



## **Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Partnerships for Solutions A G20 2024 Interfaith Forum Policy Brief**

August 4, 2024

### **Call to Action**

Action to end human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery belongs squarely on the G20 agenda, for 2024 and beyond. Trafficking is a symptom of the world's inability to protect the poorest and most vulnerable. Too often, those who most need opportunity and support become a valuable commodity for criminals to trade. To counter human trafficking, political will and resources commensurate to the threat are vitally needed.

Despite commitments from many directions to end human trafficking, the scourge persists, exacerbated by the COVID-19 emergencies, economic crises, and rising forced migration. Effective action to end human trafficking must be sustained, collaborative, and actively engage stakeholders across different sectors. The G20 leaders and processes associated with the G20 are well positioned to lead such efforts, by committing to global leadership and mobilizing resources, with approaches that are human-centered, focusing on prevention and on the victims and survivors. Working across sectors, they can link information and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) to define critical areas for intervention. Priority needs include broader public understanding of the topic, sharper legal frameworks, more robust and well-focused government spending, regulations that require and promote business transparency, sustained law enforcement efforts, proactive victim identification, and well-maintained support services.

Many religious communities give high priority to action on human trafficking and seek to engage more actively in global leadership, in ways that link global perspectives and commitments to action at community levels. Religious leadership plays significant, multifaceted roles in responding to human trafficking; prominent examples include the Santa Marta Group, Catholic sister support networks like Talitha Kum, and the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities. G20 attention can reinforce and bolster active engagement with leaders and dedicated organizations, thus promoting dynamic integration.

The G20 leaders should commit at their November 2024 Rio de Janeiro Summit to a revitalized multi-stakeholder approach to action on human trafficking that draws on diverse perspectives and capabilities of different participants. The G20 Interfaith Forum will be revitalizing and expanding its working group on trafficking, and urges the G20 to support this initiative and to facilitate cooperation between this initiative and parallel efforts undertaken by the G20 itself or by individual G20 members. Reports on progress should be called for during the 2025 Summit and annually thereafter. This working group and any parallel G20 initiatives should focus on strengthening political will across G20 member states and beyond with clear 2030 targets, including financial commitments. The G20 Interfaith Forum commits to extend, support and cooperate with these vital initiatives.

## Why the G20?

This brief reviews priority issues surrounding human trafficking today, focusing on faith engagement. It draws on research from print and online sources from governmental, non-profit, and private sectors and inputs from the IF20 networks. The final section highlights action areas for both G20 and religious leaders.

Action to end human trafficking meets the G20 2024 priority goals of “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” and “strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.”<sup>1</sup> It is central to ending poverty and leaving no individual behind. With complex multidimensional causes and pathways, combatting human trafficking demands well-integrated, cross-sectoral partnerships that are sustained, collaborative, and multistakeholder.

While human trafficking is linked to many global challenges, its distinctive features demand and lend themselves to targeted action. Global demand for cheap or even free labor and commercial sex fuels illegal trafficking rings, impeding economic growth for law-abiding businesses and curtailing legitimate employment opportunities for millions of people. Poverty, armed conflict, and poor access to education and legal employment all heighten the risk that traffickers will target the vulnerable. Poverty drives individuals and families into situations where their vulnerability and susceptibility to exploitation increases. Human trafficking is not, however, inevitable. It occurs because an individual, a group, a business, or—in some cases—a state has decided to exploit a person or persons as a commodity.

Recognized international standards, such as the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), illustrate the interconnected, important regulatory efforts work currently occurring to tackle human trafficking/forced labor in global corporate supply chains (*i.e.* transparency, due diligence and forced labor import ban laws). However, the onus is on the *state* to respect human rights.

Strong multilateral commitments promise action to address the issue, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7, which calls for the eradication of modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030. However, many challenges stand in the way of dismantling the economic, political, and social structures that allow human trafficking to flourish.

Religious leaders and diverse faith organizations are among the most prominent voices today speaking out against trafficking and modern forms of slavery. With their ability to collaborate across political, cultural, and geographic lines, and to bring to bear direct knowledge of affected communities, faith actors are well-positioned to shape societal attitudes toward trafficking, contribute to prevention efforts, and provide psychosocial, financial, and legal assistance to victims. By intentional resources utilization and capitalization on faith actors’ expertise, G20 countries can strengthen national and international responses to combat modern slavery.

The growing global demand for cheap goods and commercial sex fuels trafficking and modern slavery. The promise of high profits and low risk of prosecution and punishment emboldens traffickers to operate with impunity. Trafficking is more lucrative today than at any other time in history, generating an

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<sup>1</sup> “G20 Brazil Summit 2024.” International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2024. <https://sdg.iisd.org/events/g20-brazil-summit-2024/>

estimated US\$150 billion annually.<sup>2</sup> Sex trafficking accounts for half of all estimated profits from human trafficking, with the average victim generating US\$36,000 a year.<sup>3</sup>

Above all, human trafficking is a gross violation of human rights and causes profound suffering. However, its need to be eradicated extend beyond this main argument. Trafficking also impedes global economic growth and individual economic opportunity. Forced labor reduces opportunities for legal employment and creates unfair competition for law-abiding businesses whose profit margins are considerably lower than enterprises that rely on forced labor.<sup>4</sup> Victims of modern slavery typically cannot send remittances back home, a major hindrance to economic growth in poorer nations<sup>5</sup> where remittances greatly surpass official foreign aid amounts.<sup>6</sup> Those who escape their conditions may also face lifelong stigma and marginalization which, along with a lack of legal work history, can reduce their employment prospects, fuel poverty, and hamper national economic growth.

## Definitions and data

Human trafficking and modern slavery fall into several distinct, but overlapping, categories. Of the estimated 49.6 million victims of modern slavery (2021), 27.6 million were subjected to **forced labor**, defined by the ILO as work performed involuntarily and under the threat of a penalty.<sup>7</sup> People in forced labor increased by 2.7 million people from 2016 to 2021, an increase from 3.4 to 3.5 per thousand people.<sup>8</sup> Among these, nearly 4.6 million adults and 1.7 million children are exploited in the **commercial sex industry**.<sup>9</sup> The increased prevalence of forced labor between 2016 and 2021 was driven “entirely by forced labour in the private economy, both in forced commercial sexual exploitation and in forced labour in other sectors.”<sup>10</sup> **Forced marriage**, a significant category, involves an estimated 22 million people.<sup>11</sup> People in forced marriages increased by 6.6 million people from 2016 to 2021, from 2.1 to 2.8 per thousand people.<sup>12</sup>

The complex and evolving nature of human trafficking and modern slavery and the diverse experiences of victims complicate definitions, identification, and approaches to addressing these crimes. Contexts vary widely and an inherent fluidity hinders understanding, defining, and detecting.<sup>13</sup> Most human trafficking, and many aspects modern slavery, is underground or on the margins of legality which makes reliable data difficult to ascertain.

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<sup>2</sup> “Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour.” International Labor Organization. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly, Annie. ““Human life is more expendable”: why slavery has never made more money.” The Guardian, July 31, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Datta, Monti Narayan, and Kevin Bales. “Slavery Is Bad for Business: Analyzing the Impact of Slavery on National Economies.” The Brown Journal of World Affairs 19, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2013): 205-23.

<sup>5</sup> Lillie, Michelle. “The Dirty Economics of Human Trafficking.” Human Trafficking Search. 2013

<sup>6</sup> International Organization for Migration. “International Remittances.” World Migration Report 2024, IOM, 2024, <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-2/international-remittances>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>8</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2017 (p. 9-11), 2022 (p. 2).

<sup>9</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 45.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 2.

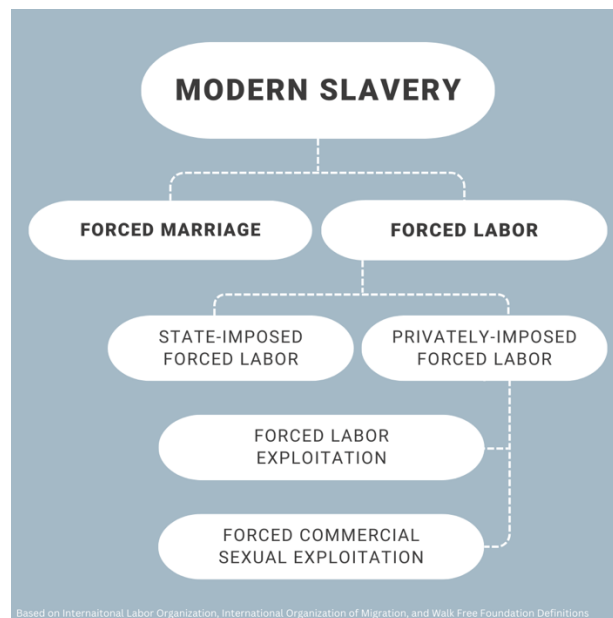
<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>12</sup> “”*Id.*

<sup>13</sup> “Human trafficking.” Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2024. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking#:~:text=The%202022%20report%20estimates%20that,were%20in%20a%20forced%20marriage>.

