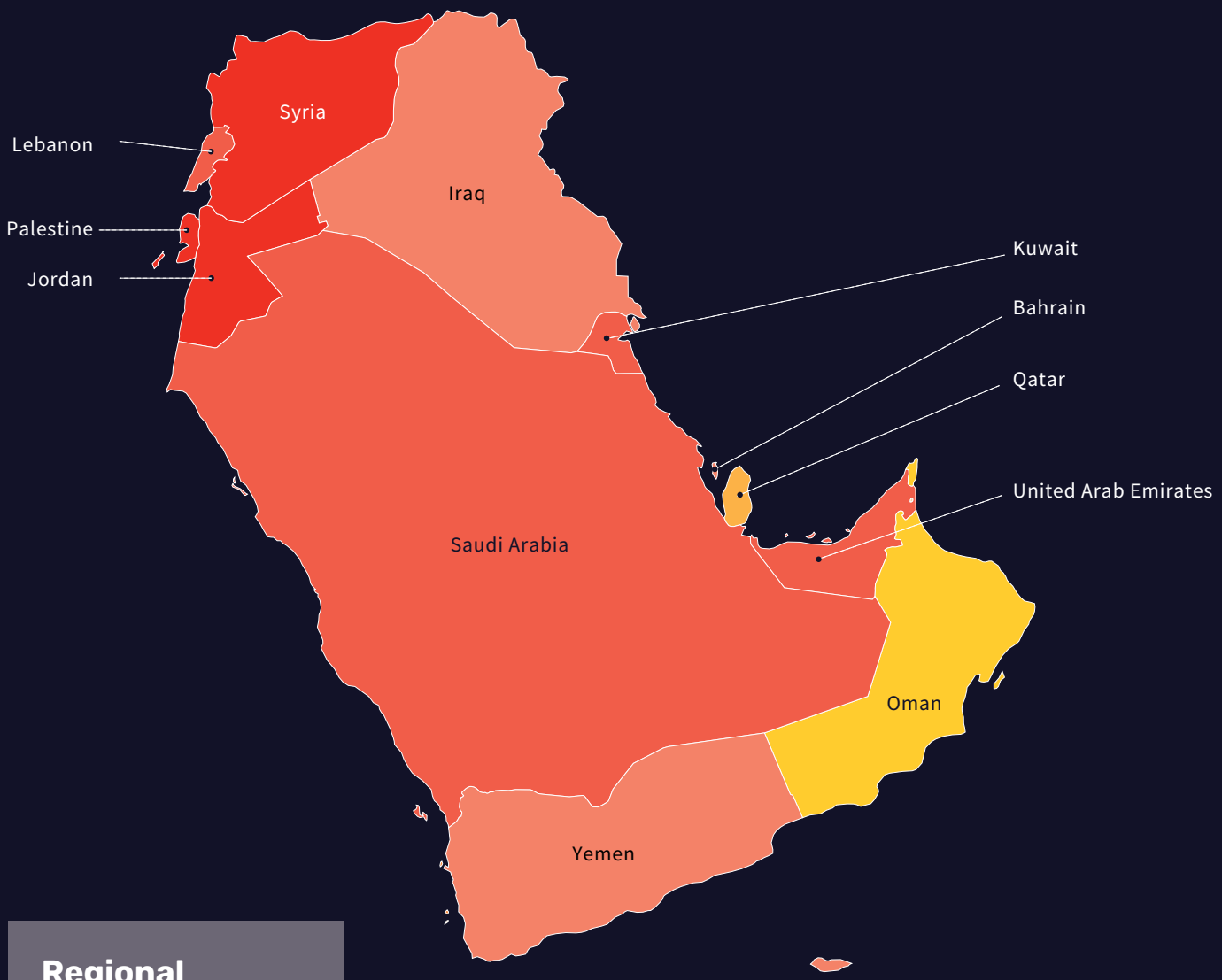
Protesters march on Juneteenth, which marks the end of slavery in the United States, with signs depicting George Floyd, an African American man who was killed by a white police officer Derek Chauvin during an arrest. Floyd's arrest and subsequent death sparked a new wave of #BlackLivesMatter protests as people across the United States demanded an end to police brutality against people of colour and deep-seated racism. Photo credit: Ira L. Black/Corbis via Getty Images

that weren't made for them can cause a positive ripple effect within the modern slavery movement.

In order to address structural and embedded racism in this space, it is vital that we work to dismantle the "ideal victim" trope throughout the modern slavery movement. Persons of colour accessing victim and survivor services must be humanised as individuals worthy of responses that recognise their unique experiences. In line with this, culturally specific services for marginalised populations must be prioritised and appropriately funded throughout the United States and beyond, with a particular focus on those that are led by and for survivors of colour. Agencies that are primarily led by white providers should work towards expanding knowledge in decolonising and deconstructing whiteness within the modern slavery movement through specific trainings that aim to increase understanding of diversity and inclusion. Additionally, it is vital for organisations to invest in economic opportunities for survivors of colour, particularly within leadership roles.

Until we can address the racial roots of slavery globally, survivors of colour will continue to remain marginalised, underserved, and underrepresented within the modern slavery movement and beyond.

ARAB STATES



Regional heat map: prevalence

Low High

The Arab States region is comprised of 12 countries, accounting for 2 per cent of the world's population. While the Arab States is the world's least populated region and smallest in terms of land mass, it comprises a rich diversity of culture, religion, industry, and geography. Yet, the region is impacted by the effects of conflict, political instability, economic shocks, and climate change — factors, among others, that drive modern slavery. More than 20 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) originate from the Arab States, and the region continues to host nearly 14.5 million of those who were forcibly displaced.[1] The effects of protracted conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen spur displacement, food insecurity, and economic instability.

The region is also home to nearly 37 million migrants, originating from within the region, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa.[2] Populations are vulnerable to sexual slavery and forced labour imposed by armed groups, forced labour as a result of displacement from their homes, and forced and child marriage to ease financial strain on households. In Jordan, Lebanon, and wealthier Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — migrant workers are vulnerable to modern slavery under the exploitative *kafala* (sponsorship) system. Forced labour is reported in sectors such as domestic work,[3] construction,[4] hospitality,[5] and security.[6] Within these contexts, gender inequality, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic work to amplify existing vulnerabilities.

Bahrain took the most action to address modern slavery in the Arab States, followed by the UAE, while Iraq and Lebanon took the least action. Syria and Yemen were excluded from the assessment of government action on modern slavery due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function. The need to reform gender discriminatory laws and grant all workers, including migrants, equal protection under national labour laws remains a pressing issue. At the same time, far greater action is needed to address modern slavery in the context of conflict, crisis, and displacement.

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery in the region?

An estimated 1.7 million men, women, and children were living in modern slavery in the Arab States region on any given day in 2021. Despite having the lowest number of people living in modern slavery across all regions, once population was considered, the Arab States had the highest prevalence of modern slavery. An estimated 10.1 people per thousand people were living in modern slavery in the region, which breaks down to 5.3 in forced labour and 4.8 in forced marriage. Forced labour was the most common form of exploitation, accounting for just over half of people living in modern slavery (52 per cent). As in all other regions, the prevalence of forced marriage was higher among females (5.5 per thousand) compared to males (4.3 per thousand).

Within the region, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait were the countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery. Saudi Arabia also had the highest estimated number of people in modern slavery, followed by Iraq, and together they accounted for half of all people in modern slavery in the region. Migrant workers face particular risk of labour exploitation in the region as a result of the *kafala* (sponsorship) system that operates in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.[7] While not a form of modern slavery itself, the system embeds a steep power imbalance between workers and employers, with the result that employers control whether a migrant worker can enter, reside, work, change jobs, and, in some cases, exit the country.[8] Female domestic workers residing the GCC and Jordan and Lebanon are particularly at risk of forced labour in private households[9] and males vulnerable to debt bondage in construction.[10]

Conflict continues to shape experiences of modern slavery in the Arab States.[11] Families displaced by conflict in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen rely on negative coping mechanisms such as forced and child marriage to relieve economic stress and protect daughters from the threat of sexual violence.[12] Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been trafficked from host communities in Jordan and Lebanon for forced marriage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labour, including forced begging.[13] Almost 3,000 Yazidi men and women remain missing after being abducted by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014.[14] Anecdotal reports note that some missing Yazidi women and children are still enslaved in Iraq, Syria, and Türkiye,[15] while others are reportedly held captive inside ISIS widow camps, such as the al-Hawl detention camp in north-eastern Syria.[16]

Although these figures are the most reliable to date, they are conservative estimates given the gaps and limitations of data collection in the Arab States. It is not possible to conduct nationally representative surveys in countries experiencing profound and current conflict which leads to an underestimate of some forms of modern slavery. Moreover, the estimates do not capture all forms of modern slavery, such as the recruitment of child soldiers, trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, and all child marriages. Despite gaps in data, sources indicate that children have been recruited into armed forces in Lebanon,[17] Iraq,[18] Syria,[19] and Yemen,[20] while trafficking for organ removal has been reported in Jordan[21] and Lebanon.[22]

Estimated number living in modern slavery:

1.7 MILLION

(10.1 per thousand)

Regional proportion of global estimate:



Forced labour

52%

Forced marriage

48%

Average vulnerability score:

56%

Average government response rating:

43%

Top 3 countries:	
Bahrain	55%
UAE	50%
Qatar	49%
Bottom 3 countries:	
Lebanon	33%
Iraq	33%
Kuwait	37%

Table 11
Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Rank	Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
1	Saudi Arabia	21.3	740,000	34,814,000
2	United Arab Emirates	13.4	132,000	9,890,000
3	Kuwait	13.0	55,000	4,271,000
4	Jordan	10.0	102,000	10,203,000
5	Syria	8.7	153,000	17,501,000
6	Lebanon	7.6	52,000	6,825,000
7	Qatar	6.8	20,000	2,881,000
8	Bahrain	6.7	11,000	1,702,000
9	Oman	6.5	33,000	5,107,000
10	Yemen	6.0	180,000	29,826,000
11	Iraq	5.5	221,000	40,223,000

What drives vulnerability to modern slavery in the region?

The Arab States is the second most vulnerable region in the world to modern slavery. Conflict as a driver of vulnerability is more significant in the Arab States than any other region. Other drivers of vulnerability were discrimination towards minority groups, political instability, and lack of political rights. At the country level, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq were the most vulnerable countries; these countries also fall within the top 10 most vulnerable countries globally. Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE had the lowest levels of vulnerability within the region; yet compared with the least vulnerable countries around the world, vulnerability is still relatively high in these countries.

Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation is the greatest driver of vulnerability in the region. In Yemen minority groups such as the Al-Muhamasheen have long experienced marginalisation,[23] while in Jordan, Lebanon, and GCC countries, migrant workers are highly vulnerable to exploitation under the *kafala* system, which grants employers substantial control over their lives.[24] Risks have compounded in the wake of COVID-19,[25] with reports of increased wage theft,[26] detention,[27] confinement to the workplace,[28] and unemployment.[29] In GCC countries where migrants comprise 82 per cent of the workforce on average,[30] the pandemic has led to an escalation of workforce nationalisation policies; that is, efforts to increase the proportion of nationals employed.[31] Such policies have spurred increased xenophobia and stereotyping of migrants as responsible for the spread of coronavirus.[32] Individuals belonging to the LGBTQI+ community also face widespread discrimination throughout the region, as homosexuality and gender non-conformity are criminalised in several countries in the region.[33]

Governance issues linked to political instability, restricted political rights, and government inaction to combat modern slavery drive vulnerability across the Arab States. In Iraq and Yemen, corruption and conflict contribute to severe political instability and disrupt government functions, exacerbating vulnerability.[34] Throughout the region, gender inequality both drives, and is reinforced by, governance issues compounding vulnerability for women and girls. Despite some progress, all Arab States countries except the UAE were ranked in the bottom fifth of more than 150 countries assessed in the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap Index, reflecting poorer gender equality in the region across economic, education, health, and political dimensions.[35] No countries in the region afford women equal rights in matters of divorce, inheritance, citizenship, and employment, while in most countries women lack equal access to justice and freedom of movement.[36] These domains are typically governed by personal status laws and male guardianship systems,[37] which severely restrict women's agency and increase their risk of exploitation.[38] Further, during the pandemic, women and girls across the region experienced a heavier domestic work burden[39] and heightened risk of gender-based violence.[40]

"My mother was sick and wanted someone to help her with the housework."

Qatari male on his forced marriage at age 24

Conflict drives vulnerability in the Arab States, yet the effects are not uniform throughout the region. While Oman and the UAE experience comparatively low levels of conflict, heightened risk of modern slavery in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen is spurred by conflict. The erosion of state protection has led to increased risk of conflict-related sexual violence and slavery in these countries.[41] Meanwhile, conflict-related displacement has entrenched risks region-wide. At least 12.3 million people were internally displaced in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen in 2021,[42] and a further 2.1 million refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and others of concern were recorded throughout the Arab States.[43] With resources in host countries increasingly strained,[44] most of these people face insecure conditions and complex humanitarian needs,[45] fuelling their vulnerability to modern slavery. For example, Syrian refugee girls in Jordan[46] and Lebanon[47] may be forced to marry as a means to access supplies and private shelters, and to protect against sexual violence and community perceptions of impurity. At the same time, research indicates that the influence of the host community may see families resist traditional expectations and delay child marriage.[48] Underreporting of sexual violence due to patriarchal norms, particularly when victims are men and boys,[49] as well as a lack of services for males, limits our understanding of their experiences of child and forced marriage in displacement settings.[50]

The effects of climate change are felt across the region, from severe drought in Syria[51] to desertification in Jordan,[52] with extreme water stress affecting most Arab States countries.[53] In Yemen, natural disasters displaced more than 220,000 people in 2020 alone,[54] while the war in Ukraine has caused disruptions to critical food imports in the Arab States region,[55] worsening the humanitarian crisis there. The impacts of climate change exacerbate the push factors that make people vulnerable to modern slavery, including poverty, loss of livelihoods, displacement, and distress migration,[56] with women and girls disproportionately impacted.[57] Where livelihoods are threatened, families may turn to negative coping mechanisms such as forced and child marriage,[58] or resort to irregular migration in search of alternative income, where risks of trafficking are heightened.[59] Climate-related resource scarcity can also trigger conflict, or spur recruitment into armed groups due to loss of livelihoods,[60] further compounding vulnerability to modern slavery.

Table 12
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by country

Country	Total (%)
Yemen	89
Syria	83
Iraq	82
Lebanon	60
Saudi Arabia	53
Jordan	49
Bahrain	40
Oman	40
United Arab Emirates	40
Kuwait	39
Qatar	38

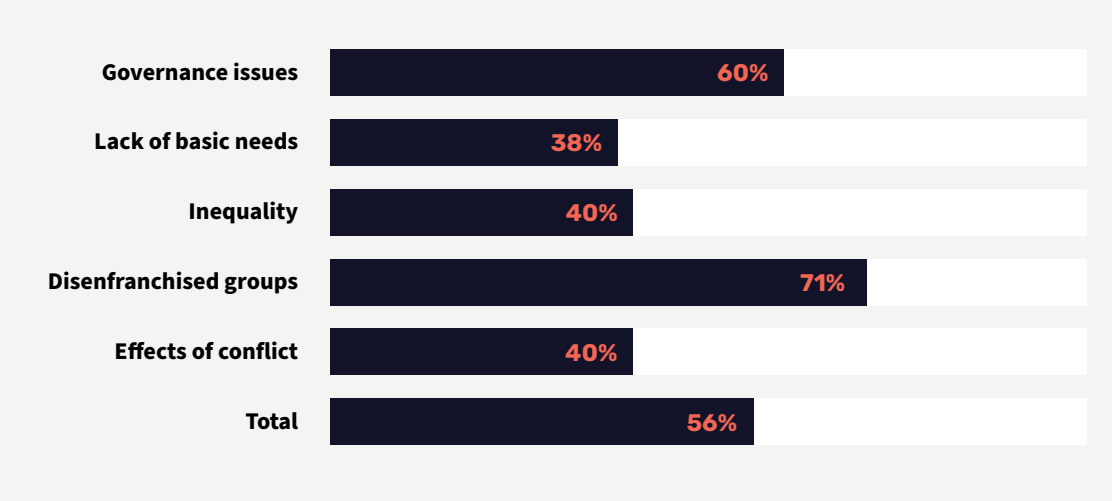


Figure 15
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by dimension

What are governments in the region doing to address modern slavery?

Walk Free assessed government responses to modern slavery in nine countries in the region.[61] Due to ongoing disruptions to government and limited data, Palestine, Syria and Yemen were excluded. The Arab States region scored an average government response rating of 43 per cent, the third highest score of the five regions. Government responses featured efforts to improve survivor support and better coordinate the response to modern slavery at the national and regional level. Despite some efforts to strengthen criminal justice mechanisms, the criminal justice response remained the weakest of any region. As in the 2018 GSI, no countries in the Arab States region have taken action to combat modern slavery in supply chains.

GDP per capita PPP (current international $) varied greatly at the country level,[62] with wealthier GCC countries typically taking relatively stronger action to respond to modern slavery. For example, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, and Qatar are among the region's wealthiest nations and demonstrated the strongest responses to modern slavery in the region. However, when compared to countries of similar wealth in other regions, GCC countries — particularly Kuwait — displayed a weak response relative to wealth,[63] with significant gaps in protections for migrant workers persisting across the subregion. Migrant workers are highly vulnerable to exploitation under the *kafala* system, Jordan, Lebanon, and the GCC countries.[64] During the reporting period, these countries continued to implement laws or policies that made it difficult for migrant workers to freely leave abusive employers. Across the region, only Kuwait and Iraq covered all categories of workers under national labour laws.[65] In a positive step, Oman,[66] Qatar,[67] and Saudi Arabia[68] adopted reforms to the *kafala* system, yet these were insufficient to dismantle the system entirely.

GCC countries have significantly higher GDP per capita than Lebanon and Iraq, the two countries taking the least action to address modern slavery. Government response efforts in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq were constrained by limited resources as these countries continued to grapple with the flow-on effects of conflict in Syria and Yemen.[69] However, despite this, Jordan took some positive action to respond to modern slavery in 2021, amending its 2009 anti-trafficking law to enhance witness and victim protection and access to compensation.[70]

Since 2018, most countries have taken further action to improve their response to modern slavery. For example, the government of Qatar established its first dedicated shelter for survivors of trafficking[71] and Kuwait commenced meetings of its national anti-trafficking committee.[72] Saudi Arabia launched an awareness campaign on how to identify and report modern slavery[73] and established a National Referral Mechanism,[74] with the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 also entering into force there in 2021.[75] No other countries made efforts to ratify international conventions since 2018 and, concerningly, the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)[76] has to date not been ratified by any country in the region. Further, no country has fully criminalised all forms of modern slavery, hampering access to justice for survivors. Oman,[77] the UAE,[78] and Qatar are the only countries to criminalise forced labour, while forced marriage is criminalised only in Iraq.[79] No countries have established a minimum marriage age of 18 without exception.

Table 13
Government response score, by country and milestone

Country*	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total %)
Bahrain	77	50	63	57	0	**55**
United Arab Emirates	59	42	75	64	0	**50**
Qatar	59	42	63	64	0	**49**
Saudi Arabia	59	54	63	43	0	**49**
Jordan	50	54	50	50	0	**46**
Oman	41	38	50	50	0	**38**
Kuwait	36	42	50	43	0	**37**
Iraq	41	38	38	29	0	**33**
Lebanon	32	42	50	29	0	**33**

* Palestine, Yemen and Syria excluded from analysis due to limited data



Chtoura, Lebanon, May 2021.

A young female Syrian refugee, who is just 19 years old, visits the office of a local NGO which provides assistance to young female survivors of child marriage. She was 17 years old when she married, and divorced a year later. Yet, young female divorcees living in Syrian refugee camps face significant stigma and hardship, and are particularly vulnerable to abuse including forced marriage and forced sexual exploitation. Photo credit: Marwan Naamani/ picture alliance via Getty Images.

Gaps in support services appeared across the region, with four countries neglecting to make services available for all survivors. Lebanon took the least action to identify and support survivors, while Saudi Arabia joined Bahrain as the only other country in the region to distribute national victim identification guidelines to all first responders.[80] Three countries provided training for police recruits and only Saudi Arabia and the UAE provided regular training for frontline responders. There is evidence that survivors were detained or deported for immigration violations in all countries except the UAE,[81] where information suggests that inconsistent application of screening procedures may have meant survivors were wrongly criminalised.[82]

Notably, all countries in the region have established a national body to coordinate the government's response to modern slavery. All countries except Bahrain and Lebanon had a National Action Plan (NAP) to combat slavery in place, yet there is no evidence the NAPs were fully funded or independently monitored. No governments in the region addressed modern slavery in government and business supply chains.

"I needed support from the police but the police didn't help. I wanted them to contact my consulate but they only called the agent."

24-year-old Sierra Leonean female survivor of domestic servitude in Lebanon

Understanding modern slavery in Palestine

Palestine has not been included in our assessments due to the complex and intertwining system of governance and occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which hampers reliable data collection. Administrative control over the West Bank was unevenly split between Israeli and Palestinian authorities under the Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 and 1995, which resulted in the Israeli authorities having greater control over the area than Palestinian authorities.[83] A *de facto* Hamas government controls the Gaza Strip, however an Israeli land, air, and sea blockade has been in place since 2007 following their election.[84] Data on modern slavery in the Gaza Strip is severely limited; international and human rights organisations have been routinely denied entry by Israeli forces enforcing the blockade.[85] Several international organisations, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, have recently acknowledged that the Israeli government is perpetrating apartheid in Palestine.[86]

Despite limited data, anecdotal evidence indicates that Palestinians experience various forms of modern slavery, including forced labour, worst forms of child labour, forced begging, and forced and child marriage.[87] Palestinian men and boys employed in the Israeli construction sector are vulnerable to debt bondage, as discriminatory employers charge them high fees and commissions and sub-contract them to other employers illegally.[88] Illegal workers without permits face greater risks of abuse and exploitation.[89] Gender biases further embed women and girls' risk of modern slavery, particularly forced commercial sexual exploitation and forced and child marriage,[90] with risk heightened for Palestinian women and girls living in refugee camps.[91] Palestinian government data estimates that more than 17,600 girls age 15 to 19 were married in the West Bank in 2018.[92] In Gaza, an estimated 11 per cent of women were married before the age of 18.[93] There are also reports of women and girls being trafficked from the West Bank to the Al Naqab desert[94] where they are forced to marry older men.[95]

Vulnerability to, and experiences of, modern slavery are also shaped by the systemic discrimination, dispossession, and displacement of Palestinians living under apartheid. In the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians are denied citizenship rights, and require Israeli-issued identity documents to live and work in the territories.[96] The work permit system creates greater risks of exploitation as it ties Palestinian workers to their employer. In addition, overnight workers have their identity documents withheld as a requirement of their permit.[97] Reforms to the permit system were introduced in 2020 to ease worker mobility in the construction sector, yet these have not been enforced.[98] Like the conditions created under the *kafala* system, the permit system entrenches power imbalances and restricts workers' movements, increasing their vulnerability to labour exploitation in Israel.[99] The ongoing occupation also prevents some people from seeking help, for example, women and girls who have been trafficked within the 1948 borders for the purposes of forced marriage report not seeking assistance due to fears of being intercepted by Israeli authorities.[100]

It is difficult to comprehensively assess Palestine's efforts to combat modern slavery as a result of the complex and continuing history of occupation, which has resulted in several different legislative regimes having the force of law. However, some actions, albeit limited and often with exceptions, have been undertaken. A broad summary of the criminal justice framework is listed in Table 14. There are several gaps in removing risks in legislation, including gaps in labour laws that leave domestic workers without protection, prohibitions on sex work, and laws that entrench gender biases in areas such as guardianship, inheritance, and divorce.[101] Field sources confirm that there are significant gaps in the government's response, ranging from a lack of support for NGOs that provide direct services to survivors to a lack of awareness among government officials and frontline responders on how to identify victims and apply the relevant anti-trafficking laws.[102] Within the West Bank, there is significant room for the government authorities to strengthen the legislative framework criminalising all forms of modern slavery, support survivors, and reduce risk of exploitation.



West Bank, Palestine, October 2020.

A Palestinian man harvests olives on his land that was split by Israel's controversial separation wall. To be able to harvest his crops on the other side of the wall, a special Israeli army permit is required. The United Nations has noted that the separation wall violates international laws and severely limits Palestinian movement and access to livelihoods. Photo credit: Emmanuel Dunand/AFP via Getty Images.

Table 14
Legal protections against modern slavery in the West Bank

Form of modern slavery	Level of protection	Source of law
Slavery	It is not clear that Jordanian prohibitions against slavery apply extraterritorially to Palestine.	Jordanian Abolition of Slavery Act of 1929.[103]
Forced labour	Forced labour is not separately criminalised in Palestine. Previously, Jordanian labour law had criminalised causing, procuring, or encouraging children under the age of 16 into forced begging.	Palestinian Labour Law No. 7 of 2000, which replaced the Jordanian Labour Law of 1960 in the West Bank.[104]
Forced marriage	Forced marriages are not criminalised within Palestine, however both brides and grooms must provide their full and free consent to the marriage. In practice, the importance of the bride's consent may be limited, as women and girls of any age require the consent of a male guardian to enter into a marriage.	Jordanian Personal Status Law of 1976.[105]
Human trafficking	Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is criminalised. However, no other offences exist for other forms of human trafficking.	Jordanian Penal Code of 1960.[106]
Child marriage	Child marriage is not criminalised. However, a minimum age of marriage is set at 18 for both boys and girls, although exceptions exist if judges of religious and family courts consider it is in the interests of both parties to allow the marriage.	Decision by the Palestinian Authority passed in November 2019.[107]



Promising Practices in the Arab States

Only 6 per cent of program evaluations in the Promising Practices Database were delivered in the Arab States region. Several evaluated programs targeted specific forms of modern slavery such as human trafficking, while others targeted related areas such as migration, refugees, and internal displacement. Evaluations of programs targeting forced marriage remain a significant gap: despite the highest regional prevalence of forced marriage being found in the Arab States, only three evaluated programs from the region targeted forced marriage. Overall, there is limited information on what works to reduce risk in specific sectors, with only two evaluations explicitly targeting high-risk sectors. One evaluated program targeted camel racing in the UAE and four countries outside the region, while another targeted the domestic work sector in nine Arab States countries. While most evaluated programs were found to have met some objectives, potential lessons learned are significantly limited as no evaluation methodology included a control or comparison group to reliably test these findings. Program designers, funders, and evaluators must systematically capture data and publicly share future evaluations to help fill the significant evidence gap on what works to address modern slavery in the Arab States.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Dismantle kafala by expanding coverage of national labour laws to include all workers, including migrant, domestic, seasonal workers. Ensure that migrant workers can freely enter, reside and exit the country and leave or transfer jobs without employer consent.**

2. **Abolish provisions in the law that criminalise absconding and enforce measures to discourage employers from filing false allegations against workers. Enforce laws that criminalise charging of recruitment fees and withholding of passports and identity documents.**

3. **Equip humanitarian practitioners to respond to modern slavery risks in crisis settings by rolling out the Global Protection Cluster's Introductory Guide to Anti-Trafficking Action in Internal Displacement Contexts.[108]**

4. **Introduce a suite of legal protections to tackle forced marriage, including by criminalising all forms of modern slavery in line with international law and raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions.**

5. **Tackle underlying gender inequality by affording women equal rights in matters of divorce, inheritance, citizenship, and employment, and strengthen access to access to justice and freedom of movement for women and girls.**

Badra, Iraq, July 2022.

A man climbs a palm tree to harvest dates in a country once known as the home of "30 million palm trees." Iraq's date production has been blighted by decades of conflict and environmental challenges, including drought, desertification, and salinisation. This has resulted in greater rates of poverty, food insecurity, and vulnerability to modern slavery. Photo credit: Asaad Niazi/ AFP via Getty Images.

Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: Life under the *kafala* system



Beirut, Lebanon, September 2020.

A former domestic worker from Sierra Leone uses her mobile phone while waiting to be repatriated later that evening. Lebanon's economic collapse, as well as COVID-19 and the August 4 blast at the Port of Beirut, have left a significant number of migrant workers in a humanitarian crisis. Many domestic workers, forced to live on the streets, are desperate to leave but cannot afford to buy a plane ticket home, and have received limited assistance from diplomatic representatives. Photo credit: Aline Deschamps via Getty Images.

The promise of decent wages and steady employment attracts many migrants from countries throughout Africa and Asia to the Arab States. However, the reality often differs substantially once in country and under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system, a restrictive work permit system that ties migrant workers to their employer.[1]

By placing control over entry, exit, work, and residence in the hands of employers, the system leaves migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation and modern slavery,[2] particularly in domestic work,[3] construction,[4] hospitality,[5] and sectors where seasonal work is common.[6] Variations of the *kafala* system exist in Jordan, Lebanon, and the GCC countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar,[7] Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Collectively, the Arab States region is home to more than 24 million migrant workers,[8] comprising over 40 per cent of the labour force — the highest share of any region.[9]

What is the *kafala* system?

The *kafala* system is a set of laws and policies that delegate responsibility for migrant workers to employers, including control over their ability to enter, reside, work, and, in some cases, exit the host country.[10] Workers typically cannot leave or change jobs prior to completion of their contract, before a certain time period, or without permission from their employer. Those who do leave may run the risk of arrest and deportation for the crime of absconding.[11] The system also limits the ability of exploited workers to access justice. In practice, a worker who leaves their job not only risks losing their means of earning an income, but also risks becoming an illegal migrant. This threatens their ability to pursue legal action against their employer and recover any income they are owed. If deported, workers may also face bans on returning to the country to work.[12] Legal redress is made even more difficult by prolonged, expensive court processes, limited legal assistance, and the absence of interpreters.[13] Some employers reportedly create additional barriers to justice; for example, by levelling false allegations of theft against migrant workers in retaliation for leaving[14] or filing false absconding reports with law enforcement to avoid paying wages owed.[15] Migrant workers can be deported even where no evidence exists to support the accusations, while employers enjoy impunity.[16]

What are the origins of the *kafala* system?

The differences between past and present understandings of the *kafala* system are vast. In classical Arabic, the term *kafala* referred to relationships between an authority figure or person with power (the *kafeel*) and a vulnerable or relatively weaker person (the *makfūl*), whereby the *kafeel* would take legal responsibility for the *makfūl* without benefitting from the relationship. Specifically, *kafala* meant "to guarantee" (as one would a business loan) and "to take care of" (for example, become the legal guardian of orphaned children).[17] The traditional interpretation of *kafala* as a form of alternative care is recognised in international law,[18] and may still be practiced in modern settings; for example, in the care of orphaned children and unaccompanied refugee minors.[19] However, the understanding of the system as a means of protection, trust, and social solidarity has largely been eclipsed by the widespread oppression of migrant workers under its present-day application as a sponsorship process.[20] This divergence between past and present applications highlights the lingering impact of colonialism.

The first example of present *kafala* was reportedly in the pearl diving industry in the British Colonial Protectorate of Bahrain in the 1920s, and subsequently spread throughout other colonies in the Gulf states.[21] In Bahrain, colonial administrators used the *kafala* system to facilitate the entry of migrant workers to fill perceived labour shortages on British-owned pearl diving ships while exerting their control over a foreign labour force by ensuring an acceptable *kafeel* took legal responsibility for the workers.[22] Most pearl divers were bound to their ship by debt and subject to abusive labour practices while onboard.[23] The repression of migrant workers is now entrenched in law and social norms. While present *kafala* is upheld by sponsorship requirements rather than debt,[24] both national and foreign employers today benefit from the disproportionate control the *kafala* system provides over workers.[25] Infantilising attitudes that position migrant workers as in need of protection justify restrictions on their mobility and other freedoms under the *kafala* system.[26]

Modern slavery experiences in Lebanon and Kuwait

Female migrant domestic workers face specific challenges under the *kafala* system. Globally, patriarchal norms that devalue domestic labour as "women's work" confine women within the household and make them less visible to authorities.[27] In high-income countries, domestic work is typically performed by low-paid female migrants who fill gaps in care driven by the curtailing of social welfare. These workers are subject to constant surveillance and face higher risks of gender-based violence, discrimination, and exploitation within their employer's households. With their movements heavily restricted, it is even more difficult for victims to leave situations of abuse.

In 2020, Walk Free interviewed 30 female survivors of domestic servitude who were exploited in Lebanon and Kuwait. Respondents came from six countries, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone, and were employed in Kuwait and Lebanon, where strict versions of the *kafala* system operate. While migrants do not require an exit permit to depart Lebanon or Kuwait, all other elements of the *kafala* system are present. In Lebanon, migrants cannot leave their job without their employer's permission[28] and in Kuwait, domestic workers must receive approval from the Ministry of Interior and Labour Court to transfer jobs without consent from their employer.[29] Getting this approval requires workers to leave their employer's household, which can lead to accusations of absconding and result in deportation:[30] seeking help is not without significant risks for migrant domestic workers. The interviews highlighted the difficulties women faced when seeking to leave their situation. Three-quarters of respondents had limited or no access to a phone in at least one household where they worked, and more than half reported having their movements restricted, including by being locked inside places of employment or monitored on camera. Half of all respondents physically escaped their household, and five women were subsequently arrested by police despite having experienced abuse and mistreatment by their employers. At least nine respondents were deported or repatriated after leaving their workplace, however this number is likely higher given not all respondents reported how they returned home.

"After I escaped, [my employers] told me that I had been reported to police for having stolen money from the home. Shortly afterwards, the police showed up and arrested me...When the day of my flight arrived, I wasn't even allowed to collect my possessions. I was still owed four months' salary and returned empty-handed."

23-year-old Ghanaian female survivor of domestic servitude



Manila, Philippines, February 2023.

Relatives of Jullebee Ranara, a migrant domestic worker who was killed in Kuwait, call for justice at her funeral. Police later arrested the 17 year-old son of Jullebee's employers in relation to her killing. Migrant domestic workers in Kuwait often face sexism and racism, as well as risks of exploitation by employers due to the extreme power imbalance created by the kafala system. Photo credit: Jam Sta Rosa/AFP via Getty Images.

Perceived or actual lack of protection prevented victims leaving situations of exploitation. Respondents reported that a lack of assistance from embassies, consulates, employment agencies, police, and beliefs that they could not turn to authorities were barriers to seeking help. While it is unclear how some respondents returned home, several were assisted by civil society organisations or family members, while few others had the cost of their tickets home paid for by their employers and agents. In one instance, a worker in Kuwait was required to pay her employer to be allowed to leave. For some workers, returning was further complicated by unpaid wages and confiscation of passports. When specifically asked if their documents were seized, all respondents in Cameroon reported that their passports were seized in Lebanon, where the practice is not outlawed,[31] and in Kuwait, where passport withholding is illegal.[32]

"I didn't go to police because they always support their citizens and will always treat my escape as a breach of contract. That was what my employer told me. I got to a church owned by a Ghanaian and they also told me they can't be of help since I've breached a contract...I was arrested by police on the street, the Kuwait government paid for my flight."

31-year-old Cameroonian female survivor of domestic servitude

Almost two-thirds of respondents paid fees to brokers in their country of origin or transit, including in Ethiopia and Guinea, where domestic laws prohibit workers being charged recruitment fees.[33] Payment of fees increases risk of debt bondage in the Gulf states, where workers are forced to work for little or no pay in order to repay recruitment and related fees.[34] While Kuwait[35] and Jordan[36] prohibit charging recruitment fees to migrant domestic workers, and the remaining *kafala* countries prohibit charging recruitment fees to all migrant workers,[37] exorbitant fees are still passed on in practice.[38] To cover these costs, some respondents borrowed money from family or arranged to pay the money when they began their job, which typically carried the false promise of a good salary and ultimately led to situations of debt bondage. Many respondents were also deceived about the nature and conditions of the work, with more than a third of them being promised an entirely different form of employment than domestic work. Among respondents in Cameroon, just under half did not sign a contract and some respondents signed contracts in a language they did not understand. Meanwhile, two Ethiopian migrant workers reported being encouraged to travel despite a temporary ban on labour migration to Gulf states being in effect at the time.

"I think Lebanese law needs to change so that we may have our rights protected. I wouldn't have had to escape."

33-year-old Ethiopian female survivor of domestic servitude

Most migrant workers reported having very little to no knowledge about the destination country prior to travelling. Respondents in Cameroon were asked further questions on what would have been helpful for them in preparing for work. The most common response was knowing the true nature and conditions of the work. When the remaining respondents (those in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone) were asked what support they needed but did not receive, the most common responses focused on greater support from embassies, employment agencies, or police.

Impact of COVID-19

The situation worsened for many migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, with reports of wage theft in the construction,[39] hospitality, and manufacturing sectors in Gulf countries,[40] largely driven by order cancellations, weakened labour protections (allowing employers to reduce wages), and dismissal or repatriation of workers without pay.[41] Migrants from countries in Asia and Africa are often recruited to work in these sectors by a complex network of local brokers, recruitment agents, friends, and relatives.[42] They may receive limited or inaccurate information about the nature of the work and be required to pay substantial recruitment fees to migrate through informal and formal channels, thereby increasing their risk of debt-bondage and exploitation in the destination.[43] During the pandemic, some migrants reportedly defaulted on loan repayments due to wage theft and were subsequently arrested in the UAE,[44] while several migrant workers in Qatar were deported before receiving their wages.[45] Construction workers were physically abused after requesting their unpaid salaries in Saudi Arabia,[46] where the government also allowed a temporary 40 per cent pay reduction in the private sector.[47] Lockdowns intensified social isolation and vulnerability among domestic workers in private households[48] and compounded difficulties in sending remittances home.[49] Some domestic workers in Lebanon were abandoned outside their consulates by employers who said they can no longer afford to pay them.[50]

KAFALA

Forms of tied visa programs operate in several other countries globally, and these systems similarly increase migrant workers' vulnerability to exploitation.[51] However, the various iterations of the *kafala* system involve some of the most restrictive conditions and are present in countries which have among the highest concentrations of migrant workers in the world.[52] Over the past decade, countries that uphold *kafala* have faced significant criticism due to the pervasive abuse of migrant workers under the system, with major international events such as the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup and Dubai World Expo 2020 drawing global attention to the issue.[53] Several countries have instituted reforms, some in response to mounting international pressure, yet no country has abolished *kafala* entirely, with vestiges of the system undermining reform efforts.

Qatar represents one example in which preparations for the FIFA World Cup since 2010 have drawn attention to grave migrant worker abuses in the construction, hotel, and security sectors.[54] Amid mounting criticism in 2017,[55] Qatar agreed to undertake a technical cooperation program with the ILO,[56] seeking to align laws and practices with international labour standards.[57] Promisingly, in 2020 Qatar ceased requiring exit permits for workers excluded from the scope of the labour law, including migrant domestic workers, expanding upon a similar 2018 amendment.[58] Qatar also removed No-Objection Certificate (NOC) requirements, allowing workers to change jobs without permission from their employer under certain conditions.[59] However, these positive reforms have been undermined by gaps in implementation and protections. In practice, the system is not only difficult for migrant workers to navigate, but many are unaware of their right to leave,[60] and even if they are they still face the threat of retaliation from their employers who may file false allegations of theft or absconding.[61] As reports of abuse persisted in the lead-up to the World Cup, human rights organisations continued to call for the government to enforce reforms and for FIFA and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (the body responsible for delivering the event) to strengthen due diligence and monitoring,[62] as well as establish a scheme to remediate harms caused.[63] While global attention was brought to the issue following the games, it has not been followed by any meaningful commitment or action by FIFA and the Qatari government, with impacted migrant workers still struggling to access compensation.[64]

Several other countries have implemented limited reforms to increase job mobility in recent years. In 2021, the government of Oman removed its NOC requirement, allowing workers to transfer jobs without their employer's permission upon completion of their contract.[65] Saudi Arabia's 2021 Labour Reform Initiative similarly allows workers to change jobs or leave the country without employer consent;[66] however, workers must complete one year of their contract and migrant domestic workers, among others, are excluded from this protection.[67] Under 2016 reforms allowing workers to transfer jobs in the UAE, workers must complete their contract or provide advance notice to avoid an employment ban, and may be required to compensate their employer.[68] As in Qatar, absconding is punishable in each of these countries and places migrant workers at risk of arrest or deportation for leaving abusive workplaces.

Even in Bahrain, which previously had the most sweeping reforms to the *kafala* system, gaps in protections persisted.[69] In 2017, the government introduced the Flexi-Permit, allowing migrant workers to freely change jobs and leave the country without facing possible charges of absconding.[70] This granted greater freedom than had ever been seen under the *kafala* system, yet the steep price of the permit deterred those eligible from self-sponsoring[71] and permit-holders lacked defined labour protections under the law.[72] Rather than address these shortcomings in line with civil society recommendations,[73] Bahrain abandoned the system entirely in October 2022,[74] replacing it with a program that allows workers to self-sponsor within designated professions.[75] Under the new system,[76] workers must obtain a vocational work permit through a certified registration centre, effectively privatising the process.[77] While the reforms purport to strengthen protections for migrants, those with irregular status from October 2022 are not eligible for the permit (unlike the Flexi-Permit system).[78] Further, workers must still bear the cost of the permit and can no longer obtain commercial registration.[79] The reforms were passed amid pressure from the business community, which was driven by fears that freelance migrant workers posed a threat to local businesses, and due to a government push to nationalise their workforce in a bid to move away from reliance on migrant workers.[80]

The state of reform

The five elements of the *kafala* system present across countries in the Arab States are set out in Table 15.[81]

Table 15

Status of key elements of the *Kafala* system, by country

Rating scale: ● = in force ◑ = partially in force ○ = not in force

Country	Employer must sponsor entry into country	Employer controls residency / work permit	Employer must grant permission for workers to change / leave job	Employer can report worker for absconding	Employer must grant permission for worker to exit country
Bahrain[82]	● Under reforms introduced in December 2022, visit visas can no longer be converted into a work permits, meaning migrants cannot obtain a work permit without exiting Bahrain.[83]	◑ The vocational work permit allows workers to self-sponsor in designated professions. It is unclear if domestic workers are eligible.[84]	◑ Vocational work permit holders can transfer labour registration centres after a minimum of 30 days from initial registration.[85] Excluding domestic workers,[86] other migrants can transfer after one year with three months' notice.[87]	● Before the Flexi-Permit was cancelled in October 2022, permit holders could not have absconding cases filed against them.[88] It is unclear whether the new permit allows absconding charges to be filed. Other migrant workers can be punished for absconding.[89]	○
Oman[90]	◑ Visit visas may be converted into a work visa without the worker having to exit Oman, however granting of the work visa depends on the employer.[91]	●	◑ Migrant workers can transfer jobs without permission after completion of their contract.[92]	●	○
United Arab Emirates[93]	◑ Free zone workers are sponsored by the free zone authority rather than an employer.[94] Visit visas may also be converted without the worker having to exit the UAE.[95]	●	◑ Requirement for permission is waived in certain circumstances, such as contract expiry or non-payment of wages.[96] Domestic workers may end their contract without consent if their employer violates legal obligations. They can transfer employers upon expiry of the contract.[97]	●	○
Kuwait[98]	●	●	◑ Migrants can change jobs after three years and 90 days' notice without permission.[99] Excludes domestic workers, who require approval from the Ministry of Interior and Labour Court to transfer jobs without consent from their employer.	●	○
Lebanon[100]	●	●	●	●	○
Qatar[101]	●	●	◑ Migrant workers can transfer jobs under certain conditions and with at least one or two month's notice.[102]	●	◑ Almost all migrant workers can depart without permission; however, employers can apply to have up to 5 per cent of certain employees to require prior approval.[103] Domestic workers must give 72 hours' notice.[104]
Saudi Arabia[105]	●	●	◑ Migrants can transfer employers upon completion of their contract, or after one year under certain conditions.[106] Domestic workers can transfer in some cases such as abuse.[107]	●	◑ Migrant workers can apply to exit the country without their employer's permission.[108] This does not apply to domestic workers.[109]
Jordan[110]	●	●	◑ Migrants can terminate unlimited term contracts with one month's notice; however, they may be required to compensate the employer. Limited term contracts can be terminated under certain conditions without permission or upon expiry. Excludes certain categories such as agricultural workers.[111]	●	●

KAFALA



Doha, Qatar, December 2022.

Construction workers, mainly from India, Bangladesh and Nepal, watch the Argentina-Australia match in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Civil society activists criticised the labour conditions faced by the thousands of migrant workers involved in preparing the global tournament, and many migrant workers lost their lives during the construction. At the time of writing, a campaign is being run by civil society activists calling for FIFA to create a fund and financially compensate families of deceased workers. Photo credit: Christian Charisius/picture alliance via Getty Images.

Several countries in the region still grapple with strong opposition to comprehensive reforms due to perceived economic benefits of the *kafala* system and entrenched discriminatory attitudes towards foreign workers.[112] In 2020, prior to the installation of a new government in Lebanon, a new standard unified contract was proposed to allow migrant workers to change employers after one month's notice, among other protections.[113] However, the contract was swiftly struck down by the Shura Council, Lebanon's highest administrative court, after the Syndicate of Owners of Recruitment Agencies in Lebanon claimed that the contract violated the labour law and would adversely affect domestic worker recruitment, a lucrative trade in Lebanon.[114]

The government of Jordan has taken the least action to reform the *kafala* system. Jordan currently maintains all elements of the *kafala* system, whereby migrant workers typically cannot enter or exit the country or transfer jobs without written employer consent.[115] While the government has made some attempts to curb illegal practices of unscrupulous recruitment agents and improve protections,[116] there is a lack of capacity and will to enforce the regulations.[117]

"I wish I knew that going to work there, I didn't have to pay any money to process any documents because my employer was to do everything. And if I fully knew that I was supposed to work as a housemaid, be locked up and denied free movement or be a prisoner, I shouldn't have gone there. I knew nobody working in Lebanon. I signed a contract when I got to Lebanon but did not understand the terms of the contract. I didn't know who the employer was."

34-year-old Cameroonian female survivor of domestic servitude

Recommendations host governments

1. Dismantle kafala by expanding coverage of national labour laws to include all workers and. ensuring migrant workers can freely enter, reside, and exit the country, and leave or transfer jobs without employer consent.

2. Strengthen monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies and high-risk sectors by increasing resources and capacity of labour inspectorates and conducting unannounced labour inspections. In addition, operate reporting mechanisms with whistle-blower protections to allow workers to freely report grievances.

3. Strengthen criminal justice responses, including the provision of free legal and interpretation services, and provide systematic, regular training on victim identification for police and first responders to ensure no victims are detained and deported. Provide training for prosecutors and the judiciary on related legislation to support access to justice, including timely compensation for survivors.

4. Address underlying discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes towards migrant workers that increase their vulnerability to modern slavery across all sectors.

5. Ratify international conventions including the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.

Recommendations sending governments

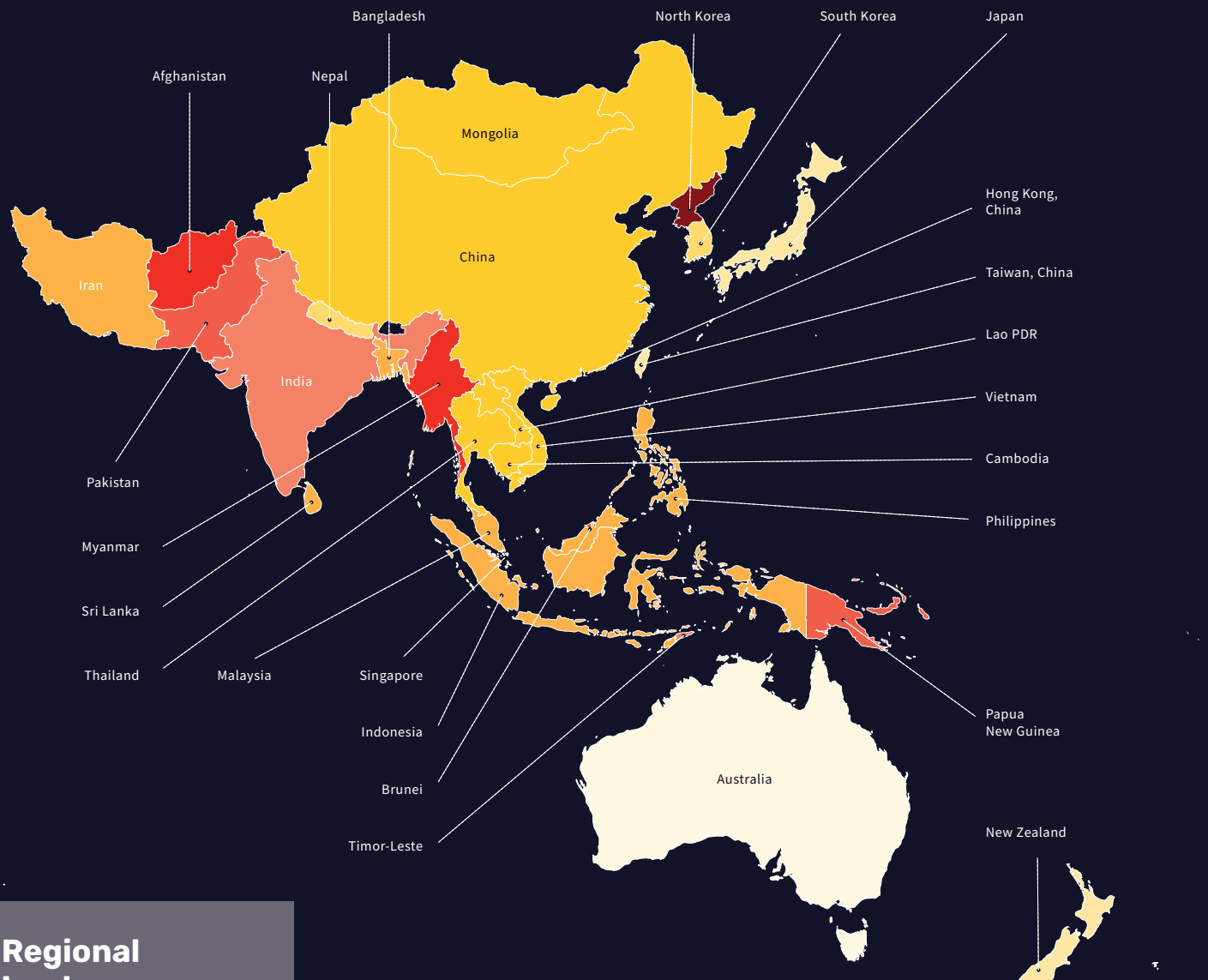
1. Introduce and enforce laws to prohibit charging of recruitment fees to employees and register and monitor local recruitment agencies for deceptive practices, ensuring contracts are made available in a language migrants can understand.

2. Pursue and strengthen bilateral labour agreements to protect migrant workers (rather than implementing labour migration bans) and cooperate with other sending countries to advocate for common standards for the protection of workers, in consultation with migrant workers, survivors, and civil society.

3. Strengthen the capacity of embassies in receiving countries to support survivors, including through deployment of trained labour attachés, and make survivor funds accessible to all migrant workers, regardless of their status.

4. Launch targeted information campaigns and formal training to ensure prospective migrants are informed of the risks, their rights, and support services available in the destination country, and support and engage with returned migrant workers to inform policies and decision-making.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



Regional heat map: prevalence

Low — High

Asia and the Pacific is home to 56 per cent of the world's population, including the two most populous countries, India and China, and experienced the greatest increase in international migrants from 2000 to 2020.[1] The region hosts the largest number of people in modern slavery, with an estimated 15 million people in forced labour. This includes debt bondage among migrants exploited within the region, hereditary forms of bonded labour in South Asia, and state-imposed forced labour in China, North Korea, and other countries. The prevalence of forced marriage in Asia and the Pacific is second highest in the world, after the Arab States, impacting an estimated 4.5 females and 2.1 males per every thousand people.

Although the region is highly diverse in terms of geography, ethnicity, culture, religion, and wealth, modern slavery occurs in every country. Discrimination on the basis of gender, race, caste, and ethnicity drives vulnerability to modern slavery. This vulnerability is compounded by conflict, as seen with the mass displacement of the Rohingya population in Myanmar, political instability, as shown by the seizure of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan, and economic insecurity, as illustrated by the economic crisis and humanitarian emergency in Sri Lanka. To varying extents, the effects of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated vulnerability across the region — driving increased unemployment, poverty, and gender inequality.

Australia took the most action to combat modern slavery in the region, followed by the Philippines and Thailand, while North Korea and Iran took the least. Across most countries, governments should address significant gaps including raising the age of marriage to 18 for girls and boys with no exemptions and ensuring that labour rights are extended to all workers, including migrants.

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery in the region?

On any given day in 2021, an estimated 29.3 million people were living in modern slavery in Asia and the Pacific. This accounts for 59 per cent of the global total. When population size is taken into account, Asia and the Pacific had the third highest prevalence of modern slavery in the world with 6.8 per thousand people in the region forced to work or marry. Among the five regions, Asia and the Pacific had the second highest prevalence of forced marriage (3.3 per thousand) and the third highest prevalence of forced labour (3.5 per thousand).[2]

The country with by far the highest prevalence in Asia and the Pacific, and, indeed, the world, is North Korea, where the population is forced to work by the state or risk being penalised with hard labour in prison camps.[3] In North Korea, an estimated one in every 10 people are in situations of modern slavery.

Following North Korea, Afghanistan, and Myanmar had the second and third highest prevalence of modern slavery in the region. India, China, and North Korea had the highest number — and together accounting for two-thirds of all people in modern slavery in the region. Instability continues to shape experiences of modern slavery across high prevalence countries in Asia and the Pacific. For example, the worsening humanitarian situation caused by the political and economic turmoil drives modern slavery practices in Afghanistan and Myanmar.[4] In these contexts, families may resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as marrying their young daughters, to deal with economic stress.[5] In other countries with a high prevalence of modern slavery, such as Pakistan and India, economic insecurity drives workers to take on risky jobs or loans from unscrupulous employers. Employers then exploit these workers by forcing them into labour-intensive jobs to repay their debts.[6]

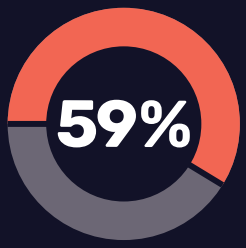
Although these regional figures of modern slavery are the most reliable to date, they are conservative estimates given the gaps and limitations of data in key regions and subregions. For example, difficulties in conducting surveys in countries that are experiencing conflict means that our estimates for these countries likely understate the problem, despite our efforts to address data gaps. These estimates also do not include the recruitment of child soldiers or organ trafficking, which other sources note occur in parts of the region.[7] The true number of people living in situations of modern slavery in Asia and the Pacific is likely much higher.

