



Chair Report

Human Rights Committee

Chairs: Julián Jaramillo & Fernanda Llanos

The primary role of HRC is to be an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/Pages/Home.aspx>

REPORT: Addressing Modern Day Slavery

Introduction

What is slavery? Slavery is having control over another individual's life, restricting their movement, and coercing them against their will. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits slavery, stating that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" (Article 4). Despite this, people are still being forced into different types of slavery daily. Many countries abolished slavery in the 19th century; however that only changed the ways that slavery is perpetrated - not the practice itself. The days of chains and shackles are mostly over, but the binds of debt and poverty are very much real. We live in an age of globalization, where migration has led to being one of the most significant factors in this situation. Modern-day slavery can be found in every country and manifests itself in several forms, such as human trafficking, forced marriages, forced labor, child slavery, debt-bondage, and serfdom. In recent years, the issue has only gotten worse. People's lives are being exploited and controlled in inhumane ways. It is the HRC's responsibility to address this pressing issue.

General Overview

Over 40 million people, 10 million of whom are children, are living in modern slavery. This figure is more than three times the figure during the transatlantic slave trade. Asia currently accounts for approximately two-thirds of the victims with India in the lead. It has become facile for violators to commit these acts against humanity due to advances in technology. The lack of proper and effective legislation against trafficking has only made it easier for these offenders to act with impunity. The number of



TEXAS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019-20



prosecutions for traffickers is shocking low; according to the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, only 9,071 convictions have been recorded worldwide.

An estimated \$150 billion has been generated from slavery. Human trafficking is a business that has created illicit earnings off of the forced labor of its victims. Major industries like agriculture, manufacturing, and mining have all been linked to benefit from forced labor. The 1.3 billion people that live in extreme poverty worldwide are more at risk of being tricked into these constrained labor positions. For instance, certain agencies hire South Asians to work on construction projects abroad - such as World Cup stadiums in Qatar - by promising them good pay and all expenses covered. In reality, these "migrant workers" are bound into long term contracts and have their passport confiscated with no means of escape while their captors make substantial profits. This isn't exclusive to South Asians being sent to Qatar, but various people being sent all over the world under similar conditions.

Slavery isn't just limited to impoverished countries; commercialized sexual exploitation has also risen in the U.S and Europe. Over 12.5% of slaves are entrapped by sexual slavery. Most women have been lured with a job in modeling, acting, and dancing. Instead, they are forced to prostitute themselves or perform sexual acts facilitated by their traffickers. Often, this practice is coupled with bonded labor, meaning that these women are economically shackled to their captors. A majority of victims in sex slavery are from forced marriages. This occurs when the parents, guardians, or relatives of the victim exchange them for payment. Girls as young as 14 have been forced into marriages without having the option to refuse. In many African, South Asian, and European countries, this has become a cultural practice. Since there is no international minimum age for marital consent, these victims are often not recognized. Victims often don't seek help from authorities because forced prostitution is primarily criminalized with the promise of incarceration and subsequent criminal records.

Immigrants, women, and children are more vulnerable to trafficking because of their status. Children and women aren't taught about the warning signs that led to victimization. There is a lack of resources for victims like adequate programs to help them facilitate recovery and victim support groups. Modern-day slavery continues to be a hidden crime, that only makes it harder for the world to see.

Major Parties Involved

India - As a country where female infanticide still occurs, India's sex ratio is highly skewed, with approximately 107.5 men per 100 women. As a result, women in more impoverished regions of the country are at risk of being sold as brides and



TEXAS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019-20



trafficked to other parts of the county. In these types of marriages, women are more likely to be abused and raped by their husbands.

Kuwait - Kuwait is a prime example of how advances in technology can facilitate modern slavery. Listings for “domestic workers” are made online on apps such as Instagram and Facebook to reach out to potential buyers; however, these workers are often sold into slavery. Although these apps have removed hashtags such as #maidsfortransfer, it is still common for women of various countries to be sold into labor in Kuwait.