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, for example, defines human trafficking as “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit.”<sup>14</sup> The UK’s Modern Slavery Act 2015 defines modern slavery broadly, to include human trafficking as well as slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labor.<sup>15</sup> There is agreement about some aspects of the definition of modern slavery, but the phenomenon’s complex nature challenges strict definitions and there is overlap and differences that can reflect different approaches and priorities.

Figure 1: Defining Modern Slavery



Human trafficking and modern slavery are among the largest and most urgent contemporary human rights challenges. ILO statistics from 2021 indicate that approximately 6.4 in every 1,000 people are victims of modern slavery.<sup>16</sup> The number of human trafficking victims has risen by an estimated 1 person per 10,000 in the last decade.<sup>17</sup> The trend reflects increased rates of forced marriage and forced labor, with estimated increases of 7<sup>18</sup> persons per 10,000 and 1<sup>19</sup> person per 10,000 respectively.

Trafficking affects individuals of all backgrounds and ages, but women and girls are most vulnerable; over half (54%) of victims of modern slavery are women and girls.<sup>20</sup> Trafficking, especially for the

<sup>14</sup> “Human Trafficking.” The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime. 2024.

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-Trafficking/Human-Trafficking.html>

<sup>15</sup> “” “Modern Slavery Act 2015.” Legislation.gov.uk. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

“Challenges of Policing Modern Slavery.” College of Policing, 6 Apr. 2024, [www.college.police.uk/article/challenges-policing-modern-slavery](http://www.college.police.uk/article/challenges-policing-modern-slavery). Accessed 9 May 2024.

<sup>16</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 17. (Defining “modern slavery” as privately imposed forced labor, state-imposed forced labor, and forced marriage.)

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 23.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 60.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 26.

<sup>20</sup> “” *Id.* at 19.

commercial sex industry, is **deeply gendered**. ILO estimates that women and girls account for 54% of all victims of modern slavery, 43% in other sectors of forced labor, and 68% of forced marriage victims<sup>21</sup>. The gender difference is more pronounced in forced commercial sex exploitation, where four out of five victims (78%) are women or girls.<sup>22</sup> Gender trends in modern slavery are based on the form and sector. Of the 6.3 million forced commercial sexual exploitation victims, women and girls represented 78%.<sup>23</sup> However, of the 21.3 million victims of privately-imposed and state-imposed forced labor (excluding commercial forced sexual exploitation), 67% are men and boys.<sup>24</sup>

**Data collection and reporting are a consistent challenge.** Some data on modern slavery is based on reporting by victims and much of it takes place “underground.” The reliability of the data therefore depends on victims’ ability to report their crimes—a process inhibited by barriers including distrust of authorities, stigmatization, and fear of retribution.<sup>25</sup> Data is collected by governmental organizations, civil society groups, and multilateral organizations by interviewing victims, family members, and friends of those affected. The IOM’s Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative emphasizes the complexity of data collection and utilizes regressive analysis techniques to estimate the number of victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.<sup>26</sup> Annex 1 provides recent estimates from the International Labour Organization, the Walk Free Foundation, and the International Organization for Migration, broken down by category and region.

Victims may be trafficked domestically or internationally by gangs and organized criminal networks, corporations, small business owners, labor brokers, employers of domestic servants, and victims’ own families.<sup>27</sup> Some instances of forced labor begin as a voluntary arrangement but devolve into debt bondage, whereby workers are coerced into providing labor to pay off the cost of trafficking them. Debt bondage, worsened by the COVID-19 crisis and subsequent economic instability, affects one-fifth of all victims of forced labor.<sup>28</sup>

Modern slavery is a **global phenomenon**, with Africa, Asia, and the Middle East areas of particular concern (Annex 2). Gaps in data collection are significant, notably in the Middle East and the Americas, but statistics suggest that modern slavery is most prevalent in Arab States, with 10.1 victims of modern slavery per 1,000 people, and in Asia and the Pacific, which hosts the highest absolute number of people in modern slavery at 29.3 million people.

Forced labor and forced marriage are most widespread in Arab States (5.3 victims of forced labor per 1,000 people and 4.8 victims of forced marriage per 1,000 people). Asia and the Pacific, however, account for the highest absolute number of modern slavery victims, with almost two-thirds of forced marriage victims (14.2 million people) and half of forced labor victims (15.1 million people) in the region.

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<sup>21</sup> “Human Trafficking.” Migration Data Portal, 4 May 2024, [www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking#:~:text=The%202022%20report%20estimates%20that,were%20in%20a%20forced%20marriage](http://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking#:~:text=The%202022%20report%20estimates%20that,were%20in%20a%20forced%20marriage).

<sup>22</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 22-36.

<sup>23</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 45.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>25</sup> “Human Trafficking.” Migration Data Portal, 4 May 2024, [www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking#:~:text=The%202022%20report%20estimates%20that,were%20in%20a%20forced%20marriage](http://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking#:~:text=The%202022%20report%20estimates%20that,were%20in%20a%20forced%20marriage).

<sup>26</sup> The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative. <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/>.

<sup>27</sup> “The Traffickers.” National Human Trafficking Hotline. 2024. <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/human-trafficking/traffickers>.

<sup>28</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 43.

No region of the world is exempt from the reach of modern slavery, and traffickers continue to operate clandestinely in many places, where they benefit from a lack of awareness of the issue among everyday citizens. Modern slavery is **most prevalent in low and low-middle income countries** (9.6 victims and 7.8 victims per 1,000 respectively) **but also occurs in high and upper-middle income countries at alarmingly high rates** (5.9 victims and 4.4 victims per 1,000 respectively).<sup>29</sup>

**Children** are among the most vulnerable targets of traffickers, comprising a quarter of all victims of modern slavery, more than 40% of forced marriage victims, and over a quarter of victims of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>30</sup>

**Refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.** Whether fleeing conflict and persecution in countries such as Myanmar and Venezuela, or searching for new economic opportunities in the United States and the European Union, the world's nearly 114 million<sup>31</sup> forcibly displaced people are frequently the targets of traffickers who promise safe passage and employment prospects, forcing victims into unpaid, exploitative labor. Without legal residence status in their host countries, many migrants choose not to seek help from governments or law enforcement for fear of arrest.<sup>32</sup> Where residence status is conditional upon the sponsorship of an employer, many documented migrants do not report abuses and labor exploitation to state authorities for fear of deportation.<sup>33</sup>

### **International agreements and common action**

The main international legal instrument to combat human trafficking is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime<sup>34</sup> adopted by the United Nations in 2000. The Protocol supplements the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (also known as the Palermo Protocol). A compendium of international anti-trafficking legislation can be found [here](#).

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, include three specific targets aimed at combating human trafficking.

- *UN Sustainable Goal 5.2:* Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.<sup>35</sup>
- *UN Sustainable Goal 8.7:* Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of

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<sup>29</sup> "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage." ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 17.

<sup>30</sup> "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage." ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 17.

<sup>31</sup> "Refugee Statistics." UNHCR. 2024.

<sup>32</sup> "Migrants and their Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Forced Labor." IOM. 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Cousins, Sophie. "Will Migrant Domestic Workers in the Gulf Ever Be Safe From Abuse?" Women's Advancement Deeply, August 29, 2018. "Slaving Away: Migrant Labor Exploitation and Human Trafficking in the Gulf." Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain. April 2014.

<sup>34</sup> "The Protocol." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2024. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/protocol.html>

<sup>35</sup> "Goal 5." United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Sustainable Development. 2024. [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5#targets\\_and\\_indicators](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5#targets_and_indicators)

the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.<sup>36</sup>

- *UN Sustainable Goal 16.2*: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.<sup>37</sup>

In agreeing to the SDGs, the United Nation member states recognize that improving health, combatting inequality, increasing education access and quality, and supporting inclusive economic growth and climate resilient solutions are necessary to combat poverty and other deprivations, including human trafficking.

International treaties face major implementation challenges. Better coordination and cooperation among state governments and law enforcement agencies are urgently needed to prosecute perpetrators who operate internationally. Despite commitments by national governments and intergovernmental agencies to combat modern slavery and human trafficking, effective anti-slavery efforts are quite limited. The U.S. Department of State estimates that there were a mere 15,159 prosecutions and 5,577 convictions globally for trafficking-related crimes in 2022,<sup>38</sup> far below the estimated total incidence of such crimes as described above.