Estimated number living in modern slavery:

29 MILLION

(6.8 per thousand)

Regional proportion of global estimate:



Forced labour

52%

Forced marriage

48%

Average vulnerability score:

48%

Average government response rating:

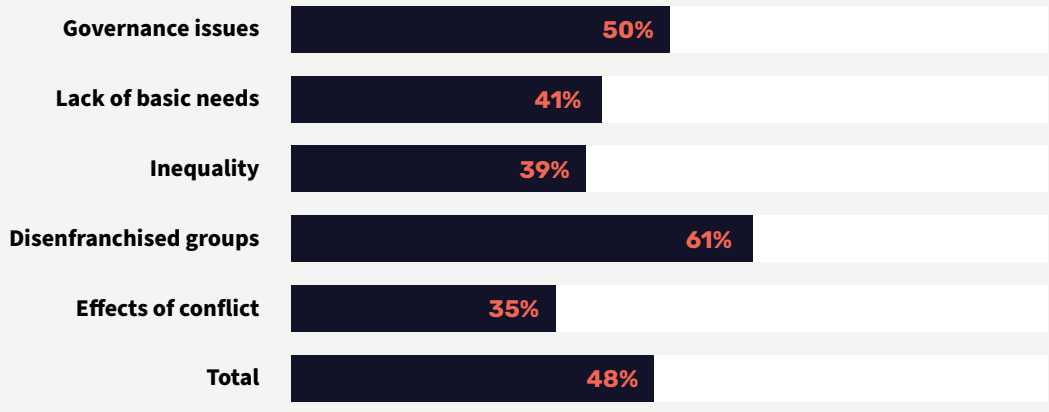
40%

Top 3 countries:	
Australia	67%
Philippines	59%
Thailand	55%
Bottom 3 countries:	
North Korea	-3%
Iran	8%
Vanuatu	26%

Table 16
Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Regional rank	Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
1	North Korea	104.6	2,696,000	25,779,000
2	Afghanistan	13.0	505,000	38,928,000
3	Myanmar	12.1	657,000	54,410,000
4	Pakistan	10.6	2,349,000	220,892,000
5	Papua New Guinea	10.3	93,000	8,947,000
6	India	8.0	11,050,000	1,380,004,000
7	Philippines	7.8	859,000	109,581,000
8	Iran	7.1	597,000	83,993,000
9	Bangladesh	7.1	1,162,000	164,689,000
10	Indonesia	6.7	1,833,000	273,524,000
11	Sri Lanka	6.5	139,000	21,413,000
12	Malaysia	6.3	202,000	32,366,000
13	Timor-Leste	6.1	8,000	1,318,000
14	Thailand	5.7	401,000	69,800,000
15	Lao PDR	5.2	38,000	7,276,000
16	Cambodia	5.0	83,000	16,719,000
17	Viet Nam	4.1	396,000	97,339,000
18	Mongolia	4.0	13,000	3,278,000
19	China	4.0	5,771,000	1,439,324,000
20	South Korea	3.5	180,000	51,269,000
21	Nepal	3.3	97,000	29,137,000
22	Hong Kong	2.8	21,000	7,497,000
23	Singapore	2.1	12,000	5,850,000
24	Taiwan	1.7	40,000	23,817,000
25	New Zealand	1.6	8,000	4,822,000
26	Australia	1.6	41,000	25,500,000
27	Japan	1.1	144,000	126,476,000

Figure 16
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by dimension



What drives vulnerability to modern slavery in the region?

Asia and the Pacific is the third most vulnerable region in the world to modern slavery. The drivers most influencing this risk include widespread discriminatory social norms, political inequality and instability, and economic insecurity. While conflict-induced displacement and disruption widened gaps in wealth and social capital in some countries, vulnerability was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters. Overall, Afghanistan had the highest levels of vulnerability (86 per cent) and Australia the lowest (7 per cent).

Discriminatory social norms that devalue marginalised groups on the basis of their migration status, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation are the greatest driver of vulnerability in the region. In Myanmar, the Rohingya minority continue to face mass displacement, abductions, sexual violence, and murder,[8] driving many to seek protection in Bangladesh. Once in Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees face increased risks of modern slavery as offenders prey on their extreme vulnerability,[9] while families living in camps struggle to cope with food and economic insecurity,[10] which, coupled with gender discrimination, has led to increased rates of child marriage.[11] The persecution of religious and ethnic minorities occurs in China, including the use of state-imposed forced labour to control the Uyghur population and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups in the Uyghur region.[12] The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of Uyghur and other predominately Muslim groups has been called a crime against humanity by the UN Human Rights Commissioner.[13]

Political inequality and instability pervade many countries in the region, driving vulnerability to modern slavery. Notably, Afghanistan is considered the least peaceful country in the world.[14] In August 2021, after four decades of war, the Taliban seized control, triggering political, economic, and social shocks and worsening the humanitarian situation.[15] The crisis has caused many civilians to turn to smugglers to flee the country, often to countries with measures in place to actively deter Afghan refugees,[16] which compounds their vulnerability to exploitation. Afghan women and girls have reportedly been forced into marriages by their families to escape the country.[17] In Iran, physical and sexual violence is perpetrated by security forces as a means to repress women's rights and stifle political dissent, which has attracted coordinated sanctions from 30 countries in March 2023.[18] Hundreds of activists have been unfairly imprisoned and subject to torture and sexual assault or killed since protests erupted in September 2022, following the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini — who was arrested for wearing her hijab incorrectly.[19] Personal status laws that deny women equal rights in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and children further entrench gender inequality and vulnerability to exploitation.[20]

Economic instability and increasing poverty limit access to essential needs for survival such as shelter, food, and water, and increase vulnerability to all forms of modern slavery in Asia and the Pacific. This is underpinned by widening wealth gaps: in 2021, an additional 80 million people were forced into poverty due to pandemic-related disruptions in economic activity.[21] This risk is compounded for disenfranchised groups who were already living in precarious conditions. In India, for example, a sudden lockdown in early 2020 left many migrant workers, who were largely employed as day labourers, stranded and without support from the government or their employers.[22] Many had no alternative but to make the journey home on foot,



Kabul, Afghanistan, August 2021.

Men walk past an all-girl school in Afghanistan. The Zarghuna High School previously educated 8,000 girls, until it was locked and shuttered per orders from the Taliban-controlled Education Ministry. Photo credit: Marcus Yam/ Los Angeles Times via Getty Images.

often walking hundreds of kilometres,[23] while others took out loans to meet their basic needs.[24] After a devastating second wave of COVID-19 buckled the Indian health system in 2021[25] and caused many deaths from the disease,[26] thousands of newly orphaned children were exposed to higher risks of abuse and trafficking.[27]

Climate change and climate-related disasters exacerbate risks to modern slavery by reducing access to essential needs and increasing existing disparities in wealth and social capital levels. These burdens were not evenly shared across the region. Many people in low-lying countries in the Pacific Islands expect to be displaced from their homes due to the effects of climate change,[28] if they have not been already.[29] Intensifying weather events and rising sea levels contribute to food and water insecurity through crop loss, loss of arable land, overcrowding, poor health and sanitation, and increased competition for limited jobs.[30] These conditions create opportunities for traffickers to exploit vulnerable individuals,[31] particularly where avenues for regular migration are not readily available.[32] Risk of modern slavery also increases through reliance on negative coping mechanisms. For instance, in Bangladesh, one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change,[33] extreme weather has been linked to child marriage to both minimise household expenses and protect daughters from the heightened risk of sexual violence.[34]

Table 17
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by country

Country	Total (%)
Afghanistan	86
Pakistan	80
Papua New Guinea	79
Iran	68
Myanmar	67
North Korea	67
Philippines	66
Bangladesh	58
Cambodia	58
India	56
Sri Lanka	56
Lao PDR	52
Timor-Leste	51
Mongolia	50
Indonesia	49
Thailand	46
Nepal	46
China	46
Viet Nam	44
Malaysia	37
South Korea	29
Hong Kong	28
Singapore	24
Taiwan	21
Japan	11
New Zealand	8
Australia	7

What are governments in the region doing to address modern slavery?

Walk Free assessed government responses to modern slavery across 32 countries in the region. Asia and the Pacific scored an average 40 per cent rating on government response, the second lowest score of the five regions. Overall, governments did not have sufficient measures to support survivors or the criminal justice process, coordinate the response, address underlying risk factors, or eradicate modern slavery from supply chains — though responses vary significantly across the region.

Within Asia and the Pacific, there are stark differences in GDP per capita PPP (current international $),[35] meaning certain economies have far more resources available to dedicate to responding to modern slavery than others. However, on overall government response scores, countries with a higher level of wealth, particularly Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan are taking relatively little action to respond to modern slavery. In comparison, Bangladesh, Fiji, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Thailand are all taking positive steps to respond to this issue relative to their level of wealth.

Australia took the most action to combat modern slavery in the Asia and the Pacific region, followed by the Philippines, Thailand, and New Zealand. For the first time, Australia allocated a budget to support implementation of its National Action Plan.[36] In December 2021, the President of the Philippines signed Republic Act (R.A.) No. 11596 into law, which effectively criminalises child marriage, setting the minimum age of marriage at 18.[37] The Philippines is only the eighth country in our assessment of the region to do so. However, the Philippines has not yet criminalised forced marriage, which remains a critical gap across the region, with only 10 countries having done so.[38] Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, and Malaysia recently joined Sri Lanka as the only countries in the region to have brought the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 into force.[39]

North Korea and Iran still demonstrate the weakest response to modern slavery, reflecting a lack of political will to address modern slavery and, in the case of North Korea, the active use of state-imposed forced labour. For many Pacific Island countries, the challenge of operating in resource constrained environments largely accounts for existing gaps in the response to modern slavery.[40]

Many countries in the region took further action to combat modern slavery since the last edition of the Global Slavery Index in 2018. For example, since then, Palau, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Nepal, and Pakistan[41] acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.[42] Brunei Darussalam finalised a National Action Plan on

human trafficking[43] and established a National Committee on Trafficking in Persons.[44] Palau, which was not included in the previous edition of the GSI, has also made significant strides in improving the modern slavery response over the last four years, during which it set up a coordinating body and adopted a National Action Plan,[45] ratified the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182),[46] and established a trafficking hotline.[47]

"Once they are rescued and back in their communities, the victims needed to be connected with services within their community. They need services so that there is no re-trafficking."

Female survivor of modern slavery, India, 2019

There are significant gaps in legislative frameworks to combat modern slavery across the region. Nine countries in Asia and the Pacific have stated in legislation that survivors are not to be treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under the control of criminals. However, even where this protection exists, it is not always implemented in practice. A total of 19 countries in the region treated survivors of modern slavery as criminals. For example, in 2020, 81 returned migrant workers who had been exploited in Viet Nam were jailed in Bangladesh.[48]

This is not the only gap between policy and practice. While almost all countries have criminalised corruption, there were reports that official complicity in modern slavery cases were not investigated in 19 countries. In India, officials allegedly received bribes from traffickers in exchange for protection against prosecution, while in the state of Tamil Nadu, local politicians allegedly benefitted from the commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced begging rings.[49] Further, despite National Action Plans in 28 countries, only 11 governments routinely reviewed their modern slavery response and just two countries monitored the government response to modern slavery through an independent entity, such as the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons in Nepal, which is tasked with monitoring human trafficking in the country and making recommendations to government.[50] More recently, Australia announced funding to establish an Anti-Slavery Commissioner.[51] Of 26 countries that have a legal framework that supports compensation or restitution for modern slavery crimes, only 15 awarded compensation or restitution to survivors in practice.

Labour laws in 18 countries prevented certain groups, such as migrant workers or domestic workers, from exercising their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and only the Philippines has ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).[52] Despite significant levels of regular and irregular migration — largely intra-regional but also to destinations such as North America, Europe, and the Middle East[53] — only six countries had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990[54] and fewer than half have ratified the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.[55] Further, recruitment agencies were registered and monitored by governments in only 13 countries, and even fewer countries in the region had laws or policies stating that recruitment fees — a known driver of risk among migrants — are to be paid by employers.

Only six countries took any steps to eradicate modern slavery from supply chains. This includes Australia's 2018 Modern Slavery Act, which requires businesses with an annual consolidated revenue of at least AU$100 million (approximately US$67 million) to report on their efforts to address modern slavery within their operations and supply chains.[56] In 2022, New Zealand also proposed legislation to prevent modern slavery within business supply chains.[57]

"Holding company owners directly liable for what happens in their business or supply chains."

Female survivor of modern slavery, India, 2019

Regional cooperation through the Bali Process Government and Business Forum

Bali Process Government & Business Forum

The Bali Process Government and Business Forum provides a unique platform for government and business leaders from 45 countries across the Asia-Pacific to collaborate on initiatives with the joint goal of eradicating modern slavery. Its "Acknowledge. Act. Advance." Framework was the first major policy document agreed upon by the private and public sectors to tackle issues of human trafficking and forced labour in the region. It focuses on the pillars of supply chain transparency, ethical recruitment, and worker protection and redress.

At the high-level meeting in February 2023, many business leaders called on their own governments to introduce robust legislation addressing modern slavery offences, noting that such legislation can create a level playing field for those businesses complying with their human rights obligations. Future plans include a series of regional events to raise awareness of modern slavery risks and promote closer collaboration between business and government. For example, the Indonesian co-chair will hold a forum aimed at young entrepreneurs, while the Nepalese business leader will host a Responsible Business Summit in Kathmandu.

Table 18
Government response score, by country and milestone

Country	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total (%)
Australia	64	69	75	79	38	**67**
Philippines	59	73	75	50	13	**59**
Thailand	50	65	75	64	0	**55**
New Zealand	45	65	50	64	25	**54**
Indonesia	45	65	50	57	0	**50**
Bangladesh	41	69	50	50	0	**49**
Sri Lanka	45	65	50	50	0	**49**
Singapore	55	54	38	57	0	**47**
Taiwan	45	36	63	79	13	**47**
Viet Nam	64	46	75	36	0	**47**
Fiji	50	50	38	64	0	**46**
India	36	58	75	50	0	**46**
Lao PDR	59	50	50	43	0	**46**
Malaysia	41	58	50	50	0	**45**
Nepal	36	58	63	50	0	**45**
Japan	45	42	63	57	0	**44**
Cambodia	41	46	75	43	0	**42**
Myanmar	50	42	75	36	0	**42**
China	41	46	50	36	13	**40**
Mongolia	36	54	25	43	13	**40**
South Korea	41	46	50	36	0	**38**
Maldives	41	38	38	50	0	**37**
Pakistan	36	42	50	43	0	**37**
Brunei Darussalam	27	42	25	57	0	**35**
Timor-Leste	32	42	50	36	0	**35**
Hong Kong	27	35	38	50	0	**32**
Papua New Guinea	23	42	50	29	0	**31**
Solomon Islands	14	42	50	43	0	**31**
Palau	27	31	25	36	0	**27**
Vanuatu	9	38	50	29	0	**26**
Iran	-5	19	25	0	0	**8**
North Korea	-9	8	13	-21	0	**-3**



Aceh province, Indonesia, August 2019.

Fishermen collect their catch. Fishing is a high-risk industry for forced labour. Migrant workers are particularly at risk of experiencing exploitation in the Indonesian fishing industry. Photo by Chaideer Mahyuddin/AFP via Getty Images.

Promising Practices in Asia and the Pacific

Within the Promising Practices Database, 46 per cent of evaluated programs are delivered in Asia and the Pacific, covering 22 countries in the region. While most programs tackle known forms of modern slavery in the region such as forced marriage, there are significant gaps in relation to debt bondage and forced labour despite the high prevalence of these issues in the region. Over three quarters of evaluated programs delivered in Asia and the Pacific had met some or all their objectives; yet as only 19 of these evaluations featured reliable methodologies with a control or comparison group, the ability to determine lessons learned or identify promising practices in the region was limited.

Spotlight on what works

Using a community-based program to empower adolescent girls with life skills, the Bangladeshi Association for Life skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents (BALIKA) aimed to reduce child marriage across three high-prevalence districts. The program offered nearly 10,000 adolescent girls 44 hours of life skills lessons in addition to 100 hours of training focused on education support, gender rights awareness, or livelihoods training. The program also engaged local young women as mentors and engaged with communities to build awareness around adolescent skills development. The evaluation of the BALIKA program found that all three interventions significantly reduced child marriages, demonstrating the importance of a community-based approach and investment in education, skills development, and livelihoods training for adolescent girls.[58]

Recommendations for governments

1. **Ensure survivor support services, including shelters, crisis support centres, and community-based protection, cover all populations — including males, adults, and migrants — and make specialised support available for children.**
2. **Strengthen legislation to protect survivors of exploitation by ensuring they are not treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under the control of traffickers. Ensure legislation supports compensation and restitution for survivors of modern slavery and that this occurs in practice, including by setting up a compensation fund for survivors.**
3. **Raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 for girls and boys with no exemptions.**
4. **Extend labour laws to ensure that all groups are covered without exception and ensure that labour inspections are regularly conducted across all sectors, including the informal sector. Introduce and enforce laws to prohibit charging of recruitment fees to employees and register and monitor local recruitment agencies for deceptive practices, ensuring contracts are made available in a language migrants can understand.**
5. **Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence to stop governments and businesses sourcing goods or services linked to modern slavery.**

Frontline voices:

"I have no way out": Forced into marriage, Afghan girls fear for their future

THE FULLER PROJECT AND ZAN TIMES

Afghanistan has experienced decades of political instability and insecurity amid successive wars and violent conflicts. The most recent Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, in August 2021 following the withdrawal of US troops, saw the militant group seize control of the country's capital city, Kabul, after a rapid advance across the country. The Taliban's return to power has seen mass degradation of human rights in the country as well as mass violence and terrorism. The emerging restrictions on women and girls' mobility and participation in government and education are further contributing to the rapid rise of modern slavery risks across the country.

With Afghan women increasingly confined to their homes, reports on their welfare are difficult to obtain. For this piece The Fuller Project, a global newsroom that reports on issues that impact women, and Zan Times, a women-led investigative newsroom that covers human rights in Afghanistan spoke to women facing the worst impacts of Taliban rule. What their interviews reveal is a nation grappling to resist ongoing violence and exploitation.

Afghan teenager Rukhsar once dreamed of becoming a doctor and finding a well-educated husband who would support her work. That was before the Taliban banned secondary education for girls and the 15-year-old's father forced her to get engaged to an older man.

"Sometimes I think to myself, it is better to … run away from home," said Rukhsar, whose name has been changed for her protection, in the western city of Herat.

Yet Rukhsar said she feared that fleeing home would lead to her being caught by the Taliban — putting her in an even worse situation.

Her situation is far from unique. Reports of early and forced marriages have soared since the Taliban seized power in August 2021 and excluded girls from middle and high schools, according to Afghan experts and international organisations working in the country.

Rukhsar's father arranged her engagement to the son of his business partner — a 22-year-old car salesman, in December. Without an education, Rukhsar said her father saw marriage as the only option for her. Her desperate appeals to him have been answered with violence.

"Every time I object to this marriage, my father beats me very hard," she said in an interview.

"My mother can't help me either because she herself got married at the age of 14," added Rukhsar, whose wedding is set for June. "I don't really know anything about marriage, I still play with my dolls. I have no way out of this situation."

Even before the Taliban's takeover, child marriage was prevalent in Afghanistan. According to the latest national data[1] from 2017, about 28 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 were married before turning 18, and 4 per cent before reaching 15. The former Afghan government set the minimum age for marriage at 16 for girls, but even this was rarely enforced. But the Taliban's crackdown on women's and girls' freedoms, such as the right to work and attend school, as well as the worsening economic and humanitarian outlook, are fuelling an increase in early and forced marriage rates across the country.

"The Taliban's draconian policies on women and girls are only increasing in number and severity, and this means that prospects are extremely dim for any improvements in terms of child, early and forced marriage in Afghanistan," Nicolette Waldman, senior crisis advisor for Amnesty, said in an interview.

UNICEF Afghanistan spokesman Salam Al-Janabi said there is a growing number of reports of "destitute parents being forced into heart-breaking measures to keep their families alive" — from exchanging daughters for a dowry to selling infants to strangers.

Shaharzad Akbar, the former chairperson of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission, said the laws and structures meant to protect women and children "no longer exist."

"The economic conditions of poor families and tolerance of child marriage have led to increase of forced and child marriage for girls in Afghanistan," said Akbar, who is now executive director of Rawadari, an organisation that monitors and reports on human rights violations in the country.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed reports of an increase in early marriage and said people were not forcing their children to wed.

"We don't have a number for it, but propaganda about this is not true," he said in a phone interview.

"The level of awareness about [child marriage and forced marriage] is high among people and they don't give their children into marriage … forced marriage is not possible at all."

The Taliban issued a decree on women's rights which said, "no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure."[2] However, last May a spokesman for the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice told Voice of America that girls "can be given to marriage" upon reaching puberty.[3]

It is not just the Taliban's policies but its members themselves who are also fuelling forced marriage, according to rights groups and some of the girls interviewed for this story. Cases of Taliban members forcing women and girls to wed them has even led some families to marry off their daughters urgently as a preventative measure.

Fatima, 14, lives in a village in Kang district in southwestern Nimroz province where gossip spread last year that the Taliban would force girls under the age of 18 into marriage. "My father engaged me because of these rumours," she said in an interview.

She was married off in February 2022 and moved to Zaranj city, the capital of Nimroz, to live with her husband and his family. There, she faced abuse and violence. "I was very young. I did not understand anything about being a housewife and doing chores," she said. "My mother-in-law used to torture me because I couldn't do housework."

The situation grew even worse, with Fatima recalling how her husband would beat her repeatedly, even when she was seven months pregnant. Although her husband moved to Iran several months ago to make money as a labourer, Fatima said she is still trapped with his family as she raises her baby.

"I would wish no one else to experience the pain and suffering that I am going through," she said.

Girls who are forced into marriage face a greater risk of domestic servitude and other forms of forced labour both inside and outside the home. They experience domestic abuse and violence, marital rape, complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and disproportionately suffer from mental health conditions.

"The consequences will be devastating not only for the physical and mental health of these girls, but for generations to come." said Akbar of Rawadari.

An Afghan doctor in a mental health ward in Herat province, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals from the Taliban, said more women and girls were arriving with extreme mental health conditions, in many cases as a result of being forced into marriage.

"This unfortunate situation has increased the number of our visitors," he said in a phone interview, referring to a rise in forced and early marriages.

"The Taliban's restrictions have left women in a vulnerable position … (they) are paying the price," he said.

Having been married off by her uncle last November to avoid a Taliban wedding, 17-year-old Arzu said she is treated like "a slave" and is now suffering from severe depression. "I am married to someone with whom I cannot live and I have no escape from it," she said in an interview from northern Samangan province.

"I hate him more everyday. My life will be ruined by this man."

Arzu said she endures constant beatings, rape and death threats, and that her husband's family refuse to take her to a doctor despite her poor mental health.

"From the day I got married, my body melts like a candle."

"My memory is weakening. I have become forgetful. I don't remember anything. I don't talk to anyone — it's no use."

Recognition of the intersection between conflict and modern slavery risks in Afghanistan is vital. In the face of an uncertain future, Afghanistan needs continued and sustained advocacy and action from the international community, towards the goal of establishing stability and rule of law. In the immediate term, there is an urgent need to reopen secondary schools and universities for women and girls, and for a humanitarian response to ensure support to all at-risk persons and to enhance monitoring and reporting mechanisms throughout the country.

See page 58 "Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war" for a wider discussion on this intersection, including recommendations for government action.

Orphanages:
Modern slavery hubs

hopeland X WALK FREE



Despite overwhelming evidence cataloguing the harms of institutional care for children, an estimated 5.4 million children worldwide live in orphanages and other institutions.[1] While many assume that orphanages are home to children who have no living parents, research consistently demonstrates that this is not the case for over 80 per cent of children living in orphanages globally.[2]

In many countries, only a small proportion of children's institutions are registered with the government, which leaves many children invisible to necessary oversight and protections, and hinders data collection efforts.[3] The institutionalised population, including children in orphanages, are underrepresented in the prevalence estimates within this Global Slavery Index for this reason.

While the case for global care reform is not new, more recent evidence from governments and civil society organisations highlights the multifaceted relationship between children's institutions and human trafficking — revealing a complex web of factors that position orphanages as both a driver and an outcome of exploitation.[4] In 2019, the links between institutions and child trafficking were recognised by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). For the first time, member states collectively expressed their concern over the harm that institutions can cause to children and called for them to be progressively phased out. In its historic Resolution on the Rights of the Child, the UNGA set out the political and human rights case for transforming care systems and made some ground-breaking recommendations. Governments and civil society now have an opportunity to implement these recommendations.

A residential care institution is any residential setting where children are isolated from the wider community and are compelled to live with other children to whom they are not related. These children, and their families, do not have control over their lives or involvement in the decisions that affect them. Crucially, an institutional culture prevails, meaning that the requirements of the organisation tend to take precedence over the children's individual needs.[5] This Spotlight uses the terms "institution" and "orphanage" interchangeably.

Trafficking into orphanages

Child trafficking into institutions, also referred to as orphanage trafficking, is described as "the recruitment of children into residential care institutions for the purpose of profit and exploitation."[6] This practice is linked to the funding of orphanages through private donations, volunteer tourism, mission trips, and other forms of fundraising.[7] It is estimated that US Christian organisations alone donate approximately US$3.3 billion to residential care each year.[8] The popular practice of orphanage volunteering — people from high-income countries traveling abroad to help children living in orphanages — also serves to provide a continual income for the orphanage, as well as reduced labour costs for the care of the children.[9] However, there is a grim downside to all of this.

Although often well-intentioned, these sources of financial and in-kind support undermine national efforts to support broader child protection and social welfare systems by creating a parallel system without official oversight and accountability. They also create a marketplace that can incentivise the expansion of existing orphanages and the establishment of new ones, with the *supply* of funding and resources into orphanages increasing the *demand* for children to be in them.[10] There is evidence of children being deliberately recruited from vulnerable families to fill spaces in orphanages, under the guise of better care and access to education.[11] Once trafficked into orphanages, children are vulnerable to neglect, abuse, and exploitation. Orphanages that are run for profit have been found to operate under extremely poor conditions to drive down care costs, with evidence also pointing to children being kept deliberately malnourished to encourage further donations,[12] forced to interact with and perform for visitors, or forced to beg for financial donations.[13]

The popularity of orphanage "volunteering" has seen a rise in orphanages built in tourist hotspots to fulfil demand and capitalise on the financial potential.[14] In Cambodia, for example, there was a 75 per cent increase in the number of residential care institutions in a five-year period, despite no correlating increase in the number of children losing both parents.[15] In Uganda, the number of children in institutions increased from just over one thousand in the late 1990s to 55,000 in 2018, despite large

Deoria, India, August 2018.

A bungalow which served as an old age facility and orphanage for girls living with mental disabilities was investigated for allegations of forced sexual exploitation of residents by shelter staff. Police raided the shelter after a 10-year old girl escaped and reported that many young girls, who were usually locked inside rooms, were taken away for short periods of time by strangers in cars parked outside. Photo credit: Deepak Gupta/Hindustan via Getty Images.

decreases in the number of orphans.[16] The presence of volunteers also places children at increased risk of sexual abuse. There have been numerous documented cases of perpetrators posing as well-intentioned orphanage volunteers to gain access to vulnerable children, taking advantage of often unregulated, unvetted, and unsupervised access.[17]

Australian Modern Slavery Act addressing orphanage trafficking

The Australian Modern Slavery Act (2018) defines and recognises orphanage trafficking as a form of modern slavery under the Act's definition.[18] As such, reporting entities with orphanages in their structures, supply chains, funding models, or operations must assess for and report on risks of modern slavery in these contexts. Additionally, the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act Guidance Material[19] includes information on orphanage trafficking and the exploitation of children in orphanages, identifying orphanage volunteering and tourism as a related risk factor. Guidance has been developed by civil society organisations to assist entities reporting under the Australian legislation to understand its implications.[20]

Trafficking out of orphanages

Traffickers and organised criminal groups are known to target institutions where they can exploit weak or absent child protection mechanisms.[21] Evidence shows children in orphanages are groomed, coerced, and deceived into leaving facilities and are trafficked into sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminality, and other forms of modern slavery.[22] In some cases, orphanages have been complicit or directly involved in the trafficking and exploitation of children within their care.[23]

Demand for adoption among childless families — often from high-income countries — also drives trafficking and kidnapping of children into and out of orphanages. [24] This is particularly evident in countries where private and international adoptions are common, for example in China, where it is estimated that more than 200,000 children are sold for the purposes of international adoptions per year.[25] In Nigeria, some orphanages have been linked to "baby factories," where traffickers hold women against their will, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver a child for the purpose of selling.[26]

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Child survivors of modern slavery and unaccompanied migrant children being placed in orphanages

Children who have been trafficked are often placed in institutions, either as a mechanism intended to provide them with protection and support or as a law enforcement response because the child is not being treated as a victim of crime. Government responses fall short of providing child-centric safeguards; for example, only 55 per cent of governments assessed in the Global Slavery Index were found to have special support for child victims of modern slavery. In some cases, children identified as victims are returned to the same institutions from which they were trafficked and are re-exposed to the risks that led to their initial exploitation.[27]

Without the protection provided by parents and guardians, unaccompanied migrant and refugee children are at greater risk of trafficking and exploitation, both in transit and on arrival in their destination country.[28] Often, these children are either placed in reception facilities akin to orphanages or they enter the institutional care system.[29] The institutionalisation of trafficked children and unaccompanied migrant and refugee children increases their vulnerability to exploitation on account of entering a high-risk and insecure system.[30]

Modern slavery risks experienced by care leavers

Children who have grown up in institutional settings are more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation once they have aged out of the system or if they have run away from the facilities.[31] This is linked to the impact of having had fewer opportunities to develop the social skills and networks needed to live successfully and independently in the community.[32]

This vulnerability is increased where there are limited services and support available for reintegration into society.[33] Further, care leavers are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Girls in Moldova who grew up in institutions, for example, were found to be 10 times more likely to be trafficked for sexual exploitation than their peers raised in families.[34] International analysis highlights similar disadvantages among care leaver populations globally, including higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, isolation, poverty, and mental health issues compared to peers raised in families.[35]

Globally, orphanages and other institutional settings for children are hubs where child exploitation and modern slavery can thrive, as they are often hidden from official oversight, operate with weak child protection systems, attract a continuous flow of large and unmonitored donations, and are home to children who are already vulnerable. Addressing this requires a multi-faceted response.

Times of crisis and children in care

More than 5 million children have lost a parent or caregiver as a result of COVID-19[36] and the number of children being separated from their parents and at risk of subsequent exploitation is expected to increase.[37] In some parts of the world, COVID-19 has reportedly led to family reunification. For example, authorities in Nepal, India and Kenya instructed orphanages to reintegrate children with their family during the national lockdown[38] In Nepal, this resulted in nearly 10 per cent of the country's institutionalised children returning to their communities in the early stages of the pandemic.[39] While this shows that not all children in orphanages lack family-based alternatives, there are concerns that children may have been sent home without the necessary assessment, preparation, and support.[40] Additionally, experts warn that inadequate records of where children have been placed, as well as of those who remain institutionalised, could lead to more children falling through the gaps and becoming unaccounted for.[41] For many orphanages around the world, lockdown and social distancing measures mean that the child-to-caregiver ratio has decreased due to reductions in staff and access to facilities, raising concerns over declines in quality of care.[42]

Social distancing restrictions have hampered orphanage inspections in some countries.[43] Encouragingly, one study on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's institutions globally found that the vast majority of founders, funders, and directors of orphanages participating in the research (91 per cent) stated that to some degree the pandemic had catalysed reflection and created an opportunity to consider or implement changes or adaptations to the orphanage model of care. This included a greater focus on sustainability and a renewed belief in the ability for institutionalised children to be reunited with their families and communities.[44]

Much can be learned from the impact of previous international crises on children in institutional care. In the wake of disaster, support for orphanages is a popular response for overseas audiences wanting to contribute to relief efforts.[45] Following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal, an increase in child trafficking and of children being placed in institutions led to immediate child safeguarding concerns.[46] Officials recorded cases of traffickers posing as either aid workers or religious representatives, coercing poor and vulnerable families to give up their children for placement into orphanages for the purposes of financial exploitation.[47] Similar conclusions have been drawn from post-disaster analysis in Haiti[48] and Indonesia.[49] It is vital that there be close monitoring of COVID-19's impact of on children in institutions and on those from families and communities whose vulnerabilities have increased due to the pandemic.

In addition, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had a devastating impact on children in institutions. Ukraine already had the largest population of institutionalised children in Europe, and the displacement brought on by the conflict has caused those numbers to rise.[50] Concerns continue to grow regarding living conditions in orphanages and the risk of child exploitation and abuse, with instances of traffickers targeting Ukrainian orphanages.[51] Additionally, the UN has expressed concern about the risk of forced adoption of Ukrainian children, warning that children in institutions cannot be assumed to be orphans.[52] In March 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and children's commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova on war crimes for the mass abduction of Ukrainian children. The children are allegedly being taken to Russia and adopted by Russian families, under the guise of a humanitarian mission to save the children from the war.[53]

Recommendations for governments

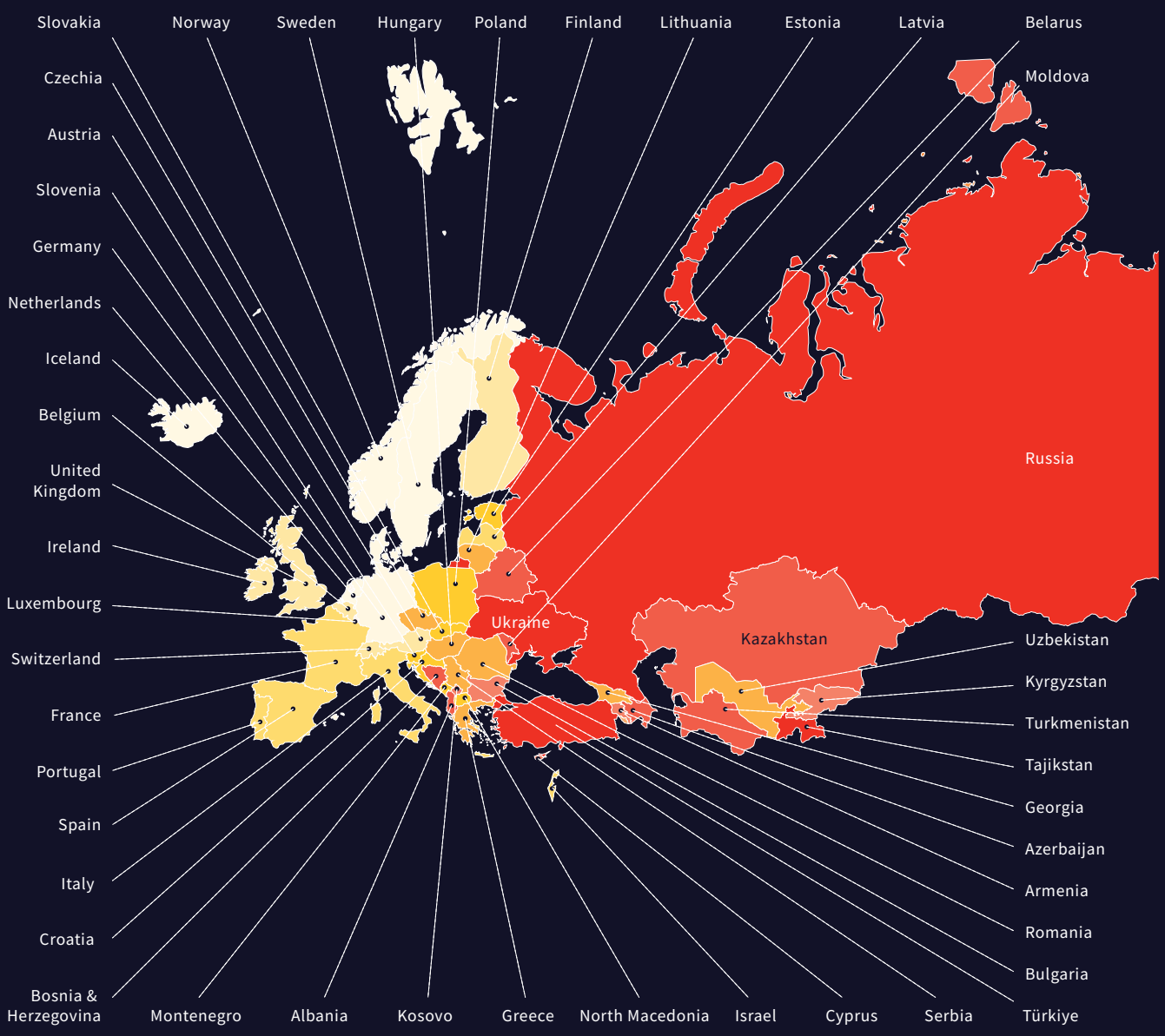
1. **Recognise the link between children in orphanages and modern slavery. Orphanage trafficking must be criminalised and children in these settings recognised and responded to as being highly vulnerable to exploitation.**

2. **Curb the proliferation of orphanages by prioritising family and community-based care in all policies relating to the care and protection of children. This includes ensuring adequate funding for family and community services and prioritising long-term, sustainable solutions that enable families and communities to thrive together.**

3. **Focus international aid on family and community strengthening initiatives, as opposed to being directed towards institutional care for children.**

4. **Monitor international donations and raise awareness among philanthropic communities of potential risks of funding orphanages.**

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Regional heat map: prevalence

LOW HIGH

Europe and Central Asia is home to 12 per cent of the world's population. Although the region is highly diverse in terms of geography, ethnicity, culture, religion, and wealth, modern slavery occurs in every country. Europe and Central Asia has the second highest prevalence of modern slavery of the five global regions. Various factors contribute to the prevalence of forced labour and forced marriage, including poverty, discrimination, migration, and a lack of economic opportunities.

Conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change further compound these vulnerabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and created new ones, with increased economic insecurity across the region and unequal access to vaccines and healthcare. To varying extents, countries across the region are impacted by climate change, with effects on agriculture and other primary industries driving poverty and food insecurity. Climate-related displacement continues to drive the risk of exploitation, particularly in forced labour, across the region. Although not reflected in our estimates, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased the risk of modern slavery, with mass displacement and forced migration both in-country and across the region.

The United Kingdom (UK) took the most action to combat modern slavery, followed by the Netherlands and Portugal, while Turkmenistan and Russia took the least. Europe has taken the most action of any region to tackle forced labour that ends up in global supply chains. Across all countries, governments should address significant gaps, including expanding the provision of safe and regular migration pathways for the most vulnerable, and tackling underlying discrimination of migrants and other marginalised groups.

What is the extent and nature of modern slavery in the region?

An estimated 6.4 million people were living in modern slavery in Europe and Central Asia on any given day in 2021. The region had the second highest prevalence in the world, with 6.9 per thousand people living in modern slavery. Europe and Central Asia had the second highest prevalence of forced labour at an estimated 4.4 per thousand people and the third highest prevalence of forced marriage (2.5 per thousand).[1]

Türkiye, Tajikistan, and Russia had the highest prevalence of modern slavery in the region. Russia, Türkiye, and Ukraine had the highest number of people living in modern slavery, accounting for nearly three in every five people in modern slavery in the region. The countries with the lowest prevalence are Switzerland, Norway, and Germany.

There are 4.1 million people trapped in forced labour in Europe and Central Asia. Forced labour takes many forms across the region for both adults and children, including domestic servitude, agricultural labour, and construction work and forced commercial sexual exploitation. There is a high population of migrant workers, both from within and outside the region, who are more vulnerable to being trapped in situations of debt bondage and exploitation.[2] Displacement fuelled by conflict, climate change, and political and economic instability also contributes to forced labour prevalence in the region, as well as rising discrimination against certain groups, such as the Roma community.[3]

Ten per cent of all forced marriages in the world, involving an estimated 2.3 million people, are in Europe and Central Asia. Forced marriages occurring across the region represent a rigidity of gender beliefs that uphold traditional roles for girls and restrict their prospects. Patriarchal attitudes towards girls, including the preservation of "family honour," are often associated with forced and child marriage, as well as poverty rates. Growing crises may also be driving forced marriages in the region. For example, data from the UK highlights that the increased risks of forced marriage created by COVID-19 and pandemic-related restrictions were experienced significantly by children, while their access to identification and support services were limited.[4] In some countries in Central Asia, the practice of bride kidnapping, or *Ala-Kachuu*, occurs — where men abduct a girl or woman and force them to get married. Despite existing domestic laws and international obligations, the practice is widespread in Kyrgyzstan, with an estimated 12,000 cases taking place a year.[5]

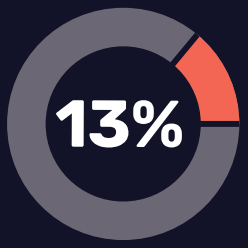
Although these estimates are the most reliable to date, they are conservative given the gaps and limitations of data collection in the region. These estimates do not capture all forms of modern slavery, such as, the recruitment of child soldiers, trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, and all child marriages. Notably, these figures do not capture any impact of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.[6]

Estimated number living in modern slavery:

6.4 MILLION

(6.9 per thousand)

Regional proportion of global estimate:



Forced labour

64%

Forced marriage

36%

Average vulnerability score:

27%

Average government response rating:

54%

Top 3 countries:	
United Kingdom	68%
Netherlands	67%
Portugal	67%
Bottom 3 countries:	
Russia	24%
Turkmenistan	26%
Liechtenstein	31%

Table 19
Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Regional rank	Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
1	Türkiye	15.6	1,320,000	84,339,000
2	Tajikistan	14.0	133,000	9,538,000
3	Russia	13.0	1,899,000	145,934,000
4	Ukraine	12.8	559,000	43,734,000
5	North Macedonia	12.6	26,000	2,083,000
6	Turkmenistan	11.9	72,000	6,031,000
7	Albania	11.8	34,000	2,878,000
8	Belarus	11.3	107,000	9,449,000
9	Kazakhstan	11.1	208,000	18,777,000
10	Azerbaijan	10.6	107,000	10,139,000
11	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10.1	33,000	3,281,000
12	Moldova	9.5	38,000	4,034,000
13	Armenia	8.9	26,000	2,963,000
14	Kyrgyzstan	8.7	57,000	6,524,000
15	Bulgaria	8.5	59,000	6,948,000
16	Cyprus	8.0	10,000	1,207,000
17	Kosovo	8.0	14,000	1,806,000
18	Georgia	7.8	31,000	3,989,000
19	Slovakia	7.7	42,000	5,460,000
20	Romania	7.5	145,000	19,238,000
21	Uzbekistan	7.4	249,000	33,469,000
22	Serbia	7.0	61,000	8,737,000
23	Hungary	6.6	63,000	9,660,000
24	Greece	6.4	66,000	10,423,000
25	Lithuania	6.1	17,000	2,722,000
26	Poland	5.5	209,000	37,847,000
27	Croatia	5.2	22,000	4,105,000
28	Slovenia	4.4	9,000	2,079,000
29	Czechia	4.2	45,000	10,709,000
30	Estonia	4.1	5,000	1,327,000
31	Portugal	3.8	39,000	10,197,000
32	Israel	3.8	33,000	8,656,000
33	Latvia	3.4	6,000	1,886,000
34	Italy	3.3	197,000	60,462,000
35	Spain	2.3	108,000	46,755,000
36	France	2.1	135,000	65,274,000
37	Austria	1.9	17,000	9,006,000
38	United Kingdom	1.8	122,000	67,886,000
39	Finland	1.4	8,000	5,541,000
40	Ireland	1.1	5,000	4,938,000
41	Belgium	1.0	11,000	11,590,000
42	Denmark	0.6	4,000	5,792,000
43	Sweden	0.6	6,000	10,099,000
44	Netherlands	0.6	10,000	17,135,000
45	Germany	0.6	47,000	83,784,000
46	Norway	0.5	3,000	5,421,000
47	Switzerland	0.5	4,000	8,655,000

The realities of risk and resistance: How one survivor of domestic violence and sex trafficking fought her way home

Katya* is a 25-year-old woman from Belarus. Following her father's death when she was a child, her mother remarried and had another child, after which her mother's attitude towards her changed. Over time, her mother became psychologically abusive, emotionally distant, and would constantly seek to humiliate Katya. This abuse led Katya to spend as little time at home as possible.

After finishing school, Katya took up a job in sales, but her family criticised her for not earning enough money. Feeling unsupported and lost, Katya accepted the offer of a friend who told her about a job in Moscow. She agreed to work in a market, but upon arrival quickly found that the promised job was not real. Instead, after arriving in Russia, Katya was forced into sexual exploitation. Unable to leave, she was subjected to daily physical, sexual, and psychological violence.

After months of living in modern slavery, Katya found an opportunity to escape when a client fell asleep while she was with him. Not willing to let an opportunity for freedom pass her by, Katya jumped out of a second-story window, injuring both her legs in the fall. Luckily, she was assisted in seeking medical attention and, with the help of friends, Katya finally returned to Belarus. Having made a daring escape to fight her way back to her homeland, Katya sought help from a non-governmental organisation and began rebuilding her life.

**Not her real name*



Pitesti, Romania, January 2017.

Adolescent girls who had been exploited by Romanian traffickers operating in Italy, Spain, Germany, and France, greet the psychologist at the shelter. Photo credit: Daniel Mihailescu/AFP via Getty Images.

What drives vulnerability to modern slavery in the region?

Europe and Central Asia is the least vulnerable region in the world to modern slavery. While the region performed relatively well across all dimensions, disenfranchised groups remain particularly vulnerable to modern slavery. Inequality and conflict disproportionately impacted some countries, while vulnerability was further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and climate-related displacement.

Conflict exacerbates vulnerability to modern slavery[7] and although it was found to be the lowest driver of vulnerability in the region, it is important to note that Russia's invasion of Ukraine fell outside our data collection period, therefore its impact is not reflected in these findings. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports more than 8 million refugees and 5 million internally displaced people in what has become the largest movement of refugees since World War II.[8] Ukrainian citizens fleeing the conflict are at increased risk of trafficking for various purposes, including sexual and labour exploitation.[9] Media reports and crisis-response work have highlighted instances of exploitation of women and girls crossing the Russian border and of those in refugee camps.[10] This vulnerability predates and is exacerbated by the war.

"Hundred of thousands of Ukrainian women have been victims of human trafficking. This was the case before the war and the war has only made it worse."

Robert Biedron, EU lawmaker and chair of the Women's Rights Committee.[11]

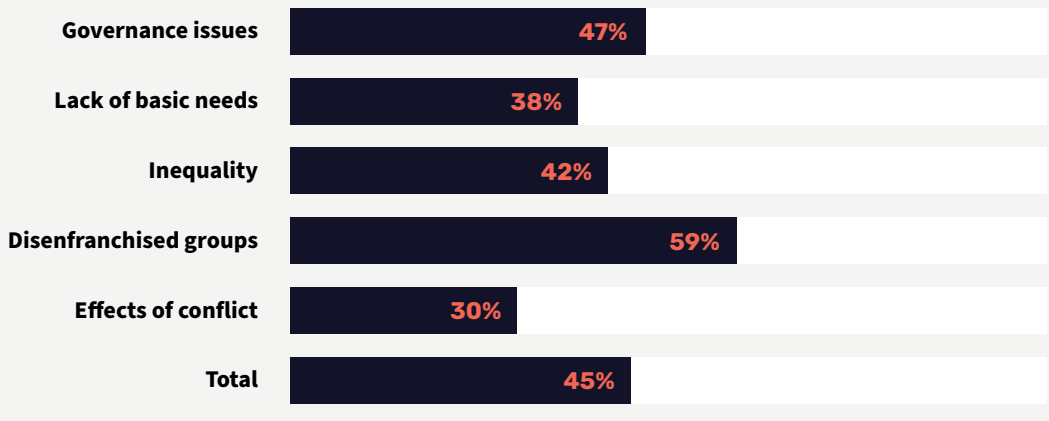
Discrimination against disenfranchised groups on the basis of migration status, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation represents the greatest driver of vulnerability in the Europe and Central Asia region. The region is a source, transit, and destination for significant migrant and refugee populations.

In 2020, more than 71.1 million migrants[12] and 6.7 million refugees[13] lived in the region. These people often encounter a lack of legal protection and insufficient information about their rights, which increases vulnerability to exploitation and abuse from recruiters, employers, and authorities.[14] Discrimination fuelled by bigotry and xenophobia has also grown alongside mass migration, with black, Muslim, Roma, and Jewish communities in the region often experiencing social exclusion, verbal harassment, and physical attacks.[15] For example, recent reports in Germany,[16] Austria,[17] France,[18] the UK,[19] and elsewhere in Europe[20] highlight steep spikes in antisemitism and other hate crimes against Jewish people. In some instances, discrimination against certain groups has been grounded in policy and justified under national security measures, such as increased surveillance of Muslim communities in France, Germany, and Austria.[21]

Governance issues such as corruption drive vulnerability to modern slavery in the region and particularly in Central Asia. Corruption is increasingly prevalent in fragile democratic states throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia,[22] with the subregion performing second lowest in the most recent Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).[23] Populist governments in Eastern Europe have cracked down severely on the freedoms of expression and assembly needed to call out corruption.[24] Additionally, for several years, international bodies and NGOs have condemned state-imposed forced labour in Belarus,[25] Poland,[26] Russia,[27] and Turkmenistan.[28] Despite Western Europe and the European Union performing better on governance issues and scoring consistently well on the CPI, progress has stagnated. The neglect or curtailment of accountability and transparency measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have remained unrestored across the subregion, and public trust has fallen in the wake of scandals associated with procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in response to the pandemic.[29] These have included allegations of corruption, overpricing, substandard quality of PPE, and unequal distribution.[30]

Despite impressive economic growth that has helped halve the number of people living in poverty in the region over the 20 years prior to the COVID-19

Figure 17
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by dimension



pandemic,[31] economic inequality still leaves many at a stark disadvantage,[32] increasing their vulnerability to modern slavery. The impacts of income inequality in some communities include higher rates of health and social problems, such as poor health outcomes, increased poverty and homelessness, and lower levels of economic growth.[33] Inequality will likely increase as the region faces a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by COVID-19, climate change, and most recently the war in Ukraine.[34] As food and energy prices surge, already vulnerable populations across Europe and Central Asia will be further impacted. When individuals and families struggle to access basic necessities, they become more vulnerable to exploitation and forced labour. Additionally, the increased demand for food and energy can create opportunities for traffickers and exploiters to take advantage of the situation by profiting from the higher prices. This can lead to the exploitation of vulnerable populations, including forced labour in the agriculture, fishing, and energy sectors.

While some countries such as Norway, Switzerland, and Ireland have made significant progress on gender and income inequality, women in neighbouring countries still face widespread discrimination.[35] However, even among countries with strong performances on gender rights measures, domestic and intimate partner violence remains a significant problem, as in the region more broadly.[36] Evidence also suggests that this issue has been exacerbated by recent crises across the region, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.[37] In addition to being paid on average 30 per cent less than their male peers,[38] women living in Europe and Central Asia are more likely to work in the informal sector, be irregular migrants, and face greater risks of trafficking and abuse.[39]

Limited access to basic needs also drives vulnerability to modern slavery. Across the region, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major health, social, and economic impacts on people and communities, as around the world,[40] which in turn have compounded challenges for already vulnerable populations. For Tajikistan, one of the least economically developed countries in the region, the impact on access to basic needs was felt across the population. Four out of 10 Tajik households reported they were forced to reduce their consumption of food, while one in five families have said they were unable to obtain medical care.[41] An analysis of impacts of the pandemic across the EU revealed educational gaps across low-income families and significant rises in households in arrears.[42]

Vulnerability to modern slavery in Europe and Central Asia is also exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change and climate-related disasters, which in turn are not evenly shared across the region. For example, severe drought has affected many parts of Europe and is expected to expand and worsen,[43] which ultimately increases the risk of exploitation and modern slavery through decreased livelihood opportunities and increased migrant flows to and from the region.[44]

Table 20
Level of vulnerability to modern slavery, by country

Country	Total (%)
Tajikistan	67
Russia	60
Azerbaijan	57
Uzbekistan	56
Kyrgyzstan	55
Türkiye	51
Armenia	48
Ukraine	48
Turkmenistan	47
Kazakhstan	42
Belarus	41
Kosovo	40
Albania	40
North Macedonia	38
Georgia	38
Bosnia and Herzegovina	36
Moldova	36
Israel	35
Serbia	34
Croatia	30
Bulgaria	26
Romania	26
Italy	22
Cyprus	21
Lithuania	21
Greece	21
Poland	19
Hungary	19
Latvia	17
Slovakia	16
Estonia	15
United Kingdom	14
Switzerland	14
France	13
Czechia	13
Belgium	11
Germany	11
Spain	10
Ireland	9
Slovenia	9
Austria	8
Sweden	7
Portugal	6
Netherlands	6
Denmark	6
Finland	5
Norway	1

Finding cooperation in crisis: Tackling modern slavery in Ukraine after the Russian invasion

In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, resulting in a displacement and protection crisis on a scale not witnessed in Europe since World War II. Today, 8.1 million refugees[45] and 5.4 million internally displaced people[46] require protection and assistance.