Mexico - Among Latin American countries, Mexico has one of the highest rates of child labor at about 8.4%. Most of these children work in maquiladoras, dangerous factories where goods are assembled to be exported. As a way to bear the intense workload, some of these children start taking drugs at a young age.

Mauritania - Although Mauritania became the last country to officially abolish slavery, 20% of the country’s population are still enslaved. This mainly occurs to members of the minority group, the Haratine, because of the rigid social hierarchy and the government’s inconsistent enforcement of the law.

Russia - Russia has reinstated the practice of prison labor as a form of punishment for various activities, including some forms of activism. Additionally, Russia used to be the destination of North Korean prison laborers - where the wages would go directly to the North Korean government - until a UN resolution dissolved the practice.

Syria - Since 2011, Syria has been going through a national crisis. Since the civil war has taken over the Syrian government, slavery in this region has significantly risen. Syrians have fallen victim to human trafficking, forced labor and marriage, and sex slavery. For every 1,000 Syrians, 7.3 of them are victims of this crisis. An estimated 136,000 Syrians are living in Modern-day slavery due to the extreme disruption caused by the war.

Uganda - In Uganda, women are sometimes sold off in open markets alongside food and livestock for as little as \$14. Some of these markets sell up to 50 girls a day. Oftentimes, these women are taken to Middle Eastern or other African countries where they are exploited.

United States - According to Business Insider, “between 18,000 and 20,000 victims are trafficked into the United States every year,” making it one of the main destinations for human trafficking. The country that traffics the largest number of people into the US is Mexico, specifically the state. Domestically, children who have been in foster care, and Native American women are at higher risk of being trafficked.



TEXAS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019-20



Timeline of Key Events

1981 - Mauritania became the last country to officially ban slavery

1989 - The U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes basic healthcare, education, and protection of those who were exploited from slavery

1995 - The U.S. government issues the Model Business Principles, which urges international businesses to adopt and implement codes to avoid forced labor

1998 - The Global March against Child Labor is established to coordinate worldwide demonstrations against child labor and to call for a U.N. Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

2002 - the Western African States agree on an action plan to confront slavery and human trafficking in their region.

2015 - The U.N. adopts 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end slavery by 2025

2017 - Research is done by the U.N. releases a combined global study indicating that: 50% of slaves are in forced labor, 12.5% in sex-slavery, and 37.5% in forced marriages

2018 - North Korea, Eritrea, and Burundi are estimated to have the world's highest rates of modern-day slavery

Past Attempts at Resolving This Issue

1919 - The International Labor Organization (ILO) is founded to establish a code of global labor standards

1926 - The League of Nations approves the Slavery Convention, which defines slavery as "status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised."

1948 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created by the United Nations

1973 - The U.N. General Assembly adopts the International Convention on the Suppression of slavery

1975 - The U.N. Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery created a fund to collect information and recommendations on slavery around the world



TEXAS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019-20



2000 - The United Nations adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

2014 - The International Labor Organization adopted the Forced Labor Protocol (came into force in 2016)

2017 - The United Nations Security Council approved resolution 2388 (2017) with the intention of cracking down on human trafficking

Suggested Websites

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36416751>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/25/modern-slavery-trafficking-persons-one-in-200>
- <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Slavery/UNVTCFS/UNSlaveryFund.pdf>
- <https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>
- <http://www.endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today>
- <https://www.freetheslaves.net/>
- <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>
- <https://restavekfreedom.org/2018/09/11/the-history-of-slavery/>

Guiding Questions

1. How can the issue of slavery be addressed in your country? Can these same measures be taken elsewhere? If so, how?
2. What type of modern-day slavery has impacted your country?
3. How can victims of slavery be identified around the world?
4. What is the role of technology in facilitating modern slavery?
5. What are the effective and ineffective strategies used in past solutions to combat this issue?
6. Would it be more effective to pass a broad resolution that covers various forms of slavery, or a detailed resolution that targets one aspect of it?
7. Although slavery is illegal in every country, not all governments enforce this law to the same extent. What, if anything, can the HRC do to ensure that these policies are implemented?