The prospects for achieving sustained progress by reliance on national legislation are mixed. Many countries lack anti-trafficking laws or the means to enforce existing laws effectively.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, public officials are themselves involved in the trafficking process or may refuse to intervene because of the potential political cost; victims may be unwilling to cooperate with the criminal justice system for fear of retribution by their traffickers.<sup>40</sup> Even in countries that actively enforce anti-trafficking measures, these measures may address only a small part of the problem; some EU governments, for example, have focused primarily on dismantling criminal networks and prosecuting traffickers, with far fewer resources going toward identifying and assisting victims.<sup>41</sup>

## **G20 Commitments and Actions on Human Trafficking and Forced Labor**

While historically, the focus in the laws of G20 states has been on labor issues broadly, in recent years, G20 leaders have taken a range of steps to address more specific aspects of human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery (notably forced and child labor). The terms human trafficking and modern slavery are referred to on occasion, but the focus is typically on labor issues. The COVID-19 emergencies led to a renewed focus on these issues. The following are extracts from official communiqués addressing human trafficking and forced labor and subsequent actions taken by G20 leaders.

### *Argentina 2018*

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<sup>36</sup> “Goal 8.” United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Sustainable Development. 2024. [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8#targets\\_and\\_indicators](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8#targets_and_indicators)

<sup>37</sup> “Goal 16.” United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Sustainable Development. 2024. [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets\\_and\\_indicators](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators)

<sup>38</sup> “2023 Trafficking in Persons Report.” U.S. Department of State. 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

<sup>39</sup> “Human Trafficking FAQs.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2020. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/faqs.html>

<sup>40</sup> “Human Rights and Human Trafficking.” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2014. 46.

<sup>41</sup> “Legislation and the Situation Concerning Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in EU Member States.” International Centre for Migration Policy Development. 2009. 13. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/doc\\_centre/crime/docs/evaluation\\_eu\\_ms\\_thb\\_legislation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/doc_centre/crime/docs/evaluation_eu_ms_thb_legislation_en.pdf)

“We will implement policies to improve the employment situation of young people, consistent with the G20 Antalya Youth Goal. We will take actions to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in the world of work, including through fostering sustainable supply chains.”<sup>42</sup>

#### *Japan 2019*

Leaders asked their Ministers to exchange good practices that will help generate policy options that support both decent work and social protection. The communiqué restated the Leaders’ commitment to promoting decent work and eradicating child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, and modern slavery, including in global supply chains.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Saudi Arabia 2020*

“Tackling the devastating impact of the pandemic on labor markets remains our priority as millions of workers continue to face job and income loss. We recognize the importance of protecting and promoting decent jobs for all, especially for women and youth. We support access to comprehensive, robust, and adaptive social protection for all, including those in the informal economy, and endorse the use of the Policy Options for Adapting Social Protection to Reflect the Changing Patterns of Work. We recognize the importance of employment policies and programs in supporting job creation, and promote the use of social dialogue. We will continue to support workers through training and reskilling policies. We acknowledge the report from the ILO and the OECD on the Impact of COVID-19 on Global Labor Markets. We endorse the G20 Youth Roadmap 2025 in support of achieving the G20 Antalya Youth Goal to reduce the share of young people who are at most risk of being permanently left behind in the labor market by 15 percent by 2025. We call upon the ILO and the OECD to continue monitoring these matters. We will continue our efforts to eradicate child labor, forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery in the world of work.”<sup>44</sup>

#### *Italy 2021*

“The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our labour markets, disproportionately affecting vulnerable workers. In cooperation with social partners, we will adopt human-centered policy approaches to promote social dialogue and to ensure greater social justice; safe and healthy working conditions; and decent work for all, including within global supply chains. To reduce inequalities, eradicate poverty, support worker transitions and reintegration in labour markets and promote inclusive and sustainable growth, we will strengthen our social protection systems, as outlined in the G20 Policy Principles to Ensure Access to Adequate Social Protection for All in a Changing World of Work. We welcome the G20 Policy Options to Enhance Regulatory Frameworks for Remote Working Arrangements and Work through Digital Platforms. We will work to ensure decent working conditions for remote and platform workers and strive to adapt our regulatory frameworks to new forms of work, ensuring that these are fair and inclusive, leaving no one behind, while paying special attention to addressing the digital gender divide and intergenerational inequalities. We also ask the ILO and the OECD to continue

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<sup>42</sup> “Buenos Aires Leaders’ Declaration.” G20 Argentina 2018, 1 Dec. 2018,

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37247/buenos\\_aires\\_leaders\\_declaration.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37247/buenos_aires_leaders_declaration.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. “G20 Osaka Leaders’ Declaration | Documents and Materials | G20 Osaka Summit 2019.” G20 Osaka Summit 2019, 28-29 June 2019, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/g20\\_summit/osaka19/en/documents/final\\_g20\\_osaka\\_leaders\\_declaration.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/g20_summit/osaka19/en/documents/final_g20_osaka_leaders_declaration.html).

<sup>44</sup> “G20 Leaders’ Declaration: Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All.” G20 Saudi Arabia 2020, 21 Nov. 2020, [www.g20.org/pt-br/assets/g20-2020\\_arabiasaudita\\_declaracao-de-lideres.pdf](http://www.g20.org/pt-br/assets/g20-2020_arabiasaudita_declaracao-de-lideres.pdf).



monitoring progress towards the Antalya Youth Goal. We underscore our commitment to further international cooperation to strengthen safe and healthy working conditions for all workers and welcome the G20 Approaches on Safety and Health at Work.”<sup>45</sup>

#### *Indonesia 2022*

“We remain committed to the promotion of decent work and the elimination of child and forced labour.”<sup>46</sup>

#### *India 2023*

“We will increase our efforts for the elimination of child labour and forced labour along global value chains.”<sup>47</sup>

#### *Brazil 2024*

“...Globalization has created challenges and its benefits have not been shared widely enough...the G20 is determined to shape globalization to benefit all people.”<sup>48</sup>

### **G7 Commitments and Action on Human Trafficking and Forced Labor**

The G7 leaders have also made several commitments to address human trafficking and forced labor in global supply chains through demonstrating shared priorities and coordination, utilizing trade policies, promoting responsible business conduct, and strengthening collaboration and accountability. The following illustrate the G7’s commitment and subsequent actions to combat human trafficking and support victims through its official communiqués.

#### *Canada 2018*

“We share a responsibility to build a more peaceful and secure world, recognizing that respect for human rights, the rule of law and equality of opportunity are necessary for lasting security and to enable economic growth that works for everyone.... We underscore the importance of taking concrete measures to eradicate trafficking in persons, forced labour, child labour and all forms of slavery, including modern slavery.”<sup>49</sup>

#### *France 2019*

“We support the implementation of the Dinard Declaration on the Partnership for a Comprehensive and Sustainable Strategy to Combat Illicit Trafficking in the Sahel Region adopted by the G7 Foreign Ministers. We acknowledge the Dinard Declaration on Women, Peace and Security, and in particular

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<sup>45</sup> ““G20 Rome Leaders” Declaration.”“ G20 Italy 2021, 31 Oct. 2021, [www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/G20ROMELEADERSDECLARATION.pdf](http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/G20ROMELEADERSDECLARATION.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> ““G20 Bali Leaders” Declaration.”“ The White House, 16 Nov. 2022, [www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/16/g20-bali-leaders-declaration/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/16/g20-bali-leaders-declaration/).

<sup>47</sup> G20 New Delhi Leaders” Declaration. New Delhi, India, 9-10 September 2023. Council of the European Union, [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/66739/g20-new-delhi-leaders-declaration.pdf\[1\]](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/66739/g20-new-delhi-leaders-declaration.pdf[1]).

<sup>48</sup> Galeano, Eduardo. ““Taking the G20 at its Word: Suggestions for Immediate & Effective Measures to Eliminate Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking.” Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 27 July 2017, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/pt/blog/taking-the-g20-at-its-word-suggestions-for-immediate-effective-measures-to-eliminate-modern-slavery-human-trafficking/>.