Unlike many other global conflicts, where modern slavery is often a neglected protection risk, the response to prevent exploitation was swift and coordinated. For the first time in a humanitarian response, an anti-trafficking response was embedded from the outset in the work of the humanitarian Protection Cluster. By May 2022, the Cluster's Anti- Trafficking Task Force, consisting of over 30 local and international organisations,[47] was disseminating modern slavery risk information, ensuring that modern slavery was put on the agenda of humanitarian responders, mapping available services, operating hotlines, and establishing referral pathways.[48]

One year on, despite the scale of the crisis, and credible evidence of conflict and displacement exacerbating modern slavery risks and giving rise to new ones, an increase in the number of victims identified in Ukraine and host countries has not been observed.[49]

The Ukraine crisis: an anomaly in the equation that crises = modern slavery?

Crisis responders, including governments, NGOs, international organisations, and UN agencies, have expressed surprise that the projected spike in cases of modern slavery has not occurred. There may be several reasons for this, both positive and negative.

Firstly, the proactive and prolific early warning system about the risks of trafficking, gender-based violence, and exploitation disseminated to conflict-affected people and those on the move may have helped to raise awareness and mitigate the risks of these forms of abuse. Unlike in many conflicts, where government breakdown or collapse creates ideal conditions for traffickers to operate without risk of punishment, in Ukraine, government institutions remain functioning, alongside civil society actors and NGOs, reducing opportunities for offending, and ensuring vulnerable people can access support.

Regionally, for the first time in the European Union's history, the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) was activated to provide refugees with legal access to entry and stay, freedom of movement, and access to vital protection and assistance. This has enabled refugees from Ukraine to receive emergency health care, education, and employment.[50] Members of the host communities have volunteered their time and resources, opened their homes to host refugee families, and donated food, clothing, and other essential items.[51]

These internal and regional factors have served preventative and protective functions against compounding risks for conflict-affected and displaced people. They have played an important role in mitigating exploitation risks and have helped to build resilience and strengthen crisis responses.

However, there are several reasons that risks of modern slavery could be higher than currently detected, and that the reduction in the reporting and detection of trafficking cases should still be cause for concern.

Within Ukraine, despite sustained efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions in need, support is stretched. Some populations remain highly vulnerable to exploitation, including women and girls in active fighting zones who are inaccessible to humanitarian responders, and unaccompanied and separated children and child-headed households, who are not receiving sufficient practical assistance.[52] For Ukrainian men, previously vulnerable to forced labour, the decision to bar them from leaving the country — while potentially stemming the flow of labour exploitation abroad — may be forcing some into irregular and dangerous routes and could reduce their likelihood of coming forward to be identified and receive assistance.[53]

Regionally, four million refugees have not formally registered for the support and protection under the TDP. Some refugees, particularly those from minority groups, are sometimes refused registration due to lack of documentation. Many Ukrainian children, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, and children previously in institutions, also remain unregistered and unmonitored.[54] The lack of oversight over these two hugely vulnerable groups may be impacting our understanding of what exploitation is occurring.

It is possible that victims and survivors may not be ready to come forward, or that ongoing challenges associated with the conflict will go on to impact levels of modern slavery in Ukraine and the region. These challenges include the depletion of resources, dwindling access to goods, reduced access to affordable accommodation, loss of documentation, and family separation. In many hosting countries, the gap between social benefit payments and potentially lucrative work offered by unscrupulous employers or traffickers may become too good to refuse.[55] In addition, the potential for donor, host state, and community compassion fatigue could also make it difficult to sustain effective responses to this ongoing crisis.

Recommendations for governments

Approximately two billion people, equating to over a quarter of the world's population, currently live in conflict-affected countries.[56] There is much to be learnt from the swift, coordinated, and compassionate response to the Ukrainian people and the impact this has had to date on reducing anticipated cases of modern slavery. It is vital these lessons be applied to some of the most neglected conflicts across the globe, where thousands of victims of modern slavery, and people at risk of exploitation, remain trapped, displaced, and unassisted.

Governments must:

1. **Extend social assistance and benefits to refugees without conditions, especially to those who are unable to secure employment, to help minimise risks of modern slavery. Such assistance may include facilitating accreditation of licenses for refugees, expanding employment opportunities, and providing free or subsidised childcare and free language classes to increase employability, foster integration, and reduce risks.**

2. **Strengthen screening at borders and at all stages of the asylum or registration process with the support of UN agencies and specialised NGOs to ensure that vulnerabilities and risks are identified and addressed.**

3. **Address the issue of discrimination against non-Ukrainian nationals and Roma people fleeing Ukraine and improve their access to rights and services, including access to registration and safe and suitable accommodation.**

4. **Individual safety should be prioritised over immigration. Investigation and prosecution should be decoupled from accessing protection and services for survivors of modern slavery or for those identified as at risk of exploitation, ensuring timely referral and access to asylum procedures, with provision of free counseling on rights to international protection or asylum.**

5. **Strengthen government oversight over care and accommodation of unaccompanied or separated children (UASC), particularly children coming from institutions, and strengthen best interest assessments where return is being considered. Strengthen support to guardians and carers of UASC to ensure adequate care and support is provided.**

Walk Free is proud to support the work of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), a network of nongovernmental organisations, international organisations and United Nations agencies, engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises, including armed conflict and disasters. The GPC is led by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Walk Free have supported the GPC to improve anti-trafficking action in crisis contexts since 2020.

What are governments in the region doing to address modern slavery?

Walk Free assessed government responses to modern slavery across 52 countries in Europe and Central Asia. Overall, the Europe and Central Asia region continues to have the strongest response to modern slavery, scoring an average 54 per cent rating among countries. Responses to modern slavery vary significantly within the region and there remains a relatively higher level of political will to address modern slavery in Europe, in part driven by regional and multilateral coordination bodies which hold governments to account and monitor their responses.

GDP per capita PPP (current international $) varied greatly across the region,[57] meaning certain economies have far more resources available to dedicate to responding to modern slavery than others. Overall, the countries with the strongest government response to modern slavery are those with a higher level of wealth, such as the top-ranking countries in the region and globally — the UK and the Netherlands. However, notable outliers are present. For example, Liechtenstein and Iceland, despite having some of the highest GDP per capita in the region and as such having relatively more resources to combat modern slavery, were among the nine governments taking the least action in the region. Both countries scored poorly on indicators relating to national, regional, and cross-border coordination and tackling forced labour in government and business supply chains. Conversely, while Albania and Georgia are among the region's countries with lower levels of GDP per capita, they have shown relatively stronger government responses to modern slavery, with both countries scoring highly on addressing risk factors.

Strong government responses in the region are typically characterised by robust criminal justice mechanisms and effective identification and support to survivors of modern slavery. The countries with the strongest government response scored high on indicators related to criminal justice mechanisms, highlighting their function to effectively prevent modern slavery. Conversely, it is concerning that more than half of the countries in the region did not have laws in place that recognise that survivors should not be treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under control of criminals. Treating survivors as criminals not only fails to acknowledge the exploitation they have faced, but it also creates additional barriers to accessing support and justice. This approach also undermines the EU Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which states that the "rights and dignity" of trafficking survivors must be respected and that they should not be penalised for their involvement in criminal activities that are a direct result of their trafficking situation.

"Police need more training on the signs for victims. Many don't know what the signs are — they take the word of the trafficker over the victim."

Male survivor of modern slavery, United Kingdom, 2018

Restricting routes, reducing protections: Impact of recent changes to UK immigration policy

Recent changes to the UK's immigration policy, particularly post-Brexit, have been criticised for putting vulnerable people at greater risk of exploitation and modern slavery. The shift towards a more hostile and discriminatory environment has made it increasingly difficult for vulnerable people to access essential support and services.[58] The criminalisation of immigration offences and the tightening of immigration laws[59] has led to individuals not coming forward and reporting instances of modern slavery out of fear of being arrested and deported. This allows traffickers to operate with impunity, putting people at even greater risk of abuse and exploitation. In March 2023, the UK government proposed the Illegal Immigration Bill,[60] which aims to detain and swiftly remove anyone entering the country "illegally." In its current form, the bill contravenes the UN Refugee Convention,[61] which the UK government has ratified, and could prevent modern slavery victims from reaching safety and accessing support.[62] The increasing curtailment of clear and accessible pathways to safe and legal migration leaves people vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and other criminal networks.[63] As such, the recent changes to UK immigration policy pose a serious threat to the safety and well-being of people who are vulnerable to modern slavery.

Throughout Europe and Central Asia, Turkmenistan and Russia have the weakest responses to modern slavery. This is characterised by limited action to address underlying risk and drivers of modern slavery. In general, this reflects a combination of limited political will and a lack of resources, which means these governments do not prioritise the response to modern slavery. Our assessment of government responses also reflects evidence of state-imposed forced labour in both countries, as well as in Belarus and Poland. In Turkmenistan, reports highlight forced labour being used as a method of mobilising labour for the purpose of economic development; and as a means of labour discipline, tens of thousands of adults are forced to pick cotton, and farmers forced to fulfil state-established quotas, under the threat of penalty.[64] In Poland, abuse of prison labour for private interests has been reported.[65] In Russia, an initiative has been approved by the prison service and several government bodies for prisoners to exchange confinement for labour on major construction projects.[66] More than a third of the country's total prison population are eligible, while it is unclear how voluntary this labour is and if it will be paid.[67] Further, there have been reports of North Koreans in forced labour within the construction and agriculture industries in Russia, with migrant workers sending the majority of their earnings back to North Korea to help prop up the regime.[68] Abuse of prison labour occurs in Belarus[69] while so-called medical labour centres[70] see citizens struggling with drug addiction forced to work as part of their recovery.

Encouragingly, for the first time in 11 consecutive years of monitoring forced child and adult labour in Uzbekistan's cotton fields, the latest reports found that state-imposed forced labour during the country's cotton harvest no longer occurs.[71] This is due to central government policy, international pressure, and national awareness raising of the illegality of forced labour.[72] In other countries across the region, modern slavery responses have been undermined by state authorities. While most countries have criminalised corruption, reports of official complicity in modern slavery cases failed to be investigated 14 countries. This includes reported instances in Bulgaria, where police officers have not been investigated for allegedly taking payments to turn a blind eye towards women exploited in commercial sex.[73]

Albania, Portugal, and Ireland have all taken further action to combat modern slavery since the previous assessment of government responses in 2018.[74] Recent developments have occurred in Albania, with the government operating one specialised shelter and allocating US$175,390 to NGO-run shelters in 2020 to support staff salaries.[75] Additionally, in Portugal, guidelines were published to outline that frontline responders, including police and NGOs, could identify and refer presumed victims to services.[76]



Berlin, Germany, August 2017.

Two of four accused cover their faces during a trial against them where they are accused of trafficking people from Hungary and Austria into Germany. Photo: Gregor Fischer/dpa via Getty Images.

Significant gaps remain in legal frameworks to combat modern slavery across Europe and Central Asia. Thirty-four countries have failed to criminalise forced labour and 29 countries have failed to criminalise forced marriage. Both Cyprus and Malta were the latest countries to criminalise forced marriage since the last Global Slavery Index in 2018. Although 14 countries in the region have ratified the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 since 2018, overall ratification remains disappointing, with 23 countries in the region failing to do so. Other critical gaps across the region include uptake of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990.

Where countries have enacted legislation or put in place relevant policies, implementation is not always consistent. Gaps in services appeared across the region, with 15 countries failing to provide services to all survivors. For example, in Serbia,[77] Germany,[78] and Hungary,[79] among others, services for men and children were inconsistent. Further, despite National Action Plans existing in 41 countries, only 11 governments fully funded activities within these plans and just 10 countries monitored their implementation through an independent entity. Most recently, in October 2020, the Irish government appointed the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission as the independent national rapporteur responsible for monitoring human trafficking policy and data collection.[80]

"There needs to be some sort of global standard of aftercare to avoid re-trafficking."

Female survivor of modern slavery, United Kingdom, 2018

Given the significant migrant flows across the region, cross-border collaboration on issues specifically related to modern slavery is integral. Encouragingly, most governments in the region did cooperate bilaterally in some way, either through repatriation efforts or labour migration agreements, and often this is facilitated through EU agreements. These agreements can help to prevent exploitation and modern slavery, as they can provide a legal framework for movement and workers' rights. However, 35 countries did not have systems in place to allow asylum seekers to seek protection or there was evidence of systematic discrimination, detention, and/or deportation of these groups. This includes countries in the region with some of the largest asylum seeker populations, including Germany, the UK, Greece, Armenia, and Spain. For example, in April 2022, the UK announced plans to deport to Rwanda asylum seekers from that country who enter the UK using "irregular routes," such as on small boats or in the backs of trucks.[81] Although the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) stepped in to issue injunctions that halted deportation flights,[82] a judicial review published in December 2022 found the policy to be lawful.[83] The scheme has been justified by the UK government as a way to deter people making dangerous journeys; however, the numbers crossing have not fallen since the policy was announced. More than 45,000 people used irregular routes like this to come to the UK in 2022, the highest figure since records began.[84]



Kherson, Ukraine, November 2022.

Since the start of the invasion, staff at a children's hospital in Kherson have protected a group of 10 orphans between the ages of two months and three years old, after hearing that occupying authorities were forcibly removing children to Crimea and Russia. There are allegedly thousands of such abductions, including 46 from the local orphanage where these children lived prior to the invasion. The whereabouts of these missing children remains unknown. Photo credit: Chris McGrath via Getty Images.

Table 21
Government response score, by country and milestone

Country	Survivors identified and supported (%)	Criminal justice mechanisms (%)	National and regional level coordination (%)	Risk factors are addressed (%)	Government and business supply chains (%)	Total (%)
United Kingdom	59	81	75	71	38	68
Netherlands	77	62	88	64	38	67
Portugal	73	73	75	64	25	67
Ireland	59	69	88	64	25	63
Norway	55	73	75	64	38	63
Spain	55	73	75	71	25	63
Sweden	59	69	63	79	25	63
Albania	55	69	75	79	13	62
Austria	59	65	75	71	25	62
Denmark	64	65	75	64	25	62
France	41	81	88	57	38	62
Georgia	68	65	75	71	0	62
Germany	50	81	63	57	38	62
Greece	68	62	75	64	25	62
Finland	55	62	88	71	25	60
Montenegro	68	73	63	57	0	60
Azerbaijan	64	69	63	64	0	59
Belgium	45	65	75	71	38	59
Croatia	59	65	75	64	13	59
Czechia	59	62	88	57	25	59
Italy	50	65	63	79	25	59
Latvia	64	65	63	57	25	59
Bosnia and Herzegovina	68	65	63	57	0	58
Cyprus	64	62	63	57	25	58
Lithuania	59	65	50	64	25	58
North Macedonia	68	65	75	50	0	58
Romania	59	65	75	50	25	58
Slovakia	50	62	63	79	25	58
Estonia	59	46	75	79	25	56
Serbia	64	69	63	50	0	56
Slovenia	50	65	63	64	25	56
Bulgaria	50	65	63	57	25	55
Hungary	50	58	63	71	25	55
Poland	50	65	75	50	25	55
Armenia	64	58	75	50	0	54
Luxembourg	50	62	50	50	25	51
Ukraine	64	54	63	50	0	51
Switzerland	50	50	50	64	25	50
Malta	64	58	38	29	25	49
Türkiye	64	54	63	36	0	49
Belarus	64	50	38	50	0	47
Iceland	55	50	38	50	25	47
Kyrgyzstan	41	65	63	43	0	47
Moldova	45	50	63	57	13	47
Kazakhstan	45	50	50	64	0	46
Uzbekistan	45	54	50	57	0	46
Israel	41	50	63	57	0	45
Kosovo	59	50	50	36	0	45
Tajikistan	23	54	50	36	0	36
Liechtenstein	27	42	25	29	13	31
Turkmenistan	14	46	25	21	0	26
Russia	5	46	38	21	0	24



Dunkirk, France, October 2022.

A migrant man carrying a child runs to board a smuggler's boat and attempt to cross the English Channel, while smugglers stand behind him. Many people, forced by circumstance, take dangerous journeys to find a better life in the UK. However, hostile attitudes towards migrants and refugees are increasing their vulnerability to exploitation. Photo credit: Sameer Al-Doumya/AFP via Getty Images.

European migration policies in response to the crises in Libya have also been criticised for their hostility and focus on border enforcement and control.[85] From 2020 to 2021, there was a 90 per cent increase in those attempting the crossing from Libya to EU countries.[86] The safe and legal options for those seeking to flee humanitarian crises across Africa via Libya are limited and have been further impeded by the European Union's support of the Libyan coastguard and its intercepting of those fleeing and returning them to Libya, where they are vulnerable to being bought and sold in slave markets.[87] Such policies appear to be addressing the sentiments of European audiences at the expense of Libyan stakeholders and local vulnerable groups. Similar border management measures have been implemented by the EU and its member states with other African countries in recent years in an attempt to limit irregular migration from the region, such as an €80 million (approximately US$87 million) deal signed with Egypt in October 2022. Egypt is likely to see intensified flows of migrants in the medium to long term as a result of regional instability, climate change, demographic shifts, and a lack of economic opportunities.[88] By limiting safe legal pathways for migrants, modern slavery, and exploitation risks will rise considerably.

Other examples of rights curtailments across the Europe and Central Asia region include labour laws in 12 countries preventing certain groups from exercising their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. For example, in Israel, prison staff do not have the right to form and join unions, nor do self-employed workers.[89] In Denmark, certain groups of non-resident foreign workers do not have the right to collective bargaining.[90]

The Europe and Central Asia region scored poorly on indicators relating to government and business supply chains, although countries in the Europe subregion have among the strongest legislative responses globally in this area. France,[91] Germany,[92] and Norway[93] have active mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (mHRDD) legislation while the same type of legislation has been proposed Switzerland[94] and the Netherlands.[95] What this means in practice in Norway, for example, is that all Norwegian-domiciled "larger enterprises" (as determined by size and income thresholds) are required to carry out due diligence in identifying, preventing, and mitigating possible adverse impacts on human rights and labour rights. Failure to do so results in fines and/or injunctions. Encouragingly, progress in this area is likely to grow in the region. An EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD), including environmental concerns, was proposed in 2022 but has not yet been adopted.[96] It would require in-scope companies to conduct due diligence on the human rights and environmental impacts of their operations and supply chains, and to take steps to address adverse impacts.

Promising Practices in Europe and Central Asia

Within the Promising Practices Database, just over 20 per cent of evaluated programs were delivered within Europe and Central Asia, covering 36 countries in the region. The majority of programs focus on industries where there are known modern slavery risks, such as sex work, agriculture, and domestic work. Seventy per cent of evaluated programs in the region targeted human trafficking, followed by the worst forms of child labour. The most common activities delivered within the evaluated programs included awareness-raising campaigns, policy advocacy, and technical support for the government. Almost 75 per cent of evaluated programs in the region met some or all of their objectives.

Notably, none of the evaluated programs in Europe and Central Asia that had some success featured a reliable evaluation methodology that included a control or comparison group to test the veracity of these positive outcomes. This severely limits the insights able to be drawn on what works to end modern slavery in Europe and Central Asia.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Strengthen efforts to protect vulnerable populations in situations of conflict and disaster from modern slavery risks, including repealing hostile migration policies that place securitisation above human rights and expanding the provision of safe and regular migration pathways and screening asylum seekers and migrants for modern slavery indicators. This should include ending political, financial, and material support to the system of forcible returns from international waters in the Central Mediterranean Sea to Libya.**

2. **Ensure that the right of survivors to not be treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under the control of traffickers is enshrined in legislation.**

3. **Enhance efforts to prevent discrimination against certain populations — such as Muslim, Roma, and Jewish people — and ensure that state policies serve to further integrate rather than target these communities.**

4. **Ensure that legal loopholes that facilitate state-imposed forced labour are closed and that the practice is abolished in Belarus, Poland, Russia, and Turkmenistan.**

5. **Expand enactment of mHRDD laws across the region to place more robust requirements on companies to report on identifying and mitigating modern slavery in their supply chains.**

06





IMPORTING RISK

Importing products at risk of forced labour 146

Maps of top at-risk products by G20 countries 153

Spotlight on the financial sector:
Investing in exploitation 172

Spotlight on the garment sector:
Stitched with slavery in the seams..... 176

Spotlight on the fishing sector:
Charting progress against forced labour at sea 182

Spotlight on the cocoa sector:
Forced labour: Chocolate's hidden ingredient..... 188

Huai'an, China, September 2022.

Workers of an electronics company work on the production line. Electronics, including laptops and mobile phones, are the highest value product at risk of forced labour imported by G20 countries.
Photo credit: CFOTO/Future Publishing via Getty Images.

IMPORTING RISK

Importing products at risk of forced labour

Over the past few decades, the culture of consumerism and the demand for goods has grown substantially, particularly in developed countries. This growth has been driven by many factors, including rising incomes, increased access to credit, and advances in technology and e-commerce.[1]

With the COVID-19 pandemic, online shopping became more popular as people sought to avoid physical stores and social distancing measures that were put in place.[2] This led to a surge in demand for products like electronics, home office equipment, and household goods.[3]

The growth of consumer culture and demand for goods has both positive and negative impacts. On one hand, it can drive economic growth and innovation, create jobs, and provide people with access to goods and services that can improve their quality of life. On the other, it can contribute to environmental degradation, social inequality, and unsustainable patterns of consumption and waste.[4] It also means that goods produced using forced labour are sold by businesses and consumed by people all over the world.

The estimates of prevalence presented in this report count forced labour where it occurs. While this is critical in identifying where the need for intervention is greatest and most pressing, it does not paint a complete picture of where responsibility lies. The production and movement of goods between countries — from the sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing, packaging, and transportation — creates supply chains connecting manufacturers, distributors, and consumers across the world. Many of these supply chains are at risk of forced labour, but their complexity makes it very difficult to trace the origin of products and the presence of forced labour.

Understanding the risk imported by G20 countries

Although the highest prevalence of forced labour is found in low-income countries, it is deeply connected to demand from higher-income countries. Nearly two-thirds of all forced labour cases are linked to global supply chains, with workers exploited across a wide range of sectors and at every stage of the supply chain. Most forced labour occurs in the lowest tiers of supply chains; that is, in the extraction of raw materials and in production stages.[5]

While modern slavery occurs within the borders of wealthier countries,[6] the purchasing practices of their businesses and governments fuel exploitation in lower-income countries that are at the frontlines of global supply chains. G20 countries collectively account for 85 per cent of the world's GDP and over 65 per cent of the world's population.[7] Two G20 countries, China and the United States (US), remain the world's largest exporting[8] and importing[9] economies respectively. Given the G20's level of influence in the global economy, it is critical to examine their efforts to address forced labour through economic and trade measures.

In this chapter we focus on the at-risk products that are imported into G20[10] countries and their value. There are two important factors to understanding the movement of risk through supply chains to the end consumer. The first is to identify which globally traded products are likely to be at risk of being produced with forced labour and the second is to match them with their trade value. The methodology used to identify a short list of products at risk of being produced using forced labour and the extent to which they are imported by G20 countries is described in Appendix 3.

The value of products at risk of forced labour

The sheer volume of imports into the G20 demonstrates the power these countries have to influence market standards and combat forced labour. Currently, G20 countries are importing more than US$468 billion worth of products at risk of being produced with forced labour, compared to US$354 billion estimated in the 2018 Global Slavery Index, an increase of US$61 billion when accounting for inflation.[11] This estimate considers only the top five most valuable at-risk products imported per G20 country, which for the first time includes solar panels exported from China. Broken down by country, the value of imports ranges significantly across the G20, from a minimum of US$1.6 billion spent by Argentina to a maximum of US$169.6 billion by the US (Table 22).

Electronics remained the highest value at-risk import for the majority of G20 countries, worth an estimated US$243.6 billion. This was followed by garments (US$147.9 billion) and palm oil (US$ 19.7 billion). Solar panels were the fourth highest value at-risk product (US$14.8 billion), reflecting the high global demand for renewable energy products[12] as governments begin to take steps to combat the climate crisis and seek alternative clean power sources.[13] Cocoa has dropped from 5th to 12th highest at-risk product imported by the G20 by value. This is consistent with reports that global demand for cocoa beans and chocolate fell during the COVID-19 pandemic.[14]

As in the 2018 GSI, electronics from China and Malaysia remain the highest value at-risk product imported by G20 countries (Table 23), while for 18 of the 19 G20 country members included in this analysis, electronics are among the top five at-risk products. In Malaysia, there are reported cases of forced labour and debt bondage in the electronics manufacturing industry, which is reliant on migrant labour from Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, and Indonesia.[15] In China, factories manufacturing electronics for global brands reportedly force Uyghurs to work under state-imposed forced labour.[16] The forced labour of Uyghurs has been found in other sectors in China, including textiles and garment manufacturing[17] and renewable energy products.

Table 22
Value of top 5 at-risk imports, by country

Country	Total value of at-risk imports (in billions $US)
Argentina	1.6
Australia	17.4
Brazil	5.6
Canada	20.0
China	17.2
France	11.8
Germany	44.0
India	23.6
Indonesia	5.2
Italy	10.9
Japan	53.1
Mexico	9.2
Russia	15.2
Saudi Arabia	7.4
South Africa	4.8
South Korea	20.2
Türkiye	5.3
United Kingdom	26.1
United States	169.6

Table 23
Value of top 5 at-risk imports, by product

Product	Total import value (in billions $US)
Electronics	243.6
Garments	147.9
Palm oil	19.7
Solar panels	14.8
Textiles	12.7
Timber	7.4
Fish	6.3
Gold	5.2
Cattle	4.4
Sugarcane	2.5
Coffee	1.6
Cocoa	1.0
Rice	0.8
Coal	0.4

Labour exploitation is pervasive in the garment industry,[18] which is the second most valuable at-risk product. At-risk garments imported into the G20 are manufactured in Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, and Viet Nam. In India, women and girls who belong to ethnic minority groups are exploited in informal factories, which are sub-contracted by global brands' tier one suppliers to produce garments.[19] These garment workers do not earn a living wage and have no formal work agreements, while some work in conditions that amounts to forced labour.[20] A 2021 study on the Vietnamese garment industry found that 6 per cent of worker-participants were likely in a situation of forced labour.[21] Many noted that they could not refuse work or change employers due to threats of "exit costs," such as withholding valuables and wages, receiving threats of legal action, and psychological or physical violence.[22]

Textiles are within the five most valuable imported products in over 70 per cent of the 19 nation states in the G20. Textiles are imported by G20 countries to make many other products within that country, including bedding, PPE, carpeting, upholstery, and garments. Forced labour reportedly occurs in textile factories in China, where Uyghurs have been allegedly forcibly transferred and made to work in textile factories by a labour transfer program.[23]

There is evidence of widescale abuse in the fishing industry.[24] Multiple reports in the last five years have highlighted instances of forced labour onboard flagged fleets from China, Ghana, Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan that supply fish to a range of G20 countries, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the US (see Table 42 in Appendix 3). A 2021 study by Greenpeace identified fishers aboard Indonesian vessels living in forced labour across 45 ships. Workers reported multiple forms of coercion, including withholding of wages and deception.[25]

The palm oil industry harms both people and planet.[26] Nine G20 countries imported more than US$19 billion worth of at-risk palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia. In Malaysia, migrant workers make up the majority of the palm oil workforce, and once on a plantation they can face heightened risks of debt bondage, restricted movement, confiscation of identity documents, and having their wages withheld.[27] Conversely, the Indonesian palm oil industry relies solely on domestic labour, including internal migrants, however the use of a piece-rate system of pay with no mandatory minimum wage or social protections has led workers to involve their children in the work in order to meet the high harvest quotas and earn a survival wage.[28]



West Java, Indonesia, June 2022.

Palm fruit is harvested by a worker in Indonesia. Palm oil, derived from the fruit, is among the top five products with the highest risk of forced labour pervading supply chains that are imported by G20 countries. Palm oil production has also been linked to other issues, including the climate crisis. Photo credit: Dimas Ardian/ Bloomberg via Getty Images.

Renewable energy products

As global demand grows for governments to take immediate and impactful action to address the climate crisis, businesses are modifying their operations to adopt renewable energy practices. In 2020, the global renewable energy industry was worth US$881.7 billion and future forecasts estimate it to grow to US$1,977.6 billion by 2030.[29] However, in the worldwide push to move to sustainable energy, vulnerable workers are exposed to greater risks of exploitation in mining, agriculture, and manufacturing.[30]

From 2019 to 2021, the Business and Human Rights Centre tracked almost 200 allegations of human rights abuses related to the mining of cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, nickel, and zinc — all essential minerals for renewable energy products.[31] Abuses included unpaid wages, underpaid wages, exploitative hiring and firing practices, child labour, and discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, caste, or religion.[32] Widespread experiences of forced labour also occur in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).[33]

Solar panels are within the top five at-risk products for 11 G20 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, and Türkiye. Polysilicon, a silica-product derived from quartz sand, is essential to manufacturing solar panels. China is the market leader in polysilicon production and in 2021 about 45 per cent of the world's polysilicon supply originated from the Uyghur region.[34] Forced labour is prevalent throughout the industry. Multiple reports allege that state-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority peoples occur in the Uyghur region,[35] alongside the systematic abuse of other human rights[36] that some governments have called a genocide.[37]

Forced labour permeates all businesses operating in Uyghur region, including those that are part of the solar panel supply chain, from the collection of raw quartz and its purification into solar grade polysilicon to its transformation into ingots, wafers, cells, and eventually solar panel modules. The Chinese government states that the associated "labour transfer" schemes are intended to alleviate poverty, yet workers are reportedly unable to refuse to participate and are coerced through threats of internment within re-education camps and extra-judicial detention.[38] In June 2021, the US issued a Withhold Release Order (WRO) to prevent the import of silica-based products made by specific companies operating within the Uyghur region.[39]

The transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy should not come at the expense of human rights, including the rights of those involved in the manufacture of sustainable energy products. The interconnected relationship between the environment and human rights was acknowledged at the UN Climate Change Conference hosted in Scotland in 2021, and more than 30 countries signed a declaration to support a "Just Transition."[40] The recommendations adopted within the declaration build upon practical guidelines created by the ILO in 2015, which aimed to provide countries with practical means to work towards sustainable economies and societies[41] while meeting their commitments under the subsequent Paris Agreement to address the impacts of climate change.[42] These included supporting workers to transition into new jobs, promoting social dialogue and stakeholder engagement between governments and representatives of workers and employers, and embedding the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among other rights-based instruments, within global supply chains.[43] However, fewer than half the members of the G20 have signed the Just Transition Declaration: signatories include Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US.[44]

What are G20 governments doing to address this risk?

No country in the world, including among the G20, has taken comprehensive action to stop sourcing goods made with forced labour, but there has been increased action by some countries to address forced labour risks within business and government supply chains in recent years. These actions range from voluntary guidelines and commitments and non-judicial complaints systems to laws establishing disclosure or human rights due diligence regimes and civil or criminal liability for misconduct.[45]

Among G20 countries, Australia, France, Germany, Brazil, the UK, and the US are taking the most action to eliminate risks of forced labour permeating global supply chains (Table 24).

Given their leverage, all G20 governments should do more to tackle forced labour in supply chains. In the G20, half of the members did not address supply chain risks, including those with the capacity to do more, including Saudi Arabia, Japan, and Russia.[47] Relative to its resources, Australia is currently outperforming wealthier G20 members such as Canada, China, and Italy in taking action against forced labour in supply chains.[48]

Table 24
G20 governments' actions to address forced labour in supply chains[a]

Government regulates and investigates public procurement to prevent use of forced labour	Government encourages mandatory reporting	Government encourages mandatory human rights due diligence	Government is using alternative avenues to ensure businesses are tackling forced labour in supply chains e.g. public-private partnerships, investor reporting
Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, UK, US	Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, UK, US	France, Germany[b]	Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, UK, US

a: Although a member of the G20, the European Union has been excluded from this analysis as government response data has not been collected at a supranational level for the Global Slavery Index.

b: The Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (LkSG) which entered into force on 1 January 2023,[i] sits outside the data collection period for the assessment of government responses in this Index. While the Act will be included for assessment in future rounds of data collection, it is noted in the table above for completeness.

Public procurement

G20 members have taken more action to address risks of forced labour within public supply chains in comparison to other countries in the Global Slavery Index. Eight G20 nation state members (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US) have implemented rules to prevent goods and services made with forced labour from being sourced by the government. These rules typically involve guidelines for procurement officers, such as the guidelines in the US pursuant to Executive Order No. 13627 of 2012[49] or through policies that explicitly prohibit the use of businesses suspected of using forced labour within their supply chains. For example, in Australia, Rule 7.27(f) of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules make specific reference to the Modern Slavery Act 2018 and ensure that procurement officials comply with the reporting requirements under the Act.[50] Australia and the UK are the only G20 members that have released public reports on efforts to mediate the risk of products made with forced labour entering government supply chains, as required under their respective disclosure laws.[51]

Even where rules and guidelines on public procurement exist, pressures caused by sudden surges in demand and insufficient global supply can circumvent these standards.[52] In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide raced to procure PPE in a highly competitive global market to respond to the emerging health crisis.[53] Textile factories in China producing PPE were reported to have used the forced labour of North Korean workers, who had 70 per cent of their wages taken by the North Korean state.[54] Governments also sourced disposable rubber gloves from factories in Malaysia despite continuing widespread concerns of forced labour within the sector; several countries, including the US, lifted bans on the import of Malaysian rubber gloves in 2020 to meet demand.[55] In 2022, legal proceedings were launched against the UK government for similarly sourcing disposable gloves for the National Health Service (NHS) from a Malaysian factory that reportedly used forced labour within its supply chain. Workers who brought the suit claimed they were forced to work for up to 12 hours each day for months at a time and that they experienced debt bondage.[56] The UK government passed an amendment to the National Health Service Act 2006 that banned the NHS from procuring goods made with forced labour in its supply chain pursuant to Section 81 of the Health and Care Act 2022.[57]

Mandatory reporting vs mandatory human rights due diligence

Since the 2018 Global Slavery Index, Australia[58] has joined the UK[59] and the US state of California[60] in enacting legislation requiring organisations to publicly disclose whether and how forced labour risks are present in their supply chains, as well as any actions they have taken to reduce those risks. In 2022, three bills were introduced in Canada, each of which require businesses to disclose efforts taken to remove child and forced labour from their supply chains ; Canada's "Modern Slavery Act" passed in May 2023.[61] In recent years, the efficacy of these disclosure regimes has been questioned. For example, the Modern Slavery Act in the UK was criticised for failing to set legally binding standards that ensure practical rather than performative compliance.[62]

As a result, there has been a shift towards laws that require businesses to go beyond disclosure and proactively identify and remediate actual and potential risks of human rights violations for workers within their operations and supply chains [mandatory human rights due diligence legislation (mHRDD)]. Laws have come into force in France,[63] Norway,[64] and Germany[65] or have been proposed in Switzerland[66]and the Netherlands,[67] while the EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) has not yet been adopted.[68] In the Netherlands, mHRDD laws adopted in 2017 specific to child labour (including the worst forms of child labour) impose a duty of care on companies to prevent the supply of goods or services made with child labour to Dutch consumers.[69] However, the law has not yet come into force; the Dutch government is reportedly developing implementation orders.[70] In 2021, Dutch legislators considered the Bill on Responsible and Sustainable International Business Conduct, which obliges large businesses to address human rights and environmental damage and conduct due diligence on their supply chains. However, the bill has not yet been passed.[71] In Switzerland in 2020, following the failure to pass a referendum to change the Constitution to ensure companies mandatorily conduct broad human rights due diligence in accordance with the UNGPs,[72] amendments were instead made to the Swiss Code of Obligations to narrow the scope of due diligence requirements to child labour and conflict metals and minerals.[73] A hybrid approach that includes both mandatory disclosure and due diligence requirements is being considered in New Zealand.[74]

Enforcement continues to be a key issue across regulatory frameworks for both government procurement and business supply chains. While some laws penalise companies that fail to comply with reporting, due diligence, or other procurement regulations (for example, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US), our government response assessment found no evidence that any country in the G20 enforced such penalties in the last five years. Remedies available for survivors of modern slavery offences are also limited. France is the only country which provides survivors with a cause of action, pursuant to Article 2 of the Duty of Vigilance law.[75] The German mHRDD shows promise in this regard by imposing fines for failure to comply with the due diligence requirements and uniquely provides civil liability avenues against businesses.[76] Similar civil liability regimes are envisioned at the EU level, under the proposed CSDD Directive.[77]

Other initiatives: Import controls, Magnitsky sanctions, and "name and shame" lists

Until recently, the US was the only country in the world to explicitly prohibit the importation of goods made with forced, convict, or indentured labour pursuant to section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930. This law empowers the US Customs and Border Protection agency, either on its own initiation or on external petition, to issue a WRO and prohibit the entry of a particular product into the country if it was reasonably believed that the goods were produced with forced labour.[78] Canada has now also taken steps to regulate the import of goods to prevent products made with forced and prison labour from entering domestic supply chains through amendments made in 2021 to Regulation 132(m), which lists banned products under Part 5 of the Customs Tariff Act of 1997.[79] A wider proposal to ban all products made with forced labour to reduce the risk of forced labour entering the European market was adopted by the EU parliament in June 2022.[80]

Other initiatives to reduce the import of products made with forced labour have typically been limited to specific sectors or forms of modern slavery. For example, EU Regulation 2017/821 entered into force in 2021 and requires importers to ensure that certain high-risk minerals and metals do not contribute to forced labour or conflict.[81] In response to reports of forced labour in the Uyghur region,[82] the US Congress passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in 2021. The law has a broad application aimed at "stopping the importation of any goods made with forced labour, including those goods mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part" in the Uyghur region.[83] Importantly, the Act envisions collaboration with Mexico and Canada to incorporate the restriction within the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement; Mexico and Canada have now both passed similar forced labour import controls.[84] A Private Member's Bill proposed in 2020 sought to amend the Australian Customs Act and introduce a specific ban on goods produced by the forced labour of Uyghurs; however, it was not passed.[85]

Laws in the US, Canada, the UK, the EU,[86] and more recently in Australia, allow for targeted "Magnitsky" sanctions against foreign entities or persons who are involved in serious human rights violations anywhere in the world.[87] Similar legislation was considered in Japan in 2022, but no further action has been taken.[88] "Magnitsky" sanctions take their name from a deceased Russian accountant and whistle-blower who was imprisoned and abused after uncovering large-scale tax fraud in Russia that involved senior government officials.[89] Penalties vary depending on jurisdiction but typically involve travel restrictions and asset freezes[90] and have been used to penalise individuals and organisations involved in modern slavery crimes. For example, in the UK, sanctions were levied against two organisations running North Korean prison camps where detainees were forced to work, the leader of a Ugandan non-state armed group that recruited children into armed conflict, and a senior general of the Myanmar Armed Forces operating in the Rakhine State, whose military operations included forcibly exploiting the labour of Rohingya people, among others.[91] Lists of individuals and organisations who have received sanctions are publicly available.[92]

Other government-run "name and shame" efforts have targeted those involved in forced labour offences, particularly in relation to goods and services made with forced labour. For example, the List of Products Produced by Child Labour or Forced Labour has been maintained by the US Department of State since 2005 and currently lists 156 goods from 77 countries.[93] In Brazil, the government has updated its "Slave Labour Dirty List" on a biannual basis since it was first established in 2004.[94] Updates to the list were temporarily suspended following a 2014 lawsuit brought against the government by the *Associação Brasileira de Incorporadoras Imobiliárias (Abrainc)*, a real estate business association, which alleged that the publication of the list was an unconstitutional use of executive power. While the Supreme Court of Brazil rejected this argument in 2020,[95] other issues limit the continued impact of the list. In 2022, researchers found that businesses and individuals circumvent the Dirty List process to avoid punishment.[96]

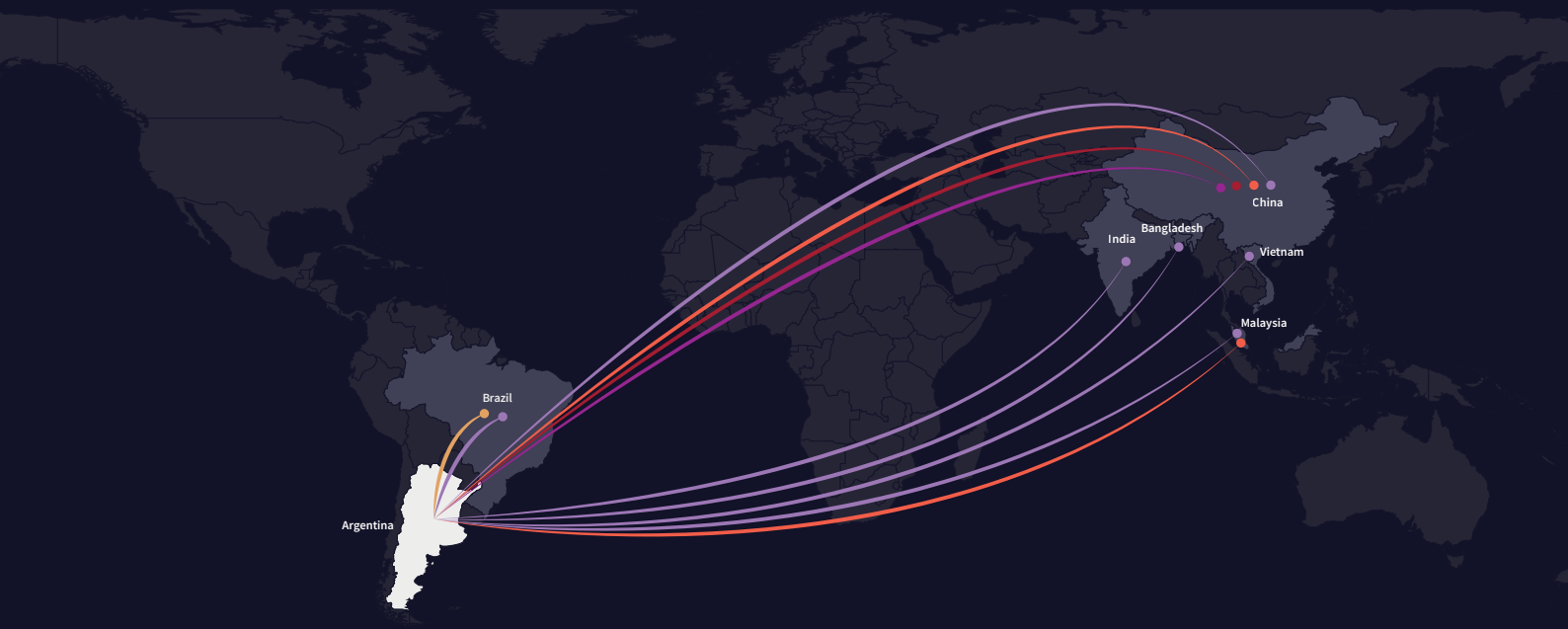
Recommendations for G20 governments

1. **Enact legislation to require large businesses and publicly funded entities to undertake mandatory human rights due diligence to proactively identify and remediate forced labour risks.**
2. **Require government contractors (and their sub-contractors) to certify that they have specific preventative measures to detect and eliminate forced labour in their supply chains.**
3. **Develop and implement rapid response guidelines that provide a practical framework for procurement agents to follow when consumer demand outstrips global supply, such as in response to crises, to reduce the risk of products produced with forced labour being introduced into public supply chains.**
4. **Strengthen existing mandatory reporting legislation by adding and implementing penalties and managing a free and publicly accessible repository to file all modern slavery statements to ensure businesses can be held accountable for non-compliance.**
5. **Take other legal measures to ensure value chains do not adversely impact human rights, such as import controls on products linked to forced labour, Magnitsky style sanctions, and public lists of those companies that have been found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.**

ARGENTINA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Coffee · Electronics† · Garments · Solar Panels · Textiles



Importer country

Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	1,249,673
Malaysia	19,969
China	103,034
Vietnam	16,574
Bangladesh	11,673
India	6,338
Brazil	5,914
Malaysia	448
China	82,025
Brazil	59,467
China	55,545

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

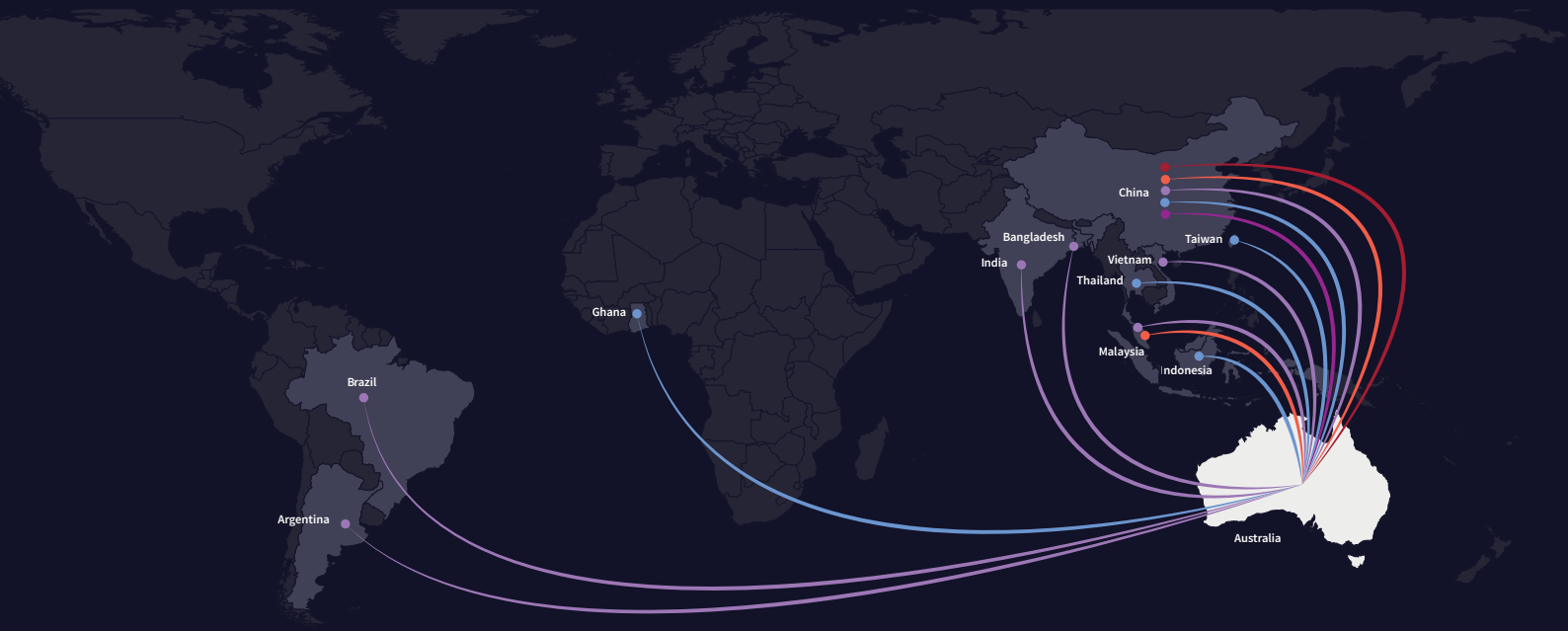
ARGENTINA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$1.6 BILLION

AUSTRALIA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Fish Garments Solar Panels Textiles



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	8,499,583
Malaysia	387,144
China	4,847,261
Bangladesh	814,958
Vietnam	400,830
India	298,593
Malaysia	25,397
Brazil	1,830
Argentina	33
China	1,302,216
China	469,839
Thailand	199,156
China	75,023
Indonesia	73,488
Taiwan	39,283
Ghana	2

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

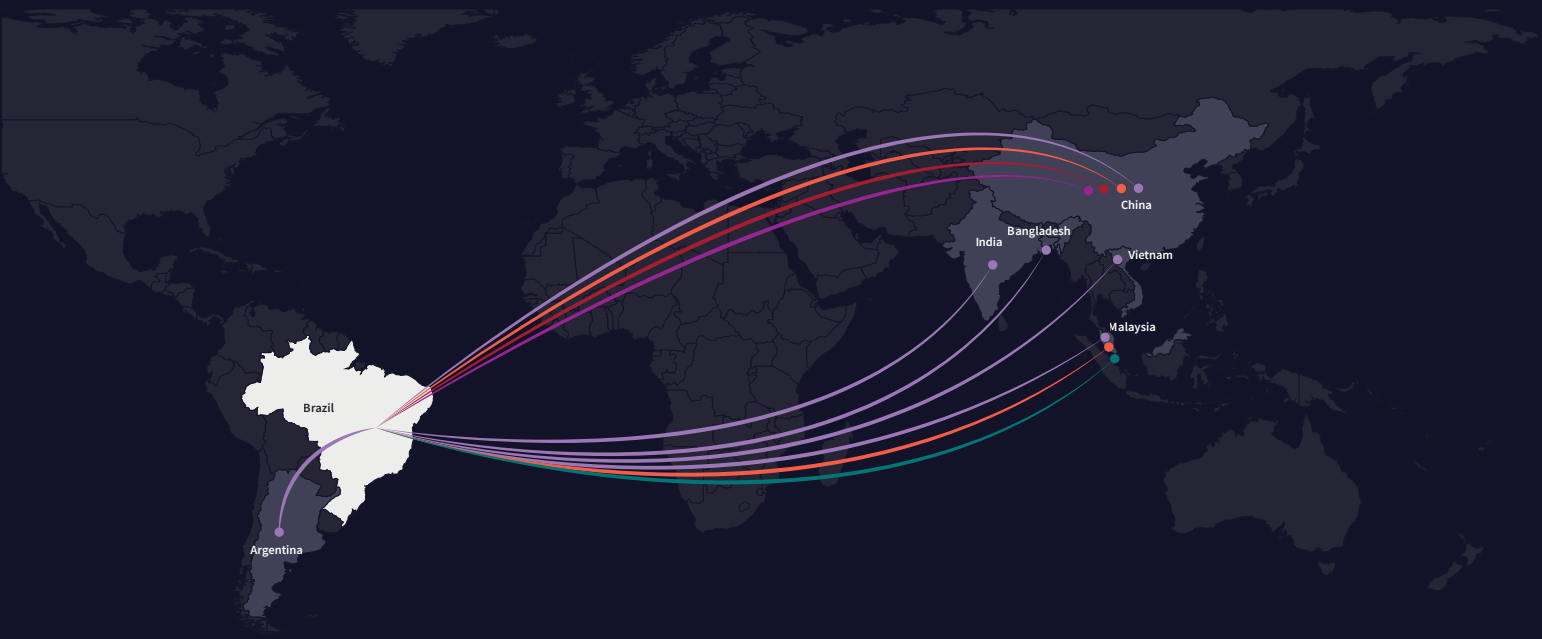
AUSTRALIA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 17.4 BILLION

BRAZIL

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Palm Oil Solar Panels Textiles



China	2,771,297	
China	1,207,778	
Malaysia	15,137	
China	624,307	
Bangladesh	108,725	
Vietnam	52,986	
India	46,369	
Argentina	6,385	
Malaysia	1,963	
Indonesia	511,464	
Malaysia	19,313	
China	269,543	

BRAZIL'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$5.6 BILLION

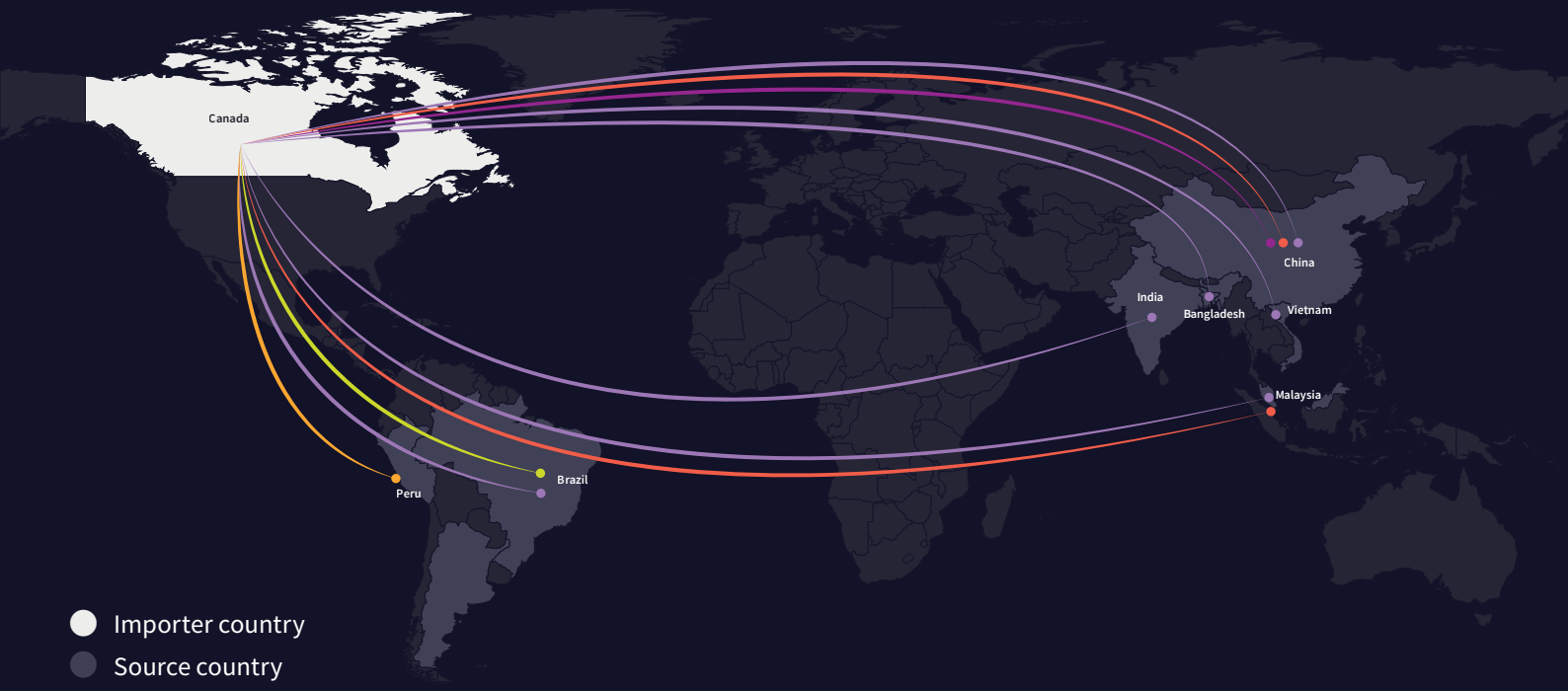
06
IMPORTING RISK

G20 IMPORTS

CANADA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Gold Sugarcane Textiles



Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	11,203,647
Malaysia	76,024
China	3,068,653
Bangladesh	1,278,694
Vietnam	1,053,657
India	259,998
Malaysia	12,618
Brazil	1,309
Argentina	6
Peru	2,097,402
China	482,486
Brazil	427,598

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

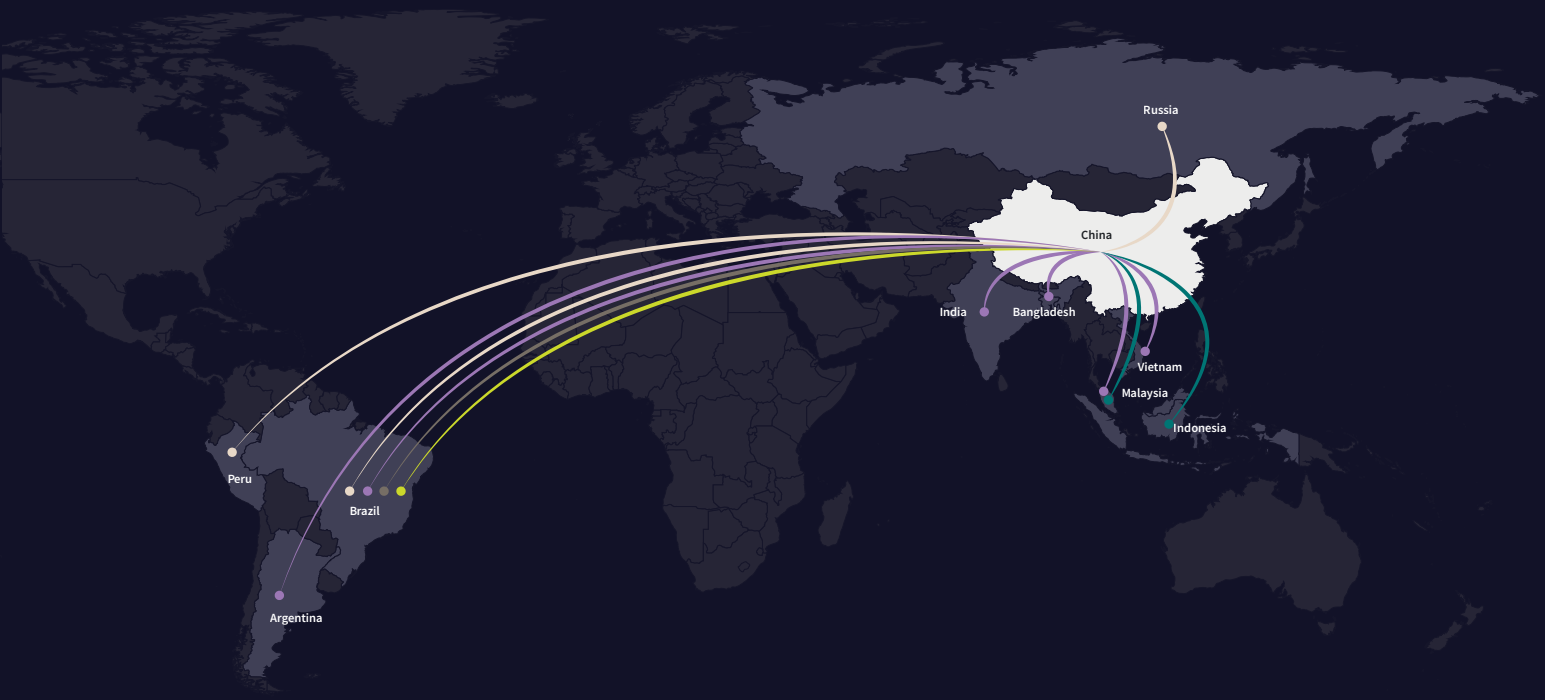
CANADA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

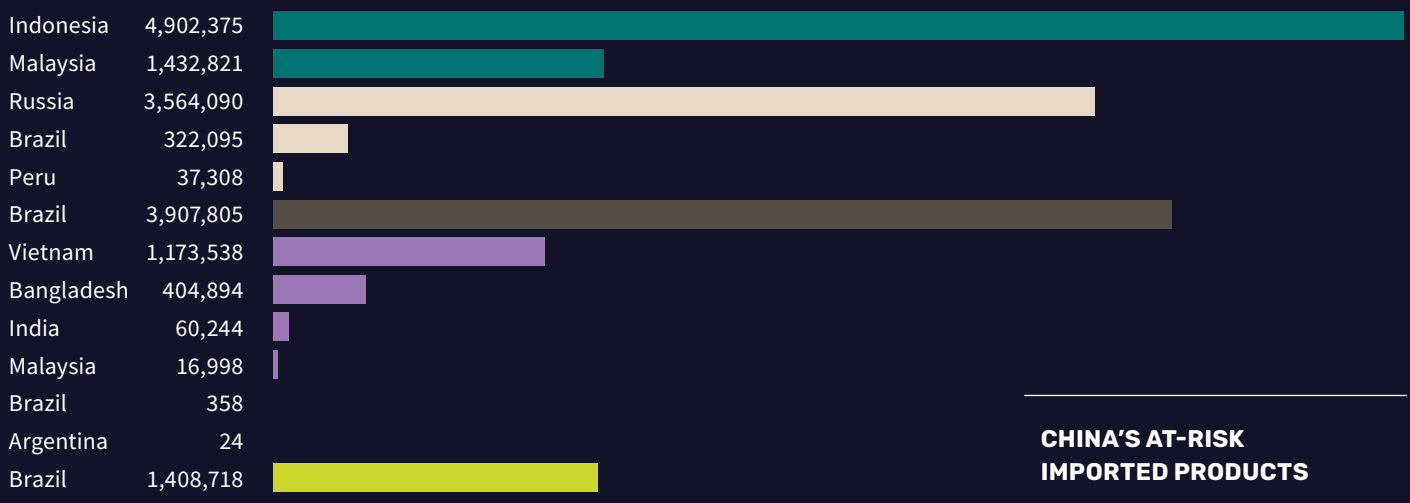
US$ 20.0 BILLION

CHINA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Cattle Garments Palm Oil Sugarcane Timber





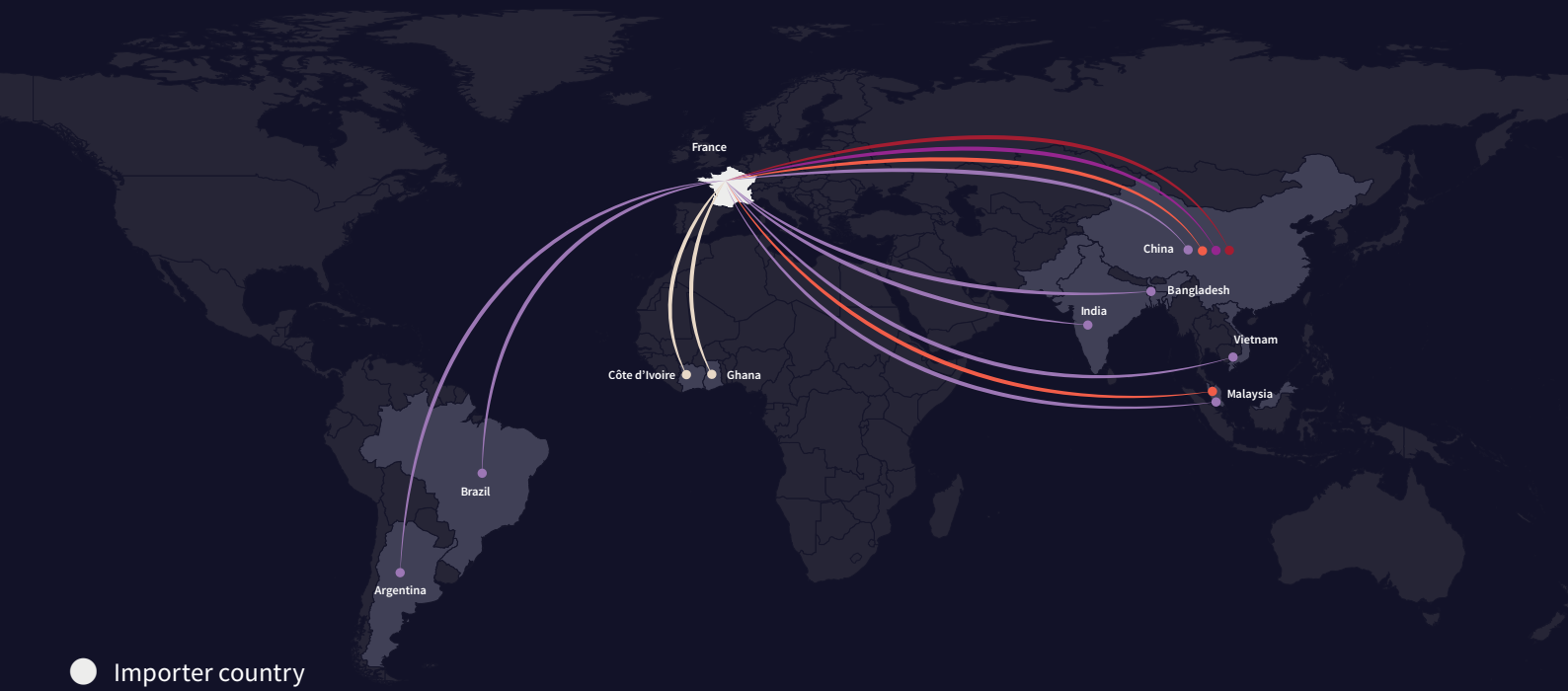
CHINA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$17.2 BILLION

FRANCE

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Cocoa · Electronics† · Garments · Solar Panels · Textiles



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	4,524,306
Bangladesh	1,917,574
India	682,554
Vietnam	564,909
Malaysia	6,475
Brazil	2,301
Argentina	577
China	2,609,763
Malaysia	13,678
Côte d'Ivoire	462,434
Ghana	172,531
China	434,278
China	362,406

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

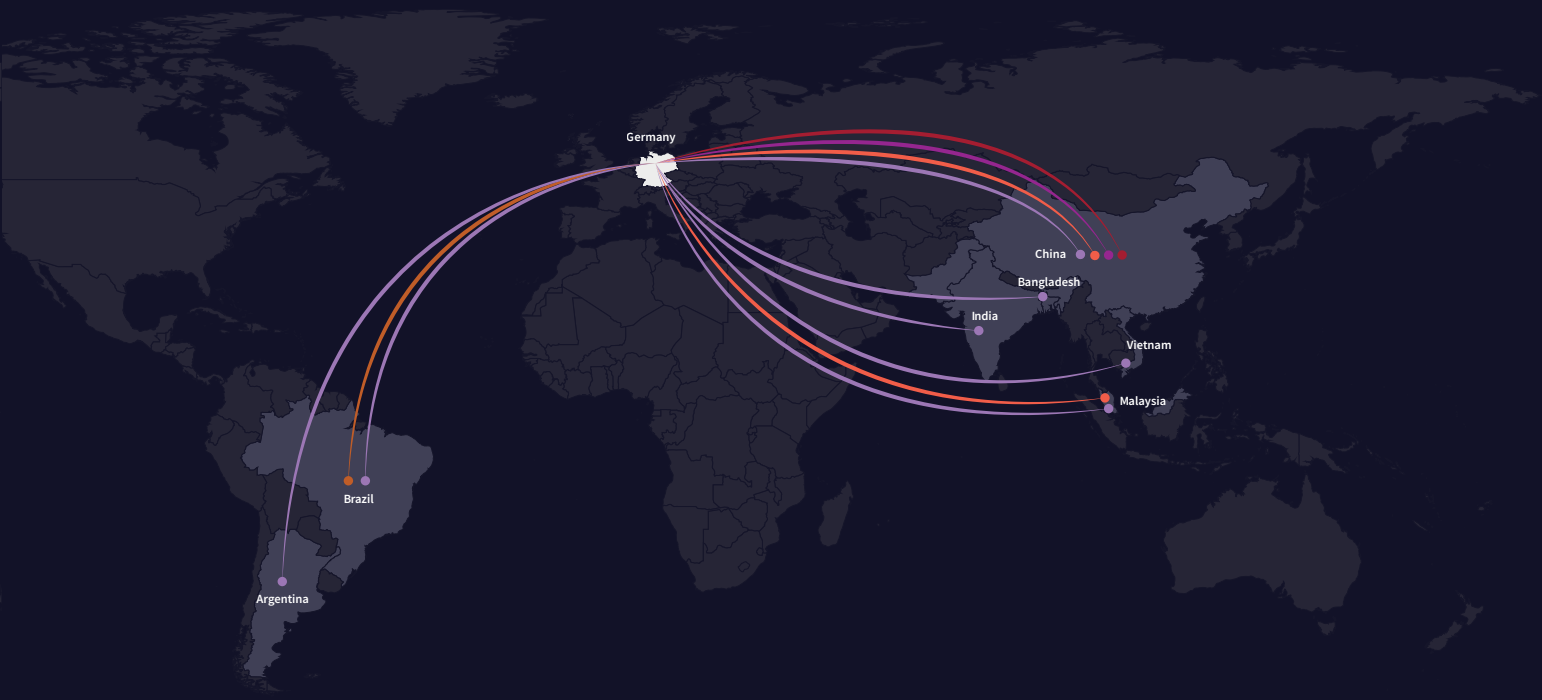
FRANCE'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 11.8 BILLION

GERMANY

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Coffee Electronics† Garments Solar Panels Textiles



China	20,319,762
Malaysia	151,570
China	7,993,142
Bangladesh	7,785,869
India	1,301,894
Vietnam	1,284,308
Malaysia	36,160
Brazil	857
Argentina	51
China	2,425,414
China	1,620,893
Brazil	1,064,743

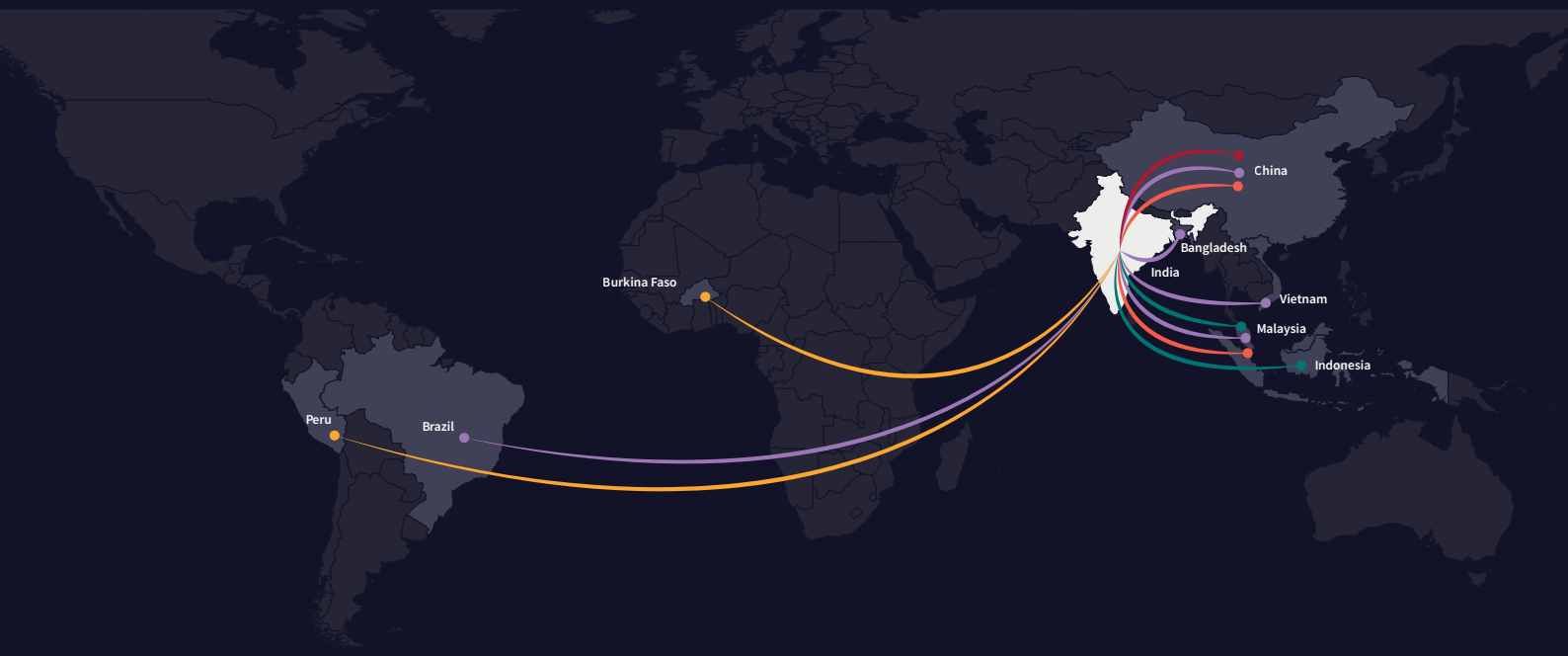
GERMANY'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$44.0 BILLION

INDIA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Gold Palm Oil Solar Panels



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	7,345,027
Malaysia	432,868
Malaysia	4,014,696
Indonesia	3,588,848
China	3,820,664
Peru	2,143,967
Burkina Faso	934,503
China	753,798
Bangladesh	472,834
Vietnam	47,222
Malaysia	7,523
Brazil	78

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

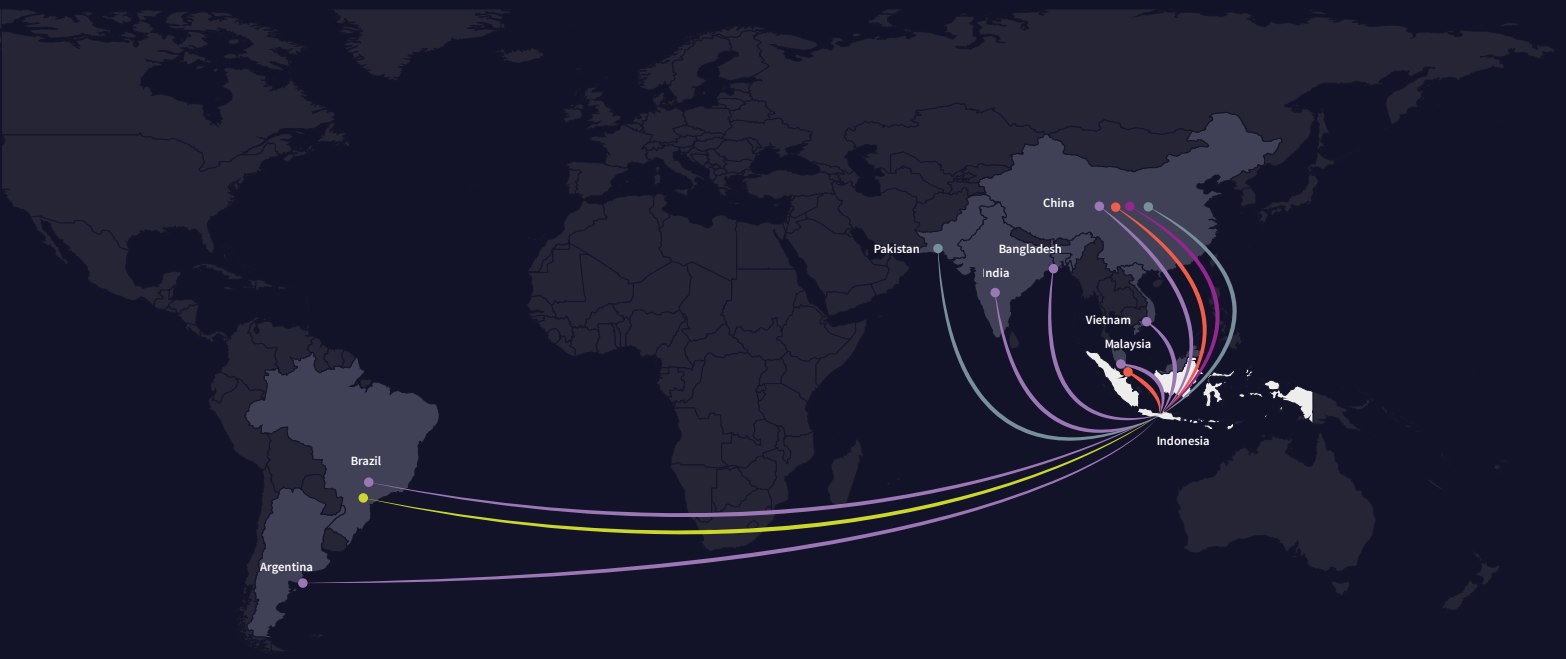
INDIA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 23.6 BILLION

INDONESIA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Coal · Electronics† · Garments · Sugarcane · Textiles



China	2,919,522
Malaysia	77,909
China	563,955
Bangladesh	58,744
Vietnam	49,025
Malaysia	21,467
India	15,410
Brazil	7
Argentina	0.4
China	663,425
China	432,649
Pakistan	0.2
Brazil	353,740

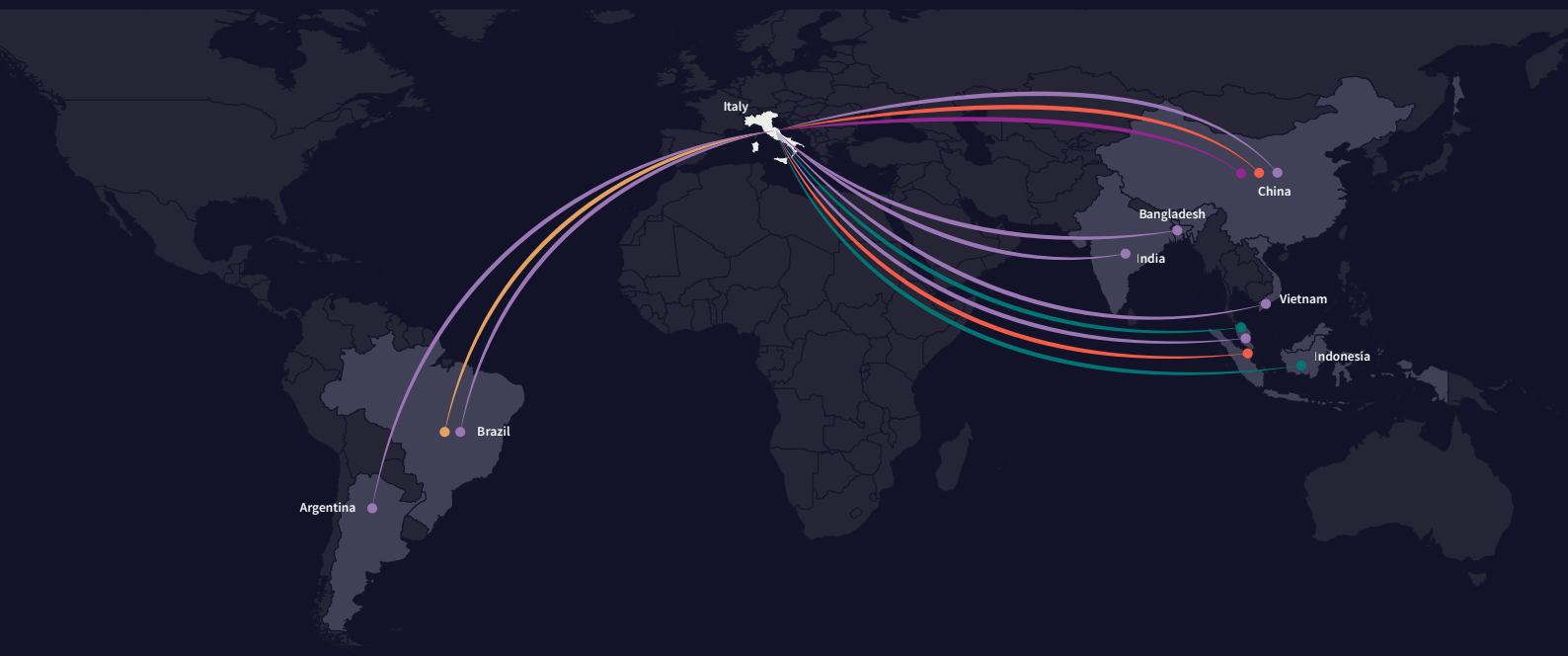
INDONESIA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$5.2 BILLION

ITALY

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Coffee · Electronics† · Garments · Palm Oil · Textiles



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	2,560,544
Bangladesh	1,420,659
India	353,801
Vietnam	275,277
Malaysia	4,419
Brazil	1,110
Argentina	143
China	4,099,594
Malaysia	11,962
Indonesia	769,786
Malaysia	416,258
China	533,455
Brazil	477,026

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

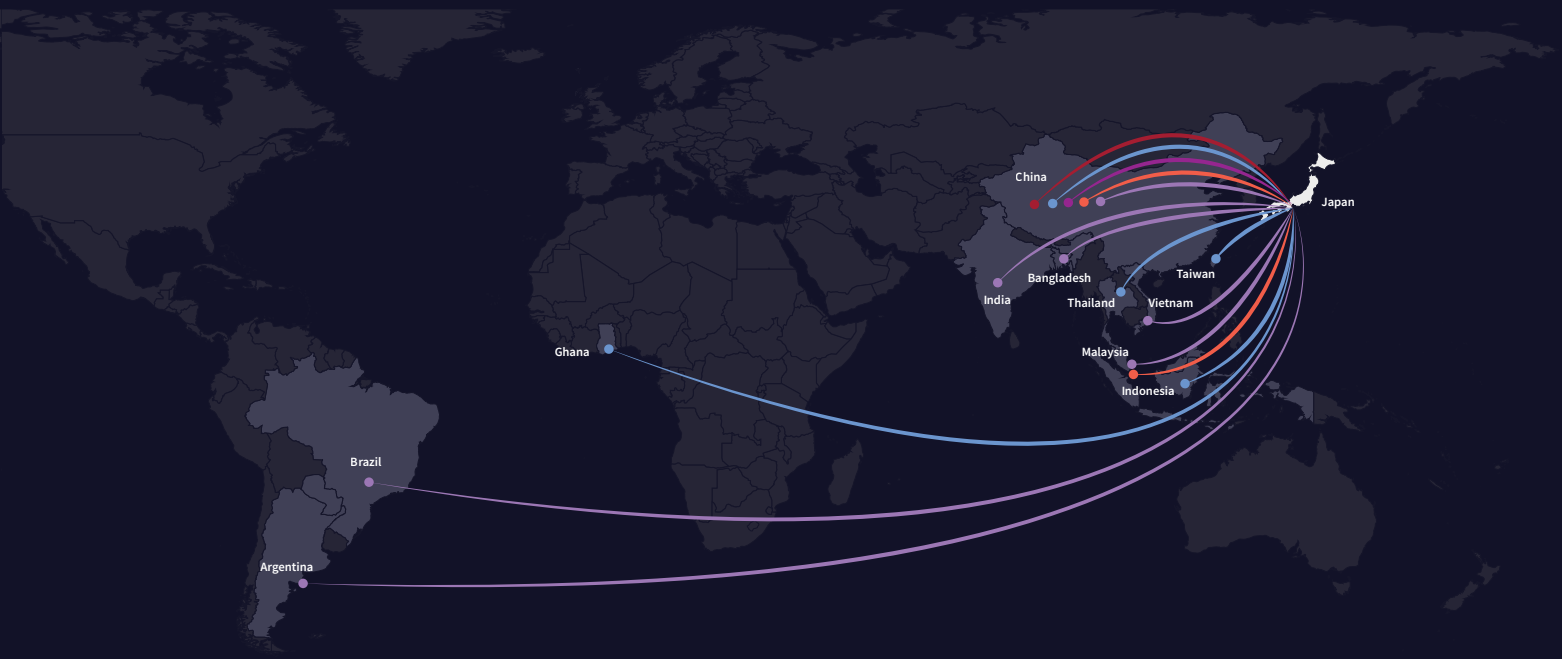
ITALY'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 10.9 BILLION

JAPAN

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Fish Garments Solar Panels Textiles



China	29,015,858	
Malaysia	111,882	
China	13,008,247	
Vietnam	3,129,860	
Bangladesh	1,161,546	
India	207,494	
Malaysia	116,704	
Brazil	1,773	
Argentina	400	
China	1,617,554	
Thailand	484,290	
Taiwan	376,438	
Indonesia	189,292	
Ghana	1305	
China	1,887,658	
China	1,805,444	

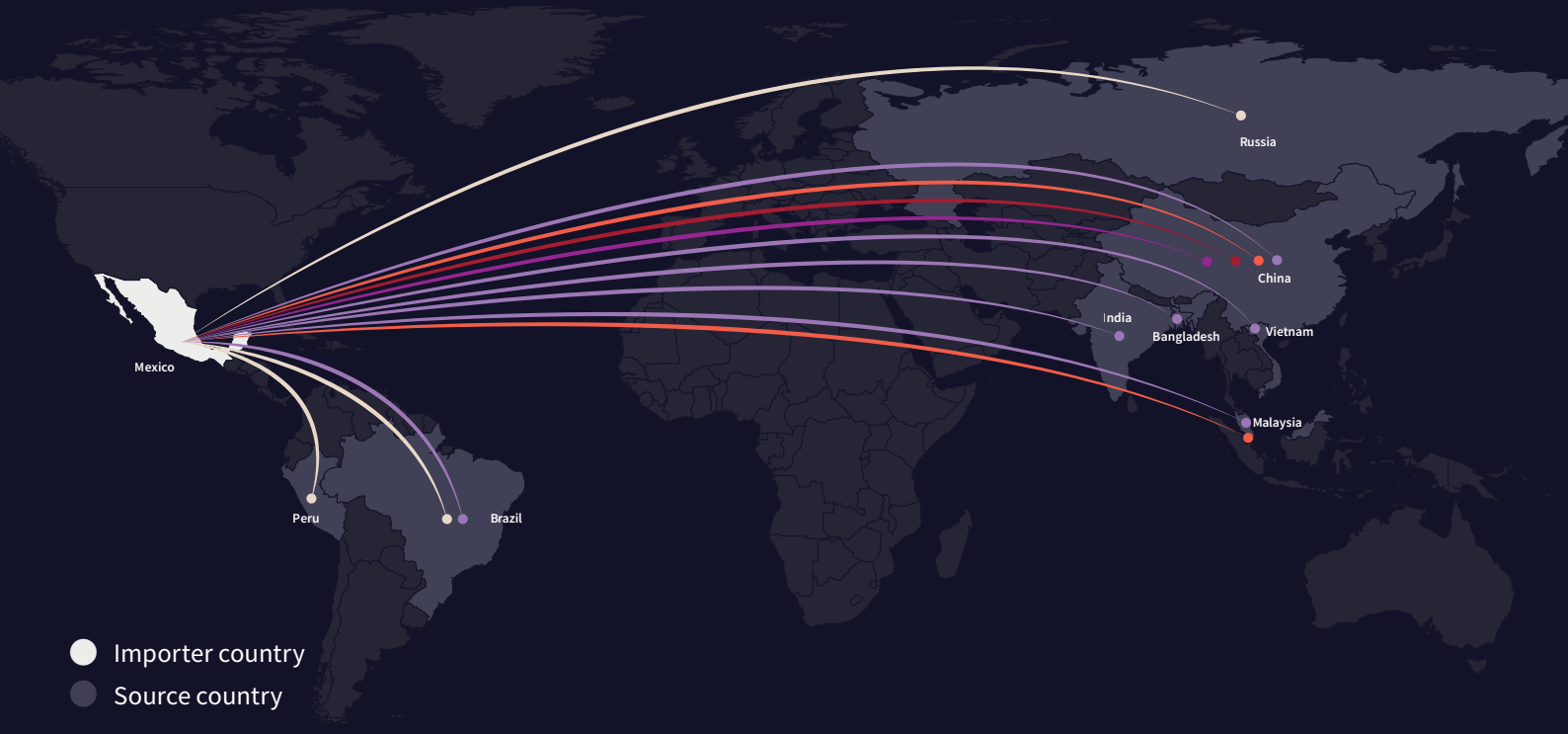
JAPAN'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$53.1 BILLION

MEXICO

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Solar Panels Textiles Timber



Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	5,553,221
Malaysia	178,698
China	1,525,355
Bangladesh	394,062
Vietnam	119,953
India	109,101
Malaysia	5,633
Brazil	1,235
China	498,915
China	476,471
Brazil	305,542
Russia	12,402
Peru	8,671

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

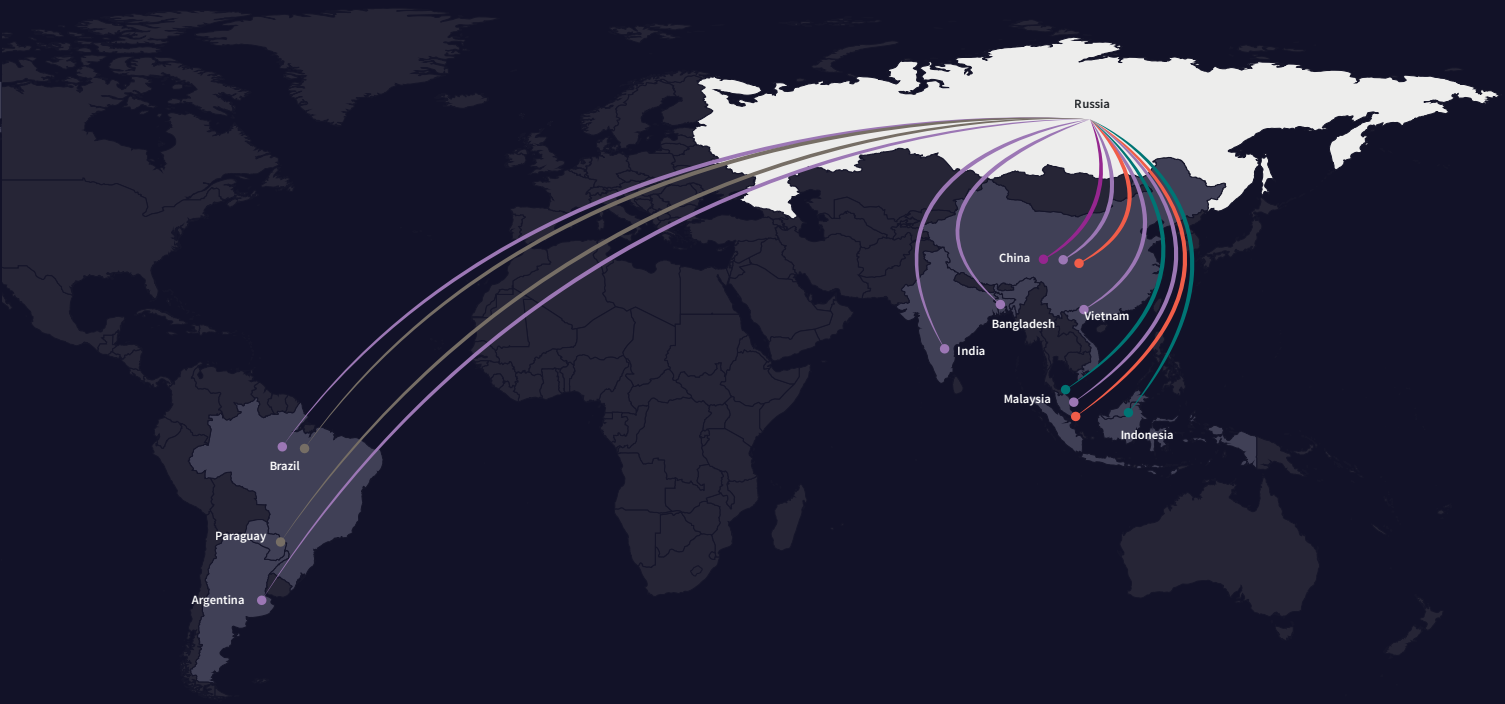
MEXICO'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 9.2 BILLION

RUSSIA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Cattle · Electronics† · Garments · Palm Oil · Textiles



China	8,699,722	Electronics
Malaysia	24,478	Electronics
China	2,976,065	Garments
Bangladesh	1,161,231	Garments
Vietnam	399,252	Garments
India	150,554	Garments
Malaysia	7,103	Garments
Brazil	372	Cattle
Argentina	0.1	Cattle
Indonesia	886,351	Palm Oil
Malaysia	15,946	Palm Oil
Paraguay	333,732	Cattle
Brazil	129,229	Cattle
China	420,059	Textiles

RUSSIA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$15.2 BILLION

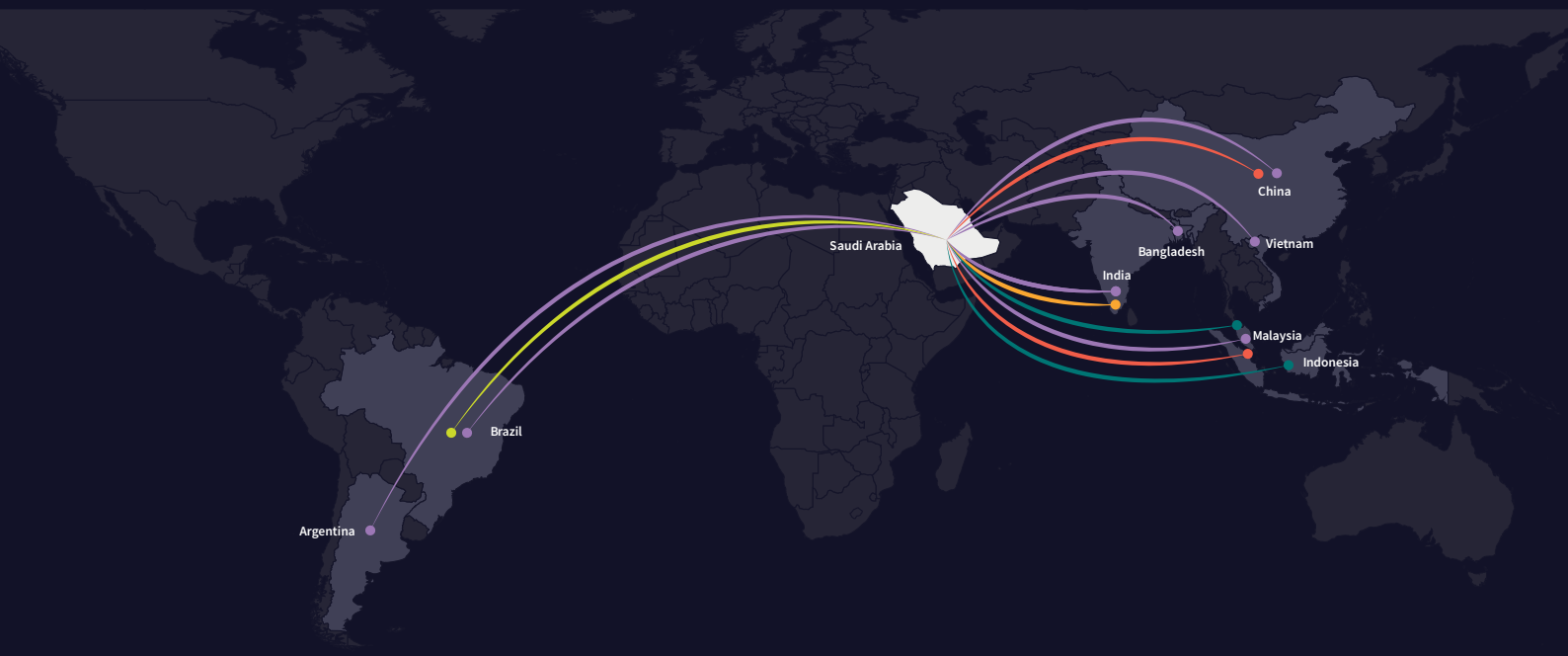
06
IMPORTING RISK

G20 IMPORTS

SAUDI ARABIA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Palm Oil Rice Sugarcane



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	2,317,822
India	414,568
Bangladesh	394,959
Vietnam	53,416
Malaysia	6,613
Brazil	626
Argentina	11
China	2,150,220
Malaysia	22,842
Indonesia	480,481
Malaysia	369,096
India	812,366
Brazil	340,235

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

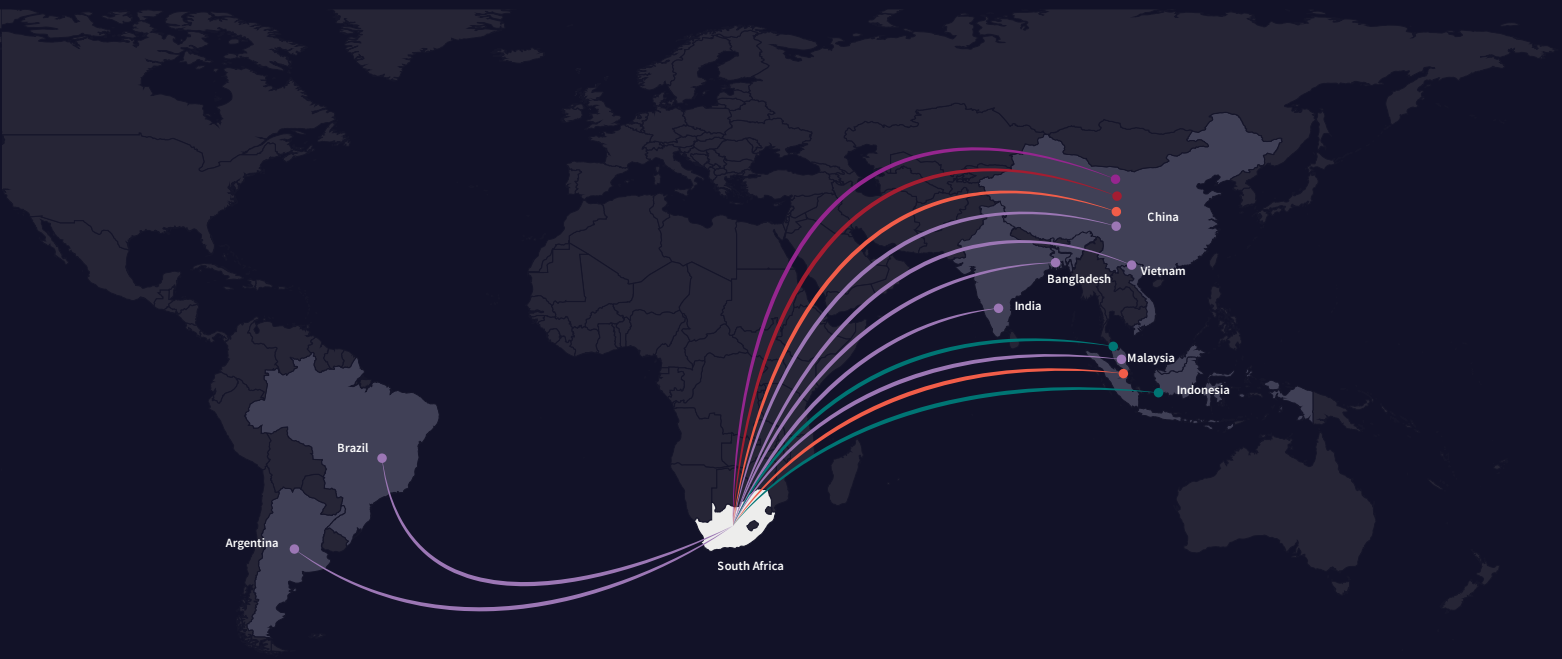
SAUDI ARABIA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

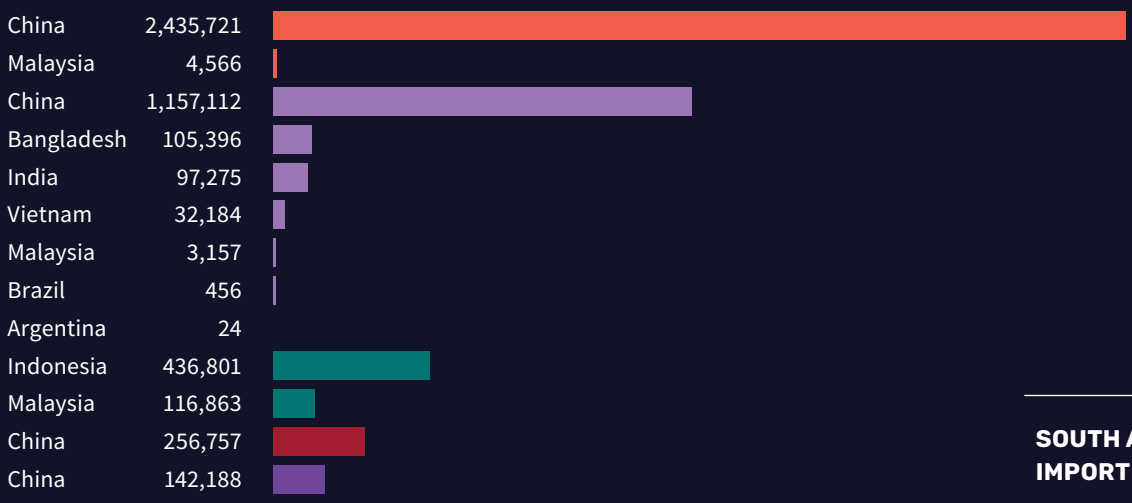
US$ 7.4 BILLION

SOUTH AFRICA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Garments Palm Oil Solar Panels Textiles





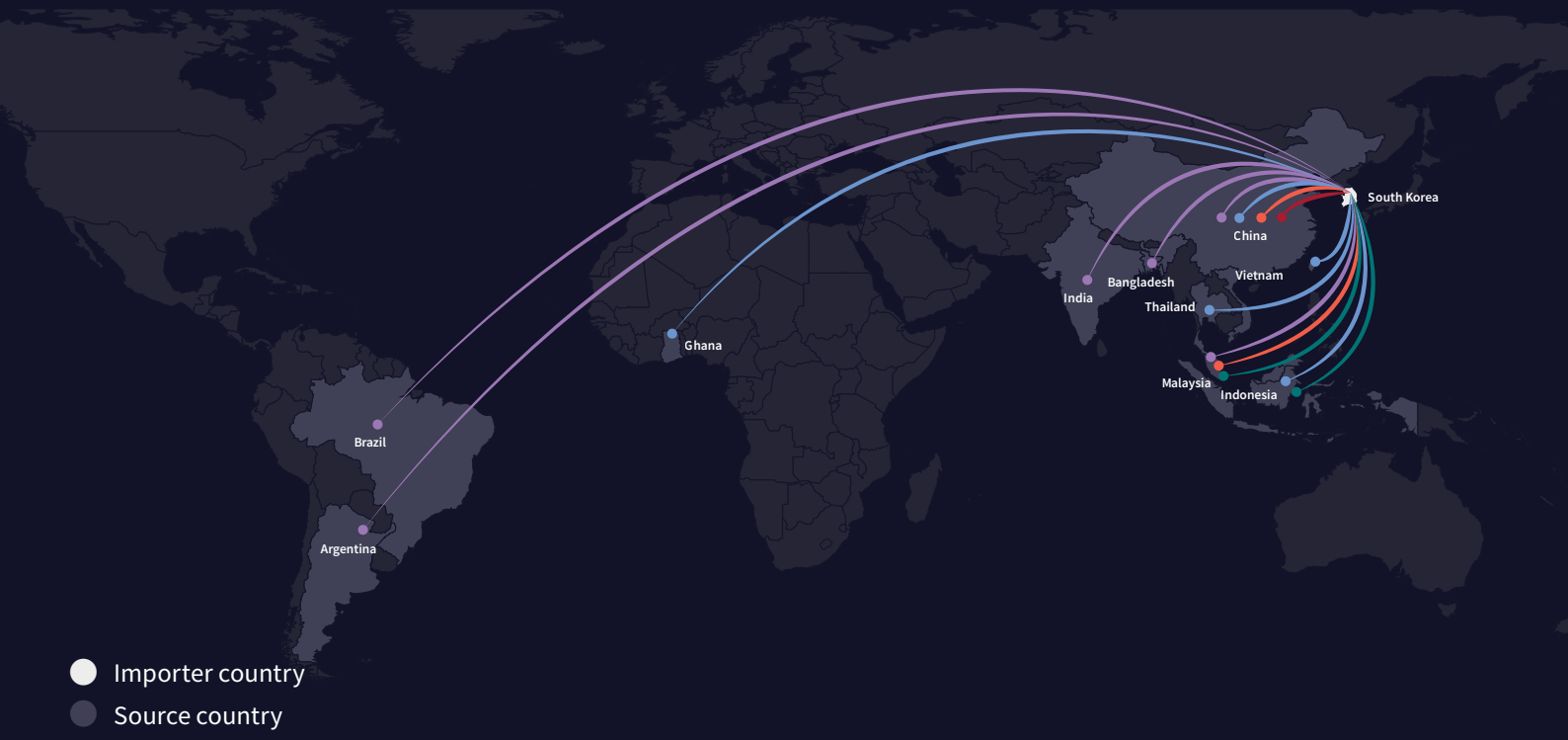
SOUTH AFRICA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$4.8 BILLION

SOUTH KOREA

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Fish Garments Palm Oil Solar Panels



Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	9,275,468
Malaysia	15,132
China	4,882,687
Vietnam	3,020,662
Bangladesh	443,987
India	56,823
Malaysia	8,626
Brazil	243
Argentina	136
China	1,003,783
Indonesia	453,534
Malaysia	373,781
China	533,256
Taiwan	114,442
Indonesia	32,753
Thailand	22,362
Ghana	1,815

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

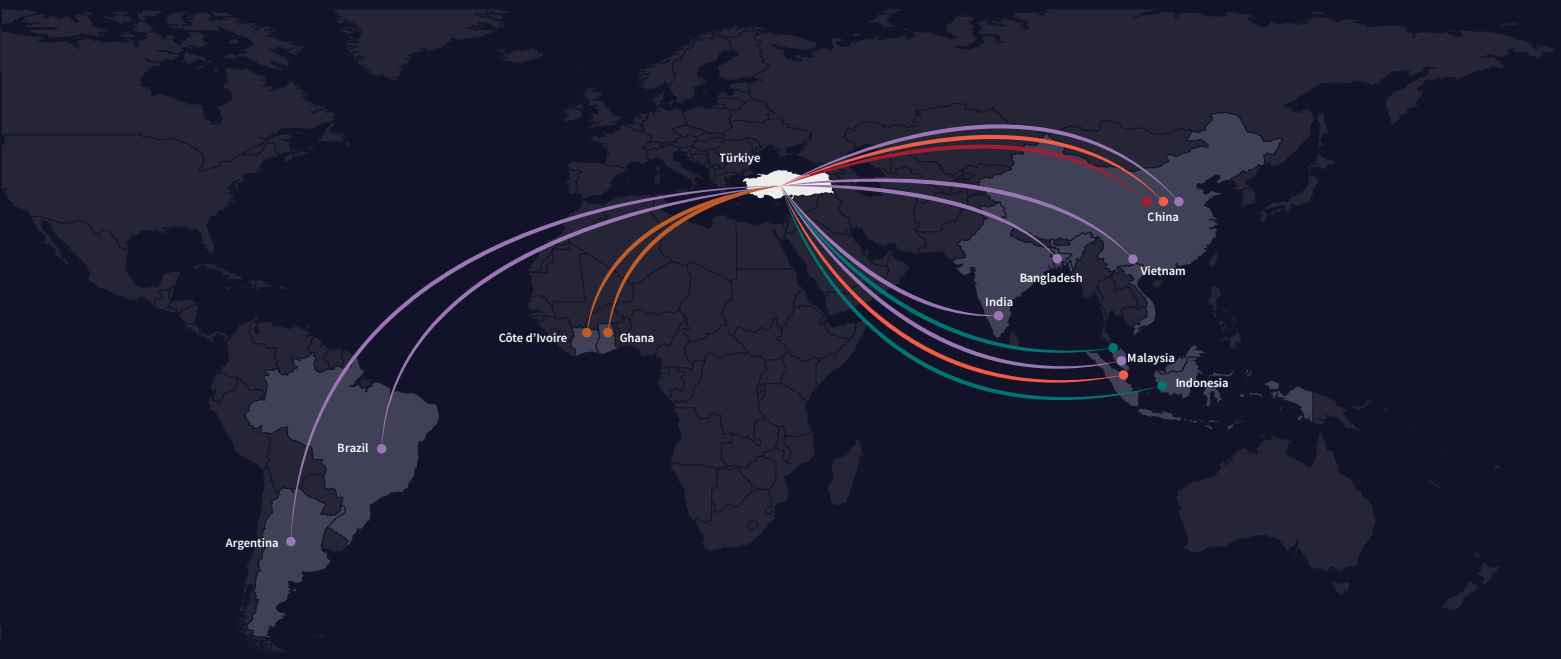
SOUTH KOREA'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 20.2 BILLION

TÜRKIYE

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Cocoa · Electronics† · Garments · Palm Oil · Solar Panels



China	3,173,722	
Malaysia	8,515	
Malaysia	659,919	
Indonesia	223,729	
China	271,493	
Bangladesh	190,776	
Vietnam	63,508	
Malaysia	27,209	
India	23,756	
Brazil	171	
Argentina	65	
China	374,515	
Côte d'Ivoire	243,290	
Ghana	76,298	

TÜRKIYE'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$5.3 BILLION

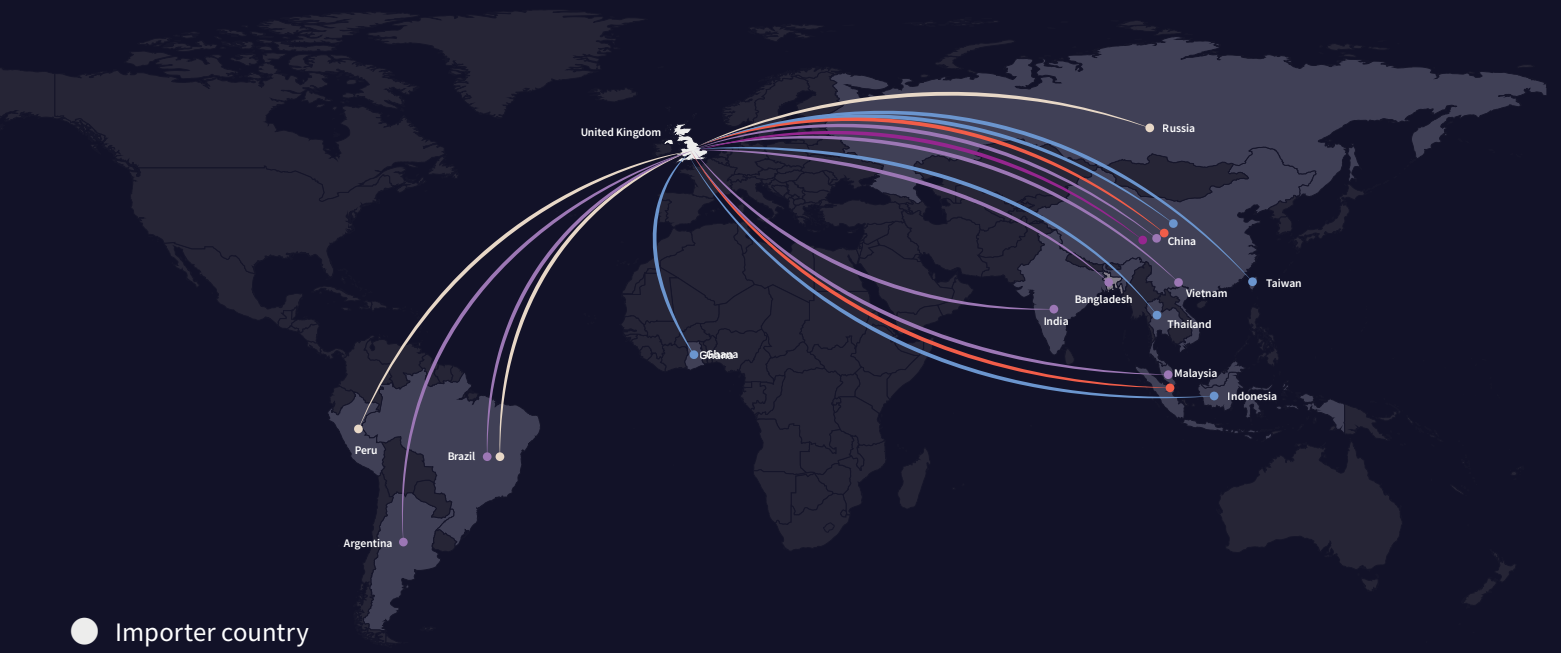
06
IMPORTING RISK

G20 IMPORTS

UNITED KINGDOM

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Fish Garments Textiles Timber



Importer country
Source country

Breakdown of at-risk imported products by source country

(annually, in thousands of US$)^*

China	14,713,414
Malaysia	37,016
China	5,257,572
Bangladesh	3,009,806
India	1,255,998
Vietnam	509,046
Malaysia	22,225
Brazil	1,294
Argentina	189
China	230,258
Ghana	38,875
Indonesia	18,615
Thailand	16,475
Taiwan	761
China	538,295
Russia	352,850
Brazil	130,422
Peru	77

†Applies to laptops, computers and mobile phones only

**see Appendix 3*

^This relates to the top at-risk imports, by import value

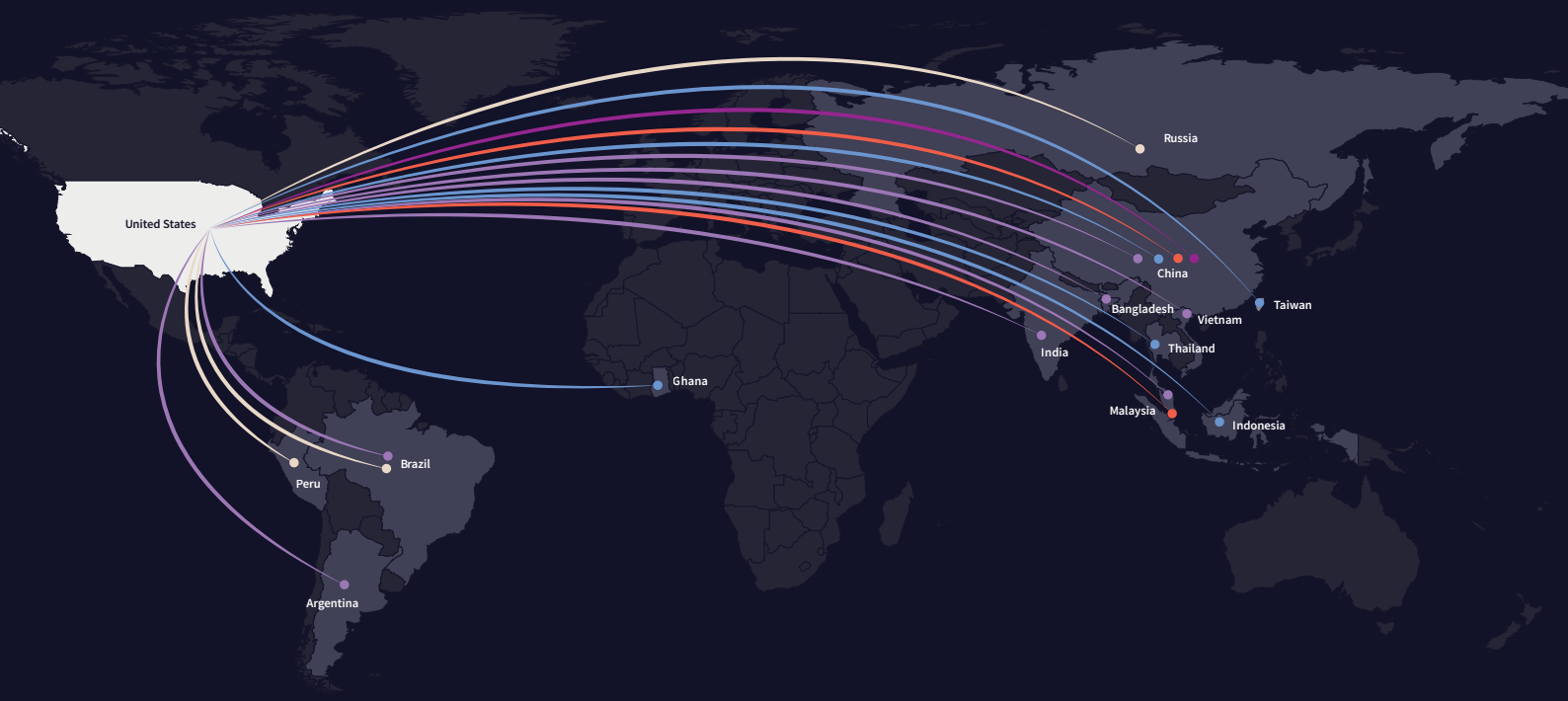
UNITED KINGDOM'S AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$ 26.1 BILLION

UNITED STATES

TOP 5 IMPORTED PRODUCTS AT RISK OF MODERN SLAVERY

Electronics† Fish Garments Textiles Timber



China	106,158,032
Malaysia	1,427,054
China	24,889,568
Vietnam	15,288,211
Bangladesh	7,273,296
India	4,657,696
Malaysia	256,474
Brazil	25,173
Argentina	950
China	4,752,876
China	1,015,843
Thailand	670,363
Indonesia	406,921
Taiwan	144,891
Ghana	257
Brazil	2,107,498
Russia	549,653
Peru	8,361

UNITED STATES' AT-RISK IMPORTED PRODUCTS

US$169.6 BILLION

Spotlight on the financial sector:

Investing in exploitation

Traditionally, the financial sector is perceived as low risk for human rights abuses.[1] In reality, there are multiple ways the sector is exposed to risks of modern slavery, including through its operations, supply chains, and business relationships.