<sup>49</sup> ““The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communiqué.”“ European Council, Council of the European Union, 9 June 2018, [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/09/the-charlevoix-g7-summit-communicue/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/09/the-charlevoix-g7-summit-communicue/).

women’s full and meaningful participation at all stages of peace processes, notably as negotiators, mediators and peace-builders.”<sup>50</sup>

#### *United Kingdom 2021*

“We are concerned by the use of all forms of forced labour in global supply chains, including state-sponsored forced labour of vulnerable groups and minorities, including in the agricultural, solar, and garment sectors. We agree on the importance of upholding human rights and of international labour standards, including those deriving from International Labour Organisation membership, throughout global supply chains and tackling instances of forced labour. We commit to continue to work together including through our own available domestic means and multilateral institutions to protect individuals from forced labour and to ensure that global supply chains are free from the use of forced labour. We therefore task G7 Trade Ministers to identify areas for strengthened cooperation and collective efforts towards eradicating the use of all forms of forced labour in global supply chains.”<sup>51</sup>

#### *Germany 2022*

“We will coordinate to maximise the coherent implementation of and compliance with international standards relating to human rights, environment, and labour across global supply chains. We are committed to tackling child labour, and to ensuring decent work, including fair wages, working closely with the private sector. We are concerned by the use of all forms of forced labour in global supply chains, including state-sponsored forced labour of vulnerable groups and minorities, including in the agricultural, solar, and garment sectors. We agree on the importance of upholding human rights and of international labour standards, including those deriving from International Labour Organisation (ILO) membership, throughout global supply chains and tackling instances of forced labour. We commit to accelerating progress including through our own available domestic means and multilateral institutions with a view to remove all forms of forced labour from global supply chains, including state-sponsored forced labour. We commit to taking measures to strengthen our cooperation and collective efforts towards eradicating the use of all forms of forced labour in global supply chains, including through increased transparency and business risk advisories, and other measures to address forced labour globally.”<sup>52</sup>

#### *Japan 2023*

“We reiterate the importance of combating transnational organized crime, including crimes related to drug trafficking, small arms and light weapons trafficking, human trafficking, and child abuse, both online and offline. We recognize the significant public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs. We will enhance efforts to stop the illicit manufacture and trafficking of these substances and to address the public health consequences of substance use. We remain committed to safe, orderly, and regular migration around the world and will continue to engage in preventing and countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Élysée. ““G7 Sahel Partnership Action Plan.”” Élysée, 5 July 2019,

<https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/05/a47d34992ae172f71af981698f05524ffed81b24.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué. The White House, 13 June 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communique/>. Accessed 1 July 2024.

<sup>52</sup> G7 Leaders. ““G7 Leaders’ Communiqué.”” G7 Germany, 28 June 2022,

<https://www.g7germany.de/resource/blob/974430/2062292/fbdb2c7e996205ace402386aae057c5e/2022-07-14-leaders-communique-data.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> ““G7 Japan 2023 Foreign Ministers’ Communiqué.”” United States Department of State, 16 Apr. 2023,

[www.state.gov/g7-japan-2023-foreign-ministers-communique/#:~:text=We%20reaffirm%20our%20commitment%20to,United%20Nations%20\(UN\)%20Charter](https://www.state.gov/g7-japan-2023-foreign-ministers-communique/#:~:text=We%20reaffirm%20our%20commitment%20to,United%20Nations%20(UN)%20Charter).

“We will continue promoting job quality and decent work as well as the fundamental principles and rights at work, including the right to safe and healthy working environments, underlining the important role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in this regard. We commit to ensure full respect of international labor standards and human rights to promote fair and non-exploitative working conditions, including in global value chains, in particular the fundamental conventions adopted by the ILO. We will promote technical cooperation on these issues and will intensify our efforts to abolish all forms of forced and compulsory labor and child labor.

[In addition,] we will work to strengthen border management and visa policies and processes, also with a view to limit the activities of migrant smuggling and trafficking networks.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Faith Involvement in Addressing Human Trafficking**

Religious groups play important and diverse roles in combatting human trafficking and supporting victims. The teachings of many religious groups condemn human trafficking, and many local faith communities today support vulnerable communities, with victims of trafficking receiving special focus and support. Recent years have also seen a rise in the number of international religious institutions and networks specifically dedicated to supporting victims, and prominent global religious leaders have taken up the cause of eliminating human trafficking. Important collaborative efforts aim to unite religious communities and link their action to broader non-faith work.

Religiously linked approaches to the challenges of human trafficking and modern slavery fall into three broad categories:

- A. **Advocacy**, linked to increasing awareness and response within faith communities. Involvement of religious communities has helped mobilize community-level action to address the issue from a moral and spiritual perspective, complementing legislative and law enforcement approaches.
- B. **Supportive Action**, from global to local, by specific religious or religious-inspired institutions to address aspects of modern slavery, often focused on victim support. Some institutions have a long history of engagement on the issue, including the Salvation Army, the International Justice Mission, and Chab Dhai in Cambodia.
- C. **Targeted efforts**, led by religious actors and institutions directed at addressing modern slavery. The Santa Marta Group and Talitha Kum are prominent examples. Several interreligious initiatives also bring diverse faith communities together in support of action, such as Religions for Peace and the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR).

The G20 Interfaith Forum initiative to prioritize human trafficking grew from several faith-linked global experiences and advocacy efforts. Prominent among them is the work of Kevin Hyland, former UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner ([see interview](#) on his work). In his police experience in the UK, he worked closely with community-based religious actors whose local knowledge and commitment to compassion enhanced both victim support and enforcement.

Some specifically religiously linked efforts on which the IF20 has focused include, *inter alia*, actions to require and ensure that human trafficking and forced labor are not involved in government supply chains. Religiously inspired anti-trafficking networks have participated in several G20 Interfaith Forums. Among the forums’ messages are the vital importance of addressing root causes of trafficking which are, notably,

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<sup>54</sup> G7 Education Ministers’ Declaration. G7 Italia, 27-29 June 2024, [www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/G7-Education-Ministers-Declaration.pdf](http://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/G7-Education-Ministers-Declaration.pdf).

situations of extreme poverty where options are limited and individuals may feel compelled to engage in trafficking as a means of survival.

**Global moral and ethical leadership** is a major area of both actual and potential support and impact. The following are examples of significant efforts to combat human trafficking driven by religious organizations:

*Pope Francis* is an exemplary, vocal advocate against human trafficking, labelling it a “crime against humanity.”<sup>55</sup> He has taken concrete steps to address the issue, including collaborating with religious leaders from various faith traditions on the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery,<sup>56</sup> addressing the issue before the United Nations,<sup>57</sup> supporting the Santa Marta Group,<sup>58</sup> and championing different Catholic organizations to combat human trafficking.<sup>59</sup>

*The Vatican* has reiterated its support for victims of trafficking—specifically victims of commercial sex trafficking—and championed preventative efforts at June 2024 56th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council: “There is a pressing need for States not only to pass laws which effectively combat this offense to women’s dignity, but also... to provide practical support for victims of prostitution and to address the underlying causes of such violence,” said the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations.<sup>60</sup>

Other prominent religious leaders who engage directly on human trafficking include the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The work of global interreligious bodies, notably Religions for Peace, United Religions Initiative, and the Parliament of the World’s Religions, have supported anti-trafficking efforts over a long period. Networks of religious actors have focused on bolstering action to address trafficking. Examples include the Joint Learning Initiative for Faith and Local Communities (JLI) and the ACT Alliance. The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) supports efforts to exert influence using the power of faith institution assets. Ecumenical bodies, notably the [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC) have focused both on condemnation of trafficking and supporting paths to action.

Historical narratives on slavery (in ancient and modern forms) have tended to be dominated by approaches by Christians, above all tied to abolitionist movements, and that is to a degree reflected in contemporary evidence. However, other religious traditions have leaders and institutional focus on the issues—see for example an Islamic Relief Worldwide [statement](#) on the topic. Another prominent example

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<sup>55</sup> Francis, Pope. “Credenziali Nuovi Ambasciatori.” Vatican City, 12 Dec. 2013, [vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/december/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131212\\_credenziali-nuovi-ambasciatori.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/december/documents/papa-francesco_20131212_credenziali-nuovi-ambasciatori.html).

<sup>56</sup> “Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery.” The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 2 Dec. 2014, [https://www.pas.va/en/events/2014/religious\\_leaders\\_slavery/final\\_statement.html](https://www.pas.va/en/events/2014/religious_leaders_slavery/final_statement.html).

<sup>57</sup> “Address of the Holy Father.” The Holy See, 25 Sept. 2015, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150925\\_onu-visita.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html).

<sup>58</sup> “Pope praises work of Santa Marta Group to combat human trafficking.” Vatican News, 17 May 2022, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-05/pope-meets-santa-marta-group-and-praises-its-work.html>.

<sup>59</sup> “Church Must Band Together to Fight Human Trafficking, Pope.” Ucanews.com, 2024, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/church-must-band-together-to-fight-human-trafficking-pope/105195>. Accessed 18 Jul. 2024.

<sup>60</sup> “Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva. “56th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls.” Nuntiusge.org, 6 Oct. 2023, [nuntiusge.org/56th-regular-session-of-the-human-rights-council-item-3-interactive-dialogue-with-the-special-rapporteur-on-violence-against-women-and-girls/](https://www.nuntiusge.org/56th-regular-session-of-the-human-rights-council-item-3-interactive-dialogue-with-the-special-rapporteur-on-violence-against-women-and-girls/).

is the Hindu leader [Swami Agnivesh](#), a passionate fighter against bonded labor in India and worldwide who died as a result of a physical attack during an advocacy event.

*Example: Catholic Church and Anti-Trafficking.*

The complexity and diversity of faith-linked responses to trafficking and modern slavery is well illustrated by different Catholic Church activities, under the broad umbrella of Papal leadership.

*The Santa Marta Group*, an alliance of international police chiefs and Catholic bishops, works to eradicate human trafficking and modern slavery. Launched in 2014, it has expanded to include representatives from various Christian denominations, as well as Muslim and Hindu faith leaders.<sup>61</sup> The Santa Marta Group works to raise awareness, provide victim support, and collaborate with law enforcement to disrupt trafficking networks.<sup>62</sup> The group gathers leaders from civil society, law enforcement, business, faiths, and communities on six continents. In Europe, Santa Marta successfully collaborated with London’s Metropolitan Police Human Trafficking Unit to create a support center for victims of human trafficking during the 2012 London Olympics which serves as a model for collaboration in combatting human trafficking.<sup>63</sup>

Networks of Catholic religious sisters have taken on trafficking issues both locally and globally, and a wide range of other faith-inspired organizations and networks are involved in this work, both as advocates and in direct support of victims. *The Talitha Kum network* is an international organization of Catholic women working against human trafficking. Talitha Kum coordinates anti-trafficking efforts across multiple countries, offering training, raising awareness, and providing direct assistance to survivors.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, the Catholic congregation the Sisters of the Good Shepherd focuses on prevention through education, vocational training, and research, as well as supporting prosecution efforts and providing legal aid to survivors.<sup>65</sup>

*The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking* are actively involved in combating human trafficking in the Americas through various initiatives, such as USCCB’s Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP), which educates on human trafficking as an offense against human dignity, advocates for ending modern slavery, provides training and technical assistance, and supports survivors through community-based services.<sup>66</sup> Other USCCB programs (the Amistad

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<sup>61</sup>The Santa Marta Group. “The Santa Marta Group.” Santa Marta Group, 8 Nov. 2023, <https://santamartagroup.org/about/the-santa-marta-group>.

<sup>62</sup>Parsitau, D.S., Aura, R.A. (2021). The Role of Religion and Faith Actors in Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa: Challenges, Tensions, and Promise. In: Yacob-Haliso, O., Falola, T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women’s Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4\\_27](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4_27)

<sup>63</sup> The Santa Marta Group. “The Santa Marta Group.” Santa Marta Group, 8 Nov. 2023, <https://santamartagroup.org/about/the-santa-marta-group>.

<sup>64</sup> “Young People Join Religious Sisters in Global Fight Against Trafficking.” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.usccb.org/news/2024/young-people-join-religious-sisters-global-fight-against-trafficking](http://www.usccb.org/news/2024/young-people-join-religious-sisters-global-fight-against-trafficking).

<sup>65</sup> “Human Trafficking in Asia-Pacific: ICMC and other Church Responses.” International Catholic Migration Commission, 13 Jan. 2020, [www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/](http://www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/).

<sup>66</sup> “Anti-Trafficking Program.” U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, [www.usccb.org/topics/anti-trafficking-program](http://www.usccb.org/topics/anti-trafficking-program). Accessed 10 May 2024.

Movement, the SHEPHERD program, COMPASS) provide case management support for victims, elevate comprehensive research and outreach, and strengthen coordination and capacity.<sup>67</sup>

The Amistad Movement trains individuals in immigrant communities to conduct outreach, educate peers on human trafficking, and provide resources for victims.<sup>68</sup> The SHEPHERD program similarly equips community leaders with skills to recognize trafficking signs, spread awareness, and empower others to join the fight against trafficking.<sup>69</sup> The Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea (COMPASS) initiative is a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State that works to strengthen the coordination and increase the capacity of the Catholic response to maritime trafficking, especially in ministries at sea and ports by providing programs that share best practices and educate on human trafficking.<sup>70</sup>

*The Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP)* is a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant program that supports foreign-born trafficking victims and their family members through case management, healthcare advocacy, legal assistance, and financial assistance.<sup>71</sup> Catholic Charities is a recipient of the TVAP grant and provides family reunification services, employment counseling, and assistance in finding emergency shelters for victims of trafficking.<sup>72</sup>

*The Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking* partners with the USCCB and dioceses to raise awareness and provide education on human trafficking.<sup>73</sup> They hold webinars and events during National Human Trafficking Awareness Month (January) and the World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking (February 8th).<sup>74</sup> They offer toolkits and resources for parishes and communities to get involved in anti-trafficking efforts.<sup>75</sup> The USCCB and Catholic Sisters collaborate to advocate, educate, provide victim services, and mobilize the Catholic community against the scourge of human trafficking in the Americas.<sup>76</sup>

The international efforts of the Catholic Sisters are critical in providing resources across continents. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJMs) of Lesotho, for example, produced a radio show

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<sup>67</sup> “United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services. “Learn More About USCCB/MRS Anti-Trafficking Program.” BRYCS, <https://brycs.org/anti-trafficking/learn-more-about-usccb-mrs-anti-trafficking-program>.”

<sup>68</sup> “United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services. “Learn More About USCCB/MRS Anti-Trafficking Program.” BRYCS.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea (COMPASS).” USCCB, <https://www.usccb.org/offices/anti-trafficking-program/coalition-organizations-and-ministries-promoting-abolition-slavery>

<sup>71</sup> “Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP).” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Trafficking in Persons, 13 June 2024, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/fact-sheet/resource/tvap>.

<sup>72</sup> Catholic Charities DC. “Trafficking Victims Assistance Program.” Trafficking Victims Assistance Program - Catholic Charities DC, 2024, <https://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/program/trafficking-victims-assistance-program/>.

<sup>73</sup> “HT-All.pdf.” Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland, 8 Mar. 2024, <https://ccdoc.org/wp-content/uploads/HT-All.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> “Anti-Trafficking Program.” U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “HT-All.pdf.” Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland, 8 Mar. 2024

“United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services. “Learn More About USCCB/MRS Anti-Trafficking Program.” BRYCS.

for women and girls to raise awareness about warning signs of trafficking.<sup>77</sup> The U.S. SNJM historically implemented similar awareness projects: Before the 2016 Super Bowl held in California, the SNJMs collaborated with law enforcement, hospitality services, and community members to counter the associated increase in human trafficking.<sup>78</sup>

### *Additional Examples*

*The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)* describes itself as “a coalition of faith- and values-based investors who view shareholder engagement with corporations as a powerful catalyst for change.”<sup>79</sup> Established five decades ago, it has evolved over several decades from an Apartheid-focused group of Christian investors to a far more interfaith group with a broader purpose. Its core mission today is to establish genuine and impactful collaborations with the companies in members’ portfolios through shareholder engagement.<sup>80</sup>

ICCR is in the vanguard of the shareholder advocacy movement in both issues and strategies. The group focuses on social justice, environmental justice, and the collective commitment to bring these concerns to companies through direct and collaborative engagement. The network includes both NGOs and civil society groups and frames its corporate engagements on the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

ICCR addresses human trafficking multifocally, with one focus being that major companies’ supply chains do not involve forced labor. Their approach is illustrated in their 2015 report “Recruited into Slavery.”<sup>81</sup>

*The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby*, has been actively involved in combating human trafficking. During his visit to Pope Francis, Archbishop Welby highlighted the issue of human trafficking, urging religious leaders to unite against it.<sup>82</sup>

*The Global Freedom Network* is the faith-based arm of Walk Free and is a collaborative effort between Catholic, Anglican, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Orthodox religious leaders to combat modern slavery and human trafficking.<sup>83</sup>

*The Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew*, contributes to the interfaith efforts against human trafficking by publicly condemning human trafficking and engaging in interfaith dialogue to promote

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<sup>77</sup> Sheridan, Judith, et al. “‘Reach every victim’ and ‘leave no one behind’: Sisters combat human trafficking.” National Catholic Reporter, 31 July 2023, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/reach-every-victim-and-leave-no-one-behind-sisters-combat-human-trafficking>.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> “About ICCR.” Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, <https://www.iccr.org/about-iccr/>. Accessed 4 Aug. 2024.

<sup>80</sup> Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. “Our Origin Story.” ICCR, 2024, [www.iccr.org/mission-history/#:~:text=In%201971%2C%20the%20founding%20congregations,apartheid%20system%20in%20South%20Africa](http://www.iccr.org/mission-history/#:~:text=In%201971%2C%20the%20founding%20congregations,apartheid%20system%20in%20South%20Africa). Accessed 4 Aug. 2024.