Financial actors may unknowingly engage vulnerable workers through labour agencies in higher risk industries such as catering and cleaning services, or purchase goods at risk of being produced with forced labour such as IT equipment and corporate merchandise.[2] There are serious risks of becoming part of value chains that rely on exploitation by investing in or lending to businesses that are complicit in modern slavery within their own operations or supply chains.[3] Certain financial actors may also inadvertently facilitate criminal activities where profits generated by modern slavery practices are laundered through legitimate financial channels.[4]

At the same time, financial institutions have a critical role to play in combating slavery. They have the ability to influence global business, drive better investment and lending frameworks and practices, identify financial flows and unscrupulous clients linked to these crimes, and use their leverage over companies invested in to improve company practices. While the sector is complex and involves a range of different financial institutions and services,[5] this spotlight focuses predominantly on asset owner and manager investment in companies listed on stock exchanges.

Financial institutions are captured under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) which established the "corporate responsibility to respect", including the requirement to avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts and seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products, or services by their business relationships, even if they themselves have not contributed to those impacts.[6] This responsibility has been increasingly translated into national legislation targeting human rights related to business activity.[7] As large businesses, many investors are captured by legislation imposing reporting requirements on the steps taken to identify and address modern slavery in operations and supply chains[8] and, more recently, by laws requiring entities to undertake human rights due diligence.[9] For example, the Australian Modern Slavery Act's official guidance recognises the responsibility of financial institutions by clarifying that entities are expected to report on the risks of modern slavery in their financial investments.[10]

However, investor action to assess and address modern slavery is still lagging behind these laws. In 2021, Walk Free, WikiRate, and the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre assessed statements published by 79 asset managers who were required to report under the UK Modern Slavery Act.[11] The assessment found that asset managers were not



London, United Kingdom, August 2022.

Public artwork is stationed outside the Bank of England, as part of a new art trail exploring the impact of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. In 1833, when The Slavery Abolition Act was passed, the UK government agreed to provide £20 million to compensate 3,000 slave-owners. No reparations have been paid by the government to former slaves or their descendants to date. Photo credit: Mike Kemp/In Pictures via Getty Images.

adequately considering the risk of modern slavery within their direct operations or supply chains of the goods and services they purchase. More importantly, given the size of their investment portfolios, asset managers also failed to consider modern slavery risks in their investments, with only about a quarter (27 per cent) indicating that they conducted some form of due diligence on human rights or modern slavery issues in their portfolios. Few assessed their investee companies for modern slavery risks (9 per cent) or engaged directly with companies to address modern slavery through social audits, self-assessment reviews, filing shareholder resolutions, or providing training (15 per cent).[12] This was similarly reflected in a 2022 assessment of asset owners and managers based in Australia and the UK who were exposed to the garment industry. Less than a quarter (24 per cent) of garment investors described that they conduct pre-investment assessments to identify modern slavery risks, despite the risks associated with the garment sector.[13]

Despite the growing number of voluntary initiatives, only one in three asset managers in the UK disclosed being part of any relevant initiatives or collaborations.[14] These initiatives provide important opportunities for financial actors to learn from experts and peers, and to lift the industry standard for preventing, identifying, and mitigating modern slavery in their own businesses and investee companies.[15] Within the evolving movement, some investors have taken on an active role in using their leverage to address modern slavery such as the CCLA impact investment firm's Find It, Fix It, Prevent It initiative[16] and the Investors Against Slavery and Trafficking Asia-Pacific (IAST APAC) initiative.

With the support of Walk Free and the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) initiative,[17] IAST APAC is an investor-led, multistakeholder initiative comprising 37 investors from Asia and the Pacific representing AU$7.8 trillion (approximately US$5.2 trillion) in assets under management, together with the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors. IAST APAC engages with investee companies spread throughout the region in the consumer, healthcare, and technology

sectors to find, fix, and prevent modern slavery from occurring in their businesses.[18] In 2020, IAST APAC signed and published a statement to the top 100 companies listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), setting out investor expectations for addressing the risks of modern slavery under the Australian Modern Slavery Act.[19]

"As investors we expect companies to meet their reporting and compliance obligations and in doing so encourage companies to examine broader risks of labour exploitation as a leading indicator of modern slavery."

Investors Against Slavery and Trafficking Asia-Pacific, 2020[20]

Alongside human rights legislation, the burgeoning responsible investment/sustainable finance movement — incorporating environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into investment decisions and reporting frameworks[21] — is rapidly being translated into formal regulations and guidance. Investors that do not incorporate ESG considerations into their investment practices and decision-making, for instance, increasingly risk failing to meet their fiduciary duties[22] and can face reputational, operational, and potentially legal risks related to maximising short-term profits over long-term sustainability.[23] ESG efforts are increasingly linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[24] It is clear that actions to address modern slavery must — as an abuse of both labour and human rights, a driver of unsustainable earnings,[25] and a key issue addressed through Targets 5.2, 8.7, and 16.2 of the SDGs[26] — form part of the 'S' in ESG.

At the regional level, building upon the Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth,[27] the European Union in 2019 set obligations on financial actors to disclose the impact of investment decisions on sustainability, including the environment and social justice, with EU Regulation 2019/2088.[28] In addition to introducing transparency requirements, the regulation calls on financial market participants and financial advisers to consider guidance published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development[29] and the Principles for Responsible Investment.[30] The EU Platform on Sustainable Finance has further proposed a structure for a social taxonomy to promote investment in sustainable activities in Europe, which would cover decent work, including for workers in value chains.[31]

Stock exchanges are also increasingly requiring listed companies to disclose ESG risks, including those related to modern slavery. As of August 2022, 32 stock exchanges have mandatory ESG reporting, and 67 had offered written guidance



Bangkok, Thailand, October 2020.

Increasingly, investors are taking action on modern slavery issues. Pictured is the Stock Exchange of Thailand, which in 2022 partnered with Walk Free and the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking initiative to develop a set of tools to help investors manage human rights risks, specifically modern slavery. Photo credit: Taylor Weidman/Bloomberg via Getty Images.

on ESG reporting.[32] In Thailand, for example, listed companies must report annually on sustainability issues, including human rights protection throughout the value chain. In 2021, Walk Free partnered with the Stock Exchange of Thailand and FAST to produce the Guidance on Modern Slavery Risks for Thai Businesses, as well as an online Modern Slavery Benchmarking Tool, to help companies manage labour risks across a range of sectors and meet their sustainability reporting obligations.[33]

International standards act as a framework to guide business in their reporting under stock exchange and other sustainability disclosure regulations. In 2021, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) released its revised standards to align with instruments such as the UNGPs.[34] At COP26, the International Sustainable Standards Board was established to develop a global baseline of sustainability disclosure standards.[35] Further, the EU is set to adopt mandatory sustainability reporting standards to guide company reporting under the proposed Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.[36]

Recommendations for governments

1. **Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence laws to require companies, including investors, to conduct due diligence to prevent, mitigate, and remedy modern slavery in operations and value chains.**
2. **Strengthen existing mandatory reporting laws by including and implementing penalties.**
3. **Establish disclosure requirements for listed companies to report on ESG risks, including modern slavery, and actions being taking to address them. Encourage stock exchanges to publish guidance on these reporting requirements.**
4. **Collaborate to ensure sustainability reporting standards fully address modern slavery issues.**
5. **Ensure that any national or regional reporting regime has in place single reporting deadlines, easily accessible reports in a centralised repository, and that the reports produced are machine-readable.**

Recommendations for investors

1. **Improve reporting under national Modern Slavery Acts and other relevant regulations to ensure the minimum requirements are met and to provide more detailed disclosures on modern slavery risks.**
2. **Implement strong risk assessment processes prior to making investment decisions to avoid high-risk investments.**
3. **Conduct continuous engagement with investee companies to improve their modern slavery risk management and consider the use of collective leverage to improve company risk performance.**
4. **Engage and share good practice with industry initiatives and collaborations, such as IAST APAC or CCLA's Find It, Fix It, Prevent It initiative.**
5. **Advocate for and support government efforts to strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks and resources for preventing and remediating modern slavery.**

Spotlight on the garment sector:
Stitched with slavery in the seams

Global demand for fast fashion has spurred exponential growth in the garment industry over the last two decades.[1] Clothing production has almost doubled in the past 15 years alone[2] and today G20 countries are collectively importing US$148 billion worth of apparel goods and US$13 billion worth of textiles at risk of being produced by forced labour every year.

Big brands based in wealthy countries increase profits by producing in lower-income countries with low wage rates.[3] Garment workers, hidden deep within these supply chains, face poor or exploitative working conditions, including poverty wages, piece-rate pay (that is, pay rate determined by the number of individual pieces made), forced and unpaid overtime, irregular work, health and safety risks, and lack of benefits such as maternity leave.[4] In their most extreme forms, these exploitative practices can lead to situations of forced labour and debt bondage.

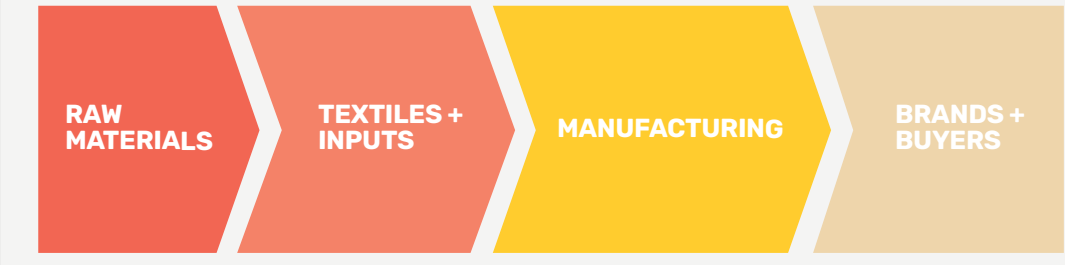
What are the risks of modern slavery in garment supply chains?

There are risks of modern slavery at each stage of the garment supply chain, from growing and producing raw materials, to processing these into inputs, to manufacturing.[5]

Raw materials

Raw materials that feed into textile production range from synthetic fibres such as polyester and polyamide, plant fibres including cotton and rubber, manmade cellulosic fibres such as viscose and acetate, and animal fibres such as wool, silk, and leather.[6] The production of many of these materials have been linked to forced labour. Silk cocoon cultivation, for instance, has been associated with forced labour in Uzbekistan,[7] while in Myanmar, children have experienced forced labour on rubber plantations.[8]

Cotton production has a long history of slavery,[9] and continues to be harvested by men, women, and children working in conditions tantamount to modern slavery. Children are recruited to pick cotton due to the perception that smaller hands reduce damage to crops.[10] Forced labour was used to produce cotton in Benin, Burkina Faso, China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan,[11] though the circumstances giving rise to exploitation may vary. In Pakistan, a 2021





survey among cotton farm workers found that 27 per cent indicated that they could not leave work on the farm if they found another job and one-fifth had seen children below the age of 15 working on cotton farms during school hours. These cotton farms relied largely on temporary workers recruited through third parties and often retained the identity documents of their workers[12] — practices that increase the vulnerability of workers and likelihood of modern slavery taking place.[13] In some countries, such as Turkmenistan,[14] China,[15] and formerly in Uzbekistan,[16] governments have forced their citizens to work in the production of cotton.

Textiles/inputs

During processing, raw cotton is ginned, spun, and woven into textiles.[17] Fibres sourced from multiple countries are combined into a singular fabric at a textile mill,[18] complicating efforts to trace the origins of a finished product. In response to tight turnaround times and reduced profit margins, suppliers sub-contract their production to home-based workers, often women and girls,[19] reducing brand oversight of their supply chains. Informal and home-based workers usually lack formal contracts, making them even more vulnerable to exploitation.[20]

Risks of child and forced labour follow the raw materials into textile production, particularly in countries based in the Asia and the Pacific region.[21] Forced labour has been documented in major exporting countries such as China, where Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups have been forced to work in the production of textiles.[22] In Southern India, recruiters offer young women and girls employment opportunities in spinning mills, where they are paid a lump sum at the end of their contract.[23] This practice, known as a *Sumangali* (married woman) scheme, traps women and girls — many who are migrants or from lower castes[24] — into working until the end of their contract or else risk losing their accumulated earnings that are earmarked to become their bride dowries.[25] Women and girls working in the spinning mills face restrictions on their movement, are forced to work long hours, and are exposed to physical and sexual abuse.[26] Despite awareness-raising on the abuses under *Sumangali* schemes, risk of exploitation continues as recruiters reportedly still market similar practices to vulnerable migrant workers, albeit under different names.[27]

Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2020.

Female garment workers block a road during a protest to demand payment of due wages. Thousands of garment workers who produce items for international fashion brands protested against unpaid wages, and claimed "they were more afraid of starving than contracting the coronavirus." Volatile demand coupled with increasing pressures from factories to meet deadlines has reportedly led to an increase in labour exploitation in the sector. Photo credit: Munir Uz Zaman/AFP via Getty Images.

Unravelling discrimination and exploitation in the textiles industry: The perspective of a survivor of bonded labour

Adhi is a young Indian woman who wanted to save money for her bride dowry. As both of her parents had died, Adhi had to rely on herself to fund her wedding and so she decided to join a working scheme at a local mill.

She approached an aunt and asked for help to find work at a local mill and join the scheme. "…I told my aunt that I wanted to go for some mill work and also help me to join a hostel. She first refused, then later on through a broker for 2000 rupees (approximately US$24) I got a job at the mill at Vedachanthur,..." she said. Eventually, Adhi began working in the winding department of a textile manufacturing mill in Tamil Nadu state. She also moved into the hostel where the scheme workers were required to stay. "…The work at the mill was hard. ... Even though I had difficulties I was happy that I had people around me, so I joined the hostel..."

Unfortunately, living at the hostel brought its own challenges. Adhi was forced to work long hours with little to no sleep. Access to food and water was also limited. "…In the hostel I experienced lot of problems. There was limited food; if you asked for extra food it was denied. To take a bath there were five bathrooms, and some days, water would not come. It was quite difficult. In one room six of us had to sleep. One of us will be in day shift or night shift or afternoon shift. … We cannot sleep properly. If the regular working girls were on leave, they will come and ask us to work even when we had just finished night shift."

When scheme workers like Adhi would try to push back on the long working hours, the regular workers would become abusive. "They will pressure us to do overtime. [They would say] 'You are only in the hostel; why can you not do it? What are you going to do with the scheme money?' We used to receive such scolding."

Adhi's experience reveals a great deal about the dynamics of bonded and child labour in spinning mills in Tamil Nadu. In the years since this experience, Adhi has shared her story to help inform anti-slavery strategies.[28]

Manufacturing

Following processing, textiles are dispatched to manufacturing facilities to be made into garments, where factory workers are exposed to exploitative working conditions, including excessive hours. In Myanmar, a 2021 survey found that 51 per cent of factory workers usually worked more than 48 hours per week.[29] Similarly, average hours for apparel workers in Uganda ranged between 48 to 65 hours per week. Without set shift times, Ugandan apparel workers are expected to work long hours to finish their tasks, leading them to work to fatigue.[30]

Vulnerable groups such as women and girls are particularly at risk of exploitative conditions in garment manufacturing. Although women and girls are overrepresented in garment factories across the globe, they are relegated to lower-paid and subordinate roles, such as machine operators and checkers. Even if their tasks are the same, women generally receive lower wages than male garment workers due to perceptions that female income is "complementary" to income generated by male breadwinners.[31] In Cambodia, women and girls make up almost 80 per cent of the garment workforce; however, they earn 13 per cent less than male workers.[32] Similarly, in Croatia, women account for 89 per cent of garment workers despite receiving a significantly lower net wage.[33] In Ethiopia's rapidly growing garment sector, workers receive some of the lowest wages compared to other garment exporting countries, in part due to the absence of a national minimum wage for private sector workers.[34] Workers in Ethiopia were found to be earning as little as 12 cents an hour in addition to experiencing wage deductions as punishment, verbal abuse, and forced overtime.[35]

Migrant workers are also highly vulnerable to exploitation in the garment sector, receiving lower wages and unfair wage deductions, and facing precarious working conditions and higher risks of debt bondage, retention of documents, and threats of violence or deportation. In countries where migrant workers cannot join or form trade unions, they face greater risk as employers exploit their lack of legal protection.[36] In a 2021 survey of factory workers in China, 45 per cent of those who had migrated from another state in China reported that they worked more than 60 hours per week, compared to 31 per cent of those who had not migrated for work.[37] Exploitative labour practices such as excessive hours, low wages, discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse have been reported in garment factories among Bangladeshi migrant workers in Jordan[38] and Syrian refugees in Türkiye.[39] In Malaysia, high recruitment fees, deceptive recruitment, passport retention, overcrowded living conditions, and abusive working conditions have been reported among Southeast Asian migrant workers in garment factories.[40]

Purchasing practices

Under the UN Guiding Principles, all businesses, including garment businesses, have a responsibility to avoid and address any adverse human rights impacts that their activities caused or contributed to.[41] To do so, they must also ensure that the demands they make to their suppliers are not driving exploitative practices. However, in practice, brands trying to cater to rapidly changing consumer preferences often make unrealistic demands of their suppliers, such as insisting on lower costs and faster delivery times. In turn, this pressure incentivises suppliers to reduce labour costs and increase working hours, exacerbating the risk of labour abuses within a supply chain.[42] Poor forecasting, late changes to order volumes, and delays in providing order requirements intensify pressures faced by suppliers and their workers.[43] Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to order cancellations, suppliers have experienced more order variability, which further complicates production and operations management.[44] Action by brands to address labour rights and modern slavery risks must include efforts to ensure that their purchasing practices are not incentivising suppliers to exploit workers.

"Sometimes my girls use to help in our work. We are a very poor family and have no other source of income...When the lockdown was announced, all our orders were suspended and the supplier blocked our payment."

Female apparel worker in India, 2020[45]

How has the pandemic impacted garment workers?

COVID-19 has worsened conditions for garment workers around the world. At the onset of the pandemic, many international brands shifted losses onto their suppliers.[46] As stores were forced to close and demand fell, brands began to cancel orders for products that had already been manufactured.[47] Some suppliers were forced to close, leading to worker dismissals, lower pay, and poorer working conditions.[48] In Cambodia, for example, garment factory owners were unable to pay workers' entitlements as many buyers refused to pay for goods that were already manufactured.[49]

A study into the impact of COVID-19 on the garment sectors of Ethiopia, Honduras, India, and Myanmar found that working and living conditions had significantly deteriorated during the pandemic. This included — in addition to job and income losses — rising debts, verbal abuse, threats and intimidation, and unfair wage deductions. Many respondents had not experienced these conditions prior to the pandemic and, for others who had, the problems had become more common or severe.[50] A failure to enforce regulations enabled businesses to violate labour standards with impunity, leaving garment workers unprotected.[51]

Brands that had previously been accused of exploitative working conditions, such as Boohoo, were also found to be putting workers at risk of COVID-19. During the pandemic, there were reports of garment factories linked to Boohoo operating illegally through lockdowns, forcing workers to work with a COVID-19 infection, and working in conditions of modern slavery.[52]

The impact of the pandemic on garment workers varies depending on gender, ethnicity, caste status, or union membership. A study of garment workers across supplier factories in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan found that wage theft disproportionately impacted female workers during the pandemic. For example, suppliers would hire women workers on low wages during lockdowns and force them to work unpaid overtime, in addition to verbally, physically, and sexually abusing them on production lines. Heightened economic insecurity left many women workers with little option but to take on large debts or sell assets to afford basic needs.[53] Additionally, garment workers who belonged to an ethnic minority or lower caste were also more likely to have their contracts terminated during the pandemic. Comparatively, those least likely to lose their jobs were workers who belonged to a union.[54]

How are brands responding to the risk of modern slavery?

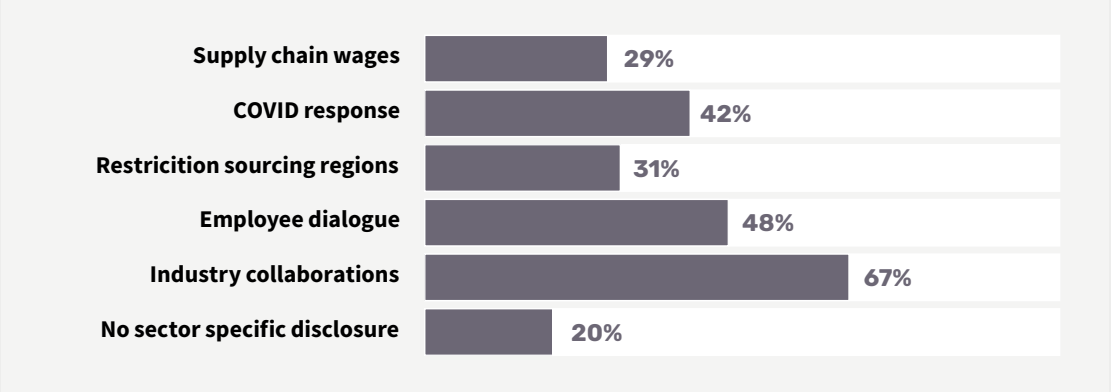
Recent legislative changes establishing mandatory reporting for large companies in California,[55] the United Kingdom,[56] Australia,[57] and the EU,[58] as well as mandatory due diligence in France[59] and Germany,[60] have pushed companies, including those in the garment industry to be more transparent. Even more recently, legislation has been proposed in the US state of New York to require fashion companies to disclose their due diligence policies[61] and in the US Senate to require large businesses to audit for forced labour.[62] Today, the biggest brands are paying greater attention to how they are producing their goods.[63] However, efforts are still falling short.

In December 2022, Walk Free and WikiRate assessed 97 statements submitted by the top garment companies and their investors required to report under the Modern Slavery Acts of the UK and Australia. Brands fell short of the requirements of the legislation and largely failed to address the specific modern slavery risks associated with the garment sector. For example, despite increased scrutiny surrounding the sector because of the pandemic[64] and heightened attention to state-imposed forced labour in garment supply chains,[65] many companies failed to disclose taking action to respond to modern slavery risks associated with COVID-19 or to restrict sourcing from regions where the state is involved in the exploitation of workers. Further, although the complex and transnational nature of garment supply chains requires engagement with workers, suppliers, and other stakeholders within supply chains, and with industry initiatives, less than half (48 per cent) of companies disclosed engaging with supply chain workers or groups representing them, while two-thirds (67 per cent) mentioned membership or partnership with industry-specific initiatives that address modern slavery issues (see Figure 18 for breakdown of the assessment of statements against sector-specific metrics).

Twenty-nine per cent of assessed companies committed to providing a living wage to their supply chain workers. Factory-level data collected by the Clean Clothes Campaign revealed that across 59 factories, the living wage gap averages 40 per cent, meaning that on average these workers need to earn almost 40 per cent more to meet their basic needs.[66] Despite this, it is estimated that the price of a final garment would need to increase by only 1 per cent for all garment workers to earn a living wage.[67]

Notably, expensive brands do not guarantee ethically made products. Despite enormous revenues,[68] luxury brands have been found to be among the poorest performers in terms of addressing risks of forced labour within garment supply chains.[69] Data from the Clean Clothes Campaign also showed that the living wage gap for workers linked to luxury brands assessed by Walk Free and WikiRate was significantly higher (53 per cent) than for non-luxury brands (38 per cent).[70]

Figure 18
Addressing modern slavery risk in the garment sector



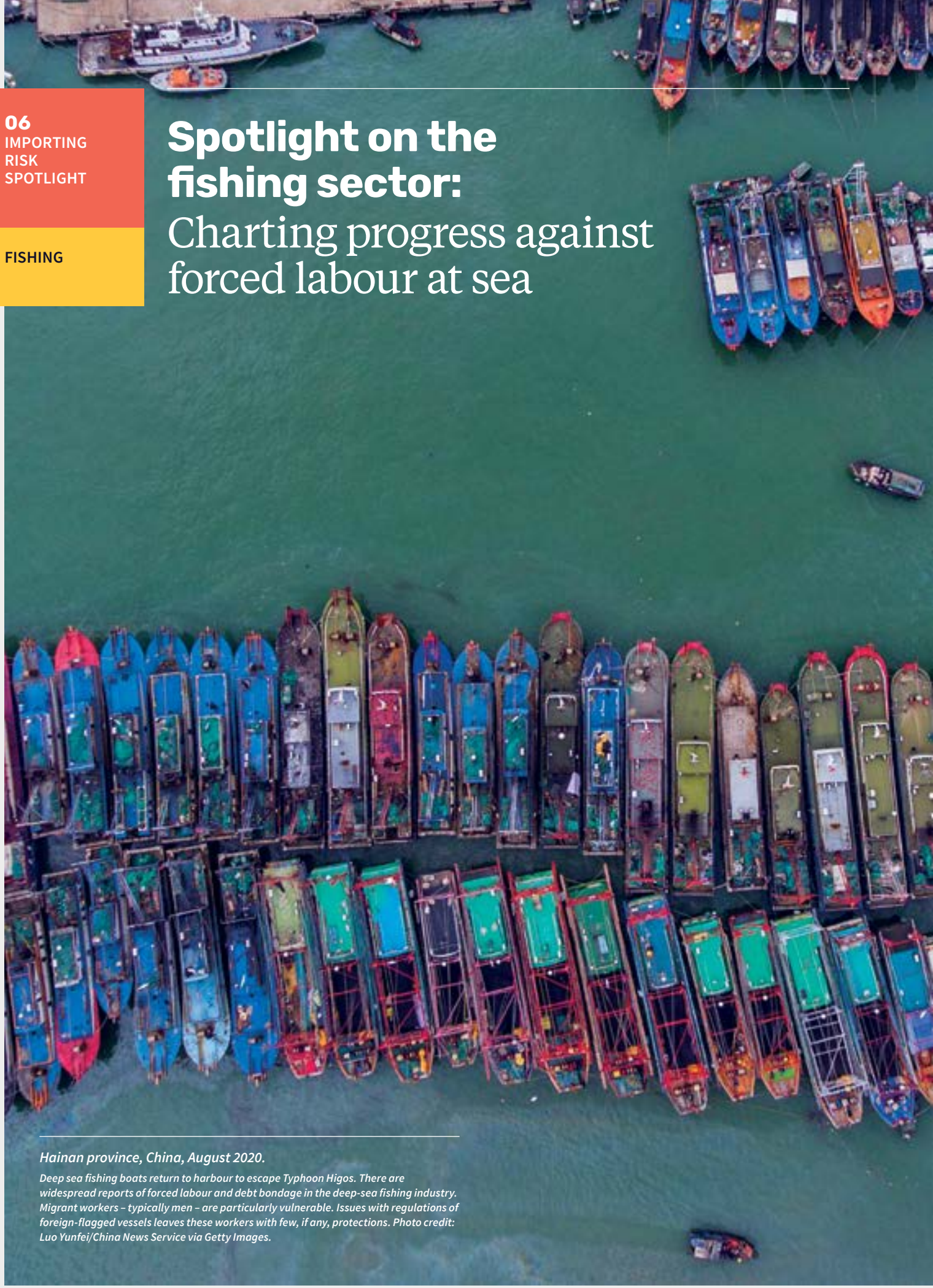
Promising practices: Examples from Southern India

Evaluations housed in the Promising Practices Database[71] can identify what works to end modern slavery in the garment sector. While there are relatively few evaluated programs targeted to the sector — mostly risk-based prevention programs, almost all of which incorporated awareness-raising campaigns and/or preventative education — there is one worth noting. In 2019, the Freedom Fund's hotspot program in Southern India,[72] which targeted bonded labour in spinning mills and garment factories,[73] evaluated the impact of a film-based curriculum within the program that brought young women and girls together to develop solutions to issues faced at home and in the spinning mills. It was found to positively change attitudes around seeking gender-equitable employment and safer working conditions among participants, as well as improving knowledge on wage entitlements and increasing confidence to act when facing situations of bullying or harassment.[74] Another evaluation of efforts to end labour abuses in Tamil Nadu state found shortcomings in program designs that did not involve local civil society groups,[75] highlighting the significance of ensuring that responses are holistic and are community-led.

Recommendations for governments

1. **Strengthen existing supply chain transparency legislation that requires mandatory reporting and implement mandatory human rights due diligence laws. Legislation should require brands to undertake due diligence, including identifying supply chain risks and taking appropriate steps to address and mitigate them.**
2. **Conduct regular labour inspections to identify exploitative practices in the garment sector. Protect rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining in both legislation and in practice to help identify and remedy exploitation and monitor working conditions, ensuring vulnerable groups such as migrant workers can access these safeguards.**
3. **Ensure the national minimum wage meets the standards of a living wage.**
4. **Prevent the import of goods made with forced labour overseas and provide support to producing nations to address forced labour issues. Embed forced labour provisions within trade agreements.**
5. **Provide avenues for redress for exploited workers.**

Spotlight on the fishing sector:
Charting progress against forced labour at sea



Hainan province, China, August 2020.

Deep sea fishing boats return to harbour to escape Typhoon Higos. There are widespread reports of forced labour and debt bondage in the deep-sea fishing industry. Migrant workers – typically men – are particularly vulnerable. Issues with regulations of foreign-flagged vessels leaves these workers with few, if any, protections. Photo credit: Luo Yunfei/China News Service via Getty Images.

In 2015, exposés revealed the exploitation of thousands of fishers aboard Thai fishing vessels in Indonesian waters,[1] which in some cases had been going on for years.[2] While not the first reports of forced labour at sea, nor in Southeast Asian waters, they catalysed awareness of the pervasiveness of this form of modern slavery in the fishing industry. Since then, documentaries,[3] research,[4] and media reports[5] have continued to highlight the plight of those forced to work at sea in many parts of the world.

Increased focus on modern slavery at sea has galvanised political pressure to reform the regulatory environments which allow high-risk fleets to operate with near impunity.[6] It has also spurred research into innovative methods to improve monitoring of labour practices at sea and intensified demand for seafood imports free of slavery in its supply chains.[7] Yet progress on protecting fishers remains slow and the gains that were made initially have since been offset by the COVID-19 pandemic.[8]

Forced labour in fisheries is driven by the motivation to reduce costs amid diminishing profits, as the industry tries to meet global demand for seafood.[9] The overfishing that results serves to push profits further out of reach of fishing operators and perpetuates a cycle that leaves fishers vulnerable to forced labour. Fishers can be lured into situations of modern slavery by seemingly legitimate employment opportunities, but once recruited find themselves unable to leave due to threats of violence, physical confinement on – and off-shore, withholding of wages, and debts incurred through the recruitment process.[10] Confiscating passports and other identity documents is another means of keeping fishers from leaving situations of forced labour by preventing them from returning home or finding another job.[11] More recently, COVID-19 restrictions have also provided a convenient excuse for controlling fishers' movements.

Protection of fishers requires regulation by governments of flag states, which bear primary responsibility for the conditions in which fishers work and live aboard fishing vessels flying their flags.[12] Other states that have responsibility are port states where fishing vessels refuel and offload their catch and which are authorised to inspect vessels entering their ports, coastal states which have jurisdiction over and licence fishing in their waters, labour source states where migrant fishers are recruited and transit through, and market states that import fisheries products.[13]

Persistent gaps in legal protection of fishers

While globally there has been progress to improve the legal frameworks that protect fishers, coverage is inadequate. Together, two international legal instruments provide a comprehensive framework for preventing forced labour in the fishing sector — the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.[14] Only 21 countries have ratified Convention No. 188, which promotes decent working and living conditions for fishers.[15] Of those, only six are among the top 25 countries responsible for producing the greatest marine capture and only two, Spain and Thailand, are among the seven countries deemed to have high-risk fisheries.[16]In 2018 and 2019, the Thai government ratified Convention No. 188 and the Protocol 2014 of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930,[17] becoming the first Asian government to do so.[18] The 2014 Protocol, which requires measures to be taken to prevent forced labour and to identify, protect and provide remedy for victims has been more widely ratified, but still by fewer than half of the top 25 countries responsible for producing the greatest marine capture.[19]

Gaps in domestic labour laws reduce protections for fishers. Fifty-five percent of the 176 countries included in Walk Free's assessment of government response do extend labour law protections to all workers regardless of sector or migration status. Most notably, labour laws in South Korea and Japan — countries with fisheries at high risk of forced labour[20] — lack protection for all fishers. Specifically, in South Korea, labour laws do not extend to migrant fishers[21] and, in Japan, labour laws do not extend to seafarers.[22]

Fishers also have limited recourse to freedom of association or collective bargaining rights. Forty-one per cent of the countries assessed do not provide these rights for all groups, while the majority of countries deny those rights to migrant workers, temporary workers, and, in some cases,

maritime workers specifically. For example, in Thailand, where 90 per cent of the fishing workforce are migrants from Myanmar and Cambodia,[23] migrant workers do not have legal rights to join or form their own unions, a legal gap that advocates assert has impeded progress on addressing labour exploitation among migrant fishers.[24]

Risks of debt bondage and confiscation of passports and other identity documents are inherent to the industry and are not adequately addressed in national laws.[25] Just over one third of countries assessed mandate that recruitment fees cannot be charged to employees and less than a quarter register and monitor recruitment agencies. Further, only a quarter of countries prohibit the withholding of passports in either labour, criminal, or anti-trafficking laws. Even when laws do exist, enforcement in distant waters is a difficult task. Observers who are tasked with collecting information on fishing practices have minimal access to some fishing fleets.[26] Without adequate monitoring, vessels using forced labour can operate with impunity.

Tackling the demand for seafood with opaque supply chains

Demand-side levers such as import bans have gained momentum in recent years as ways to pressure fishing nations to improve regulation of the fishing sector and to address human and labour rights abuses in the industry. The US and Canadian governments have attempted to prevent seafood produced with forced labour from reaching their markets through existing bans on the importation of goods likely mined, manufactured, or produced by forced labour.[27] This passes responsibility to importers to ensure the goods they bring into the country are at low risk of being produced with forced labour or else risk financial loss as a result of the seizure of these goods.[28] In the US, Withhold Release Orders (WROs) prohibit goods produced by forced labour being imported into the country under Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930.[29] In 2021, WROs were used for the first time to ban the import of goods produced by an entire fishing fleet, the Chinese company Dalian Ocean Fishing Co, based on recurring reports of forced labour.[30] As of September 2022, an additional four fishing vessels flagged to Fiji,[31] Taiwan,[32] and Vanuatu[33] had active WROs against them.[34] In 2020, Canada introduced measures to prevent the import of goods produced wholly or in part by forced labour under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement Implementation Act.[35] Similar legislation has been proposed in Australia[36] and the EU.[37] While there is insufficient data to understand the long-term efficacy of import bans in stopping forced labour in supply chains, there is some evidence of short-term improvements in corporate behaviour.[38]

Recent measures aimed at tackling the demand for illegal fishing also have potential benefits for human rights at sea, since illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing is associated with forced labour at sea.[39] For example, reforms by the Thai government introduced in 2018 and 2019 in response to the European Commission's 2015 "yellow card," a warning that without improved regulations to address IUU fishing, Thai seafood exports were at risk of European Union sanctions.[40] Reforms included measures to increase transparency of vessel identity, ownership, and fishing behaviours, and the introduction of a system to authorise and inspect vessels entering and leaving Thai ports.[41] These were among the changes that led to the removal of the yellow card against Thailand in January 2019.[42] Reports indicated that some of the measures improved the working conditions of fishers;[43] however, the Thai government subsequently faced criticism for poor implementation of these reforms.[44] Also endeavouring to reduce IUU fishing, World Trade Organization members in 2022 finalised the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which prohibits subsidies to a vessel or operator engaged in IUU fishing.[45] The agreement will take effect and become binding once it is formally accepted by two-thirds of WTO members[46] and complaints are subject to the WTO dispute settlement process.[47]

Governments have also sought to stop the introduction of goods produced by modern slavery from entering their jurisdictions through legislation that encourages the private sector to identify and reduce modern slavery risks in their supply chains and operations and provide remedy where modern slavery is detected. Since 2015, 10 governments have enacted modern slavery legislation[48] and an additional seven governments as well as the European Union are considering such legislation.[49]

"We met the captain, the ship boss, and the foreman. The boss of the ship wanted to issue a ticket: 'If you don't sign it, then you will be homeless here. So, you're trapped in Peru!' Finally, there was no more choice, even though I was sick. Due to lack of clean water, my kidneys were sick ... so okay, it's okay ... I finally signed. 'If you don't sign then you won't be taken home,' they said."

Indonesian migrant fisher on experiences of intimidation at sea, 2020[50]

COVID-19: A convenient crisis. A fisherman's story.

Angelo*, from a fishing community in the northern part of the Philippines, was encouraged by his family when he was in his 20s to take a job as a fisher in the Taiwanese fishing industry to supplement his family's income. As is common among Filipinos looking to work abroad in the fishing industry, Angelo engaged a recruitment agency. Based in Manila, the recruitment agency made all necessary arrangements for Angelo, including sending his monthly salary to his family in the Philippines on his behalf. Angelo did not sign a contract but was told he would earn more than what he was earning as a local fisherman at home. Angelo was employed on Taiwanese vessels for several years and was satisfied with the work. However, without a contract he did not know how long he would be aboard a vessel and sometimes spent more than a year at sea.

In 2018, Angelo, who at the time was in his late 30s, was working on a Taiwanese flagged fishing vessel with a Taiwanese captain and crew from the Philippines, Taiwan, and Bangladesh. The living and working conditions were poor and their salaries were often delayed. Availability of food and water was restricted by the captain and the Taiwanese crew, and they were made to work with little rest. They did not complain due to fear of not being paid.

In 2019, Angelo was informed by his family that they had not received any income from the recruitment agency for three months.

The company that operated the vessel told Angelo and his fellow crew that their pay would be delayed because it was used to fund repairs to equipment aboard the fishing vessel. They were also told that the ship had to wait in international waters, on the boundary of Chinese waters, until the condition of the vessel was verified by a shipping agent from China. Angelo and the crew remained stranded without pay in international waters for five months, during which time the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. Despite the repatriation of other crew members, Angelo and eight other Filipino crew were refused repatriation by the company that owned the vessel and made to stay on the vessel to guard the ship under the command of the Taiwanese captain. Angelo and the Filipino crew continued to make requests for repatriation to the captain of the vessel and were told that COVID-19 restrictions prevented this.

After several pleas from Angelo via social media, welfare organisations and faith leaders based in the Philippines called on the government of the Philippines to intervene. In April 2020, after nine months aboard the fishing vessel without pay, the Chinese authorities facilitated the repatriation of the crew with costs paid by the Philippines government. Angelo never received the salary owed to him. Following repatriation, he was informed that the recruitment agency was unregistered and had illegally recruited him.

**Not his real name*

COVID-19 turning back the clock on transparency and protection at sea

Restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19 reduced oversight of working conditions aboard fishing vessels and increased opportunities for fishers to be exploited. Pandemic travel restrictions interrupted the rotation of crew at the beginning and end of their contracts.[51] As a result, some vessels were not allowed to dock, which in turn prevented fishers from leaving these vessels and returning home.[52] The inability to change crews led to extended periods on board, sometimes beyond contract end dates, putting fishers at increased risk of forced labour.[53] Towards the end of 2020, some 400,000 seafarers (those involved in fishing and shipping) were reportedly stranded at sea.[54] Because of the pandemic,[55] several regional fisheries management organisations halted the requirement for independent observers to be onboard vessels in their areas of competence.[56] While the purpose was to overcome labour shortages and reduce personnel on vessels, it also obscured labour practices, limiting opportunities for exploited fishers to be identified and removed from such situations.[57]

While the pandemic saw an increased risk of exploitation, research points towards technological innovations to help address the lack of oversight. Improved vessel monitoring and open-source vessel tracking data can aid observers in maintaining oversight of fishing and labour practices at sea by identifying "risky" behaviour by vessels. Such information can inform enforcement activities and allow targeting of vessels with identified risky behaviour.[58] Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) are two approaches that use satellite tracking to monitor fishing vessels and their activities while at sea.[59] Despite their advantages, VMS and AIS are not used systematically, even by vessels equipped with remote monitoring capabilities.[60] Remote electronic monitoring, such as through the use of onboard cameras, also has the potential to help address the impact of observer shortages as well as reduce the costs associated with monitoring fishing practices and improve observer safety.[61]

Tech helping to narrow the search

In 2021, Walk Free and Minderoo Foundation's Flourishing Oceans initiative supported Global Fishing Watch in the development of a model that would help reveal the extent of forced labour onboard fishing vessels at sea. Building on recent research that employed a machine learning approach to identify high-risk vessels,[62] Global Fishing Watch researchers trained a model to associate certain behavioural patterns of fishing vessels at sea with a higher risk of forced labour. To do this, they created a comprehensive database of 358 known instances of forced labour at sea between 2012 and 2020. However, only about 80 of these cases could be matched to AIS data — either because most offenders did not accurately broadcast AIS or, in some cases, they intentionally turned off their AIS equipment.

Despite this, the model was able to identify several vessel characteristics that were important in predicting risk of forced labour, including average voyage time, number of voyages, maximum distance the vessel operated from shore, and number of foreign port visits. Through this, more than 3,000 vessels — including longliners, squid jiggers, and trawlers — were identified as potential offenders associated with high risk of forced labour. Additionally, approximately 66,000 individuals, representing 30 per cent of all crew, were estimated to have worked onboard these vessels in 2020. However, the inability to match known instances of forced labour to the AIS data suggests that this may be a considerable underestimation of the scale of the problem.



Thailand, 2018.

Thailand is a top 5 global seafood producer, with exports reaping over US$7 billion. But the profitable industry supplying consumers around the world with cheap seafood comes at a high cost to both the environment and to workers. The overwhelming majority of workers in Thailand's fishing and seafood processing industries are migrants from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Labour brokers recruit from vulnerable communities, promising favourable employment in the construction, manufacturing, or agriculture industries. Migrants often incur debt from their recruitment, fees and costs associated with transportation and securing employment in Thailand. These debts are paid off through deductions from workers' earnings with employers and brokers frequently using debt manipulation to inflate the amounts and force people into bonded labour. Photo credit: Freedom Fund.

Recommendations for governments

1 All governments must improve the publication and sharing of information on vessels with a history of human rights abuses, including identifying information, vessel behaviours, and details of human rights abuses. This includes developing, supporting, and implementing remote electronic monitoring programs while ensuring crew privacy is protected.[63]

Given the different types of state jurisdiction under international maritime law, the governments of the following states should:

2 **Flag states***:* Ratify and domesticate the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 and the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), and ensure labour laws extend to migrant workers, temporary workers, and maritime workers. These laws must criminalise withholding of passports and other identity documents and guarantee workers full rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining regardless of nationality.

3 **Source states:** Address the factors that make fishers vulnerable to modern slavery before they leave their country of origin. This includes registering and monitoring recruitment agencies and establishing and implementing laws to ensure workers do not pay fees or are not charged for services provided by recruitment agencies.

4 **Coastal states:** Use their leverage to protect fishers in their waters by monitoring vessels operating under flags of convenience and refusing access to vessels where forced labour has occurred. Require remote electronic monitoring, such as AIS, to be consistently used to access fishing licences.

5 **Port states:** Ratify and domesticate the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). Ensure that port authorities are adequately resourced and trained to conduct inspections of vessels to assess the working and living conditions of fishers and identify indicators of forced labour. This must include survivor support services and enforcement of relevant laws to ensure perpetrators of forced labour are held to account.

6 **Market states**: Implement measures to address the demand for seafood caught with modern slavery. This includes strengthening existing modern slavery mandatory reporting laws or, preferably, introducing mandatory human rights due diligence legislation. These laws should require action to be taken by businesses to prevent, mitigate, or remediate modern slavery and have financial penalties, including civil liability for non-compliance. Additionally, governments should implement import bans of goods where there is a reasonable belief that these are made with forced labour.

Spotlight on the cocoa sector:

Chocolate's hidden ingredient

Chocolate is a vastly popular treat all over the world, yet many consumers do not know that forced or child labour may have been used to produce it.[1] The farming and harvesting of cocoa beans are particularly vulnerable to forced labour, trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour.[2]

Nearly two-thirds of the world's cocoa originates from West Africa, primarily from Côte d'Ivoire (44 per cent) and Ghana (16 per cent).[3] Despite the steep profits made by chocolate companies, cocoa farmers earn significantly below a living income. For example, in 2021 the largest company in the cocoa sector, Nestlé, reported annual gross profits of approximately US$18 billion.[4] In comparison, the average daily income of cocoa farmers is reportedly only the equivalent of US$1.42 in Ghana and US$1.23 in Côte d'Ivoire.[5] Farmers earn just 6 per cent of the retail price of a standard milk chocolate bar while chocolate manufacturers earn 33 per cent.[6]

In a 2018 study funded by the Chocolonely Foundation, Walk Free estimated that 3.3 in every thousand adult cocoa workers in Ghana had experienced forced labour, while in Côte d'Ivoire the figure is 4.2 in every thousand workers in medium and high cocoa production areas. Children were also at risk of forced labour; approximately 16,000 children across the two countries had been forced to work and were typically coerced by someone in their family.[7] Parents and adult family members, including siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, are commonly found to be responsible[8] due to widespread poverty and limited alternative opportunities to earn income. Other reports indicate that children and migrants from Burkina Faso and Mali are trafficked for the purposes of labour exploitation within the Ivorian and Ghanaian cocoa sector.[9]

Modern slavery is driven by widespread poverty within cocoa-growing communities, together with highly variable cocoa prices, barriers to education,[10] small profit margins for farmers,[11] and the limited bargaining power of farmers to insulate against price shocks.[12] These structural inequalities lead cocoa-farming operations to recruit vulnerable workers, including their own children and migrants — and sometimes through forced labour, trafficking, or debt bondage[13] — in order to meet demand,[14] improve profitability, and earn a living income. Meanwhile, major companies reap the benefits of the expanding chocolate industry, which is expected to be worth US$200.4 billion by 2028.[15] In fact, as the industry grows, risks of exploitation increase. Over the last decade, a 62 per cent rise in cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana was accompanied by a 13 per cent rise in hazardous child labour,[16] with children aged 10 to 17 years involved in land clearing, lifting heavy loads, using agro-chemicals and sharp tools, and working long hours and at night.[17]

COVID-19 increased the risk of modern slavery and left workers with even fewer protections. Vulnerability to modern slavery increased in the cocoa sector due to pandemic-related supply chain interruptions, price fluctuations, and unstable demand — in addition to increased food insecurity,[18] rising poverty,[19] and greater barriers to education.[20] For example, school closures, limited government assistance, and decreased parental incomes[21] exposed more vulnerable Ghanaian children to hazardous work.[22] In Côte d'Ivoire, one study found a 21 per cent increase in hazardous child labour on cocoa farms during a partial lockdown in 2020.[23]



Commitments, action, and inaction

Efforts to reduce exploitation in the West African cocoa sector have focused almost exclusively on child labour. Since the 2001 Harkin-Engel Protocol,[24] a public-private partnership developed with United States federal legislators to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in the cocoa industry,[25] several cocoa buyers have made commitments to end the exploitation of children. Eight of the industry's major players[26] signed the Protocol and pledged to eliminate the worst forms of child labour from their cocoa growing operations.[27] Yet, in the two decades since the Protocol was adopted, exploitation remains common, with more than 1.5 million children engaged in child labour in cocoa productions in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.[28]

Some efforts have been made to monitor, identify, and provide remedy for children exposed to child labour. For example, the Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS), first developed by Nestlé in partnership with the International Cocoa Initiative,[29] provides a structured approach to address and remediate child labour in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.[30] The CLMRS model is based on the proactive identification, record-keeping, engagement, and remediation with children vulnerable to hazardous work and their families. The work is delivered via specialised Community Liaison Officers, who maintain regular contact with vulnerable children, families, and communities as needed.[31] When implemented correctly, CLMRS highlights how companies can work together with communities to identify, remediate, and in turn reduce child labour risks. However, the model has faced criticisms of ineffectiveness, poor coverage,[32] and untimely remediation.[33] Increased resources, collaboration, and funding are required to strengthen and expand current systems.