<sup>81</sup> Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. “Recruited Into Slavery.” ICCR, 2022, [www.iccr.org/reports/recruited-into-slavery/](http://www.iccr.org/reports/recruited-into-slavery/)

<sup>82</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury. “Archbishop Sends Message to Anglican Anti-Slavery Meeting in Rome.” Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 June 2024, [https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/node/847/printable/bbd\\_pdf\\_format](https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/node/847/printable/bbd_pdf_format). Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. “2014 Booklet Declaration of Religious Leaders.” 2 Dec. 2014, [https://www.pass.va/content/dam/casinapioiv/pass/pdf-booklet/2014\\_booklet\\_declaration\\_religious\\_leaders.pdf](https://www.pass.va/content/dam/casinapioiv/pass/pdf-booklet/2014_booklet_declaration_religious_leaders.pdf).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

understanding and cooperation among religious leaders in combating human trafficking. In 2017, Patriarch Bartholomew convened the First International Forum on Modern Slavery, “Sins Before Our Eyes,” in Istanbul, bringing together Orthodox Christian leaders to take action against this global crisis.<sup>84</sup> He also formed the Patriarchal Task Force on Modern Slavery, led by Metropolitan Nikitas of the Dardanelles, to guide the Orthodox Church’s response, and has called on Orthodox Christians worldwide to join the fight against this “unacceptable expression of abuse and evil in our present day.”<sup>85</sup>

*Buddhist organizations like the International Network of Engaged Buddhists and Buddhism for Development* contribute to counter-trafficking efforts by addressing root causes such as poverty and lack of education.<sup>86</sup> Dhamma Moli, a small Buddhist community in Nepal founded by two Theravada Buddhist nuns, provides shelter and education to young girls at risk of falling victim to human traffickers. The nuns, Venerable Dhamma Vijaya and Venerable Molini, were inspired to start Dhamma Moli after witnessing the devastating effects of human trafficking during a visit to Cambodia. They have since dedicated themselves to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the girls, teaching them Buddhist principles, and helping them reintegrate into society.<sup>87</sup>

*The Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities (IAFSC)* is a collaborative effort among religious communities to address human trafficking. This alliance is motivated by interfaith values and aims to take collective action to prevent, protect against, and respond to trafficking. The alliance is comprised of various faith-based organizations and leaders who work together to leverage their moral influence to better protect children from trafficking. IAFSC’s key initiatives include education, advocacy, supporting service providers, reporting and referrals, interfaith commitment, and global partnership.<sup>88</sup> IAFSC emphasizes the importance of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in addressing human trafficking, recognizing that religious communities are uniquely positioned to promote equitable outcomes for children and respond with compassion to situations of abuse and exploitation.<sup>89</sup>

Various faith-inspired organizations focus specifically on action to address trafficking. Prominent among them is the *International Justice Mission (IJM)*,<sup>90</sup> a global organization that protects people in poverty from human trafficking and modern slavery, as well as from violence and abuse of power by police.<sup>91</sup> Their work includes strengthening justice systems, rescuing and restoring victims, holding perpetrators to account, and championing scalable protection solutions. Their work is based on collaborating with local authorities—such as police, judges, and community leaders—to respond to violence and make sustainably safe communities.<sup>92</sup> Their programs focus on poverty’s root causes and target the factors that make the poorest most susceptible to human trafficking.

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<sup>84</sup> Adminincom. “Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking as a Parish.” Incommunion, 22 Oct. 2019, <https://incommunion.org/2019/10/22/fighting-modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking-as-a-parish/>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Bodakowski, Michael. “Regional Approaches to Combatting Trafficking in Southeast Asia.” Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 23 Apr. 2013, [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia](http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia).

<sup>87</sup> Campano, Erik. “Buddhist Nuns, Human Trafficking, Nepal, Dhammamoli, Dhammavijaya, Molini, Erik Campano.” Patheos, 2013, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/erikcampano/2013/02/buddhist-nuns-human-trafficking-nepal-dhammamoli-dhammavijaya-molini-erik-campano/>.

<sup>88</sup> “Interfaith Alliance | Home.” Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities, 3 May 2024, [iafsc.org/](http://iafsc.org/).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Bodakowski, Michael. “Regional Approaches to Combatting Trafficking in Southeast Asia.” Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 23 Apr. 2013, [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia](http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia).

<sup>91</sup> “International Justice Mission | End Modern Slavery for Good.” International Justice Mission, [www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.



Country-focused initiatives often have strong faith leadership and practical action. Cambodia is one prominent example, a country response that is central to conversations regarding the current reasons for human trafficking, potential solutions, and the ethical obligations of various stakeholders to address the harm inflicted on individuals and society.<sup>93</sup> [Chab Dai](#) was established in 2005 in Cambodia and supports partners focused on trafficking victims as well as relevant policies. With coalitions now in the UK and US in addition to Cambodia, multisector engagement and community collaboration is core to their mission of ending “all forms of abuse and modern slavery globally by building a movement to empower communities, to strengthen systems, and to restore justice and wellbeing with survivors.”<sup>94</sup>

Metta Karuna reflection center in Siem Reap, Cambodia, is one other such example. The center is a multi-purpose center established by Jesuit Services and Sister Denise Coghlan that takes a broad and action-focused approach to trafficking problems.<sup>95</sup> Islamic Relief Worldwide also operates regionally, supporting action against the trafficking of children in Nepal through anti-poverty projects such as the Ensuring Child Protection and Welfare (ECPW) program.<sup>96</sup>

### **Looking Ahead: Recommendations**

The G20 leaders should commit at their November 2024 Rio de Janeiro Summit to a revitalized multi-stakeholder approach to action on human trafficking that draws on diverse perspectives and capabilities of different participants. The G20 Interfaith Forum will be revitalizing and expanding its working group on trafficking, and urges the G20 to support this initiative and to facilitate cooperation between this initiative and parallel efforts undertaken by the G20 itself or by individual G20 members. Reports on progress should be called for during the 2025 Summit and annually thereafter. Our working group and any parallel G20 initiatives should focus on strengthening political will across G20 member states and beyond with clear 2030 targets, including financial commitments. The G20 Interfaith Forum commits to extend, support and cooperate with these vital initiatives.

A renewed G20 initiative could reinforce and bolster active engagement with leaders and dedicated organizations and promote dynamic integration. Leadership that links global and local perspectives and action is critically needed to combat human trafficking. The aim is to take anti-human trafficking commitments to new levels, setting trafficking in both global and local contexts in a clear human rights framework.

Efforts must involve multiple stakeholders, encompassing wide-ranging commitments from various communities and sectors, while also seeking practical methods to strengthen connections. Specific targets and deadlines including financial commitments can reinforce broad promises. A narrative that links economic, social, cultural, and legal forces that cause and perpetuate human trafficking to global development goals can inspire action.

The moral and practical leadership of religious communities and networks can take global and local forms. More specifically, it can include action within specific frameworks such as the G20. Religiously led anti-trafficking work plays significant, but poorly integrated, roles in global approaches.

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<sup>93</sup> "Faith Roles in Cambodia's Efforts to Counter Trafficking in Persons." Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2021, [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/faith-roles-in-cambodia-s-efforts-to-counter-trafficking-in-persons](https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/faith-roles-in-cambodia-s-efforts-to-counter-trafficking-in-persons).

<sup>94</sup> "About Chab Dai." Chab Dai, [www.chabdai.org/about-chab-dai](http://www.chabdai.org/about-chab-dai).

<sup>95</sup> "Country Profile: Cambodia." JRS, Jesuit Refugee Service, <https://jrs.net/en/country/cambodia/>.

<sup>96</sup> "Where We Work: Nepal." Islamic Relief Worldwide, Islamic Relief, [https://islamic-relief.org/where\\_we\\_work/nepal/#:~:text=We%20are%20currently%20working%20on,living%20below%20the%20poverty%20line](https://islamic-relief.org/where_we_work/nepal/#:~:text=We%20are%20currently%20working%20on,living%20below%20the%20poverty%20line).

The working group would highlight and link existing resources, identify knowledge gaps, estimate resources needed to take action to higher levels, and propose institutional and collaborative mechanisms to enhance impact. It would draw on new technologies, including different forms of AI, in this effort.

Further steps include:

*“Nothing about us without us.”* The call for inclusion of those directly involved (survivors, victims) has central importance as a mantra and reminder.

*Action to better integrate faith and non-faith linked anti-human-trafficking initiatives.* Research and consultations with different groups could identify knowledge gaps, overlaps, and points of convergence.

*Building proactively on the experience and assets of faith actors* to strengthen strategies where they offer specific means that governments and other civil society actors lack. The institutional capacity of large religious bodies could be leveraged to support collaboration across borders and obtain access to critical areas. Religious groups’ close work with at-risk populations such as refugees and migrants<sup>97</sup> position them to engage knowledgeably with policymakers.

*Identifying and assessing anti-human-trafficking efforts specifically focused on children,* with a view to assuring their integration in broader strategies.

*Intentional inclusion of victims in all plans,* with deliberate priority to supporting victims and giving them a voice. Victim representatives need to be present in policy deliberations about trafficking policies.

*Confidential hotlines, particularly in known target areas for recruiters,* implemented through training for law enforcement, public employees, and humanitarian aid workers on how to provide effective assistance to victims of modern slavery.

*Deliverables linked to global and national supply chains* through focus on public procurement processes to identify where such supply chains rely on forced labor.