Other company actions to reduce risk include the creation of internal certification schemes. However, these schemes have also attracted criticism due to a lack of action and transparency on how the standards are implemented.[34] Certification schemes developed by independent sustainability labels, such as Fairtrade and the Rainforest Alliance, and those developed by regional bodies, including the ISO/CEN 34101 and ARSO/SRS 1001 standards,[35] have also faced issues. In 2021, 39 per cent of Fairtrade-certified cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire were living in extreme poverty, while only 15 per cent of Fairtrade-certified farmers earned a living income.[36] Despite increases to Fairtrade minimum prices for cocoa in 2019, current prices paid for cocoa do not meet their own Living Income Reference Prices, which were established to quantify the gap between sustainable and market prices.[37] Clearly, unless they are coupled with other interventions addressing the core issue of poverty through paying more for cocoa and strengthening CLMRS, certification schemes alone will not address labour exploitation in the cocoa sector.

Accra, Ghana, June 2019.

A worker removes the husk from roasted cocoa beans, as part of the chocolate production process. Cocoa farming is a significant source of income for families in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, yet despite the massive profits made by chocolate companies, farmers earn little income and often require their children to skip school in favour of going to work, in order to survive. Photo credit: Cristina Aldehuela/AFP via Getty Images.

Big chocolate company disclosures under the Modern Slavery Acts

An analysis of statements produced by cocoa companies required to report under the United Kingdom and Australian Modern Slavery Acts (MSAs) highlights the limited actions taken to address forced labour and exploitation in the industry. In February 2023, Walk Free and WikiRate assessed the modern slavery statements of 39 companies against a series of metrics[38] derived from the MSAs and their accompanying guidance.[39]

Perhaps most surprisingly, almost two-thirds of the cocoa companies did not include any sector-specific disclosures within their statements, despite including well-documented modern slavery risks within the sector such as addressing and monitoring child labour and supply chain wages. Not a single company disclosed a modern slavery policy applied beyond their immediate suppliers (tier 1), despite modern slavery risks increasing in deeper tiers. Further, despite the high risk of forced labour and the worst forms of child labour in the sector, only seven companies identified an incident of modern slavery in their cocoa-specific supply chain. Rather than indicating that the industry is low risk, these findings point to severe lack of industry transparency and reveal that the majority of companies are failing to conduct due diligence.

The companies were also assessed against five metrics that were specific to the cocoa industry.[40] Of these, the most commonly met was the disclosure of collaborative efforts, partnerships, or support for initiatives such as the International Cocoa Initiative and the World Cocoa Foundation. Over half of company statements included this type of disclosure. Only 33 per cent of companies included disclosure of supply chain wages, although for most this did not go further than referencing pledges to increasing farmer and worker incomes, rather than citing a commitment and action plan for implementing living wages throughout supply chains. Only one company disclosed that they had a CLMRS that covered all their cocoa suppliers, although five others described that they were planning to expand their current CLMRS to cover all cocoa suppliers by 2025. Despite increased modern slavery risks in the cocoa sector associated with COVID-19, only two companies reported having provided pandemic-related support to their suppliers or workers.

Consumers, human rights groups, and survivors have attempted to hold chocolate companies to account through legal action. Separate lawsuits against major chocolate companies[41] concerning exploitation in the cocoa sector in the US, under the Alien Tort Statute,[42] the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act,[43] and consumer protection laws in the state of Massachusetts,[44] have had limited success to date. These cases have been dismissed due to the extraterritorial nature of the conduct[45] and for failing to show a traceable connection between the companies and the cocoa workers.[46] However, a new class action against Nestlé USA alleging a breach of a Californian law,[47] for deceiving consumers through sustainable and certification labels, is proceeding to trial.[48] Actions by source country governments have also had some limited impact, but not without a struggle. For example, in 2020, the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire instituted the Living Income Differential (LID), which required chocolate makers to pay an extra US$400 per tonne of cocoa, in addition to the farm gate price.[49] However, companies avoided paying the premium by negotiating with other cocoa-producing governments[50] and thereby diversifying their cocoa sources,[51] which resulted in decreased demand, oversupply, and reduced earnings for farmers.[52] Fortunately, following negotiations between buyers, cocoa regulators, and the Côte d'Ivoire Ghana Cocoa Initiative, 12 major cocoa buyers formally agreed to pay the LID and set a price floor in July 2022.[53] However, it remains yet to be seen if this commitment is being implemented.

"I admit that it is a kind of slavery... They are still kids and they have the right to be educated today. But they bring them here to work, and it's the boss who takes the money."

Ivorian farmer on unaccompanied children from Burkina Faso who come to work on cocoa farms.[54]

Confectionery with a conscience: Tony's Chocolonely

Tony's Chocolonely has a mission to make all chocolate slavery-free. The Netherlands-based company advocates for chocolate companies to take full responsibility for their supply chains by observing the company's Five Sourcing Principles,[55] which include: comprehensively tracing the production of cocoa beans; paying a higher price through premiums that enable a living income; strengthening farming cooperatives; improving the quality of cocoa beans and productivity through promoting sustainable farming practices; and making a long-term commitment to sales at a higher price to reduce demand shocks.[56] Transparency is a key part of the company's ethos, as evidenced through its annual FAIR report, which details its policies and their impact, along with gaps and trends, and identifies cases of modern slavery within its supply chain.[57] This commitment to transparency, despite attracting some criticism,[58] is crucial to raising awareness and to evaluating the effectiveness of the company's theory of change.[59]

Awareness-raising efforts begin at the point of sale through the design of the chocolate bars,[60] through Tony's "Serious Friends" peer ambassador network,[61] and through purpose-driven campaigns such as the "Sweet Solutions" campaign launched in 2021,[62] which involved the creation of four chocolate bars resembling iconic products but made using Tony's sourcing principles. The campaign reached 32 million people, more than doubled the number of signatories on a petition demanding due diligence legislation and led to almost 15,000 new "ambassadors" joining the fight to make chocolate slavery-free.[63] Tony's decision to source cocoa from the West Africa, instead of avoiding this sector all together, demonstrates to the wider industry that sustainable sourcing and traceability is possible.

Recommendations for governments

In cocoa-producing nations:

1. Collaborate to raise farm gate prices and develop national traceability schemes.[64]
2. Commit to improve regional supply management to protect workers from price fluctuations, with more comprehensive regional coordination and strategies that target oversupply and enable sustainable domestic and international prices.
3. Increase support for cocoa workers and establish farmer-controlled cooperatives that enhance their bargaining power and foster a competitive domestic sector.
4. Undertake greater policy reform in social and safety protections, such as employment insurance and increased investment in cocoa agriculture, education, and healthcare.

In cocoa-consuming nations:

1. Strengthen existing MSAs and introduce mandatory human rights due diligence to mandate stronger due diligence, transparency, and accountability mechanisms across entire supply chains. Voluntary codes and reporting alone will not prevent or address exploitation in the cocoa sector.
2. Fund independent research that highlights good practice and leading industry examples to track progress, address root causes, and identify effective remedy and detection mechanisms.
3. Strengthen partnerships and agreements with both cocoa-producing and other cocoa-consuming countries that hold international companies accountable and ensure good governance is upheld.

07





APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Terminology..... 194

Appendix 2: Methodology behind the Global Slavery Index 196

Appendix 3: Methodology for identifying the highest value products at risk of forced labour imported by the G20..... 254

Tehran, Iran, September 2022.

Nasibe Samsaei, an Iranian woman living in Turkey, cuts her ponytail off during a protest outside the Iranian consulate in Istanbul following the death of Jina (Mahsa) Amini, a Kurdish-Iranian woman arrested by the country's morality police responsible for enforcing the strict dress code for women. Higher rates of gender inequality have been linked to higher prevalence of modern slavery. Photo credit: Yasin Akgul/AFP via Getty Images.

APPENDIX 1:
Terminology

In the context of this report, modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, other slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking.

Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. For example, their identity documents might be taken away if they are in a foreign country, they may experience threats or actual violence, or their family might be threatened.

Countries use varying terminology to describe modern slavery, including the term slavery itself, as well as other concepts such as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale or exploitation of children. These terms are defined in various international agreements and treaties, which many countries have voluntarily signed onto and ratified into law. The following are the key definitions most governments have agreed to, thereby committing to prohibit through their national laws and policies:

Human trafficking

Human trafficking is defined in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol as involving three steps.

1. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons;
2. by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person;
3. with the intent of exploiting that person through: prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery (or similar practices), servitude, and removal of organs.

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve threat, use of force, or coercion.

Forced labour

Forced labour is defined in the International Labour Organization Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29) as “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.” The ILO conventions C29 and C105 list precise exceptions under which labour can be imposed by state authorities.

State-imposed forced labour

State-imposed forced labour refers to forced labour imposed by state authorities, including involuntary labour exacted by government officials, as means of:

a. political coercion, education, or as a punishment for expressing political views;
b. punishment for participating in non-violent strikes;
c. mobilising labour for the purpose of economic development;
d. enforcing labour discipline; or
e. discrimination based on race, social status, nationality, or religion.

While some circumstances may justify a state's ability to impose compulsory work on citizens for specific tasks — for example, to perform civic or military obligations or to enforce penal sanctions — the scope of this ability is limited by conditions set in international conventions such as ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). Imposing compulsory labour outside of these limitations may result in an activity being regarded as state-imposed forced labour.

Forced commercial sexual exploitation

Forced commercial sexual exploitation refers to forced labour imposed by private agents for commercial sexual exploitation and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the use, procuring, or offering of children for the production of child sexual abuse material.

Slavery and slavery-like practices

Slavery is defined in the 1956 Slavery Convention 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 a later treaty, states agreed that there are also certain "slavery-like practices": debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, sale or exploitation of children (including in armed conflict), and descent-based slavery.

Debt bondage

Debt bondage is a status or condition where one person has pledged their labour or service (or that of someone under their control) in circumstances where the fair value of that labour or service is not reasonably applied to reducing the debt or length of debt, or the length and nature of the service is not limited or defined.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage refers to situations where a person has been forced to marry without giving their consent. A forced marriage might occur under physical, emotional, or financial duress as a result of deception by family members, the spouse, or others, or by the use of force or threats or severe pressure. These marriages are prohibited by several international conventions, including those that prohibit slavery and slavery-like practices, including servile marriage.

As set out in the joint general recommendation of the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), child marriage – where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age – is considered a form of forced marriage, given that one and/or both parties cannot express full, free, and informed consent due to their age. However, in many countries 16 and 17-year-olds who wish to marry are legally able to do so following a judicial ruling or parental consent.

For the current estimates, the measurement of forced marriage is limited to marriages of both adults and children that respondents to the survey reported as having been forced without consent. As a result, the estimates do not include every instance of child marriage.

Worst forms of child labour

Drawing on the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the term "worst forms of child labour" for the purpose of these estimates is comprised of:

a. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
b. the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances;
c. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties.

APPENDIX 2:
Methodology behind the Global Slavery Index

The Global Slavery Index was designed to shed light on the extent of modern slavery and level of vulnerability to modern slavery for 160 countries, as well as the actions taken by 176 governments to address these crimes and human rights violations. The methodology that enables these assessments is described in detail in three parts:

1. Part A – Estimating prevalence.
2. Part B – Measuring vulnerability.
3. Part C – Assessing government action.



München, Germany, January 2019.

A woman co-defendant in the case of human trafficking hides behind a file in a courtroom of the district court before the trial begins. She allegedly helped a man force another woman into sex work, after luring her with promises of marriage and tricking her into a sexual relationship. Photo credit: Matthias Balk/picture alliance via Getty Images.

APPENDIX 2:

Part A: Estimating prevalence

The regional estimates presented in the 2021 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (Global Estimates) produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are used by Walk Free as the starting point for our independently produced national level estimates, which are presented in the 2023 Global Slavery Index (GSI).

This section summarises the methods used to produce the global and regional estimates presented in the 2021 Global Estimates and details the process to get from the regional estimates to national prevalence estimates. A detailed account of the methodology of the 2021 Global Estimates can be found in the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery report on the Walk Free website.

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery

The 2021 Global Estimates were comprised of two sub-estimates: an estimate of forced labour and an estimate of forced marriage. The sub-estimate of forced labour was then further broken down into three categories: forced labour in the private economy, forced commercial sexual exploitation, and state-imposed forced labour.

As no single source provides data that is suitable for the measurement of all forms of modern slavery, a combined methodological approach was adopted for the 2021 GEMS, drawing on three sources of data to calculate the sub-estimates:

1/ Nationally representative surveys

The estimates of forced labour in the private economy (excluding the sex industry) and forced marriage are derived from 68 nationally representative surveys on forced labour and forced marriage jointly conducted by ILO and Walk Free, and implemented through the Gallup World Poll.[1] During the 2017-2021 period, a total of 77,914 respondents aged 15 years and over were interviewed either face-to-face or by telephone across the 68 survey countries. Surveys also collected information on forced labour and forced marriage among immediate family members (spouse, biological parents, children, and biological siblings) of respondents who were alive at the time of interview. As a result, the full network sample (respondents and their family network) was 628,598 persons and included children below 15 years of age as well as individuals 15 years old and over. Only cases of modern slavery that occurred between 2017 and 2021 were included in these estimates, and all situations of forced labour were counted in the country where the exploitation took place. In the five-year reference period for the estimates, while surveys were conducted in 68 countries, men, women, and children were reported to have been exploited in 129 countries (see Figure 20).

The estimates of forced marriage also draw on national telephone surveys on forced marriage conducted in four countries in the Arab States region: Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.[2] During 2021, Arabic speaking residents aged 18 and over were recruited via random digit dialling with quotas based on the most recent national census used to achieve an approximately representative sample of 2,000 respondents per country. Respondents were asked about their own experiences of forced marriage and those of their immediate family members. The inclusion of these surveys brought the total network sample for forced marriage to 109,798 persons.

Estimates for countries in which national surveys were not conducted were produced through an imputation model.[3] A weighted linear model on the prevalence rate of forced labour included geographic variables and a variable on the number of international migrant workers in the country as covariates. For forced marriage, the weighted linear model consisted of geographic variables only. Because no national surveys were available for the North America region, that region was assimilated with the Northern, Southern, and Western Europe region.

Figure 19
Typology of Modern Slavery

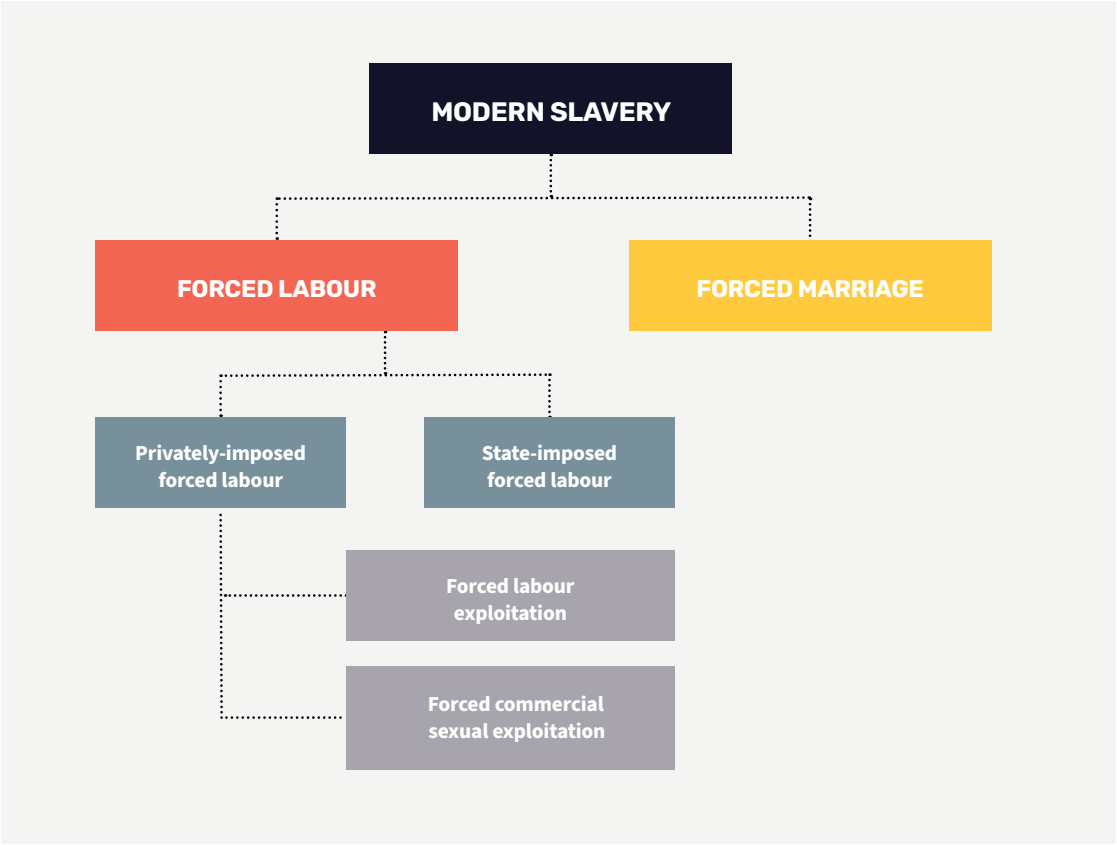
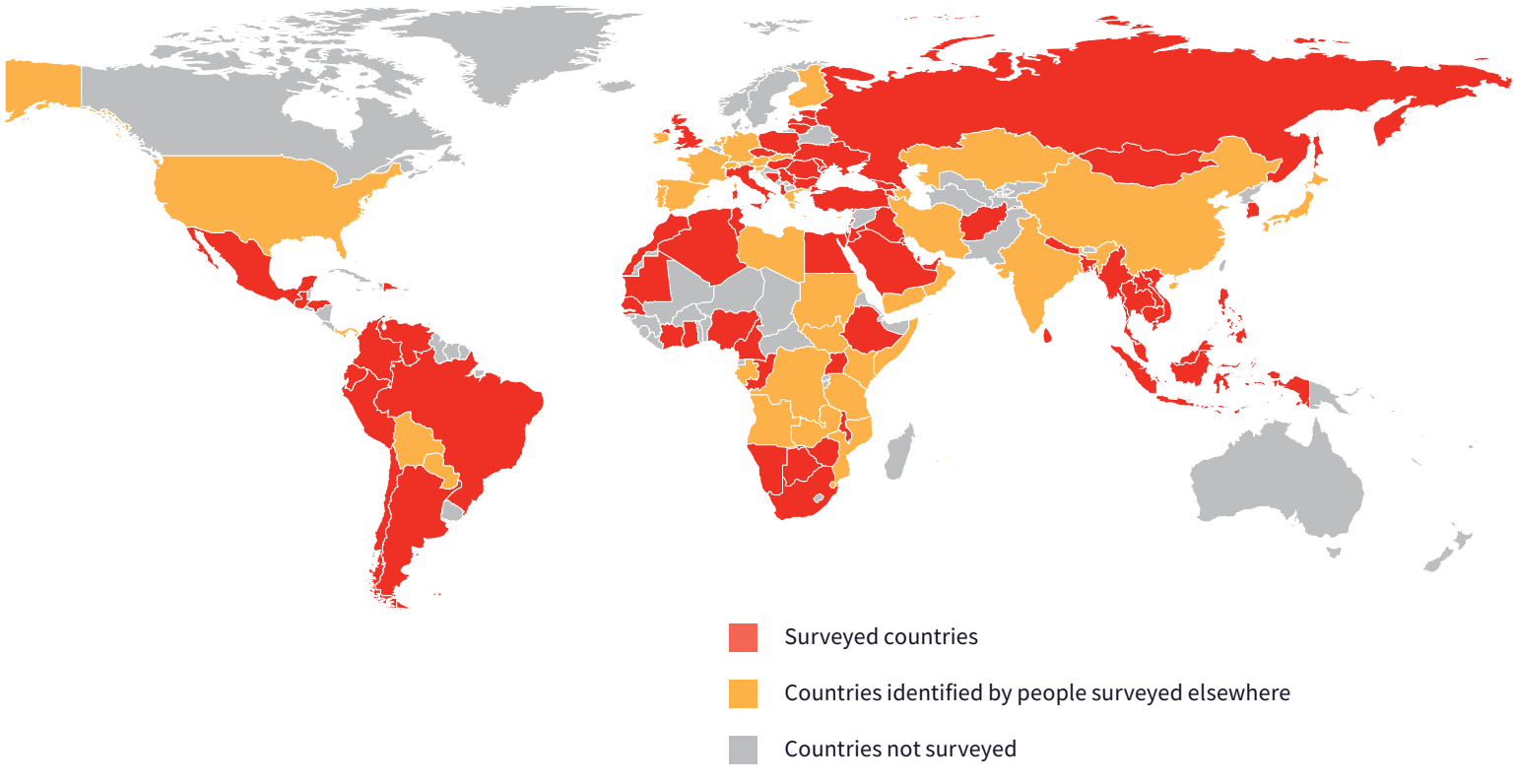


Figure 20
Countries of exploitation identified from the countries surveyed



2/ Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) dataset

Administrative data from IOM's CTDC dataset[4] was used in combination with the 68 survey datasets to estimate forced commercial sexual exploitation of adults and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The CTDC dataset comprises cases of trafficking for both sexual and forced labour exploitation and includes information on the profile of the survivors of human trafficking (e.g., age, gender, citizenship, country of birth) and on the trafficking situation (e.g., country of exploitation, type of exploitation, industry of exploitation, means of control). Statistical models were used to estimate the odds ratios of forced commercial sexual exploitation relative to forced labour exploitation separately for adults and children by gender using the CTDC database. These odds ratios were applied to the corresponding global estimates of forced labour exploitation of adults and children derived from the national surveys.

3/ Comments from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations relating to state-imposed forced labour, and other secondary sources

Because the surveys focused on the non-institutionalised population, meaning that people in prisons, labour camps or military facilities and other institutional settings are not sampled, they are not suitable for estimating state-imposed forced labour. Instead, the estimate of state-imposed forced labour was derived from validated secondary sources and a systematic review of comments from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations relating to state-imposed forced labour.

The estimates are calculated as stock estimates; that is, the average number of persons in modern slavery at a given point in time during the 2017 to 2021 reference period. The stock estimate is calculated by multiplying the total flow by the average duration (the amount of time in which people were trapped in forced labour) of a spell of modern slavery.

Table 25
Individual-level predictors of modern slavery

Variable	Description	FL/FM
Age	Age (years) of primary respondent	FL & FM
wp12	Residents 15+ in Household	FL
wp14	Urban/Rural	FL & FM
wp1219	Gender	FL & FM
wp3117	Education Level	FL & FM
wp1223	Marital Status	FL & FM
emp_2010	Employment Status	FL & FM
wp16	Life Today	FL
wp2319	Feelings About Household Income	FL
wp40	Not Enough Money for Food	FL & FM
wp23	Health Problems	FL

From global and regional to national estimates

The national estimates presented in this GSI were calculated using individual and country-level risk factors of modern slavery. A risk model was used to generate average predicted probabilities of modern slavery by country. The regional totals in the 2021 Global Estimates were then apportioned based on each country's average predicted probability of modern slavery. This process involved the following key steps:

1/ Validating individual-level risk factors of modern slavery and predicting modern slavery at the individual-level

During the development of the 2018 GSI risk model to estimate the risk of modern slavery, a set of individual-level risk factors for forced labour and forced marriage were identified using national surveys that included questions on experiences of forced labour and forced marriage. This included using a series of statistical tests to identify relationships between instances of victimisation and other variables collected in the Gallup World Poll.[5] In developing the 2023 GSI vulnerability model, the relationship between these individual-level risk factors and modern slavery was assessed. The individual-level risk factors are presented in Table 25. Tests confirmed the variables identified in 2018 remained significantly associated with forced labour and/or forced marriage and were therefore retained as variables in the 2023 risk model. Individual-level risk factors included age, gender, marital status, education level, urban/rural, employment, life evaluation, health, and ability to live on current income.

Multi-level models

Multilevel models (MLM) were fitted to the data to enhance the predictions of the individual-level models and account for the hierarchical nature of these data. MLMs allow for the extrapolation of model results beyond the sample of 68 countries. Model coefficients were estimated using Bayesian hierarchical linear models with random intercepts, with weakly informative normal priors (mean = 0, SD = 2.5). Model coefficients were calculated separately for forced labour and forced marriage which were set as outcome variables. Model coefficients were then applied to survey data in each country to calculate individual-level risk. Individual risks were then aggregated into a country average, which was calculated using post-stratification weights. This followed the same approach that was used in 2018 GSI estimate calculations. This model produced unrealistically high risk of forced labour for several countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe subregions. As a result, the sample of surveys on which calculations of individual-level risk were based was limited to those where there was greater confidence based on alignment with the vulnerability model. As a result, 12 countries were removed and the models re-estimated. The final model is represented by equation 1:

Equation 1.

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{ij} + \beta_2 y_{ij} + \beta_3 v_j + u_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where

$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right)_{ij}$	is the logit of the probability p of forced labour or forced marriage for each individual i in a country j.
β_0	is a constant term (intercept).
$\beta_1 x_{ij}$	is a vector of individual-level demographic control variables x with values varying for each individual i within a country j, and with unknown coefficients β_1.
$\beta_2 y_{ij}$	is a vector of individual-level predictor variables y, with values varying for each individual i within a country j, and with unknown coefficients β_2.
$\beta_3 v_j$	is the vulnerability score v, with values varying for each country j, and with an unknown coefficient β_3.
u_j	is a random coefficient that is allowed to vary by country.
ε_{ij}	is an individual error term.

Model Performance

The overall accuracy of a model was measured by the area under the ROC curve (AUC), with an AUC of 1 representing a perfect model, and an AUC of .50 representing a model with no discrimination, as good as a random guess. The assessed AUC value of 0.75 indicates the model has acceptable discrimination, according to the Hosmer & Lemeshow (2013) heuristic.

Actual versus fitted prevalence plots for the 55 countries with modern slavery survey data showed a similar or better fit (Pearson's r = 0.71). The random intercepts model showed a poorer fit with the actual values than the other two models (a perfect fit is exemplified by the red dotted line). Alternate models were examined for improved fit; for example, a model removing random intercepts but leaving country as a fixed effect. However, a random intercepts model with country level predictors provides the most comprehensive framework to undertake these inferences and was the model on which estimates were based.

2/ Estimating prevalence and aligning with Global Estimates of Modern Slavery regional estimates

Individual predictions were aggregated into risk scores at the country level. For the 29 countries that were missing Gallup Word Poll data, risk factors were imputed as an average over several multiple imputation approaches (glm, amelia, multiple imputation by chained equations). Country risk scores were used to estimate country prevalence by apportioning the regional counts of modern slavery from the 2021 Global Estimates based on the risk of modern slavery in a country relative to the risk of other countries in the region. This was undertaken as follows:

First, country risk was adjusted by country of exploitation. The basic premise is to apply an adjustment factor equal to the ratio of victims identified in the national surveys in a subregion, to total exploited victims in the same subregion. If no national surveys were conducted in a given subregion, we estimate that the prevalence is equal to modelled risk multiplied by population. This is calculated using the following steps:

a. Calculate number of victims identified by the country surveys who are exploited in a different country, by country of exploitation.
b. Code countries as either "net sending" or "net receiving" based on income level of country and international migrant stock as a percentage of the total population (2020).[6] Countries with an international migrant stock of less than 5 per cent of their population and grouped as either "low income," "lower-middle income," or "upper-middle income" were assigned as sending countries, as were "high income" countries with an international migrant stock of less than 10 per cent of their population.
c. Calculate aggregate number of victims by place of exploitation in sending and receiving areas.
d. Adjust down the risk score of regions that have a lower number of victims being exploited in country.
e. Adjust up the risk score of regions that have a higher number of victims being exploited in country.

Second, taking adjusted country risks, estimate prevalence in a country based on the regional prevalence and the distance between the adjusted country risk and the weighted average regional risk score, following these steps:

a. Normalise the adjusted and imputed country risk scores to a 1-100 range, with 1=min risk, 100=max risk.
b. Multiply the normalised risk score by the country population.
c. Calculate regional prevalence by dividing aggregates for total modern slavery (excluding state-imposed forced labour) over total population.
d. Calculate average normalised regional score by dividing the sum of normalised risk scores by the country population.
e. Calculate country prevalence by multiplying the regional average by the ratio of normalised country risk score over the average normalised regional score.

To simplify, since normalised modern slavery risk in Afghanistan (60.1) is 2.28 times higher than the average risk in Asia and the Pacific region (26.3), we estimate that prevalence in Afghanistan is 2.28 times greater than the regional average.

Third, use the survey estimate for Mauritania (3.2 per cent) rather than the modelled risk score due to the distinct nature of slavery in the country. The practice is entrenched in Mauritanian society with slave status being inherited and deeply rooted in social castes and the wider social system. Those owned by masters had no freedom to own land and cannot claim dowries from their marriages nor inherit property or possessions from their families.[7] When it abolished slavery in 1981, it was the last country to do so. Hereditary slavery continues to impact the Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian communities, with many survivors and their descendants dependent upon former "masters" because of limited skills and alternate economic opportunities. Given the evidence available that supports the higher survey estimate, that estimate is taken from Mauritania, and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are adjusted down to ensure totals are aligned with the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery.

To account for heightened risk experienced by migrants in the Arab States, we made an additional adjustment within the region based on national surveys of returned migrant workers in six origin countries across Asia and Africa.

3/ Final calculation of estimated prevalence

The process outlined in steps 1 and 2 produces prevalence estimates for all forms of modern slavery except state-imposed forced labour. Given the nationally specific manifestations of state-imposed forced labour where it does occur, it was excluded from the steps outlined above and a final adjustment based on publicly available data sources was made to account for this. A final estimate of the prevalence of all forms of modern slavery is then calculated. Additionally, estimates of the number of people in modern slavery for each country are calculated with reference to UN population estimates.[8] The resulting estimates are presented in Table 26.

Data limitations

Limitations of the source data

As with all empirical research, there are some limitations of the data used to produce the 2021 Global Estimates, within which the findings of this Index should be interpreted.

First, the use of imputations models introduce some error and, as such, the national estimates should not be interpreted as hard findings.

Second, while the sample of countries on which the estimates were based in the 2021 estimates is larger than in previous editions, there remain some regions where the coverage is limited or lacking — this specifically concerns North America and the Arab States (however, regional forced marriage data gaps have been somewhat addressed). The sample of countries also omits some of the most populous countries, namely China, India, Pakistan. While surveys were conducted in India and Pakistan, fragility of the underlying data led to their exclusion. Fielding of these surveys during COVID-19 restrictions is likely to have had an impact on data quality. Similarly, it is usually not possible to survey in countries that are experiencing profound and current conflict, such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan, and parts of Nigeria and Pakistan. Yet it is known that conflict is a significant risk factor — the breakdown of the rule of law, the loss of social supports, and the disruption that occurs with conflict all increase risk of both forced labour and forced marriage. The lack of data from countries experiencing conflict means that modern slavery estimates in regions in which conflict countries are situated will understate the problem.

Third, COVID-19 affected the data collected from countries surveyed during 2020 and 2021, during which time data was collected via telephone rather than face-to-face, as had been done exclusively in previous rounds of data collection.

Fourth, the estimates of forced commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour of children were built on models of profiles of assisted cases of human trafficking in the CTDC dataset compiled by IOM and its partners. While the dataset provided rich data for global estimation, the regional distribution must be taken with caution.

Lastly, due to changes in some areas of the methodology and the expansion of the data coverage, the 2021 global and regional estimates on forced labour are not truly comparable with the estimates of the previous edition. The high variability of the estimates, especially, at the regional level also warrants caution when comparing between editions. Forced labour and forced marriage are not only difficult to capture in sample surveys and administrative sources, but also hard to measure through survey questionnaires and administrative reporting systems. The result is that the estimates have relatively high sampling errors and a low degree of replicability. Even without changes in methodology and data coverage, the estimates are likely to exhibit high variability making comparison over time somewhat hazardous.

Limitations of the risk modelling

This analysis is not without the limitations inherent to any cross-sectional research endeavour. Our selection of variables is driven by both theoretical and statistical considerations, but unfortunately the field of modern slavery lacks a unifying causal theory that can be used to inform variable selection. Finally, we have a limited sample size of confirmed individual cases, which limits the extent to which we can expand our predictive models and enhance the accuracy of our predictions. Further surveys will lead to an increase in our sample, thereby enabling the study of more complex effects and refinement of the modelling.

Table 26

Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
Afghanistan	13.0	505,000	38,928,000
Albania	11.8	34,000	2,878,000
Algeria	1.9	84,000	43,851,000
Angola	4.1	136,000	32,866,000
Argentina	4.2	189,000	45,196,000
Armenia	8.9	26,000	2,963,000
Australia	1.6	41,000	25,500,000
Austria	1.9	17,000	9,006,000
Azerbaijan	10.6	107,000	10,139,000
Bahrain	6.7	11,000	1,702,000
Bangladesh	7.1	1,162,000	164,689,000
Belarus	11.3	107,000	9,449,000
Belgium	1.0	11,000	11,590,000
Benin	3.0	37,000	12,123,000
Bolivia	7.2	83,000	11,673,000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10.1	33,000	3,281,000
Botswana	1.8	4,000	2,352,000
Brazil	5.0	1,053,000	212,559,000
Bulgaria	8.5	59,000	6,948,000
Burkina Faso	3.7	77,000	20,903,000
Burundi	7.5	89,000	11,891,000
Cambodia	5.0	83,000	16,719,000
Cameroon	5.8	155,000	26,546,000
Canada	1.8	69,000	37,742,000
Central African Republic	5.2	25,000	4,830,000
Chad	5.9	97,000	16,426,000
Chile	3.2	61,000	19,116,000
China	4.0	5,771,000	1,439,324,000
Colombia	7.8	397,000	50,883,000
Costa Rica	3.2	16,000	5,094,000
Côte d'Ivoire	7.3	193,000	26,378,000
Croatia	5.2	22,000	4,105,000
Cuba	5.4	61,000	11,327,000
Cyprus	8.0	10,000	1,207,000
Czechia	4.2	45,000	10,709,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4.5	407,000	89,561,000
Denmark	0.6	4,000	5,792,000
Djibouti	7.1	7,000	988,000
Dominican Republic	6.6	72,000	10,848,000
Ecuador	7.6	135,000	17,643,000
Egypt	4.3	442,000	102,334,000
El Salvador	8.1	52,000	6,486,000
Equatorial Guinea	7.8	11,000	1,403,000
Eritrea	90.3	320,000	3,546,000
Estonia	4.1	5,000	1,327,000
Eswatini	3.6	4,000	1,160,000
Ethiopia	6.3	727,000	114,964,000
Finland	1.4	8,000	5,541,000
France	2.1	135,000	65,274,000
Gabon	7.6	17,000	2,226,000
Gambia	6.5	16,000	2,417,000
Georgia	7.8	31,000	3,989,000



Table 26

Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
Germany	0.6	47,000	83,784,000
Ghana	2.9	91,000	31,073,000
Greece	6.4	66,000	10,423,000
Guatemala	7.8	140,000	17,916,000
Guinea	4.0	53,000	13,133,000
Guinea-Bissau	4.5	9,000	1,968,000
Guyana	4.2	3,000	787,000
Haiti	8.2	94,000	11,403,000
Honduras	7.0	69,000	9,905,000
Hong Kong	2.8	21,000	7,497,000
Hungary	6.6	63,000	9,660,000
India	8.0	11,050,000	1,380,004,000
Indonesia	6.7	1,833,000	273,524,000
Iran	7.1	597,000	83,993,000
Iraq	5.5	221,000	40,223,000
Ireland	1.1	5,000	4,938,000
Israel	3.8	33,000	8,656,000
Italy	3.3	197,000	60,462,000
Jamaica	7.3	22,000	2,961,000
Japan	1.1	144,000	126,476,000
Jordan	10.0	102,000	10,203,000
Kazakhstan	11.1	208,000	18,777,000
Kenya	5.0	269,000	53,771,000
Kosovo	8.0	14,000	1,806,000
Kuwait	13.0	55,000	4,271,000
Kyrgyzstan	8.7	57,000	6,524,000
Lao PDR	5.2	38,000	7,276,000
Latvia	3.4	6,000	1,886,000
Lebanon	7.6	52,000	6,825,000
Lesotho	1.6	4,000	2,142,000
Liberia	3.1	16,000	5,058,000
Libya	6.8	47,000	6,871,000
Lithuania	6.1	17,000	2,722,000
Madagascar	4.6	127,000	27,691,000
Malawi	4.9	93,000	19,130,000
Malaysia	6.3	202,000	32,366,000
Mali	5.2	106,000	20,251,000
Mauritania	32.0	149,000	4,650,000
Mauritius	1.5	2,000	1,272,000
Mexico	6.6	850,000	128,933,000
Moldova	9.5	38,000	4,034,000
Mongolia	4.0	13,000	3,278,000
Morocco	2.3	85,000	36,911,000
Mozambique	3.0	93,000	31,255,000
Myanmar	12.1	657,000	54,410,000
Namibia	2.4	6,000	2,541,000
Nepal	3.3	97,000	29,137,000
Netherlands	0.6	10,000	17,135,000
New Zealand	1.6	8,000	4,822,000
Nicaragua	7.3	49,000	6,625,000
Niger	4.6	112,000	24,207,000
Nigeria	7.8	1,611,000	206,140,000

Table 26

Estimated prevalence and number of people in modern slavery, by country

Country	Estimated prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population)	Estimated number of people in modern slavery	Population
North Korea	104.6	2,696,000	25,779,000
North Macedonia	12.6	26,000	2,083,000
Norway	0.5	3,000	5,421,000
Oman	6.5	33,000	5,107,000
Pakistan	10.6	2,349,000	220,892,000
Panama	4.7	20,000	4,315,000
Papua New Guinea	10.3	93,000	8,947,000
Paraguay	6.4	46,000	7,133,000
Peru	7.1	234,000	32,972,000
Philippines	7.8	859,000	109,581,000
Poland	5.5	209,000	37,847,000
Portugal	3.8	39,000	10,197,000
Qatar	6.8	20,000	2,881,000
Republic of the Congo	8.0	44,000	5,518,000
Romania	7.5	145,000	19,238,000
Russia	13.0	1,899,000	145,934,000
Rwanda	4.3	55,000	12,952,000
Saudi Arabia	21.3	740,000	34,814,000
Senegal	2.9	49,000	16,744,000
Serbia	7.0	61,000	8,737,000
Sierra Leone	3.4	27,000	7,977,000
Singapore	2.1	12,000	5,850,000
Slovakia	7.7	42,000	5,460,000
Slovenia	4.4	9,000	2,079,000
Somalia	6.2	98,000	15,893,000
South Africa	2.7	158,000	59,309,000
South Korea	3.5	180,000	51,269,000
South Sudan	10.3	115,000	11,194,000
Spain	2.3	108,000	46,755,000
Sri Lanka	6.5	139,000	21,413,000
Sudan	4.0	174,000	43,849,000
Sweden	0.6	6,000	10,099,000
Switzerland	0.5	4,000	8,655,000
Syria	8.7	153,000	17,501,000
Taiwan	1.7	40,000	23,817,000
Tajikistan	14.0	133,000	9,538,000
Tanzania	2.9	171,000	59,734,000
Thailand	5.7	401,000	69,800,000
Timor-Leste	6.1	8,000	1,318,000
Togo	3.3	28,000	8,279,000
Trinidad and Tobago	4.7	7,000	1,399,000
Tunisia	2.3	27,000	11,819,000
Türkiye	15.6	1,320,000	84,339,000
Turkmenistan	11.9	72,000	6,031,000
Uganda	4.2	190,000	45,741,000
Ukraine	12.8	559,000	43,734,000
United Arab Emirates	13.4	132,000	9,890,000
United Kingdom	1.8	122,000	67,886,000
United States	3.3	1,091,000	331,003,000
Uruguay	1.9	7,000	3,474,000
Uzbekistan	7.4	249,000	33,469,000
Venezuela	9.5	270,000	28,436,000
Viet Nam	4.1	396,000	97,339,000
Yemen	6.0	180,000	29,826,000
Zambia	5.1	94,000	18,384,000
Zimbabwe	5.0	74,000	14,863,000



APPENDIX 2:
Part B: Measuring vulnerability

Walk Free measures the extent to which a population is vulnerable to modern slavery across 160 countries. The vulnerability model has three main aims:

- Inform prevalence estimation, contributing to the risk model which allows national estimates to be made at the country-level, including for countries where there is no national survey.
- Identify and quantify individual, systemic, and structural factors that make people vulnerable to modern slavery, informing the allocation and direction of anti-modern slavery efforts.
- Help to identify potential data "blind spots" where future research should be targeted.

The vulnerability model maps 23 risk variables across five major dimensions:

1. Governance Issues
2. Lack of Basic Needs
3. Inequality
4. Disenfranchised Groups
5. Effects of Conflict

The following section provides an overview of the methodology of the vulnerability model.

Development of the vulnerability model

The vulnerability model methodology has evolved since the 2018 edition of the Global Slavery Index with the input from an independent Expert Working Group. During 2016 and 2017, the Expert Working Group provided feedback on addressing theoretical and empirical gaps, normalisation, and standardisation of the data, dealing with missing data, and weighting of the data. This advice has carried through to the methodology used to calculate the vulnerability model. Further detail on the feedback of the Expert Working Group can be found in the 2018 GSI methodology.

Theoretical framework

The vulnerability model is guided by human security and crime prevention theories. The human security theory was developed by the UN Development Programme to capture seven major areas of insecurity: economic, political, food, community, personal, health, and environment. The most basic shared characteristic of human security as a concept involves a focus on the safety and well-being of individuals regardless of their citizenship status or relationship to a nation state. Importantly, the field of human security allows us to situate our understanding of modern slavery — a complex crime that is both a cause and a symptom of many other global problems such as pandemics, environmental disasters, conflict, and financial crises — within the larger discourse on vulnerability and to ensure that we were not missing significant dimensions of vulnerability to modern slavery. The use of human security theory also emphasises the global importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and links our vulnerability theory and modelling exercises to the developing global discussion on common metrics and goals for international development. Finally, this approach allows for the inclusion and exclusion of variables to be grounded in theory.

Review of the 2018 vulnerability model

Developing the 2018 vulnerability model involved selection of variables based on the human security theory that were published and updated regularly, were transparent about their methodology and source of the data and were the product of a methodology that did not suffer significant limitations that would impact the reliability of the data. A total of 35 variables were collated and, where necessary, normalised to a 1-100 scale and inverted so that higher numbers represented greater vulnerability. The 35 variables were then tested for collinearity, with any variables with a variance inflation factor above 10 and tolerance score below 0.1 dropped from the model. Principal factor

analysis was then performed on the 24 variables which were retained. This reduced the number of variables to 23 and grouped them into five factors. The next step involved conceptualising the factors as distinct dimensions based on the final factor loadings and focused on risk of modern slavery. Imputation was used where threshold levels of missing data were met, and subregional averages imputed. Vulnerability scores were finally weighted by eigenvalues to give more weight to dimensions that have the most explanatory power in our overall vulnerability score. Quality assurance checks were performed on data transcription and calculations. A detailed description of the 2018 methodology can be found in Appendix 1 of the 2018 Global Slavery Index.

Data collation

The 23 variables used in the 2018 vulnerability model were assessed for updated data and changes to methodology. Where updated data was available, the most recent version was used, as of 31 December 2021. Six variables were discontinued or covered too few countries. Substitute variables were identified through a literature search and selected based on theoretical and empirical similarity to maintain comparability to the 2018 model. The discontinued variables and their substitutes are listed in Table 27. Table 28 presents the placement of variables within dimensions in the vulnerability model.

Impact of changes to variables on total scores and ranks

The substitution of discontinued variables with theoretically and empirically similar variables had the effect of increasing data availability for some countries which, in addition to methodological differences between the 2018 variable and its 2023 substitute, led to indicator and dimension level changes for some countries that do not necessarily reflect actual changes in vulnerability. Similarly, changes to methodology for three of the variables used in the 2018 vulnerability model saw a reduction in data availability for those variables and thus for some countries. This meant that there were some countries for which imputation was required whereas for others, increased data meant that averages were no longer imputed. This led to significant shifts in scores and ranks for some countries. For example, Papua New Guinea previously benefitted from imputed regional scores based on Australia and New Zealand, however more complete data in 2023 meant imputation was no longer required and led to an increase in overall vulnerability relative to 2018.

Data preparation and analysis

Updated data was cleaned and analysed using Microsoft Excel. The variable *Internally Displaced Persons* was calculated by summing four different datasets sourced from UNHCR: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), New Asylum Applications, Returned IDPs, and Returned Refugees. *Internally Displaced Persons* was then logarithmically transformed. Where necessary, variables were normalised to a 1-100 scale and inverted so that higher numbers represented greater vulnerability. For more information on normalisation and inversion of variables, please download the 2023 vulnerability data and codebook from https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/downloads/.

To address issues relating to missing data, the proportion of missing data was calculated at the dimension level for each country. For dimensions *Inequality*, *Disenfranchised Groups*, and *Effects*

Table 27
Variables replaced with substitutes in the 2022 vulnerability model

Discontinued variable from 2018 vulnerability model	Variable substituted in the 2023 vulnerability model
Disabled rights, Gallup World Poll	Protection from workplace harassment based on disability, World Policy Analysis Centre
Same sex rights, Gallup World Poll	LGBTI Acceptance Index, UCLA School of Law
Judicial confidence, Gallup World Poll	Law enforcement reliability (Global Competitiveness Report), World Economic Forum
Acceptance minorities, Gallup World Poll	Social Group Equality, IDEA Global State of Democracy Indices
Acceptance immigrants, Gallup World Poll	Employers prioritise nationals, World Values Survey
Alt political rights (Polity IV Dataset), Center for Systematic Peace	Political rights, Freedom House

Table 28
2023 vulnerability model with new variables indicated in italics

Dimension	Variables
Governance Issues	Political instability
	Government response
	Women's physical security
	Political rights
	Regulatory quality
	Disability based workplace harassment
	Weapons access
Lack of Basic Needs	Cell phone users
	Undernourishment
	Social safety net
	Ability to borrow money
	Tuberculosis
	Access to clean water
Inequality	Emergency funds
	Violent crime
	Gini coefficient
	Law enforcement reliability
Disenfranchised Groups	*Employers prioritise nationals*
	Social group equality
	LGBTI acceptance
Effects of Conflict	Internally displaced persons
	Impact of terrorism
	Internal conflicts fought

Table 29
Exceptions to the general approach to missing data

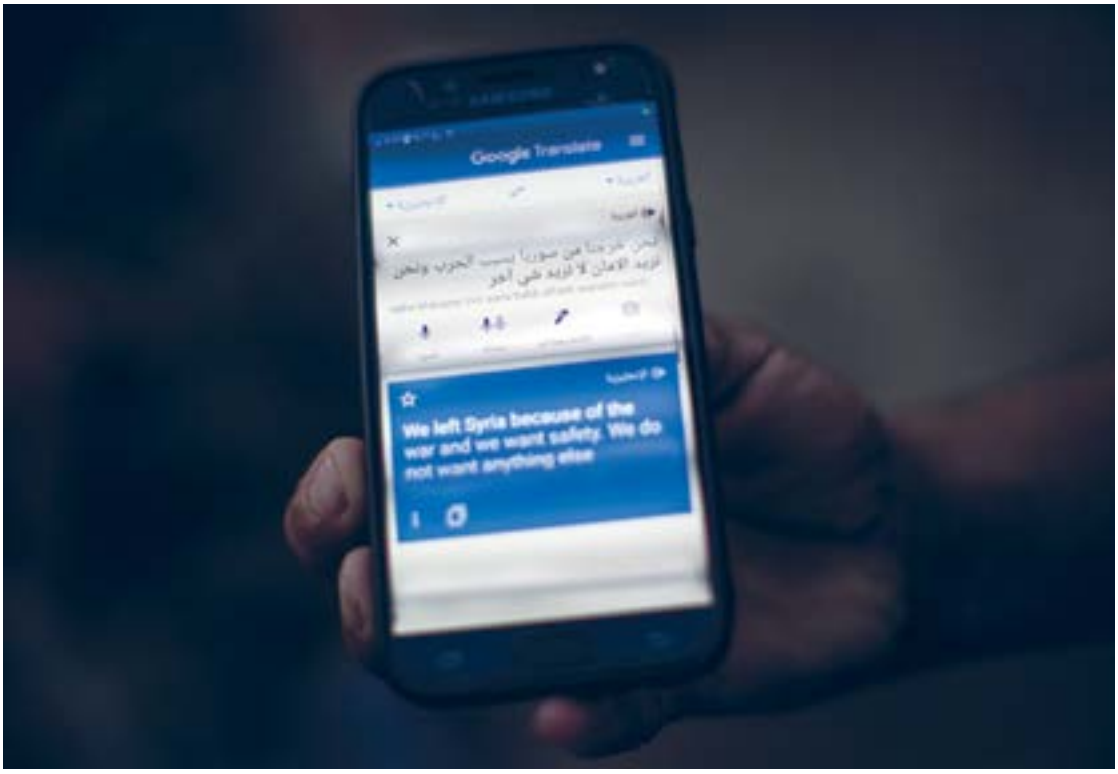
Country	Dimension	Proportion missing	Treatment
Hong Kong	Governance issues	57%	Maintained at 57%
Papua New Guinea	Access to basic needs	75%	Maintained at 75%
	Inequality	67%	Maintained at 67%
Burkina Faso	Disenfranchised groups	67%	Partially imputed, reduced to 25% missing data
Guinea-Bissau	Disenfranchised groups	67%	Partially imputed, reduced to 25% missing data
Syria	Inequality	75%	Maintained at 75%

of Conflict, the threshold was 50 per cent. For dimensions *Governance Issues* and *Lack of Basic Needs*, the threshold for missing data was 51 per cent due to the larger number of total vulnerability variables included in the first two dimensions of vulnerability. Subregional averages were imputed for variables within a dimension where the proportion of missing data met the threshold for that dimension. Exceptions to this approach were made in order to maintain variability within the regions where some data may have been more limited and are described in Table 29. Dimension averages were then calculated for each dimension and weighted by the factor eigenvalue determined in development of the 2018 vulnerability model. Weighting by eigenvalue is performed to give more weight to factors that have the most explanatory power in our overall vulnerability score. That is, the factors are not equal, and eigenvalues indicate the amount of variance explained by a certain factor. Factors with greater eigenvalues explain more of the overall model and have thus been weighted accordingly in the overall score which was then calculated by averaging the eigenvalue-weighted dimension scores and was normalised so to scale from 1-100. As a final step, quality assurance checks were performed by external consultants to ensure that no errors were made in the transcription from original sources, nor in calculations made in Excel.

Limitations

The vulnerability model should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind:

1. How well the vulnerability variables measure the real-world phenomena they are approximating in our model is limited by the need to select variables that cover most of our 160 countries, are published regularly, and explain clearly how these measures were developed.
2. The lag in administrative data reflecting real world situations on the ground affected the quality of the vulnerability model, as even the most recent information may still not reflect current situations on the ground at this moment.
3. Collinearity checks on our variables resulted in dropping several empirically redundant but conceptually important variables such as corruption, gender inequality, and environmental performance.
4. Data imputation ensured that missing data points were supplemented with regionally specific trends and information on affected vulnerability variables. However, imputed values are unlikely to be the true values for those countries.
5. Comparability between the 2023 vulnerability model and the 2018 vulnerability model is reduced by the substitution of discontinued variables with variables that are conceptually and empirically similar, which nonetheless differ in how they measure the real-life phenomena they approximate or measure slightly different phenomena.



Velika Kladusa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 2018.

A refugee man speaks with a journalist through an online translator on his phone. His message reads: "We left Syria because of the war and we want safety. We do not want anything else." Many refugees and asylum seekers have been exposed to even greater risks as a result of hostile immigration policies adopted across Europe. Photo credit: Maciej Luczniewski/NurPhoto via Getty Images.

APPENDIX 2

Part C: Government responses

Governments play a critical role in the developing and implementing the laws, policies, and programs that are needed to prevent and respond to modern slavery. To complement the prevalence estimates and assessment of vulnerability, as with previous editions, the GSI includes an assessment of the actions governments are taking to respond to modern slavery.

This assessment is based on tracking government progress towards the achievement of five milestones:

1. Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery.
2. Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery.
3. Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response.
4. Risk factors, such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed.
5. Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.



Bamian, Afghanistan, August 2021.

Afghan woman walks by a mural calling for women and children's rights. Humanitarian fears proved well-founded, as rollbacks occurred soon after the takeover, with Afghan girls aged 12 years and over prohibited from attending secondary school. Subsequent reports indicate that forced marriages of women and girls increased after the ban, as poverty rates rose. Photo credit: Wakil Kohsar/AFP via Getty Images.