*Bolster efforts to address root causes of risks -- including economic conditions, supporting vulnerable populations, and raising awareness of the issue.* Religious actors should be consulted and engaged in developing and implementing appropriate accountability mechanisms. National policies that extend rights to laborers in the informal economy can contribute to curtailing the exploitation of workers. Awareness campaigns should aim to ensure that potential victims and bystanders can better recognize the causes and signs of exploitation. Initiatives addressed to at-risk populations can serve as an important bulwark against trafficking.

*Strengthen anti-trafficking enforcement and collaborative efforts, especially for trafficking occurring on the internet.* Deliberate action, taken in collaboration with civil society groups, including religious actors, is needed to contain the worrying online spread of child pornography and to prosecute perpetrators.

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<sup>97</sup> For example, of the U.S. government’s ten partner resettlement agencies, six are faith-based organizations: Church World Service (CWS), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Bethany Christian Services (BCS) (“U.S. Resettlement Partners | UNHCR US.” UNHCR, [www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/resettlement-united-states/u-s-resettlement-partners](http://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/resettlement-united-states/u-s-resettlement-partners)).

*Strengthen data collection mechanisms.* A stronger statistical base would foster public recognition of the patterns and scale of trafficking and modern slavery, inform action initiatives, and facilitate assessment of the impact of anti-slavery initiatives. Databases such as the UN's Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal, the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative, and the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index help shape anti-trafficking policy, especially with regards to vulnerable groups such as women, children, and migrants and refugees. Assuring adequate financing at the national level alongside formal designation of overall action responsibility is necessary.

## Annex 1: Data on Trafficking/modern slavery

Table 1: Modern Slavery Worldwide

	Privately imposed forced labor (excluding FCSE)		Forced commercial sexual exploitation (FCSE)		Total privately imposed forced labor		State-imposed forced labor		<b>TOTAL FORCED LABOR</b>		<b>TOTAL FORCED MARRIAGE</b>		<b>TOTAL MODERN SLAVERY</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
World	17,325	2.2	6,332	0.8	23,657	3.0	3,920	0.5	27,577	3.5	21,993	2.8	49,570	6.4
Male	11,303	2.9	1,403	0.4	12,706	3.2	3,072	0.8	15,779	4	7,060	1.8	22,839	5.8
Female	6,022	1.6	4,929	1.3	10,951	2.8	848	0.2	11,798	3.1	14,933	3.9	26,731	6.9
Adults	16,017	2.9	4,644	0.9	20,661	3.8	3,603	0.7	24,263	4.5	13,020	2.4	37,283	6.9
Children	1,308	0.6	1,688	0.7	2,997	1.3	317	0.1	3,314	1.4	8,973	3.8	12,287	5.2
High income	4,065	3.3	1,208	1	5,274	4.3	110	0.1	5,384	4.4	1,865	1.5	7,249	5.9
Upper-middle income	4,490	1.5	2,451	0.8	6,941	2.4	2,025	0.7	8,965	3.1	3,737	1.3	12,702	4.4
Lower-middle income	6,467	2.2	2,122	0.7	8,590	2.9	326	0.1	8,916	3	1,4131	4.8	23,047	7.8
Low income	2,301	3.4	551	0.8	2,852	4.2	1,459	2.1	4,311	6.3	2,261	3.3	6,572	9.6
Africa									3,819	2.9	3,189	2.4	7,008	5.2
Americas									3,593	3.5	1,496	1.5	5,089	5
Arab States									886	5.3	814	4.8	1,700	10.1
Asia and the Pacific									15,142	3.5	14,207	3.3	29,349	6.8
Europe and Central Asia									4,137	4.4	2,287	2.5	6,424	6.9

Absolute numbers (No.) are in the thousands. Prevalence rate (%) is victims per 1,000 people. Figures pulled from the International Labor Organization, International Organization of Migration, and Walk Free Foundation's 2022 "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Force Labor and Forced Marriage" 2022 report.

## Annex 2: Regional Focus

### *Africa*

Human trafficking is a major problem across Africa, driven by complex socioeconomic factors. Research, policy responses, and victim support are needed to address the problems effectively. Estimates put the number of forced labor victims in Africa at 3.8 million and forced marriage victims at 3.2 million (5.2 victims of modern slavery per 1,000 people across the continent).<sup>98</sup> The 2022 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that, in 2020, a majority of the victims (60%) in Sub-Saharan Africa are children, and a majority of trafficked victims were trafficked for forced labor (62%).<sup>99</sup>

Legislation within Sub-Saharan African countries to protect victims and criminalize offenders is limited, with significantly lower conviction rates of traffickers (2 people per 1,000,000) than the global average (7 people per 1,000,000).<sup>100</sup> Of those investigated for human trafficking between 2018 and 2020, only 22% were prosecuted and 4% were convicted for their crimes. During the same period, Sub-Saharan African countries followed global prosecution trends with a decrease in number of those prosecuted (6% regional decrease in prosecution rates) but, opposing global trends, the region saw increased conviction rates (22% increase in regional conviction rates, 44% decrease in global conviction rates).<sup>101</sup> Although boys and men are more likely to be prosecuted for human trafficking (65% of those prosecuted are boys or men, 35% are girls or women), women are more likely to be convicted (56% of those convicted are men, 44% are women).<sup>102</sup>

Children in Africa are particularly susceptible to entrenched systems of debt bondage from hereditary slavery practices or a family selling children for increased income, in which children are forced to work in the domestic service and agriculture sectors.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, urbanization, labor-intensive industries, and military recruitment are factors linked to internal trafficking in East Africa.<sup>104</sup>

Nigeria is a major source for human trafficking within Africa, with an estimated 750,000 to 1 million victims trafficked in Nigeria annually. The Edo State is considered a significant regional source for trafficking in Nigeria.<sup>105</sup> Following the drivers of trafficking worldwide, poverty, unemployment, corruption, conflict, globalization, ease of travel, demand for cheap labor, and cultural/religious practices are key drivers of trafficking in Nigeria. Gender inequalities, lack of education, and feelings of hopelessness also contribute to vulnerability.

No African country has met the minimum standards for eliminating trafficking under the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report, with Nigeria ranked as Tier 2.<sup>106</sup> Lack of primary research, limited support services for victims, and gaps in data collection on trafficking to the UK from Nigeria have been identified as

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<sup>98</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 23, 61.

<sup>99</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 89.

<sup>100</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 66.

<sup>101</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 64.

<sup>102</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 91-93.

<sup>103</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 48-49.

<sup>104</sup> “Human Trafficking in Eastern Africa: Research Assessment and Baseline Information in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi.” International Organization of Migration, 2008.

<sup>105</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Prevention of Human Trafficking.” UNODC, [www.unodc.org/conig/en/stories/prevention-of-human-trafficking.html](http://www.unodc.org/conig/en/stories/prevention-of-human-trafficking.html).

<sup>106</sup> “2023 Trafficking in Persons Report.” U.S. Department of State. 2023.

challenges of combating trafficking practices. African-regional initiatives like the SADC 10 Year Strategic Plan of Action have aimed to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts in southern Africa.<sup>107</sup>

Faith organizations and religious communities in Africa play a crucial role in identifying, supporting, and advocating for victims of human trafficking, as well as working to prevent and disrupt trafficking networks through collaborative efforts with law enforcement and other stakeholders. Religious leaders and institutions hold significant sway in many African communities and use this platform to raise awareness about human trafficking, denounce the practice, and mobilize their followers to act. Regional faith groups are often well-positioned to identify victims of trafficking due to their frequent interaction with community members. They often provide critical services such as health, education, shelter, and awareness-raising activities targeting vulnerable populations.<sup>108</sup> For example, the Salvation Army collaborates with key stakeholders of the Kenyan National Referral Mechanism to coordinate assistance for trafficking victims in Eastern Africa.<sup>109</sup>

Faith communities are also important advocates for protection of vulnerable groups and key players in preventing and ending the exploitation of children. UNICEF has developed an Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking to educate faith leaders, faith-based organizations, and houses of worship on human trafficking and equip them with tools and resources. The Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking highlights the values of several faith traditions, includes scriptural examples, and offers thirteen ways faith communities can combat human trafficking globally and locally.<sup>110</sup>

Faith actors have also worked in various African countries to address the complex relationship between religion, gender, and violence against women and girls, which can contribute to human trafficking and exploitation.

### ***The Arab States***

There are an estimated 886,000 forced labor victims and 814,000 forced marriage victims in the Arab States, a prevalence rate of 10.1 victims of modern slavery per 1,000 across the region.<sup>111</sup> The Arab States have the highest prevalence rates of forced labor in the world at 5.3 victims per 1,000.<sup>112</sup> Women and girls are disproportionately affected by trafficking within the region, composing 73% of victims in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and 89% of victims in other Middle East countries.<sup>113</sup>

Migrant workers in countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery under the exploitative kafala (sponsorship) system.<sup>114</sup> The prevalence of forced migration is significantly higher for migrant workers internationally (13.8 victims

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<sup>107</sup> “Southern African Development Community (SADC).” SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030. SADC Secretariat, 2020, [https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-08/RISDP\\_2020-2030.pdf](https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-08/RISDP_2020-2030.pdf).