Theoretical framework: crime prevention theory

Our assessment of government responses is underpinned by situational crime prevention theory (Figure 21).[9] This is based on the understanding that in order for the crime of modern slavery to occur, there needs to be a vulnerable victim, a motivated offender, and the absence of a capable guardian. It also recognises that crime does not happen in a vacuum and that broad contextual factors like state instability, discrimination, and disregard of human rights are critical to any government response.

Therefore, to reduce the prevalence of modern slavery crimes, governments need to:

- Reduce the opportunity for offenders to commit the crime.
- Increase the risks of offending.
- Decrease the vulnerability of potential victims.
- Increase the capacity of law enforcement and other guardians.
- Address the people or factors that stimulate or facilitate slavery.

Development of the conceptual framework

Using this theoretical framework as a starting point and drawing on the UN Trafficking Protocol[10] and the European Convention on Action against Trafficking Beings,[11] as well as literature on effective responses to modern slavery,[12] we first devised (in 2014) a conceptual framework of what constitutes a strong response to modern slavery. We further refined this conceptual framework in consultation with our independent Expert Working Group and scholars in fields related to modern slavery, such as harmful traditional practices, health, social welfare, and migration. It was organised around the five milestones outlined above, which, if achieved, would ensure that governments are taking sufficient steps to address modern slavery, and underpinned our assessment of government responses in the 2014, 2016, and 2018 Global Slavery Indices.



Figure 21
Situational crime prevention theory

Updating the conceptual framework

After the publication of the 2018 Global Slavery Index and following consultations with several stakeholders from the end of 2018 until data collection began in late 2020, further refinements were made to the conceptual framework in advance of the 2023 Global Slavery Index. After three editions of the GSI, we needed to keep apace of legislative and policy developments and consult with those with lived experience to review and strengthen our framework.

To this end, we held two workshops with our independent Expert Working Group to identify gaps, enhance the ability to measure outputs, and refine the ways issues such as harmful traditional practices were incorporated in the conceptual framework. The Expert Working Group also provided guidance on the processes of data collection and the weighting of milestones. Broadly, the rounds of review with the Expert Working Group culminated in the inclusion of indicators that assess concrete outputs as opposed to processes and of more indicators that focused on labour rights and child rights, as well as aligning our understanding of underlying risk factors and how to address these with international conventions and grey literature.

The need to include survivors in developing solutions to modern slavery has long been identified but rarely actioned.[13] To systematically embed survivor perspectives in the assessment of government responses, Walk Free partnered with Survivor Alliance and NGO partners to convene more than 50 survivors in four Lived Experience Expert Groups in Ghana, India, Kenya, and the United Kingdom.

Survivors were asked to share their perspectives on the actions governments should take to end modern slavery, to rank the milestones from most to least important, and any other feedback. The vulnerability of women and children to modern slavery was emphasized across the Lived Experience Expert Groups, as well as the need for sensitisation campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of modern slavery, and for the provision of proactive social safety nets as part of prevention activities. Depending on location, the ranking of which milestone was most important differed: Milestone 1 (UK and Ghana), Milestone 4 (Kenya), and Milestone 5 (India) (see Table 30). Interestingly, despite several groups noting the need for laws to criminalise modern slavery and corruption, no group rated Milestone 2 as the most important part of a government's response.

Based on the consultations with the Lived Experience Expert Groups, indicators within the conceptual framework were edited to take into account survivor's assessments of essential services. This included ensuring indicators better measure government action on registering recruitment agencies, ensuring that survivor compensation is delivered in practice, and ensuring that National Referral Mechanisms include providing survivors with the right to work. All survivor groups emphasised the importance of involving survivors in the development of policy and advocacy; in the UK and India, survivors suggested they should be incorporated in the data collection process to overcome data gaps for output indicators. Although this did not form part of the data collection process for the purposes of this report (discussed in greater detail below), Walk Free will consider how to further involve survivors in future rounds of data collection analysing government responses.

Table 30

Lived Experience Expert Groups ranking of government response milestones
(ranked from most important (1) to least important (5))

Country	Milestone 1: Survivors identified and supported	Milestone 2: Criminal justice mechanisms	Milestone 3: National and regional level coordination	Milestone 4: Risk factors are addressed	Milestone 5: Government and business supply chains
UK	1	3	2	3	4
India	4	3	5	2	1
Kenya	3	4	2	1	5
Ghana	1	5	2	3	4



Kaparelli, Greece, April 2018.

A Syrian refugee removes weeds from the field at an organic farm. Salman Dakdouk Kastro, a Syrian activist long settled in Greece, set up the organic farm to help refugees grow their own food and as a means of integration. The project includes a collective restaurant using the produce from the farm.
Photo credit: Louisa Goullamaki/AFP via Getty Images.

In cases where feedback received from the Expert Working Group or the Lived Experience Expert Groups was not incorporated into the conceptual framework, the proposed change either was already captured under another indicator within the framework, there was limited data available, or the suggested indicator was not conceptually consistent. For example, the suggestion to include a specific indicator to capture whether governments had publicly committed to using a survivor-centred approach was not included as it was considered preferable from a conceptual perspective to examine whether a government had streamlined a survivor-centred approach throughout their entire response, rather than simply making a public declaration. To test the robustness and availability of data for suggested indicators, we worked with Regenesys BPO, an offshore ethical sourcing business which employs survivors of modern slavery in the technology sector. From the review of indicators and this round of testing, we excluded 54 proposed indicators where suggestions were not conceptually consistent with the current framework or where data was not available consistently and at the level required for data collection. This included some of the indicators that measured "outputs" as opposed to existence of policies and processes. We will continue to review these suggested indicators to potentially incorporate in the next round of data collection. For examples of indicators excluded in this round, refer to Table 31.

The Expert Working Group and the Lived Experience Expert Groups identified a greater need to reflect the rights of the child and our understanding of how governments should address underlying risk factors in the conceptual framework. As such, an internal review was conducted to map the conceptual framework to international rights instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Guidelines on International Protection No. 8.[14] The purpose of this mapping exercise was to ensure all relevant standards are reflected in the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was also compared to areas of vulnerability identified by the Alliance 8.7 Migration Action Group[15] and joint research by Walk Free and the International Organization for Migration[16] to ensure sites of vulnerability, victim characteristics, and guardian responses are all reflected within the framework. Finally, the conceptual framework was mapped against the vulnerability model developed by Walk Free, as discussed in Part B, to ensure vulnerability was comprehensively represented in the conceptual framework.

The full updated conceptual framework can be found at the end of this section.

Table 31

Example of suggested indicators which cannot be included in the current conceptual framework due to conceptual or data gaps

Proposed indicator number	Description		Outcome
Milestone 1, 1.2.7	There has been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline	If yes to 2.1.1, there has been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline. The indicator is met if there has been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline	Potentially included in the next round of data collection. Review data sources available to ensure that sufficient information exists for majority of countries.
		AND this must have occurred since 15 February 2014.	
		If no to 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.	
		NOT there hasn't been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline.	
		NOT the number of victims identified through the hotline decreased;	
		NOT there is no information regarding the number of victims being identified through the hotline.	
Milestone 2, 2.2.5	Free translation services for victims exist in legislation	Free translation services for victims are made explicit in legislation. This means that any type of free translation or interpretation services exists in legislation AND these are either specific to victims of modern slavery OR victims of modern slavery can access translation services, which are available for all victims of crime.	Potentially included in the next round of data collection. Review data sources available to ensure that sufficient information exists for majority of countries in the database. To be further refined to be clearly differentiated from existing indicator analysing services available to victims within the courtroom (Milestone 2, 2.1.3).
		NOT free translation services for victims are not in legislation.	
		NOT translation services are available and free, but there is evidence to contradict this;	
		NOT translation services are available, but not free;	
		NOT free translation services are available only for citizens, not foreign victims;	
		NOT free translation services are available for certain types of crime (such as violent crime) and modern slavery is not specified;	
		NOT free translation services are offered by NGOs, but not made explicit in legislation.	

Table 31

Example of suggested indicators which cannot be included in the current conceptual framework due to conceptual or data gaps

Proposed indicator number	Description		Outcome
Milestone 3, 1.1.9	Reports on the National Action Plan are used to inform budget allocations	If yes to there is a National Action Plan, annual reports on the NAP inform where the money is spent for the coming year AND reports to be released during the period 15 February 2019 to 31 August 2022 If no to is there an action plan, then this indicator cannot be met	Potentially included in the next round of data collection. Review language to ensure the indicator is not tied to the National Action Plan and reports. Purpose of the update is to look for evidence that reviews of responses inform budget allocations. Covered partially by "Government routinely reviews its response to modern slavery" (Milestone 3, 1.2.2).
Milestone 4, 3.1.10	There are legislative and/or administrative measures to address environmental degradation and climate change	SDG Target 13.2.1: Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalisation of an integrated policy/ strategy/ plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development.	Potentially included in the next round of data collection.
Milestone 5, 2.3.5	A policy framework exists for eradicating illicit money flows	N/a	Potentially included in the next round of data collection. Review language to ensure the indicator is clear and linked to a measurable standard such as anti-money laundering legislation. Review also to ensure conceptually consistent with the broader framework.

Process of assessing government responses to modern slavery

Throughout 2020 and 2021, data was collected for 176 countries for the government response component of the GSI. As in previous editions of the Global Slavery Index, this included data on Commonwealth countries[17] in our government response database. Where data is limited[18] in smaller Commonwealth nations, we have excluded these countries from our analysis. Due to the ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government, we have not included ratings for Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen this year.[19]

The conceptual framework underpinning our assessment is arranged around the five milestones, which are then broken down into activities, which are further disaggregated into indicators. There are a total of 141 indicators in the conceptual framework and 42 activities. This included five additional indicators that were developed by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) in 2018 and are referenced in a report released by Walk Free and CHRI in 2020 that assessed the modern slavery responses of Commonwealth governments. These additional indicators are:

1. ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) is ratified.
2. Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (2000) is ratified.
3. *NEGATIVE: Certain groups, such as migrant workers or domestic workers, are not able to unionise.*
4. *NEGATIVE: There are lower primary school enrolment rates for girls.*
5. *NEGATIVE: Homosexuality is criminalised.*

The breakdown by milestone is described in Table 32 below.

Data collection

Data is collected at the indicator level, where each indicator describes an element of an activity. Take Activity 1.2 under Milestone 1, "Comprehensive reporting mechanisms operate effectively" as an example, set out in Table 33.

Table 32
Breakdown of milestones into activities and indicators

Milestone		No. of activities	No of indicators
1	Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery	12	41
2	Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery	13	40
3	Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response	4	13
4	Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed	9	31
5	Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour	4	16
Total		**42**	**141**

Taiwan and Kosovo have 41 activities, not 42, as they are unable to ratify international conventions.



Illescas, Spain, March 2023.

A car drives past two night clubs popular for sex work, while debates continue in the Spanish Parliament regarding whether to criminalise sex work. Human rights groups note that doing so would lead to increases in sexual violence and human trafficking, as there would be less visibility over the industry. Photo credit: Pablo Blazquez Dominguez via Getty Images.

Table 33
Activity 1.2, Milestone 1

Milestone 1: Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery	
Activity:	**1.2.1 There is a reporting mechanism, such as a hotline**
1.2 Comprehensive reporting mechanisms operate effectively	**1.2.2 Reporting mechanism is available for men, women, and children**
	1.2.3 Reporting mechanism is free of charge to access
	1.2.4 Reporting mechanism operates 24/7
	1.2.5 The reporting mechanism operates in multiple languages or has capacity to provide immediate access to translators
	1.2.6 Operators have had specialist training in modern slavery, call-handling and case referrals*
	1.2.7 There has been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline*
	* These indicators were added to the conceptual framework following consultation and review with the Expert Working Group and the Lived Experience Expert Groups. However, data was not collected against them due to limited available sources. These indicators are 'aspirational' and will be retained in the conceptual framework for future rounds of data collection and analysis.

There are seven indicators under this activity, each of which determine the existence of the reporting mechanism, and how well it is operating. Desk research was conducted for five of these indicators and others in the conceptual framework by a team of 17 researchers and research assistants following a strict protocol. Through AnnieCannons, a non-profit that provides technology and software focused vocational training to survivors of modern slavery, and Regenesys BPO, 12 researchers were survivors of modern slavery. Specific protocols were developed on an indicator-level for these researchers to provide further technical support and to ensure consistency in data collection across the global research team. All protocols described both the types of reports and sources to be reviewed and what constitutes "relevant" information. The multilingual global team[20] conducted research either by country or by indicator and saved these references in the government response database.[21]

These data points were then verified, as far as possible, by NGO contacts within each country. NGOs were given the opportunity to either respond via email, hold Zoom interviews, or complete a survey. Over 25 survey responses were received, and a further 51 NGOs responded to individual requests for information via email or Zoom calls.

Data is current as of 31st August 2022.

Creation of a database

All data collected for our assessment of government responses since 2014 is publicly available; a total of over 100,000 datapoints. Ratings are available for 2016, 2018, and 2022.

Contact info@walkfree.org to download the dataset.

Rating

The 2023 scoring system, which is based on activities, has not been used in previous editions of the GSI. Activities are used to clearly communicate the actions a government is taking, or not taking, to eradicate modern slavery in its simplest form.

Of the 141 indicators in the conceptual framework against which data was collected, 125 are what we have called "positive indicators." Put simply, these cover the actions the government is taking to implement each activity and ultimately each milestone. The indicators described in Table 33 below are all positive indicators. In some instances, they go beyond implementation to measure effectiveness of an activity (*There has been an increase in number of victims being identified through the hotline* in the above example).

These indicators are supplemented by 16 standardised "negative indicators," which attempt to measure implementation of a particular activity (listed in Table 34). For example, if shelters exist for modern slavery victims, the negative indicator *victims are held in shelters against their will and do not have a choice about whether or not to remain in a shelter* would capture whether victims are detained and experience secondary victimisation despite the existence of these shelters. The negative indicators also cover broader factors, which, if conducted by governments, would increase the risk of human trafficking and child exploitation. These include state-sanctioned forced labour, high levels of government complicity, criminalisation of victims, deportation of potential victims, and policies that tie migrant workers to their employers.

Table 34
Example of negative implementation indicators, Activity 2.1, Milestone 1

Milestone 1: Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery		
Activity:	2.1.1	Survivor support services are available for some suspected survivors of modern slavery (men, women, non-binary, and children where relevant)
2.1: Emergency support is available for identified survivors	2.1.2	NEGATIVE Suspected survivors are held in shelters against their will and do not have a choice about whether or not to remain in a shelter
	2.1.3	Government contributes to the operational costs of the shelters and there are no significant resource gaps
	2.1.4	Physical health services are provided to survivors of modern slavery
	2.1.5	Mental health services are provided to victims of modern slavery
	2.1.6	NEGATIVE Survivor support services are not available for all survivors of modern slavery
	2.1.7	NEGATIVE No survivors have accessed the services or shelters

Once data had been collected and verified, each indicator was scored on a 0 to 1 scale. On this scale, 0 meant no information was identified or available, or information explicitly demonstrated that the government did not meet any indicators, and 1 meant that the indicator had been met. Negative indicators were scored on a 0 to – 1 scale, where 0 meant no information was identified or available, or information explicitly demonstrated that the government did not meet any indicators, and – 1 meant that the indicator had been met. As an advocacy tool, we have retained our rating where no information found is rated as "0." However, we have identified indicators within the government response database that have consistently had no information found since 2014. In future rounds of data collection, we plan to prioritise testing these indicators to ascertain if no information is available, whereupon we will ultimately remove the indicators for future rounds of data collection. As part of the data collection that informed this assessment of government responses, an indicator that assessed whether evaluations of anti-slavery projects were provided to government officials to inform their future programming was removed from data collection due to consistent gaps in available information (Milestone 1, Indicator 3.3.3).

The data and ratings then underwent a series of quality assurance — first by country, where each country was reviewed against the rating descriptions to determine if ratings were sound. Secondly, following data collection being completed, each indicator was reviewed across all countries to check for consistency in the applied logic. Any final edits were then reviewed, and final edits made in the database.

The data was then imported into STATA, where indicators were grouped into activities and scored. Indicators are organised into 42 activities, which are given a score from – 2 to 2, dependent on the number of indicators met and the nature of those indicators. Activity scores are outlined in Table 35.

The three negative rated activities in Table 36 are subtracted from the overall score as they typically involve systemic issues that significantly undermine the veracity of the entire government response to modern slavery, rather than increasing vulnerability. For example, these systemic issues are represented by indicators relating to corruption and complicity, the use of state-imposed forced labour and when a government has identified no victims of modern slavery, which indicates that any systems in place to support survivors in the country are ineffective.

Activity scores are summed to give a total score for each milestone. Milestone scores are then summed to give a total government response score out of 78.

Each activity is weighted equally so that a country can only obtain a total of 78 points, noting that the final score is presented as a percentage. This does lead to an implicit weighting of milestones, where the more activities in a milestone, the more weight it is given. Table 37 describes the milestone weightings below.

Table 35
Scoring activities

Indicators	Activity	Score
No positive indicators within an activity are met OR for negative rated activities (Table 36) no negative indicators are met	Activity is not achieved	**0**
At least one positive indicator is met, OR all positive indicators are met and at least one negative indicator is met	Activity is partly achieved	**1**
All positive indicators are met, and no negative indicators are met	Activity is achieved	**2**
For negative rated activities only (see Table 36), the negative indicator is met	Undermining the response to modern slavery	**-2**

Table 36

16 Negative indicators, and three negative activities in which the government undermine their own response to modern slavery

Negative rated indicators		Negative rated activities	
M1 1.5.1	There is evidence that victims of modern slavery have NOT been identified between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022.	M1 Activity 1.5	Victims have not been identified
M1 2.1.2	Suspected survivors are held in shelters against their will and do not have a choice about whether or not to remain in a shelter		
M1 2.1.6	Survivor support services are not available for all victims of modern slavery		
M1 2.1.7	No survivors have accessed the services or shelters between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022.		
M1 2.3.5	Foreign survivors are detained for immigration violations		
M1 2.3.6	Foreign survivors are deported for immigration violations		
M2 2.1.3	There is evidence that survivors of modern slavery have been treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under control of criminals		
M2 3.1.2	Units do not have necessary resources to be able to operate effectively		
M2 3.2.4	Judicial punishments are NOT proportionate to severity of the crime and culpability of the offender.		
M4 2.1.5	Certain groups, such as migrant workers or domestic workers, are not allowed to unionise		
M4 2.2.4	There are laws or policies that prevent or make it difficult for workers to leave abusive employers without risk of loss of visa and deportation and/or security deposits		
M4 3.1.3	There are lower primary school enrolment rates for girls		
M4 3.1.9	Homosexuality is criminalised		
M4 3.3.1	Reports of individual officials' complicity in modern slavery cases have not been investigated	M4 Activity 3.3	Official complicity is not investigated
M4 3.4.3	Diplomatic staff are not investigated for alleged complicity in modern slavery cases or abuse of survivors		
M4 4.1.1	State-sanctioned forced labour exists	M4 Activity 4.1	Government places its population, or part of its population, in forced labour

Limitations

Collecting data for 141 indicators across 176 countries is a complicated undertaking. Access to data is limited for all indicators where information is not available publicly or available in languages spoken by the research team. The continued absence of Arabic speakers prevented verification with NGOs in countries where these are the primary languages spoken. Limits also remain in measuring the implementation of a response — while the negative indicators and NGO verification are the first steps in measuring this, more remains to be done in getting at the reality of what is occurring on the ground as opposed to what is reported publicly.

Comparability to previous assessments

The government response assessment is broadly comparable with previous iterations of the GSI (Table 38). However, due to the significant changes in both the method of analysis and the conceptual framework, this is limited to comparisons at the indicator rating level rather than comparisons against milestone or total scores.

In 2023, the method of calculating total scores for milestones was updated to better reflect a government's commitment to completely achieving an activity. Percentage scores for milestones were calculated based on the achievement of activities rather than the number of met indicators as has been done in the past.

Milestone	No. of activities	Milestone score out of	Percentage weight
Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery	12	22	28%
Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery	13	26	34%
Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response	4	8	10%
Risk factors, such as attitudes, social systems and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed	9	14	18%
Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour	4	8	10%
Total	**42**	**78**	**100%**

Table 37
Implicit weighting of each milestone

While the data remains comparable at the indicator level, comparing milestone percentage scores between 2018 and 2023 will be indicative of both changes made to the scoring system and actual government improvement. When seeking government improvement, it is most accurate to compare indicator ratings between 2018 and 2023.

The comprehensive consultations and review of the 2018 conceptual framework led to the addition of 43 indicators and removal of 49 indicators across all five milestones in the conceptual framework. Additionally, some indicators have been moved to different activities in different milestones after a final review of the framework and the shift to activity-based scoring.

Other changes at the indicator level involved edits to the existing indicators rather than removing or introducing new indicators: however, across milestones 1, 2, and 3 only 11 indicators were substantially changed.

No substantial changes were made to indicators in either milestone 4 and 5. As a result of the additions, removals, and edits there was a related change in the categorisation of indicators at the activity level. Most changes were concentrated in Milestone 2 and were largely the result of regrouping the criminal justice indicators into activities responding to specific types of modern slavery or to support particular vulnerable groups. In 2018, all conventions were grouped into one activity and all criminal justice provisions into a separate activity. In 2023, we organised these by type of modern slavery, so all conventions and domestic legislation related to trafficking were grouped into one activity. We also split out the implementation in legislation versus implementation in practice related to access to justice mechanisms.

	Country	2023 score	2018 score in 2023 framework
Most action in 2023	United Kingdom	68	69
	Australia	67	68
	Netherlands	67	67
	Portugal	67	65
	United States	67	67
	Ireland	63	63
	Norway	63	67
	Spain	63	59
	Sweden	63	64
Least action in 2023	North Korea	-3	-1
	Eritrea	5	5
	Iran	8	8
	Libya	10	12
	Somalia	18	17

Table 38
2018 rankings when considered under the 2023 framework

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 1:	**Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery**
Outcome 1:	**Increase (and eventual decrease) in reported cases of modern slavery**

	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
Activity 1.1		**The public knows what modern slavery is and how to report it**	
	1.1.1	National campaigns provide information to members of the public on how to report and identify victims	Campaigns on how to identify potential victims, such as promotion of a hotline, website, or text messaging service OR campaign on how to report potential victims, such as distributing indicators of modern slavery AND must be distributed to the public at the NATIONAL level AND distribution has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. NOT training for government officials, NGOs, embassy staff, health and social workers. NOT general awareness campaigns that do not mention hotline or indicators of trafficking. NOT information is distributed to at-risk or specific populations or geographic locations, such as migrant workers or at-risk communities. This is covered under M4, 1.2.1.
	1.1.2	These campaigns are distributed systematically and at regular intervals (as distinct from one-off, isolated)	If yes to M1, 1.1.1, the campaign or information has been distributed at least twice or annually since 15 February 2014 OR the campaign or information is promoted regularly through social media AND there is evidence that this online promotion has been regularly updated (at least once since 15 February 2019 (please refer to dates of Facebook posts, tweets, etc.). If no to M1, 1.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
	1.1.3	There has been an increase in reported cases of modern slavery from the public	If yes to M1, 1.1.1, there has been an increase in public reports of modern slavery cases in recent years AND this increase in reports is directly related to the campaign OR has occurred since the campaign has been distributed to the general public AND this must have occurred since 15 February 2014. If no to M1, 1.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
Activity 1.2		**Comprehensive reporting mechanisms operate effectively**	
	1.2.1	There is a reporting mechanism, such as a hotline	Reporting mechanism exists where modern slavery crimes can be reported (either in isolation or as part of a larger phone or web service). This includes text messaging, an online form, or a phone hotline AND this/these reporting mechanism/s must have been operational at some point between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT a centralised police number, unless there are trained operators or specific sub-unit for reporting modern slavery crimes. NOT hotlines that provide information to migrants before they migrate overseas. NOT hotlines providing legal advice. If there is one hotline covering one population (such as a trafficking hotline for women and girls) OR there are multiple operating hotlines covering different populations, please rate as indicator met.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 1.2	Comprehensive reporting mechanisms operate effectively		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.2.2	Reporting mechanism is available for men, women, and children	If yes to M1, 1.2.1, this reporting mechanism is available for men, women, and children to report cases of modern slavery OR there are separate hotlines that cover men, women, and children. Please refer to the most relevant reporting mechanism identified in M1, 1.2.1 for indicators M1, 1.2.2 through 1.2.5. For example, a modern slavery or trafficking hotline would be most relevant, followed by multiple hotlines that cover all sub-populations (e.g., hotline for women and girls, separate hotline for men and boys). If multiple relevant hotlines exist covering all sub-populations, please rate as indicator met. If some populations are not covered (e.g., a single hotline exists where women and girls can report, but there is nowhere for men or boys to report exploitation), rate as indicator not met. If it is not specified which sub-populations are covered, assume all are covered and rate as indicator met. This/these reporting mechanism/s must have been operational at some point between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 1.2.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
	1.2.3	Reporting mechanism is free of charge to access	If yes to M1, 1.2.1, this reporting mechanism is free to access. Please refer to the most relevant reporting mechanism identified in M1, 1.2.1 for indicators M1, 1.2.2 through 1.2.5. For example, a modern slavery or trafficking hotline would be most relevant, followed by multiple hotlines that cover all sub-populations (e.g., hotline for women and girls, separate hotline for men and boys). If multiple relevant hotlines exist covering different populations and all are free of charge, please rate as indicator met. If some of the available and relevant hotlines are not free, please rate as indicator not met. If it is unclear that the hotline/s is/are free, then rate as indicator not met. NOT the website or reporting form is available online (would still require internet connection to access it). This/these reporting mechanism/s must have been operational at some point between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 1.2.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1, and must be rated as 0.
	1.2.4	Reporting mechanism operates 24/7	If yes to M1, 1.2.1, this reporting mechanism operates 24/7. Please refer to the most relevant reporting mechanism identified in M1, 1.2.1 for indicators M1, 1.2.2 through 1.2.5. For example, a modern slavery or trafficking hotline would be most relevant, followed by multiple hotlines that cover all sub-populations (e.g., hotline for women and girls, separate hotline for men and boys). If multiple relevant hotlines exist covering different populations and all are available 24/7, please rate as indicator met. If some of the available and relevant hotlines are not available 24/7, please rate as indicator not met. If the hotline refers to “24 hours a day” but it is unclear if this is 7 days a week, please rate as indicator met. If it is unclear that the hotline/s is/are available 24 hours a day OR 7 days a week, then rate as indicator not met. This/these reporting mechanism/s must have been operational at some point between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 1.2.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1, and must be rated as 0.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 1 (cont.)	**Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery**
Outcome 1:	**Increase (and eventual decrease) in reported cases of modern slavery**

Activity 1.2	**Comprehensive reporting mechanisms operate effectively**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.2.5	The reporting mechanism operates in multiple languages or has capacity to provide immediate access to translators	If yes to M1, 1.2.1, this reporting mechanism operates in multiple languages, or brings in translators as necessary. Please refer to the most relevant reporting mechanism identified in M1, 1.2.1 for indicators M1, 1.2.2 through 1.2.5. For example, a modern slavery or trafficking hotline would be most relevant, followed by multiple hotlines that cover all sub-populations (e.g., hotline for women and girls, separate hotline for men and boys). If relevant multiple hotlines exist covering different populations and all are available in multiple languages, please rate as indicator met. If some of the available and relevant hotlines are not available in multiple languages, please rate as indicator not met. "Multiple languages" means the national language + at least one other language. This/these reporting mechanism/s must have been operational at some point between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 1.2.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1, and must be rated as 0.
Activity 1.3	**Front-line police know what modern slavery is and how to identify victims**		
	1.3.1	Training on basic legal frameworks and victim identification has been carried out for front-line "general duties" police	Training for front-line police has taken place on basic legal frameworks surrounding modern slavery AND training has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Definition of training includes formal in-person training, as part of broader curriculum on human rights or other training programs, or part of an online training program. Training can be provided by International Organisations (IOs)/ International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs)/ Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT training manuals have been developed by INGOs or NGOs. NOT booklets with indicators of trafficking have been handed out to police. NOT training for immigration, border guards, or labour inspectors.
	1.3.2	Training on victim identification is provided as part of basic training for new police recruits	Training on modern slavery is provided as part of basic training for new police recruits. If the source mentions that modern slavery training takes place as part of the academy training for all police officers OR that all new police officers or new recruits receive training AND there is evidence this has occurred since 15 February 2014, please rate as indicator met. NOT training on modern slavery is provided to some police officers, but it's not clear if this is for all new recruits or provided as part of academic training. This would mean that the indicator is not met.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 1.4	First responders know what modern slavery is and how to identify victims		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.4.1	Training on how to identify victims of modern slavery is provided to officials with front-line regulatory bodies whose personnel are likely to be "first responders"	Personnel at regulatory bodies have received training on modern slavery, which may include indicators of modern slavery and how to refer individuals AND training is formal face-to-face or through online modules AND training is provided to one or more of the following types of personnel: border guards, immigration officials, labour inspectors AND training has been provided at least once since 15 February 2014. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT leaflets have been distributed to labour inspectors or posters have been put up in airports on how to identify/report victims.
	1.4.2	Training on how to identify victims of modern slavery is provided to non-regulatory workers likely to be "first responders"	Non-regulatory bodies have received training on modern slavery, which may include indicators of modern slavery and how to refer individuals AND training is formal face-to-face or through online modules AND training is provided to one or more of the following: teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, tourism sector workers (including private tourism operators) AND training has been provided at least once since 15 February 2014. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT leaflets on how to identify/report victims have been distributed to tour guides or posters put up in healthcare facilities.
	1.4.3	Training for first responders is delivered systematically and at regular intervals (as distinct from one-off, isolated)	If yes to M1, 1.4.1 OR 1.4.2, and training is delivered regularly (defined as at least twice in the last five years) to at least one of the members of the above groups (labour inspectors, border guards, immigration officials, doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, tourism sector workers) since 15 February 2014 OR if yes to M1, 1.4.1 AND 1.4.2, and training is delivered at least twice in the last five years to BOTH of these groups. NOT training has been delivered to each of these groups once since 15 February 2014. If no to M1, 1.4.1 AND 1.4.2, then this indicator cannot be rated as 1, and must be rated as 0.
Activity 1.5	**NEGATIVE Victims have not been identified**		
	1.5.1	NEGATIVE There is evidence that victims of modern slavery have NOT been identified	Government authorities or officials OR NGOs or international organisations have not identified any victims of modern slavery between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. This indicator is met only when victims have been identified during the reporting period, regardless of who has identified them. Note: This indicator is not dependent on training provided under M1, 1.3.1, M1, 1.4.1, or M1, 1.4.2.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 1 (cont.)	**Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery**
Outcome 2:	**Survivors are provided with support to help break the cycle of vulnerability**
Activity 2.1	**Emergency support is available for identified survivors**

2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
2.1.1	Survivor support services are available for some suspected survivors of modern slavery (men, women, non-binary, and children where relevant)	Any kind of survivor support service is available for men, women, non-binary individuals or children AND services must be government run, or funded by government, or provided with in-kind support from the government AND these services are available since 15 February 2019. NOT evidence that services are available but have not been used. This indicator is looking at availability of services, not use. NOT INGOs run a shelter without any government support. (Support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support.)
2.1.2	NEGATIVE Suspected survivors are held in shelters against their will and do not have a choice about whether or not to remain in a shelter	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, adult survivors are unable to leave a shelter or safe house when they wish (or are unable to leave without a chaperone). Children must also be able to leave when they wish but should be accompanied by a chaperone. If evidence that survivors (adults and children) are detained against their will or are unable to leave unaccompanied (adults) or with a chaperone (children) AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as -1 and can only be scored as 0.
2.1.3	Government contributes to the operational costs of the shelters and there are no significant resource gaps	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, government provides financial support to the shelters. Support defined as in-kind or monetary support (not just permission) AND services must be operational between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT INGO funds and runs a shelter or safe house without any government support. If government provides some resources, but there are significant gaps in financial resourcing not covered by governments or INGOs, then please rate as indicator not met. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as 1, and must be scored as 0.
2.1.4	Physical health services are provided to survivors of modern slavery	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, there is evidence of some physical health support for survivors of modern slavery AND services must be operational between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Synonyms for physical health support would include medical support. If explicit groups are excluded (e.g., there are no physical health services for men), then please rate as not met. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as 1, and must be scored as 0.
2.1.5	Mental health services are provided to survivors of modern slavery	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, there is evidence of some mental health support for survivors of modern slavery AND services must be operational between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Synonyms for mental health support would include counselling and psychological support. If explicit groups are excluded, e.g. there are no mental health services for men, then please rate as not met. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as 1, and must be scored as 0.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 2.1	Emergency support is available for identified survivors		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.1.6	NEGATIVE Survivor support services are not available for all survivors of modern slavery	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, there are gaps in existing services. There have been identified modern slavery cases of men, women, non-binary individuals, children, or other groups such as foreign survivors, forced labour survivors, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. AND there are NO specific shelters or services for them OR evidence that certain groups of survivors have been turned away from shelters or services AND this has also occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT services are not available for a particular group, but no cases within that group were identified. Please specify which groups have been excluded. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as -1, and must be scored as 0.
	2.1.7	NEGATIVE No survivors have accessed the services or shelters	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, despite availability of services, survivors have not accessed them AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Examples include cases where facilities exist but survivors are not being transferred to these facilities. If no to M1, 2.1.1, this indicator cannot be scored as -1, and must be scored as 0.
Activity 2.2	**Survivor-centred determined longer-term support is available for all identified survivors**		
	2.2.1	Longer-term financial support is available for survivors	Survivors are provided with any form of longer-term financial support, including receipt of social welfare or longer-term housing NOT long-term stays in shelters AND there is evidence that these are available between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT provision of emergency shelters under M1, 2.1.1. Note: This indicator is not dependent on M1, 2.1.1
	2.2.2	Survivors are able to access education or employment	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, adult survivors are provided with long-term rehabilitation support beyond financial support. This is defined as access to employment, job training, employability support (jobs, skills, or confidence building) or education support. Please rate as indicator met if there is any evidence of these programs AND these are available between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT education is available for children (see M1, 2.4.1 below). Education and/or employment services must be government-run, or funded by government, or provided with in-kind support government. If access to education and/or employment is restricted to some survivors (e.g., on the basis of gender, migration status, or ethnicity), the indicator is not met.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 1 (cont.)	**Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery**		
Outcome 2:	**Survivors are provided with support to help break the cycle of vulnerability**		
Activity 2.2	**Survivor-centred determined longer-term support is available for all identified survivors**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.2.3	Survivors have the right to information regarding their situations and their rights, including protection mechanisms	Legislation includes provisions that survivors are entitled to information regarding their situation and rights, including protection mechanisms such as seeking asylum, other available services, and the processes of family reunification and repatriation. NOT evidence that this is given in practice, but no evidence in legislation. NOT potential survivors are given information when arrested. NOT survivors are given information about their court case (covered under M2, 2.1.1).
	2.2.4	Survivors have the right to confidentiality	Legislation includes provisions that survivors have the right to confidentiality, including that the state has protected the privacy and identity of survivors, including ensuring that the name, address, and all other information that could lead to the identification of a survivor shall not be revealed to the media or otherwise to the public. NOT survivors don't have the right to confidentiality. NOT legislation that excludes some survivors from the right to confidentiality.
Activity 2.3	**Visas provide protection and are in the best interests of the survivor**		
	2.3.1	Reflection periods exist in law for survivors	Reflection periods are available for survivors of modern slavery so that they might access support while they decide if they want to remain in the country or participate in a court case AND reflection periods are minimum 30 days AND they are available to all survivors. NOT there is a reflection period, but no mention of a minimum 30-day period OR the reflection period is less than 30 days. NOT the source mentions that reflection periods are available and at least 30 days but they exclude foreign survivors or other groups.
	2.3.2	Visas are in place to address the migration situation of survivors who want to remain or be resettled	Visas are in place to address the migration situation of survivors who want to remain in the country. This indicator is met if visas are available so that foreign survivors can receive support either in-country or in a third country after a reflection period has expired AND these are available between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. These visas include any type of longer-term visas of at least one year, or shorter but renewable visas, or a visa permits up to at least one year when renewed. NOT visas are temporary, of less than a year, not renewable and less than a year, or renewable but not up to one year. NOT visas are in place, but they exclude some groups or there are restrictions. Note: This indicator is not dependent on M1, 2.1.1.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 2.3	Visas provide protection and are in the best interests of the survivor		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.3.3	Foreign survivors can access visas that allow them to work	If yes to M1, 2.3.2, these visas allow foreign survivors to work. This could be while they are waiting for the outcome of the court process, or while they are participating in survivor assistance programs, such as a National Referral Mechanism. If no to M1, 2.3.2, this indicator cannot be scored as 1, and must be scored as 0.
	2.3.4	Visas to stay in the country are not dependent on survivor participation in the court process	If yes to M1, 2.3.2, these visas are not tied to a survivor's participation in the court process or court case. For example, visas are awarded to trafficking survivors on the basis of humanitarian or personal reasons, not because they have agreed to participate in the court process. NOT visas are available to survivors only while OR if they participate in the criminal process. If no to M1, 2.3.2, this indicator cannot be scored as 1, and must be scored as 0.
	2.3.5	NEGATIVE Foreign survivors are detained for immigration violations	Foreign survivors are detained in detention facilities for immigration violations. Can include instances where survivors are detained for a breach of visa conditions AND this occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT foreign survivors are deported for immigration violations. This is covered under M1, 2.3.6. Note: If survivors are arrested for crimes committed while exploited, please refer to M2, 2.1.4.
	2.3.6	NEGATIVE Foreign survivors are deported for immigration violations	Foreign survivors are deported for immigration violations. Can include instances where foreign survivors are deported to countries of origin without access to assistance AND this occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT foreign survivors are detained for immigration violations. This is covered under M1, 2.3.5. Note: if survivors are arrested for crimes committed while enslaved, please refer to M2, 2.1.4.
Activity 2.4	**Special protections for child survivors are available**		
	2.4.1	Specialised support services exist for children	Children have specialised services, or are given some kind of special support NOT including support in the criminal justice system AND these are available between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Specialised child services can include: when the age of the child is uncertain, authorities presume the survivor to be a child; child survivors are appointed a guardian who supports their recovery; those who provide support services to child survivors have received specialist training. NOT children are placed in correctional facilities, boarding schools, or other non-specialised institutions.
	2.4.2	Survivors are assisted to make contact with their family or contact person of choice	Survivors are assisted by the government to make contact with families OR there is a family reunification program AND this is operating between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT family reunification program exists but is not currently funded. NOT INGOs operate a family reunification program without government support. If there is evidence of family reunification in legislation and there is no evidence of it not operating, then indicator met.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 1 (cont.)	**Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery**		
Outcome 2:	**Survivors are provided with support to help break the cycle of vulnerability**		
Activity 2.5	**Services are continually improved**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.5.1	Training has been carried out for all staff providing direct survivor assistance services	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, there is evidence of training for those who provide direct survivor support services on how to assist survivors of modern slavery, and can include trauma informed care, do no harm principles, individualised treatment and care, comprehensive care, self-determination and participation, non-discrimination, confidentiality and right to privacy AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT training is provided by unskilled volunteers. NOT general modern slavery training is provided to social workers. Direct survivor assistance services means those services provided by workers who have regular contact with survivors post-identification. It can include shelter workers, case managers, doctors, and psychologists. If no to M1, 2.1.1, it is not possible to score 1 on this indicator and it must be rated as 0.
	2.5.2	Direct survivor assistance services have been evaluated	If yes to M1, 2.1.1, evidence that formal reporting or evaluation of direct survivor support services has been undertaken AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Evaluation (internal or external) is defined as an assessment of the current services against the service objectives and incorporating client feedback. NOT a description of the program or services provided. NOT ad hoc inspections without a clear sense of follow up activities. NOT evaluations of the National Action Plan – this is covered under M3, 2.1.1. If no to M1, 2.1.1, it is not possible to score 1 on this indicator and it must be rated as 0.
Outcome 3:	**Government coordinates the identification and referral of survivors**		
Activity 3.1	**Identification guidelines are used by all first responders**		
	3.1.1	The government has clear national guidelines for identifying and screening victims for all first responders	National general guidelines exist for all first responders to identify AND screen victims AND these guidelines exist as of 31 August 2022. First responders are defined as: police, immigration, border patrol, labour inspectors, NGOs, teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and tourism industry workers. General guidelines should exist at the national level for all responders. NOT police have their own guidelines or standard operating procedures. NOT multiple guidelines exist for each type of first responder. NOT guidelines have been distributed. It is sufficient that the guidelines exist to meet the indicator. Distribution is covered under M1, 3.1.4.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 3.1	Identification guidelines are used by all first responders		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.1.2	The guidelines make provision for a category of "presumed victims" who can be provided with services until a formal determination is made	If yes to M1, 3.1.1, the national guidelines include provisions so victims who have not yet been assessed to be survivors of modern slavery can still receive services. Examples include "presumed" categories within guidelines or "informal" assistance given to victims while determination is made. If no to M1, 3.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
	3.1.3	The guidelines clearly set out which organisations have the authority to identify victims of modern slavery	If yes to M1, 3.1.1, the national guidelines outline which organisations can or cannot formally identify victims of modern slavery. Examples include a list of approved agencies and NGOs that can identify and certify that individuals are survivors of modern slavery. If no to M1, 3.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
	3.1.4	The government has distributed guidelines for identifying and screening victims to all first responders	If yes to M1, 3.1.1, the national guidelines have been distributed to all first responders AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. First responders are defined as: police, immigration, border patrol, labour inspectors, NGOs, teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and the tourism industry. If no to M1, 3.1.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.
Activity 3.2	**National Referral Mechanism is operating effectively**		
	3.2.1	A "National Referral Mechanism" brings together government and civil society to ensure survivors are being referred to services	There is a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for survivors of modern slavery AND the NRM includes government and NGOs AND it is operating during the period between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. A National Referral Mechanism is a group of approved NGOs and government agencies that refers survivors to services at the national level. NOT evidence that survivors have been referred to services without a national system in place.
	3.2.2	There is evidence that survivors are being referred to services using the National Referral Mechanism	If yes to M1, 3.2.1, there is evidence that survivors are referred through the National Referral Mechanism AND this has happened at least once between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. If no to M1, 3.2.1, this indicator cannot be rated as 1 and must be rated as 0.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 2:	Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery		
Activity 1.1	**Slavery is effectively criminalised**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.1.1	Slavery Convention, 1926	Ratification or succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the 1926 Slavery Convention as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed the 1926 Slavery Convention, WITHOUT accession (a), succession (d), or ratification.
	1.1.2	Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956	Ratification, succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery 1956, WITHOUT ratification, or succession (d), or accession (a). ratification, or succession (d).
	1.1.3	Slavery is criminalised	Slavery is criminalised as a distinct crime. The offence of slavery must include a situation in which the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. Slavery may be listed as a standalone crime in the penal or criminal code or in trafficking-specific legislation or in another act. NOT slavery is prohibited in the Constitution.
Activity 1.2	**Trafficking is effectively criminalised**		
	1.2.1	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	Ratification, acceptance [denoted by an (A)], accession [denoted by an (a)], or succession [denoted by a (d)] of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000 as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, WITHOUT ratification, Acceptance (A), accession (a), or succession (d).
	1.2.2	Human trafficking is criminalised	Human trafficking is listed as a standalone article in the penal code or criminal code OR human trafficking is criminalised under a distinct piece of legislation AND within either the penal code or distinct legislation human trafficking does not require movement of individuals AND the legislation covers men, women, and children. Movement may include cross-border/transnational movement, or internal movement such as movement from a rural to urban location. Definition of trafficking includes action, means, and purpose. Trafficking in persons shall require action (e.g., recruitment, transportation, transfer, or harbouring), means (e.g., by the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, or fraud), and purpose (e.g., the purpose of exploitation). For children, trafficking shall not require the means component and this is reflected in legislation.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 1.3	Forced labour is effectively criminalised	
2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
1.3.1	ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957 (No. 105)	Status must be "In Force" for the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) AND "In Force" as of 31 August 2022. NOT "In force" for the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).
1.3.2	Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930	Status must be "In Force" for the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 AND "In Force" as of 31 August 2022.
1.3.3	ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	Status must be "In Force" for the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) AND "In Force" as of 31 August 2022. NOT "In Force" for the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).
1.3.4	Forced labour is criminalised	Forced labour is criminalised as a distinct crime. Forced or compulsory labour means 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. Does not include compulsory military service, work which forms part of the normal civic obligations of the citizen, or work performed in cases of emergency (such as war, fire, famine, or flood). The offence of forced labour must include (1) work performed under the menace of any penalty; (2) work for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. These two components must be present in order for the indicator to have been met. Forced labour may be listed as a standalone crime in the penal or criminal code or in trafficking-specific legislation or in another act.
Activity 1.4	**Forced marriage is effectively criminalised**	
1.4.1	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964	Ratification, succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964, as of 31 August 2022. NOT the country has signed the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964, WITHOUT accession (a), ratification, or succession (d).
1.4.2	Forced marriage is criminalised	Forced marriage is criminalised as a distinct crime, in the penal or criminal code, trafficking legislation, or other act. NOT the legal age of marriage is set at 18. If kidnapping is required to be present for the crime of forced marriage to occur, this is indicator not met.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 2 (cont.)	**Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery**		
Activity 1.5	**Exploitation of children is effectively criminalised**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.5.1	ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	Status must be "In Force" for the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) AND "In Force" as of 31 August 2022.
	1.5.2	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000	Ratification, succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000, as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000, WITHOUT accession (a), ratification, or succession (d).
	1.5.3	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000	Ratification, succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000, as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000, WITHOUT accession (a), ratification, or succession (d).
	1.5.4	Use of children in armed conflict is criminalised	Criminal code or standalone legislation specifically criminalises use of children in armed conflict. NOT where the age of recruitment is 18, but there is no criminalisation of the use of children in armed forces. Must cover use of children in state (national army) and armed groups (non-state armed groups).
	1.5.5	Child commercial sexual exploitation is criminalised	The penal or criminal code or trafficking legislation includes standalone provisions that it is an offence to sell/force a child into prostitution / commercial sexual exploitation AND to purchase sexual acts with a child. NOT when selling a child is criminalised AND child sex abuse is criminalised (second component must criminalise purchase of sexual acts with a child).
Activity 1.6	**Exploitation of migrants is effectively criminalised**		
	1.6.1	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990	Ratification, succession [denoted by a (d)] or accession [denoted by an (a)] of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990, as of 31 August 2022. NOT signed or signed to succeed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990, WITHOUT accession (a), ratification, or succession (d).
	1.6.2	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000	Ratification, acceptance [denoted by an (A)], approval [denoted by an (AA)], accession [denoted by an (a)], or succession [denoted by a (d)] of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000 as of 31 August 2022. NOT the country has signed the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000, WITHOUT ratification, acceptance (A), approval (AA), accession (a), or succession (d).

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 1.7	Exploitation of women is effectively criminalised		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.7.1	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981	Ratification, accession [denoted by an (a)], or succession [denoted by a (d)] of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981, as of 31 August 2022. NOT the country has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981, WITHOUT ratification, accession (a), or succession (d).
	1.7.2	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Ratification, accession [denoted by an (a)], or succession [denoted by a (d)] of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981, as of 31 August 2022. NOT the country has signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981 WITHOUT ratification, accession (a), or succession (d).
	1.7.3	ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	Status must be "In Force" for the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) AND "In Force" as of 31 August 2022.
Activity 2.1	**Survivors are able to participate in the criminal justice system as victims**		
	2.1.1	National laws allow victims to participate in the legal system regardless of their role as a witness	National laws allow victims to participate in the legal system regardless of their role as a witness. This includes: allowing victims to give evidence (without being called as a witness), allowing victims to inspect and add documents to the file, giving the victim information regarding the court case, OR allowing for the admission of victim impact statements. NOT there is evidence or a general statement that victims participate in the criminal justice process as witnesses. Relevant national laws include the criminal procedure code, or criminal sentencing acts.
	2.1.2	Law recognises that survivors should not be treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under control of criminals	National laws recognise survivors are not criminals for all conduct during their exploitation AND this must refer to modern slavery crimes, not general provisions in legislation. Modern slavery crimes are defined as human trafficking, forced labour, slavery, forced marriage, and children in armed conflict. NOT survivors are protected from criminalisation only for certain crimes (e.g., prostitution or immigration offences). NOT there is no evidence that survivors have been criminalised.
	2.1.3	NEGATIVE There is evidence that survivors of modern slavery have been treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under control of criminals	There is definitive or concrete evidence that survivors have been arrested for crimes committed while under the control of the person exploiting them AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT foreign nationals have been deported OR detained for immigration offences (no visa, overstaying visa, etc.). This is covered under M1, 2.3.5 and 2.3.6. Examples would be survivors have been arrested on prostitution charges or arrested for drug production. If survivors are arrested and released as soon as it is realised that they are survivors, please rate as indicator not met. If there is evidence those arrested MAY be survivors, please rate as indicator not met.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 2 (cont.)	**Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery**	
Activity 2.2	**Victim-witnesses are protected in legislation**	
2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
2.2.1	Free legal services for survivors of modern slavery exist in legislation	Any type of free legal services or advice exists in legislation, including free legal advice and free legal representation AND these are either available for, or specific to, victims of modern slavery. NOT legal services are in legislation, but are not free. NOT legal services are available, or offered by NGOs, but not specified in legislation. This is covered under M2, 2.3.1. NOT free legal services are available only for citizens, not foreign survivors or other groups. NOT free legal services are available for certain types of crime (such as violent crime) and modern slavery is not specified.
2.2.2	Witness and victim protection mechanisms exist in legislation to ensure that neither witnesses nor victims are intimidated, nor interfered with INSIDE the courtroom	Witness and victim protection mechanisms exist in legislation so that survivors are not intimidated or interfered with INSIDE the courtroom Victim protection mechanisms INSIDE the courtroom refers to provision of video testimony, not cross-examining survivors, and any other protection mechanisms to prevent survivors coming into contact with perpetrators. NOT applicable outside the courtroom (see M2, 2.2.3.). NOT these exist in practice, but not in legislation. This is covered under M2, 2.3.2.
Activity 2.2	**Victim-witnesses are protected in legislation**	
2.2.3	Witness and victim protection mechanisms exist in legislation to ensure that neither witnesses nor victims are intimidated nor interfered with OUTSIDE the courtroom	Witness and victim protection mechanisms exist in legislation so that survivors are not intimidated or interfered with OUTSIDE the courtroom. Witness and victim protection mechanisms OUTSIDE the courtroom include an official witness protection program where individuals are provided with security, new identities, and relocation support, or protection whereby the survivor's identity is not revealed to the public. NOT applicable inside the courtroom (see M2, 2.2.2.). NOT these exist in practice, but not in legislation. This is covered under M2, 2.3.3.
2.2.4	The legal framework supports compensation or restitution for survivors of modern slavery from perpetrators	The legal framework allows survivors of modern slavery to receive compensation for damages incurred as a result of exploitation OR the legal framework allows survivors of modern slavery to receive restitution for damages incurred as a result of exploitation. Compensation is when a court orders the defendant (perpetrator) to pay the claimant (victim) for their loss. Restitution is when a court orders the defendant (perpetrator) to give up their gains to the claimant (victim). When the compensation and/or restitution is available only for victims of violent crimes, please mark as indicator not met, as this may exclude some survivors of modern slavery. NOT evidence that compensation and/or restitution has been given in practice, but no evidence found in legislation. This is covered under M2, 2.3.4. Includes the ability to file a civil suit against the perpetrator.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 2.3	Victim-witnesses are able to access justice in practice		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.3.1	Free legal services for survivors of modern slavery are available in practice	Any type of free legal services or advice has been provided in practice, including free legal advice and free legal representation AND these are either specific to survivors of modern slavery OR survivors of modern slavery can access broader legal advice, which is available for all victims of crime AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022 NOT legal services are available, but not free. NOT free legal services are available only for citizens, not foreign survivors or other groups. Free legal services can be offered by governments or IOs/NGOs. If there is any evidence that free legal services exist in practice, please rate as indicator met. If there is no evidence they are or are not being used, please rate as no information found. If there is evidence that free legal services are not used or are poorly implemented, please rate as indicator not met. If free legal services exist in legislation, please move information to M2, 2.2.1.
	2.3.2	Witness and victim protection mechanisms are used in practice to ensure that neither witnesses nor victims are intimidated nor interfered with INSIDE the courtroom	Government operated or supported witness and victim protection mechanisms are used in practice so that survivors are not intimidated or interfered with INSIDE the courtroom AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Victim protection mechanisms inside the courtroom refers to provision of video testimony, victims are not cross-examined, and victims are protected from perpetrators. Government operated or supported is defined as government run or funded by government or provided with in-kind support from the government. NOT applicable outside the courtroom (see M2, 2.3.3.). If there is any evidence that witness protection mechanisms are used in practice, please rate as indicator met. If there is no evidence of these being used or not being used, please rate as information not found. If there is evidence that these are not used or are poorly implemented, please rate as indicator not met. If witness protection mechanisms INSIDE the courtroom exist in legislation, please move information to M2, 2.2.2.
	2.3.3	Witness and victim protection mechanisms are used in practice to ensure that neither witnesses nor victims are intimidated nor interfered with OUTSIDE the courtroom	Government operated or supported witness and victim protection mechanisms are used in practice so that survivors are not intimidated or interfered with OUTSIDE the courtroom AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Witness and victim protection mechanisms include an official witness protection program where individuals are provided with security, new identities, and relocation support, or protection whereby the victim's identity is not revealed to the public. Government operated or supported is defined as government run or funded by government or provided with in-kind support from the government. NOT applicable inside the courtroom (see M2, 2.3.2.). If witness protection mechanisms are used in practice, please rate as indictor met. If there is no evidence of these being used or not being used, please rate as information not found. If there is evidence they are not used or are poorly implemented, please rate as indicator not met. If witness protection mechanisms OUTSIDE the courtroom exist in legislation, please move information to M2, 2.2.3

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 2 (cont.)	Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery		
Activity 2.3	**Victim-witnesses are able to access justice in practice**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.3.4	Modern slavery survivors have been awarded compensation or restitution from perpetrators	There is evidence survivors of modern slavery receive compensation for damages incurred as a result of exploitation OR there is evidence of modern slavery survivors receiving restitution for damages incurred as a result of exploitation AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Compensation is when a court orders the defendant (perpetrator) to pay the claimant (victim) for their loss. Restitution is when a court orders the defendant (perpetrator) to give up his/her gains to the claimant (victim). If there is evidence of compensation and/or restitution being awarded to survivors of modern slavery, please rate as indicator met. Please also include details of the award. If there is no evidence of compensation being awarded or not awarded, please rate as information not found. If compensation or restitution exists in legislation, move information to M2, 2.2.4.
Activity 2.4	**Special procedures for children are available in legislation and in practice in the criminal justice system**		
	2.4.1	Legislation exists detailing that children shall be questioned in a child friendly manner	The legal framework allows child survivors to be questioned by police, the judiciary, and other authorities in a child friendly manner. Child friendly questioning respects the child's dignity and capacity. It includes special safeguards to avoid any thoroughly abusive interrogation process for children. For example, where legislation includes: - Only specially trained members of the law enforcement authorities shall question child survivors. - Child survivors are questioned by officers of the same sex, except when there is cultural evidence that this would not be in the best interests of the child. - Guardians shall be present when a child is interviewed about their experience. A child is defined as under 18 years old. Any of these examples when described in legislation would be indicator met. Any evidence that these are used ONLY in practice please rate as indicator not met.
	2.4.2	Legislation exists that allows child testimony to be videotaped or to provide evidence remotely	The legal framework allows for child testimony to be videotaped and presented in the courtroom as an official piece of evidence. If the criminal procedure code, trafficking legislation, or Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) report describes legislation that allows children or minors to present evidence via videotape, or to act as a witness via video, this would be indicator met. A child is defined as under 18 years old. If no evidence in legislation, this would be indicator not met. If there is evidence of this being used in practice, but no evidence in legislation, please rate as indicator not met.
Activity 3.1	**Specialised police units are able to investigate modern slavery crimes**		
	3.1.1	Specialised law enforcement units exist	There is a specialised law enforcement unit or a sub-unit or team within the law enforcement structure that has specialised mandate to conduct investigations into modern slavery OR provide specialist support for colleagues AND this unit has been in operation at any point since 15 February 2014. NOT local level anti-trafficking coordination bodies that are outside the police.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 3.1	**Specialised police units are able to investigate modern slavery crimes**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.1.2	NEGATIVE Units do not have necessary resources to be able to operate effectively	If yes to M2, 3.1.1, these units, sub-units, or teams do not have funding, sufficient budget, or operational equipment, or are understaffed. This has had an impact on their ability to function effectively AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022.
Activity 3.2	**Increased number of quality prosecutions**		
	3.2.1	Training is provided to the judiciary	Training for the judiciary has taken place on modern slavery and related legislation, victim needs in the courtroom, basic international legal standards in modern slavery cases, trends in modern slavery in the country, or victim profiles. AND this training has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Definition of training includes formal in-person training or an online training program as part of broader curriculum on human rights or other training programs. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). The judiciary includes judges and magistrates. NOT training manuals have been developed by INGOs or NGOs. NOT booklets with description of modern slavery laws have been handed out to judiciary.
	3.2.2	Training is provided to prosecutors	Training for prosecutors has taken place on modern slavery and related legislation, victim needs in the courtroom, basic international legal standards in modern slavery cases, trends in modern slavery in the country, or victim profiles AND this training has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Definition of training includes formal in-person training or an online training program as part of broader curriculum on human rights or other training programs. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT training manuals have been developed by INGOs or NGOs. NOT booklets with description of modern slavery laws have been handed out to prosecutors.
	3.2.3	Training is systematic and recurrent (as distinct from one-off, isolated)	If yes to M2, 3.2.1 OR 3.2.2, training is delivered at least twice in the last five years to either the judiciary OR prosecutors OR if yes to M2, 3.2.1 AND 3.2.2 and training is delivered at least twice in the last five years to BOTH of these groups AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014. Please rate as indicator not met if training has been delivered to each of these groups only once since 15 February 2014. If no to M2, 3.2.1 AND 3.2.2, then this indicator cannot be rated as 1, and must be rated as 0.
	3.2.4	NEGATIVE Judicial punishments are NOT proportionate to severity of the crime and culpability of the offender	Judicial punishments are either too lenient or too harsh for offenders AND these punishments have been handed out during 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Examples of too lenient include giving of fines, suspended sentences, and sentences that are less than the prescribed minimum. Examples of too harsh are corporal punishment and capital punishment.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 3:	**Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response**
Outcome 1:	**Responses to modern slavery are coordinated and held to account at the national level**
Activity 1.1	**National mechanisms exist to coordinate the response**

2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
1.1.1	National coordination body exists	National coordination body on any OR all forms of modern slavery (trafficking, slavery, forced labour, children in armed conflict) exists AND this body coordinates the whole-of-government response to modern slavery. It can consist of solely government representatives OR government AND NGOs or other groups such as trade unions, survivors, or other civil society groups. If no government representatives are present (e.g., it consists solely of civil society representatives), then indicator not met. NOT a National Action Plan. NOT a group or body that refers survivors to services — this is covered under M1, 3.2.1.
1.1.2	Survivors are included in the government response	Survivors are included in the government response through an advisory council or through other forms of consultation on national policy specifically with survivor groups. Evidence of a meeting of a survivor advisory council or group OR evidence of meeting of national task force or coordination body where a survivor is represented AND this group or meeting occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022.
1.1.3	The national coordination body meets regularly to coordinate the government's response	If yes to M3, 1.1.1, the national coordination body meets regularly to coordinate the government's response AND at least one meeting has taken place between 15 February 2019 and 31 March 2021. Regularly includes if the national coordination body meets monthly, quarterly, or at least once every six months. If no to M3, 1.1.1, indicator is not met and must be rated as 0.
1.1.4	National coordination body includes both government and NGOs	If yes to M3, 1.1.1, the national coordination body on modern slavery includes both NGOs AND government representatives. NOT a National Action Plan. NOT a group or body that refers survivors — this is covered under M1, 3.2.1. NOT survivors are included in the coordination body (this is included under M3, 1.1.2). If no to M3, 1.1.1, this indicator cannot be met and must be rated as 0.
1.1.5	A National Action Plan exists with clear indicators and allocation of responsibilities	Any National Action Plan (NAP) on modern slavery, or that covers any component of modern slavery, such as trafficking, forced marriage, children in armed conflict AND this NAP has been approved and is being implemented AND the NAP covers part or all of the period 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT child labour NAPs, or broader human rights NAPs, women empowerment NAPs, or business and human rights NAPs, unless they include a specific modern slavery section. NOT regional action plans, such as the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia (developed with SAARC countries).

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 1.1	National mechanisms exist to coordinate the response		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.1.6	Activities in the National Action Plan are fully funded	If yes to M3, 1.1.5, there is evidence that there is a budget attached to the National Action Plan (NAP) and this is fully funded. Indicator still met if the NAP is part funded by government and part funded by IOs or NGOs, but that all activities are funded. NOT the activities are costed, but it is unclear where this money is coming from OR there are reports of significant gaps in funding that are not plugged by IOs, NGOs, or other agencies. If more than one relevant NAP exists, all must be funded to meet the indicator. If no to M3, 1.1.5, then this indicator cannot be met and must be rated as 0.
Activity 1.2	**Government monitors its response**		
	1.2.1	Independent entity to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the government's response exists	An independent entity is established to monitor the activities of the government in relation to its anti-modern slavery efforts. This body can be outside the NAP and does not have to focus solely on modern slavery. Independent entity can be an independent statutory body or individual or other third party that DOES NOT implement the government response to modern slavery. Examples would include a national human rights commission or national rapporteur AND entity must exist as of 31 August 2022. NOT regional entities that inspect government responses, such as Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in Europe.
	1.2.2	Government routinely reviews its response to modern slavery	The government publicly releases its own review of government policy OR there is evidence that the government is actively reviewing its own response AND this is made public AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. This can be through public inquiries, the release of annual reports, or other public monitoring mechanisms. The review must be released by a government body. This includes the national coordination body described in M3, 1.1.1 or the ministry or department in charge of the government response. It could also be released by a separate government entity. NOT civil society reporting. NOT reporting completed by an independent entity (described by M3, 1.2.1).

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 3: (cont.)	**Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response**		
Outcome 1:	**Responses to modern slavery are coordinated and held to account at the national level**		
Activity 2.1	**Cross-border collaboration exists**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.1.1	The government is involved in a regional response	The government is part of a regional response. A relevant regional body includes: - a regional body with more than two country representatives as members of the group, and - a focus on some form of modern slavery. The government must have signed onto, or have agreed to abide by, the shared values and objectives developed by the group (i.e., a code of conduct, an MoU on proposed outcomes, etc.) AND regional body must exist as of 31 August 2022 AND regional body must have had anti-slavery or anti-trafficking activities between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT country is a member of regional bodies which have not taken any action on modern slavery since 15 February 2019.
	2.1.2	Agreements exist between the government and countries of origin and/or destination to collaborate on modern slavery issues	Bilateral agreements exist between governments of countries of origin and/or destination to collaborate on modern slavery issues AND these agreements must be current as of 31 August 2022. NOT bilateral labour OR migration agreements (covered under M3, 3.2.2). NOT evidence of repatriation (covered under M3, 2.2.1).
	2.1.3	Joint investigations occur between nations	There is evidence joint investigations into trafficking or other modern slavery crimes have occurred between two or more nations AND these joint investigations must have occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. An example would be evidence that police in Thailand have conducted a joint investigation with Malaysia.
Activity 2.2	**Cross border collaboration exists, specific to foreign survivors of modern slavery**		
	2.2.1	The government cooperates with the government of the home country to facilitate repatriation	The government cooperates with home country for voluntary repatriation of foreign nationals. This could include repatriation mediated by IOM AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014. NOT evidence of deportation or any involuntary return of individuals. Repatriation refers to the voluntary return of individuals to their home country. Deportation refers to the removal of individuals from a country without their consent.
	2.2.2	Agreements between countries on labour migration provide protection for labour migrants	Bilateral labour agreements exist between countries AND include provisions for protection of labour migrants AND these agreements are current as of 31 August 2022. Protection can include access to labour laws, or social protection or other safety nets. For countries that are part of the EU, membership is not sufficient to offer protection. Instead, please see whether national legislation has been harmonised with EU requirements under EU law. NOT agreements regarding number of labour migrants sent/received.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 4:	**Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed**		
Outcome 1:	**Government programming reflects and responds to known risk factors and drivers of modern slavery and patterns of exploitation**		
Activity 1.1	**Risk factors, drivers, and patterns of exploitation are understood and inform government action**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	1.1.1	Government facilitates or funds research on modern slavery	Government funds or has been actively involved in research on any type of modern slavery, including responses to modern slavery, and on the attitudes, social systems and institutions that place people at risk of modern slavery AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Active involvement is defined as development of the research, participation in the research, or monetary or in-kind support. Modern slavery includes trafficking, forced labour, slavery, worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and use of child soldiers. Research can be both qualitative and quantitative and include prevalence studies. NOT civil society conducts research without government involvement. NOT government conducts research on child labour. NOT the government releases statistics on convictions and sentencing under modern slavery laws.
	1.1.2	Government interventions that aim to address modern slavery are evidence-based	There is evidence that government interventions or programs are based on strategies or theories of change identified by research AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Evidence can include a broader government strategy that incorporates modern slavery research, the National Action Plan incorporates modern slavery research, or that the National Action Plan or strategy is reviewed in line with recent modern slavery research.
Activity 1.2	**Government interventions are tailored to known risks**		
	1.2.1	Awareness campaigns target specific known risks of modern slavery	Any awareness campaign implemented by the government that provides detailed information on how to avoid the risks of modern slavery AND this campaign has run at least once since 15 February 2014. Campaign can be implemented by the government with a partner NGO OR funded by the government and solely implemented by an NGO. These campaigns can include domestic violence, trafficking, forced marriage, child marriage, the worst forms of child labour, child soldiers, and risky migration practices as they relate to modern slavery. These campaigns can be national, regional, or local campaigns, as long as they are targeted to specific risks. NOT an awareness-raising, counter-trafficking campaign run by an international organisation without government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT promotion of a hotline or how to identify victims — this is covered under M1, 1.1.1.
	1.2.2	Awareness campaigns are repeated at regular intervals (as distinct from one-off, isolated)	If yes to M4, 1.2.1, the awareness campaigns have occurred regularly, e.g., campaign started in 2014, and was updated and delivered again in 2015, 2016 etc. AND this has occurred regularly since 15 February 2014. If no to M4, 1.2.1, this indicator cannot be met and must be rated as 0.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 4: (cont.)	**Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed**
Outcome 1:	**Government programming reflects and responds to known risk factors and drivers of modern slavery and patterns of exploitation**

Activity 2.1	**Labour rights exist and are enforced**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.1.1	The government conducts labour inspections to identify modern slavery	The government conducts labour inspections in order to identify exploitative practice, including forced labour AND these inspections have occurred since 15 February 2014. NOT private companies conduct their own inspections. NOT labour inspectors are trained to identify modern slavery — this is covered under M1, 1.4.1 — but there is no evidence that they have conducted inspections. NOT labour inspections solely focused on child labour.
	2.1.2	There is a sufficient number of labour inspectors to cover the population	There a sufficient number of labour inspectors to cover the population AND these observations must be from 15 February 2019 onwards. This is verified by the observations for each country on its application of ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) made by the ILO Committee of Experts and published on Normlex. Number of inspectors meets ILO's requirements if there is one labour inspector per 10,000 workers in industrial market economies, one per 20,000 workers in transition economies, and one per 40,000 workers in less developed countries.
	2.1.3	Labour laws extend to everyone, including migrant workers, domestic workers, and those in the fishing and construction sectors	The legal definition of an employee includes all vulnerable workers, such as domestic workers, migrant workers, construction workers, maritime workers, etc. If the jurisdiction does not have a generic definition of an employee or a labour code, the information can come from NGOs, related legislation, or reports. If there are separate laws covering particular groups (e.g., separate legislation providing protections for domestic workers), this would be indicator met. This indicator does not extend to military, judiciary and civil service — if these are NOT included, and all other groups are included, this is still indicator met.
	2.1.4	Labour laws provide for freedom of association and collective bargaining	Labour laws provide for freedom of association AND collective bargaining to ANY groups. Aligned with the ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). National labour laws shall allow all workers the right to organise and encourage and promote voluntary negotiation between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations (Article 3 and 4 of Convention No. 98). Indicator is met if ANY group has freedom of association and collective bargaining. NOT gaps in collective bargaining and freedom of association. This is covered under M4, 2.1.5.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 2.1	Labour rights exist and are enforced		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.1.5	NEGATIVE Certain groups, such as migrant workers or domestic workers, are not allowed to unionise	If yes to M4, 2.1.4, labour laws do NOT provide for freedom of association and collective bargaining for groups in line with ILO Convention No. 98. Groups that are often excluded are fishers, domestic workers, and migrant workers. If these groups are explicitly excluded, rate as indicator met. Aligned with ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). National labour laws shall allow all workers the right to organise and encourage and promote voluntary negotiation between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations (Article 3 and 4 of Convention No. 98). NOT military forces, police force, and the corrections service are excluded (this falls within the scope of the Convention). If no groups apart from military forces, police force, and the corrections service are explicitly listed as excluded, then assume right to association apply to all and rate as indicator not met. If no to M4, 2.1.4, this indicator cannot be met and must be rated as 0.
	2.1.6	Labour inspectors are able to enter premises unannounced	Labour law details that labour inspectors are able to enter premises unannounced AND observations including details on the existing of unannounced audits must be from 15 February 2019 onwards. This is verified by the observations for each country on the Convention Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) made by the ILO Committee of Experts and published on Normlex. NOT ILO has explicitly stated that labour inspectors are not able to enter premises unannounced or that all inspections are scheduled.
	2.1.7	Labour inspectors are able to enter premises and enforce fines	Labour law details that labour inspectors are able to enter premises and enforce fines AND observations are from 15 February 2019 onwards. This is verified by observations and direct requests for each country on the Convention Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) made by the ILO Committee of Experts and published on Normlex. Labour inspectors are enforcing fines or fines are levied where infringements are found during the inspection process. NOT ILO has explicitly stated that either there are no fines, or these are not enforced.
Activity 2.2	**Protections exist for migrant workers**		
	2.2.1	Recruitment agencies are registered and monitored by the government	Recruitment agencies are registered AND monitored by the government AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Forms of monitoring include: investigation of recruitment agencies, closing of recruitment agencies' operations, cancelling of recruitment agencies' contracts, visits to recruitment agencies, and applying penalties to recruitment agencies. NOT only that recruitment agencies are registered by the government. There must be some mention of form of monitoring or tracking.
	2.2.2	Laws or policies state that private recruitment fees are paid by the employer, not the employee	Government legislation or policies state that recruitment fees and costs payable to recruitment agencies are not charged to the employee (i.e., fees are paid by the employer, not employee). NOT fees or costs associated with getting a job are not paid in practice.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 4: (cont.)	**Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed**
Outcome 1:	**Government programming reflects and responds to known risk factors and drivers of modern slavery and patterns of exploitation**

Activity 2.2	**Protections exist for migrant workers**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.2.3	There are laws that prohibit the withholding of passports	National laws prohibit the withholding of passports. This MUST be explicit in the criminal/ penal code, labour legislation or code, or trafficking legislation. Withholding passports is defined as passports are held by an employer, official, or government authority and are not available on request. NOT withholding passports is an aggravating offence in trafficking crimes. NOT withholding passports with a view to trafficking or smuggling a person is a criminal offence. NOT crimes related to forgery of passports.
	2.2.4	NEGATIVE There are laws or policies that prevent or make it difficult for workers to leave abusive employers without risk of loss of visa and deportation and/or security deposits	Any current specific government policy or law that leads to loss of visa or to deportation of migrant workers (or specific groups of migrant workers, such as domestic workers) for leaving abusive employers. Can be referred to as "tied visas" where a particular group of migrant workers are tied to one employer and unable to leave AND this policy is in place as of 31 August 2022. NOT there is evidence of survivors being deported for breach of visa conditions, but this does not occur as a direct result of government policy – this is covered under M1, 2.3.5 and M1, 2.3.6.
	2.2.5	Safe migration pathways exist for those seeking employment	Safe migration pathways exist for those seeking employment AND country registers a value of at least 80 per cent of migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people. A country can belong to one of the following categories: Fully meets indicator that country has the safe migration pathways — values of 100 per cent of necessary migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people: Meets — values of 80 per cent to less than 100 per cent. Partially meets — values of 40 per cent to less than 80 per cent. Requires further progress — values of less than 40 per cent. Must fall in one of the following categories: Fully meets (values of 100 per cent). Meets (values of 80 per cent to less than 100 per cent). NOT falls in one of the following categories: Partially meets — Values of 40 per cent to less than 80 per cent. Requires further progress — Values of less than 40 per cent. Source: SDG indicator 10.7.2 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and International Organization for Migration).

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 3.1	Social protections exist		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.1.1	All are able to access to health care	All are able to access affordable health care within in a given country AND this health care system is available as of 31 August 2022. Affordable health care includes the presence of state health care schemes, community health schemes, or financial assistance focused on providing access to health care for vulnerable groups. Health care is available for all and does not discriminate based on gender, ethnicity, religious background, or geographic region. NOT health care is available for survivors of modern slavery – this is covered under M1, 2.1.4 and M1, 2.1.5. For example, if health care is too costly, thereby excluding certain groups, or health care is too centralised, thereby excluding certain geographical regions, please rate as indicator not met. Source: Universal Health Coverage Index (SDG 3.8.1). If score is above 80 then indicator is met.
	3.1.2	All children are able to access public primary education regardless of ethno-cultural or religious background	Public primary education system exists and children are able to access public primary education AND this primary education system is available as of 31 August 2022. All children are able to access education, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious background, or geographic region. For example, if primary education is too costly, thereby excluding attendance by certain groups of children, or education is not available to certain groups (such as Roma) please rate as indicator not met. Sources: UNICEF primary education data and US Department of Labor Worst Forms of Child Labour report. Using these two sources, if there is evidence that free public education exists and that less than 10 per cent of the primary school-age population are out of school, then this indicator is met.
	3.1.3	NEGATIVE There are lower primary school enrolment rates for girls	Out of primary school rates are higher for girls than boys AND this is current as of 31 August 2022. Source: UNICEF out of primary school data. NOT out of school rates are the same for female and male.
	3.1.4	All children are included in birth registration systems	All are able to access the government run or supported birth registration system AND this is current as of 31 August 2022. Can include systems which are implemented or funded by INGOs, but with government support. Government support is defined as development of the birth registration system, participation in the system, or monetary or in-kind support. Covering the entire population refers to the percentage of people who are registered. Indicator is not met if less than 95 percent of the population is registered, OR specific groups are missing. Source: UNICEF statistics on birth registration and additional research on missing vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations can include ethnic, cultural, or religious groups whose members do not have equal access to birth registration.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 4: (cont.)	**Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed**
Outcome 1:	**Government programming reflects and responds to known risk factors and drivers of modern slavery and patterns of exploitation**

Activity 3.1	**Social protections exist**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.1.5	Systems are in place to allow asylum seekers to seek protection	There are legal protections, such as legislation, laws, or systems in place that enable asylum seekers to access basic support and protection within a country's borders AND this system is available as of 31 August 2022. Services may be provided by IOs/NGOs with government support. Government support is defined as development of the asylum seeker system, participation in the system, or monetary or in-kind support. NOT asylum seekers are detained without access to services. NOT asylum seekers are deported without their claims being assessed. NOT asylum seekers claims are assessed outside of the country where they sought asylum. NOT protections that are available for migrants (so not specific to refugees or asylum seekers). NOT evidence that refugees or asylum seekers cannot work. Sources: US State Department country reports on human rights practices, Amnesty International, Freedom House, and Human Rights Watch.
	3.1.6	Legal age of marriage is 18	The legal age of marriage is 18 for males and females with NO exceptions AND this is current as of 31 August 2022.
	3.1.7	Unemployment protections for vulnerable populations exist	At least one form of unemployment protection for vulnerable populations exists AND this is current as of 31 August 2022. Forms of unemployment protections, also referred in the source as unemployment benefit programs, may include but are not limited to: social, universal or voluntary insurance, severance payments, social assistance, unemployment aid, unemployment insurance, and right of withdrawal from provident fund. Source: International Labour Organization World Social Protection Report.
	3.1.8	Poverty alleviation schemes exist	Poverty alleviation schemes exist AND this is current as of 31 August 2022. At least seven of the following eight policy areas are covered: child and family, maternity (cash), sickness (cash), unemployment, employment injury, disability/ invalidity, survivors, old age. The following categories meet the indicator: - Comprehensive scope of legal coverage – eight policy areas covered. - Nearly comprehensive scope of legal coverage - seven policy areas covered. NOT the following categories: - Intermediate scope of legal coverage – five to six policy areas covered. - Limited scope of legal coverage - one to four policy areas covered. - Incomplete information available – no known policy areas covered. Source: International Labour Organization World Social Protection Report.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 3.1	**Social protections exist**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.1.9	NEGATIVE Homosexuality is criminalised	Homosexuality is criminalised. Source: Human Rights Watch.
Activity 3.2	**Official complicity in a crime is illegal**		
	3.2.1	National laws criminalise corruption in the public sector	Public corruption is criminalised in legislation. Public sector includes government officials, including police, immigration, and border guards. Corruption includes, at a minimum, bribery of officials. Please refer to legislation, not to instances of combating corruption.
Activity 3.3	**NEGATIVE Official complicity is not investigated**		
	3.3.1	NEGATIVE Reports of individual officials' complicity in modern slavery cases have not been investigated	Any reports of officials' complicity or corruption in modern slavery cases AND that these have NOT been investigated AND these have occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. Officials include: government officials, police, immigration officials, border guards, and labour inspectors. Excludes consular staff (covered by M4, 3.4.3). MUST be related to modern slavery crimes (trafficking, forced labour, slavery, forced marriage, use of child soldiers, and worst forms of child labour). If there is evidence of widespread corruption, but investigations are regularly taking place, please rate as indicator met. If there is evidence of widespread corruption, but only a minimal number of investigations have been completed OR there is limited information available, please rate as indicator not met. NOT evidence of general corruption of law enforcement.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 4: (cont.)	**Risk factors – such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions – that enable modern slavery are addressed**
Outcome 1:	**Government programming reflects and responds to known risk factors and drivers of modern slavery and patterns of exploitation**

Activity 3.4	**Government provides support for citizens overseas**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	3.4.1	Government provides training on modern slavery for its consular staff	Government provides training for its embassy or consular staff before departure for a posting or during a posting AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Definition of training includes formal in-person training or part of an online training program as part of broader curriculum on human rights or other training programs. Training can be provided by INGOs with government support (support defined as permission, development of the training, or monetary or in-kind support). NOT training manuals have been developed by INGOs, NGOs. NOT booklets with indicators of trafficking have been handed out to embassy staff.
	3.4.2	Government provides identification documents and supports travel arrangements for citizen return	Any citizen found exploited overseas can obtain ID documents from their own country OR be helped to travel back to their country by their own government. These documents are normally given by a citizen's embassies or consulates in the host country AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. Evidence in law or in practice is sufficient to meet the indicator. This information can be found in modern slavery legislation, or on ministry/ department of foreign affairs websites.
	3.4.3	NEGATIVE Diplomatic staff are not investigated for alleged complicity in modern slavery cases or abuse of survivors	Diplomatic OR embassy staff are complicit in the exploitation of nationals or abuse those who seek assistance at the embassy AND no investigations have taken place into this complicity AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022.
Activity 4.1	**NEGATIVE Government places its population, or part of its population, in forced labour**		
	4.1.1	NEGATIVE State-imposed forced labour exists	Any form of state-imposed forced labour, where the government forced the whole population, or segments of it, to work under threat of penalty, and for which work people have not offered themselves voluntarily AND this has occurred between 15 February 2019 and 31 August 2022. NOT compulsory military service, work which forms part of normal civil obligations of the citizen, or work performed in cases of emergency (such as war, fire, famine, or flood). This is verified by ILO Committee Experts through both direct requests AND observations for the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) AND for the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). Follows ILO typology - see Global Estimates of Modern Slavery.

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 5:	**Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour**
Outcome 1:	**Government sources goods and services that are slavery-free**
Activity 1.1	**Government regulates and investigates public procurement to prevent use of forced labour**

2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
1.1.1	Guidelines exist for public procurement officials	The government has drafted guidelines or an internal memo for public procurement officials that outline standards and/or operating procedures to prevent the purchase of public goods or services that involve modern slavery AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014. These can be general guidelines on human rights that include sub-sections on modern slavery. The guidelines can include outlining steps to be taken should a contractor be found to use forced labour or requiring government contractors over a certain value to maintain compliance plans.
1.1.2	Public procurement policies and systems exist to minimise the risk of governments purchasing products tainted by forced labour	The government drafts and implements public procurement policies and standards that explicitly prohibit public procurement agencies from engaging businesses suspected of using forced labour OR from purchasing products that were made using forced labour AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014. These policies can include prohibiting those found to be using forced labour from public contracts OR inserting clauses in public contracts prohibiting the use of forced labour.
1.1.3	Annual reports on government action to prevent use of forced labour in public procurement are produced and publicly available	The government releases reports on activities taken to prevent use of forced labour in public procurement AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014 OR if the policy has been adopted since 15 February 2019, it is enough that reporting is stipulated as part of regulating compliance. The report can be on human rights but include a sub-section on modern slavery. Modern Slavery Act statements produced by the government would meet this indicator.
1.1.4	The government has provided training to public procurement officials on modern slavery	The government has provided training to procurement officials on what modern slavery is, how it is relevant to their role, and on existing government policies and their implementation AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014. This training is provided face-to-face, or through online training modules.
1.1.5	There is evidence that the government has taken remedial action where forced labour has been discovered in public procurement	There is evidence that the government has worked with contractors in public supply chains that have been identified as having issues with use of forced labour to implement corrective action plans OR where the use of forced labour is prevalent in public supply chains and the contractor is unwilling to work with the government, there is evidence that the government has cancelled the contract AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014.

Table 39
Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Milestone 5: (cont.)	**Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour**
Outcome 1:	**Government sources goods and services that are slavery-free**

Activity 2 .1	**Government encourages mandatory reporting**		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.1.1	Laws or policies require businesses to report on their actions to implement risk minimisation policies	Legislation or policies require businesses to report on their actions to minimise risk of forced labour in their supply chain. For example, the UK Modern Slavery Act requires businesses earning more than GBP36 million annually to report on their actions to combat modern slavery or the Australian Modern Slavery Act requires businesses with a turnover of more than AUD100 million to report on their actions to combat modern slavery.
	2.1.2	Penalties exist for companies that fail to report	If yes to M5, 2.1.1, mandatory reporting requirements include civil or criminal penalties for companies that fail to report. If no to M5, 2.1.1, indicator is not met and must be rated as 0.
	2.1.3	Penalties have been applied to companies that fail to report	If yes to M5, 2.1.1 and M5, 2.1.2, there is evidence that the government has pursued civil or criminal proceedings for companies that have failed to report. If no to M5, 2.1.1 and M5, 2.1.2, indicator is not met and must be rated as 0.
	2.1.4	The government implements a responsible investment reporting requirement for investment funds and banks headquartered in their country to ensure that investment does not support modern slavery	Investment funds and banks headquartered in the country MUST report on modern slavery risk in investments AND this reporting must occur at least every two years. If policy is in place, there MUST be evidence that this has occurred since 15 February 2014 OR if the policy has recently been adopted, it is enough that reporting is stipulated as part of regulating compliance. NOTE: There must be explicit mention of modern slavery NOT that investment funds or banks have corporate social responsibility policies that require them to report on human rights UNLESS modern slavery is part of this reporting. ESG reporting that includes forced labour / modern slavery on stock exchanges is included in this indicator.
Activity 2 .2	**Government encourages mandatory due diligence**		
	2.2.1	The government has put in place mandatory human rights due diligence legislation	Legislation or policies require business to produce a due diligence plan that identifies and prevents risks to human rights (and sometimes also the environment) that could occur as a result of their business activities. This could include the production of publicly available due diligence plans for which they can then be held accountable. For example, French Duty of Vigilance legislation
	2.2.2	Mandatory human rights due diligence legislation includes "right of action" for survivors of modern slavery crimes	If yes to M5, 2.2.1, the legislation allows for a "right of action" whereby interested persons, including those harmed by corporate failures to observe human rights due diligence standards, can make applications to judicial authorities requesting companies to correct problems with compliance. It can also include potential compensation for those affected. E.g., French Duty of Vigilance legislation

Table 39

Conceptual framework for measuring government responses

Activity 2 .2	Government encourages mandatory due diligence		
	2022 Indicator Number	Indicator	Indicator description
	2.2.3	Penalties have been applied to companies that have failed to comply with their due diligence plans	If yes to M5, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, there is evidence that penalties have been enforced for those companies that have failed to comply with their due diligence plans AND this has occurred at least once since 15 February 2014.
Activity 2 .3	**Government is using alternative avenues to ensure businesses are tackling forced labour in supply chains**		
	2.3.1	The governments has identified high-risk sectors and have taken action to work with these sectors to eradicate modern slavery	The government has collaborated with businesses to identify high-risk sectors and set up national sector-specific initiatives that support businesses in tackling modern slavery. These can be broader initiatives that cover sustainability, health and safety, etc., but must include some elements of tackling modern slavery (e.g., the sustainable textile partnership in Germany) AND this has occurred since 15 February 2014.
	2.3.2	Laws or policies allow governments to create a public list of businesses that have been found to tolerate slavery in their supply chains	The government has worked with businesses and NGOs to create a public list of businesses that have been found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains AND/OR these businesses are prevented from accessing public funds (e.g., the “dirty list” in Brazil) AND this is operational as of 31 August 2022.
	2.3.3	Laws or policies prevent the import of goods and services made with forced labour	The government has prohibited the import of goods and services made with forced labour (e.g., the US Tariff Act) AND this is current as of 31 August 2022.
	2.3.4	Laws are in place that make it a criminal offence for company directors or companies who fail to prevent modern slavery and fail to undertake reasonable due diligence in first tier supply chain	Directors can be charged and prosecuted for slavery in first tier supply chains where it can be shown that due diligence has not occurred. This indicator measures the existence of this provision in legislation AND this is current as of 31 August 2022.

APPENDIX 3:

Methodology for identifying the highest value products at risk of forced labour imported by the G20

The world's most developed countries are connected to modern slavery not only through exploitation occurring within their own borders but also through the goods they import. In the GSI, we identify the highest value products at risk of being produced by forced labour which are currently being imported into G20 countries. The G20 are the largest importers (and exporters) in the world, accounting for 75 per cent of global trade.[1]

As a first step we developed a list of products at risk of being produced by modern slavery. This was informed by high-risk countries and industries as well as recent suspected cases of forced labour identified in the production of these goods.[2] We then compiled import data for all G20 countries for these products.

Table 40
Initial list of goods produced by forced labour as reported by the US Department of Labor

Ranking	Product with risk of modern slavery	Source countries
1	Bricks	Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia
2	Cotton	Benin, Burkina Faso, China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan
3	Garments	Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Bangladesh
4	Cattle	Bolivia, Brazil, Niger, Paraguay, South Sudan
5	Sugarcane	Bolivia, Brazil, Myanmar, Dominican Republic, Pakistan
6	Gold	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, North Korea, Peru, Venezuela
7	Fish	China, Ghana, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan
8	Timber	Brazil, North Korea, Peru, Russia
9	Carpets	India, Nepal, Pakistan
10	Coal	China, North Korea, Pakistan
11	Rice	Myanmar, India, Mali
12	Brazil Nuts/Chestnuts	Bolivia, Peru
13	Cocoa	Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria
14	Diamonds	Angola, Sierra Leone
15	Electronics	China, Malaysia
16	Coffee	Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire
17	Embellished textiles	India, Nepal
18	Palm oil	Indonesia, Malaysia
19	Shrimp	Myanmar, Thailand
20	Stones	India, Nepal
21	Textiles	China, North Korea
22	Thread/Yarn	China, India



Identifying a list of imports at risk of modern slavery

Our starting point was the 2022 US Department of Labor list of goods produced by forced labour and child labour.[3] The list was first filtered by "forced labour" to ensure that products suspected of being produced only by child labour were excluded. A simple country count of products was performed to determine a ranking: the product with the highest number of countries listed against it was ranked first, the product with the second highest numbers of countries against it was ranked second, and so on. This produced an initial list of 22 product/source country combinations at risk of modern slavery.

As a next step, we conducted a literature review of the product/source country combinations to independently validate the list, using the following parameters:

- Reference period: 1 January 2017 to 31 July 2022.
- Mix of media and non-media sources (peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, government documents, international organisation reports, NGO reports, etc.), whenever possible.

The following hierarchy of sources was used in conducting this research:

1. Peer reviewed publications, e.g., articles from journals identified through database searches and, if required, through Google Scholar.
2. Reports of international organisations, e.g., ILO, IOM, UN.
3. Reports of international NGOs, e.g., Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International.
4. Government websites, e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
5. National NGOs.
6. Media, through Google searches.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive, and we performed additional searches where suggested sources did not provide the information required.

Once the literature review was completed, a product/source country combination was included if it was on the 2022 US Department of Labor list of goods produced by forced labour that are listed in Table 40. In addition, the product/source country combination had to be independently verified by credible secondary sources, such as journal articles, primary research reports, reports from an international organisation or an NGO, or media reports. If no relevant references were found or the information was more than five years old, the product/source country combination was excluded.

The literature review resulted in the final list of at-risk products seen in Table 41. Source countries marked in red were deleted from the list as we could not find recent evidence to verify the occurrence of forced labour. The countries marked in green were added to the final list based on Walk Free primary research into modern slavery in the cocoa sector in Ghana[4] and well-known exploitation occurring in the products of solar panels in China.[5]

London, United Kingdom, December 2022.

A headline from the Evening Standard newspaper reads "Modern Slavery Blitz on London embassies" following the proposal of a new law to stop foreign embassies claiming immunity from legal actions being taken by domestic workers under their employment. The law will allow these workers to take diplomats to an employment tribunal for malpractice, including modern slavery. Photo credit: Mike Kemp/In Pictures via Getty Images.

Table 41
Final list of products at risk of modern slavery by source country.

Product	Source countries
Bricks	Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia
Garments	Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Bangladesh
Fish	China, Ghana, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan
Cotton	Benin, Burkina Faso, China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan
Gold	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, North Korea, Peru, Venezuela
Timber	Brazil, North Korea, Peru, Russia
Carpets	India, Nepal, Pakistan
Coal	China, North Korea, Pakistan
Cattle	Bolivia, Brazil, Niger, Paraguay, South Sudan
Sugarcane	Bolivia, Brazil, Myanmar, Dominican Republic, Pakistan
Rice	Myanmar, India, Mali
Cocoa	Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Ghana
Electronics	China, Malaysia
Palm oil	Indonesia, Malaysia
Textiles	China, North Korea
Brazil Nuts/Chestnuts	Bolivia, Peru
Coffee	Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire
Diamonds	Angola, Sierra Leone
Embellished textiles	India, Nepal
Shrimp	Myanmar, Thailand
Stones	India, Nepal
Thread/Yarn	China, India
Solar Panels	China

Identifying the most valuable imported products at risk of modern slavery

Trade data was obtained for the 19 G20 member countries. South Africa was included in this analysis for the first time: in 2018 it was excluded as it reported trade data via the Southern African Customs Union. The European Union was excluded to avoid double counting trade data from France, Germany, and Italy.

The final list of G20 countries are:

1. Argentina
2. Australia
3. Brazil
4. Canada
5. China
6. France
7. Germany
8. India
9. Indonesia
10. Italy
11. Japan
12. Mexico
13. Russia
14. Saudi Arabia
15. South Africa
16. South Korea
17. Türkiye
18. United Kingdom
19. United States

Data source and definitions

BACI dataset

The import data used for this analysis was taken from the BACI dataset.[6] BACI is the world trade database developed by the French research centre *Centre d' Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales* (CEPII) at a high level of product disaggregation.

Original trade data is provided by the United Nations Statistical Division (COMTRADE database). BACI is constructed using a procedure that reconciles the declarations of the exporter and the importer. This harmonisation procedure enables the extension of the number of countries for which trade data is available. The dataset gives information about the value of trade (in thousands of US dollars) and the quantity (in tonnes).

For this project, we used the 2021 BACI trade dataset with the 2017 Harmonized System (HS) nomenclature, which was the most recent available at the time of writing.

Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System

The Harmonized System (HS) is an international nomenclature for the classification of products. It allows participating countries to classify traded goods on a common basis for customs purposes. At the international level, the HS for classifying goods is a six-digit code system.

The HS comprises approximately 5,300 product descriptions that appear as headings and subheadings, arranged in 99 chapters, and grouped into 21 sections. The six digits can be broken down into three parts. The first two digits (HS-2) identify the chapter the goods are classified in, e.g. *09 = Coffee, Tea, Maté and Spices*. The next two digits (HS-4) identify groupings within that chapter, e.g. *09.02 = Tea, whether or not flavoured*. The next two digits (HS-6) are even more specific, e.g. *09.02.10 = Green tea (not fermented)*. Up to the HS-6 digit level, most countries classify products in the same way (a few exceptions exist where some countries apply old versions of the HS).

The HS was introduced in 1988 and has been adopted by most countries worldwide. It has undergone several revisions in the classification of products, which entered into force in 1996, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017.

Data compilation

Each of the products from the final list in Table 41 is represented by multiple HS 2017 product categories within the BACI trade dataset. The relevant categories were identified using the Foreign Trade Online directory.[7] Using STATA, import data for all relevant product categories and source countries was extracted from the 2021 BACI dataset for 19 G20 countries.

The products were then ranked from highest to lowest according to import value in US$. The resulting list of top five products at risk of modern slavery (according to US$ value) imported by each of the G20 countries is presented in Table 42. This product list has changed between 2018 and 2023. Textiles, palm oil, and coffee were not included in the top five most valuable products at risk of modern slavery of any G20 country in 2018. Cotton and carpets remain products at risk of modern slavery, however they have dropped off the highest value list since 2018.



Kolti, Nepal, March 2022.

A young Nepali woman works in her family's vegetable garden, while temperatures rise and threaten 240 million people living in the Hindu Kush. The remote communities in the area are some of the most impoverished, with women and children facing the greatest risk from climate change, including malnourishment and poverty. Photo credit: Rebecca Conway via Getty Images.

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
Argentina	Electronics	China	1,249,673
		Malaysia	19,969
	Garments	Bangladesh	11,673
		Brazil	5,914
		China	103,034
		India	6,338
		Malaysia	448
		Viet Nam	16,574
	Textiles	China	82,025
	Coffee	Brazil	59,467
	Solar panels	China	55,545
Australia	Electronics	China	8,499,583
		Malaysia	387,144
	Garments	Argentina	33
		Bangladesh	814,958
		Brazil	1,830
		China	4,847,261
		India	298,593
		Malaysia	25,397
		Viet Nam	400,830
	Solar panels	China	1,302,216
	Textiles	China	469,839
	Fish	China	75,023
		Ghana	2
		Indonesia	73,488
		Taiwan	39,283
		Thailand	199,156
Brazil	Solar panels	China	2,771,297
	Electronics	China	1,207,778
		Malaysia	15,137
	Garments	Argentina	6,385
		Bangladesh	108,725
		China	624,307
		India	46,369
		Malaysia	1,963
		Viet Nam	52,986
	Palm oil	Indonesia	511,464
		Malaysia	19,313
	Textiles	China	269,509
Canada	Electronics	China	11,203,647
		Malaysia	76,024
	Garments	Argentina	6
		Bangladesh	1,278,694
		Brazil	1,309
		China	3,068,653
		India	259,998
		Malaysia	12,618
		Viet Nam	1,053,657
	Gold	Peru	2,097,402
	Textiles	China	482,486
	Sugarcane	Brazil	427,598

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
China	Palm oil	Indonesia	4,902,375
		Malaysia	1,432,821
	Timber	Brazil	322,095
		Peru	37,308
		Russia	3,564,090
	Cattle	Brazil	3,907,805
	Garments	Argentina	24
		Bangladesh	404,894
		Brazil	358
		India	60,244
		Malaysia	16,998
		Viet Nam	1,173,538
	Sugarcane	Brazil	1,408,718
France	Garments	Argentina	577
		Bangladesh	1,917,574
		Brazil	2,301
		China	4,524,306
		India	682,554
		Malaysia	6,475
		Viet Nam	564,909
	Electronics	China	2,609,763
		Malaysia	13,678
	Cocoa	Côte d'Ivoire	462,434
		Ghana	172,531
	Textiles	China	434,278
	Solar panels	China	362,406
Germany	Electronics	China	20,319,762
		Malaysia	151,570
	Garments	Argentina	51
		Bangladesh	7,785,869
		Brazil	857
		China	7,993,142
		India	1,301,894
		Malaysia	36,160
		Viet Nam	1,284,308
	Solar panels	China	2,425,414
	Textiles	China	1,620,893
	Coffee	Brazil	1,064,743
India	Electronics	China	7,345,027
		Malaysia	432,868
	Palm oil	Indonesia	3,588,848
		Malaysia	4,014,696
	Solar panels	China	3,820,664
	Gold	Burkina Faso	934,503
		Peru	2,143,967
	Garments	Bangladesh	472,834
		Brazil	78
		China	753,798
		Malaysia	7,523
		Viet Nam	47,222

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
Indonesia	Electronics	China	2,919,522
		Malaysia	77,909
	Garments	Argentina	0.4
		Bangladesh	58,744
		Brazil	7
		China	563,955
		India	15,410
		Malaysia	21,467
		Viet Nam	49,025
	Textiles	China	663,425
	Coal	China	432,649
		Pakistan	0.2
	Sugarcane	Brazil	353,740
Italy	Garments	Argentina	143
		Bangladesh	1,420,659
		Brazil	1,110
		China	2,560,544
		India	353,801
		Malaysia	4,419
		Viet Nam	275,277
	Electronics	China	4,099,594
		Malaysia	11,962
	Palm oil	Indonesia	769,786
		Malaysia	416,258
	Textiles	China	533,455
	Coffee	Brazil	477,026
Japan	Electronics	China	29,015,858
		Malaysia	111,882
	Garments	Argentina	400
		Bangladesh	1,161,546
		Brazil	1,773
		China	13,008,247
		India	207,494
		Malaysia	116,704
		Viet Nam	3,129,860
	Fish	China	1,617,554
		Ghana	1,305
		Indonesia	189,292
		Taiwan	376,438
		Thailand	484,290
	Solar panels	China	1,887,658
	Textiles	China	1,805,444

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
Mexico	Electronics	China	5,553,221
		Malaysia	178,698
	Garments	Bangladesh	394,062
		Brazil	1,235
		China	1,525,355
		India	109,101
		Malaysia	5,633
		Viet Nam	119,953
	Solar panels	China	498,915
	Textiles	China	476,471
	Timber	Brazil	305,542
		Peru	8,671
		Russia	12,402
Russia	Electronics	China	8,699,722
		Malaysia	24,478
	Garments	Argentina	0.1
		Bangladesh	1,161,231
		Brazil	372
		China	2,976,065
		India	150,554
		Malaysia	7,103
		Viet Nam	399,252
	Palm oil	Indonesia	886,351
		Malaysia	15,946
	Cattle	Brazil	129,229
		Paraguay	333,732
	Textiles	China	420,059
Saudi Arabia	Garments	Argentina	11
		Bangladesh	394,959
		Brazil	626
		China	2,317,822
		India	414,568
		Malaysia	6,613
		Viet Nam	53,416
	Electronics	China	2,150,220
		Malaysia	22,842
	Palm oil	Indonesia	480,481
		Malaysia	369,096
	Rice	India	812,366
	Sugarcane	Brazil	340,235

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
South Africa	Electronics	China	2,435,721
		Malaysia	4,566
	Garments	Argentina	24
		Bangladesh	105,396
		Brazil	456
		China	1,157,112
		India	97,275
		Malaysia	3,157
		Viet Nam	32,184
	Palm oil	Indonesia	436,801
		Malaysia	116,863
	Solar panels	China	256,757
	Textiles	China	142,188
South Korea	Electronics	China	9,275,468
		Malaysia	15,132
	Garments	Argentina	136
		Bangladesh	443,987
		Brazil	243
		China	4,882,687
		India	56,823
		Malaysia	8,626
		Viet Nam	3,020,662
	Solar panels	China	1,003,783
	Palm oil	Indonesia	453,534
		Malaysia	373,781
	Fish	China	533,256
		Ghana	1,815
		Indonesia	32,753
		Taiwan	114,442
		Thailand	22,362
Türkiye	Electronics	China	3,173,722
		Malaysia	8,515
	Palm oil	Indonesia	223,729
		Malaysia	659,919
	Garments	Argentina	65
		Bangladesh	190,776
		Brazil	171
		China	271,493
		India	23,756
		Malaysia	27,209
		Viet Nam	63,508
	Solar panels	China	374,515
	Cocoa	Côte d'Ivoire	243,290
		Ghana	76,298

Table 42

Top five products at risk of modern slavery according to US$ value imported by G20 countries[8]

G20 country	Imported product at risk of modern slavery	Source country	Import value (in thousands of US$)
UK	Electronics	China	14,713,414
		Malaysia	37,016
	Garments	Argentina	189
		Bangladesh	3,009,806
		Brazil	1,294
		China	5,257,572
		India	1,255,998
		Malaysia	22,225
		Viet Nam	509,046
	Textiles	China	538,295
	Timber	Brazil	130,422
		Peru	77
		Russia	352,850
	Fish	China	230,258
		Ghana	38,875
		Indonesia	18,615
		Taiwan	761
		Thailand	16,475
US	Electronics	China	106,158,032
		Malaysia	1,427,054
	Garments	Argentina	950
		Bangladesh	7,273,296
		Brazil	25,173
		China	24,889,568
		India	4,657,696
		Malaysia	256,474
		Viet Nam	15,288,211
	Textiles	China	4,752,876
	Timber	Brazil	2,107,498
		Peru	8,361
		Russia	549,653
	Fish	China	1,015,843
		Ghana	257
		Indonesia	406,921
		Taiwan	144,891
		Thailand	670,363

08





ENDNOTES

Global findings....266

Spotlight: Understanding forced and child marriage....268

Spotlight: Anti-social: modern slavery on social media....271

Spotlight: Guardians and offenders: examining state-imposed forced labour....274

Spotlight: Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war....281

Spotlight: The costs of the climate crisis.... 284

Regional findings: Africa....286

Regional Findings: The Americas.... 290

Regional Findings: Arab States....292

Spotlight: Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: life under the kafala system....298

Regional findings: Asia and the Pacific.... 304

Spotlight: Orphanages as modern slavery hubs.... 306

Regional findings: Europe and Central Asia....308

Importing products at risk of forced labour....311

Spotlight on sectors: Investing in exploitation....315

Stitched with slavery in the seams....317

Charting progress against forced labour at sea....319

Forced labour: chocolate's hidden ingredient....323

Appendices....325

Dhaka, Bangladesh, January 2021.

Labourers unload coal from a cargo ship in Gabtoli on the outskirts of Dhaka. After unloading 30 baskets of coal they earn around US$1. Kazi Salahuddin Razu/NurPhoto via Getty Images.

ENDNOTES

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SPOTLIGHTS

Understanding forced and child marriage

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Anti-social: modern slavery on social media

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33. Guidance issued under section 54(9) of the UK MSA does not explicitly require companies to report on modern slavery risks linked to their products or services. Meanwhile, the Australian MSA guidance explicitly states companies are not obligated to report on risks relating to customers. Home Office 2017, *Transparency in supply chains: a practical guide*, Government of the United Kingdom, p. 32. Available from: **https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040283/Transparency_in_Supply_Chains_A_Practical_Guide_2017_final.pdf**. [11 July 2022]; Australian Border Force n.d., *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018: Guidance for Reporting Entities*, pp. 33-34. Available from: **https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/criminal-justice/files/modern-slavery-reporting-entities.pdf**. [27 February 2022].
34. We were able to identify and assess 27 statements produced by 10 reporting entities from 2018 to 2022, covering 10 social media platforms, with two companies also distributing social media applications. Eighteen out of 27 statements explicitly mentioned at least one social media platform (or stores distributing social media platforms) under their control.
35. For the purposes of the assessment, 'social media' refers to computer and Internet-based technologies that facilitate sharing of user-generated content through virtual networks via computer or smartphone.
36. Of the most recent statements published for each reporting entity assessed, one was published for financial year 2020, six were published for financial year 2021, and three were published for financial year 2022. Four statements were produced under the UK MSA, three were produced under the Australian MSA, and two were produced under both.

37. Statements falling under the scope of the Australian MSA are required to have their statement approved by a principal governing body and signed by a responsible member; and must fulfil six mandatory reporting criteria (excluding mandatory criterion seven: any other relevant information), namely: identify the reporting entity and describe its structure, operations and supply chains (mandatory criteria one and two); describe the risks of modern slavery practices in the operations and supply chains of the reporting entity and any entities the reporting entity owns or controls (mandatory criterion three); describe the actions taken by the reporting entity and any entities that the reporting entity owns or controls to assess and address these risks, including due diligence and remediation processes (mandatory criterion four); describe how the reporting entity assesses the effectiveness of actions being taken to assess and address modern slavery risks (mandatory criterion five); and describe the process of consultation with any entities the reporting entity owns or controls (mandatory criterion six). Australian Border Force n.d., *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018: Guidance for Reporting Entities*, pp. 33-34. Available from: **https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/criminal-justice/files/modern-slavery-reporting-entities.pdf**. [27 February 2022]. For a comparison on minimum requirements and guidance under the UK and Australian MSA, see also: Walk Free & WikiRate 2022, *Beyond compliance in the garment industry: Assessing UK and Australian Modern Slavery Act statements produced by the garment industry and its investors*, Minderoo Foundation, p. 33. Available from: **https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2022/02/22150956/Walk-Free-Beyond-Compliance-Garment-Industry.pdf**. [19 July 2022].
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Spotlight: Guardians and offenders: examining state-imposed forced labour

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Spotlight: Modern slavery: A weapon and consequence of war

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Spotlight: The costs of the climate crisis

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APPENDICES

Appendix 2: Methodology behind the Global Slavery Index

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17. Commonwealth countries included are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Fiji, Malta, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
18. Limited data defined as not included in the United States State Department Trafficking in Persons Report and/or excluded from at least five global datasets. These excluded countries include Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Nauru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.
19. Identified using the 2019 Fragile States Index, where those countries that scored 10.0 on the Security Apparatus indicator were excluded. See **https://fragilestatesindex.org/2020/05/08/fragile-states-index-2020-annual-report/**.
20. English, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Chinese, and Portuguese. Arabic speakers were missing from the team but will be included in the next iteration. Team members had a background in law, international relations, international development, or American studies.
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Appendix 3:
Methodology for identifying the highest value products at risk of forced labour imported by the G20

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6. For political reasons, the UN is not allowed to show trade statistics for Taiwan, Province of China. Therefore, Taiwan is included under 'Other Asia not elsewhere specified' (country code 490) in the BACI trade dataset. In principle, trade data for territories belonging to Asia, but not specified by country, could end up in code 490. In practice, only trade of Taiwan is included under this code, except for a few countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, which reports all of their exports to unknown countries). For more information, please see: **https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/comtrade/Taiwan%2C+Province+of+China+Trade+data**. CEPII 2023, *BACI HS17 (2017-2021)*, CEPII. Available from: **http://www.cepii.fr/CEPII/en/bdd_modele/bdd_modele_item.asp?id=37**. [20 February 2022].
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8. Imports data is presented for 19 countries of the G20. The European Union was excluded as much of its trade is already captured in the data of Germany, Italy, and France.

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