<sup>108</sup> “Can Faith-based Organizations Assist Trafficking Victims?” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024. <https://www.unodc.org/easternafrika/en/can-faith-based-organizations-provide-assistance-to-trafficking-victims.html>

<sup>109</sup> “Can Faith-based Organizations Assist Trafficking Victims?” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024.

<sup>110</sup> “Interfaith Toolkit To End Trafficking.” UNICEF USA, 2024. <https://www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit>

<sup>111</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 18.

<sup>112</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 24.

<sup>113</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 79..

<sup>114</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 38.

per 1,000 migrants versus 4.1 victims per 1,000 non-migrants), and they often face barriers to accessing protection and other basic rights. Forced labor in the Arab States is most reported in sectors such as domestic work, construction, hospitality, and security. Gender inequality, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic have also amplified existing vulnerabilities of migrant and non-migrant communities.<sup>115</sup>

Governments in the region have taken some steps to address modern slavery, such as launching awareness campaigns, establishing national referral mechanisms, and ratifying relevant international conventions.<sup>116</sup> However, significant gaps remain in areas like victim identification and support, criminal justice mechanisms, and addressing root causes.<sup>117</sup>

Many Arab countries have passed comprehensive anti-trafficking laws since the UN Trafficking Protocol was adopted in 2000,<sup>118</sup> including Mauritania, the UAE, Egypt, and other countries. The region's anti-trafficking laws generally focus on criminalizing trafficking, protecting victims, and establishing national coordination mechanisms;<sup>119</sup> however, significant gaps remain in areas like victim identification, support services, and addressing root causes.<sup>120</sup> The League of Arab States has also developed a Model Law to Combat the Crime of Trafficking in Persons, which has influenced national legislation in the region.<sup>121</sup> Some countries, like Jordan and Morocco, have faced challenges in fully implementing their anti-trafficking laws due to political factors and resource constraints.<sup>122</sup>

Religious organizations and leaders have played an important role in combating human trafficking and supporting victims in the Arab States.<sup>123</sup> For example, Islamic organizations and scholars have issued *fatwas* (religious rulings) condemning labor abuse, exploitation,<sup>124</sup> and modern slavery.<sup>125</sup> Initiatives, such

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<sup>115</sup> Walk Free, "Arab States," Global Slavery Index, accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/arab-states/>.

<sup>116</sup> "Modern slavery in Saudi Arabia," Walk Free, accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/country-studies/saudi-arabia/>.

<sup>117</sup> International Labour Organization, "40 million in modern slavery and 152 million in child labour around the world," ILO News, September 19, 2017, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/40-million-modern-slavery-and-152-million-child-labour-around-world>.

<sup>118</sup> Mohamed Y. Mattar, Human Rights Legislation in the Arab World: The Case of Human Trafficking, 33 MICH. J. INT'L L. 101 (2011). Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol33/iss1/506>

<sup>119</sup> Mohamed Y. Mattar, Human Rights Legislation in the Arab World: The Case of Human Trafficking, 33 Mich. J. Int'l L. 101 (2011). Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol33/iss1/506>

<sup>120</sup> International Labour Organization, "40 million in modern slavery and 152 million in child labour around the world," ILO News, September 19, 2017, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/40-million-modern-slavery-and-152-million-child-labour-around-world>.

<sup>121</sup> Mohamed Y. Mattar, Human Rights Legislation in the Arab World: The Case of Human Trafficking, 33 MICH. J. INT'L L. 101 (2011). Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol33/iss1/506>

<sup>122</sup> "Advocacy and laws confront trafficking across the Arab States," UN Women, accessed April 28, 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/3/advocacy-and-laws-confront-trafficking-across-the-arab-states>.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Combating Trafficking in Persons in Accordance with the Principles of Islamic Law. United Nations, 2010. [www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic\\_law\\_tip\\_english\\_ebook\\_v0985841.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic_law_tip_english_ebook_v0985841.pdf)

"Advocacy and laws confront trafficking across the Arab States," UN Women, accessed April 28, 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/3/advocacy-and-laws-confront-trafficking-across-the-arab-states>.

<sup>124</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Combating Trafficking in Persons in Accordance with the Principles of Islamic Law." 24. United Nations, 2010. [www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic\\_law\\_tip\\_english\\_ebook\\_v0985841.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic_law_tip_english_ebook_v0985841.pdf)

<sup>125</sup> Global Freedom Network. A United Faith Against Modern Slavery: The Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Modern Slavery. Vatican City, 2 Dec. 2014, <https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/06154604/GFN-2-Dec-Vatican-Book-digital.pdf>.

as the Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries, has also brought together religious leaders with government agencies to raise awareness and coordinate anti-trafficking efforts across the region.<sup>126</sup> The involvement of religious institutions has helped mobilize community-level action and address the issue from a moral and spiritual perspective, complementing legislative and law enforcement approaches.<sup>127</sup>

### *North America & South America*

Human trafficking remains a pervasive issue in North and South America, where 5.1 million people live in conditions of modern slavery on any given day in the region.<sup>128</sup> The critical drivers of human trafficking in the region include: porous borders and a lack of regional coordination, facilitating cross-border trafficking networks;<sup>129</sup> economic disparity and a lack of opportunity causing vulnerability among marginalized groups;<sup>130</sup> and corruption and complicity among officials that undermine anti-trafficking efforts.<sup>131</sup>

There are an estimated 3.593 million forced labor victims and 1.496 million forced marriage victims in the Americas, a prevalence rate of 5 victims of modern slavery per 1,000 across the region.<sup>132</sup> Similarly to the Arab States, migrants in the Americas are particularly vulnerable to exploitation through human trafficking—particularly those who are undocumented and working in sectors where trafficking is prevalent (such as the agriculture, construction, and domestic sectors).<sup>133</sup> In addition to migrants, indigenous communities and other disenfranchised groups in the Americas, are disproportionately affected by trafficking due to systemic discrimination and a lack of access to resources. In Canada, for example, indigenous women compose 50% of the identified human trafficking survivors, while they are only 4% of Canada’s entire population.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> "Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013, [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/2013/arab-initiative-to-build-national-capacities-to-combat-human-trafficking-in-the-arab-countries.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/2013/arab-initiative-to-build-national-capacities-to-combat-human-trafficking-in-the-arab-countries.html).

<sup>127</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Combating Trafficking in Persons in Accordance with the Principles of Islamic Law*. United Nations, 2010. [www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic\\_law\\_tip\\_english\\_ebook\\_V0985841.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/islamic_law_tip_english_ebook_V0985841.pdf)

UN Women, "Advocacy and laws confront trafficking across the Arab States," UN Women, April 28, 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/3/advocacy-and-laws-confront-trafficking-across-the-arab-states>.

<sup>128</sup> "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage." ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 20.

<sup>129</sup> "Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking." UNICEF USA, 12 Apr. 2024, [www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit](http://www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit).

Caritas Internationalis. "Human Trafficking." Caritas, 22 Apr. 2024, [www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/](http://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/).

<sup>130</sup> Caritas Internationalis. "Human Trafficking." Caritas, 22 Apr. 2024, [www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/](http://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Catholic Social Teaching and the Church’s Fight to End Trafficking." USCCB, 30 Mar. 2024, [www.usccb.org/offices/anti-trafficking-program/catholic-social-teaching-and-churchs-fight-end-trafficking](http://www.usccb.org/offices/anti-trafficking-program/catholic-social-teaching-and-churchs-fight-end-trafficking).

<sup>131</sup> "Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking." UNICEF USA, 12 Apr. 2024, [www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit](http://www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit)

"Combating Human Trafficking: Key Approaches." Wilson Center, 18 Apr. 2024, [www.wilsoncenter.org/article/combating-human-trafficking-key-approaches](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/combating-human-trafficking-key-approaches).

<sup>132</sup> "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage." ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 18.

<sup>133</sup> "Americas | Walk Free." Walk Free, 30 Mar. 2024, [www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/americas/](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/americas/).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*



Most countries in the Americas have laws criminalizing human trafficking, largely aligned with the UN Trafficking Protocol. Successful support of region-based anti-trafficking legislation includes the 2000 U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), a comprehensive federal law that allows for prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims.<sup>135</sup> Mexico similarly implemented legislation (the 2012 General Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Crimes related to Trafficking in Persons) to strengthen penalties and bolster victim assistance.<sup>136</sup> Brazil also increased sentences for trafficking crimes in 2016 with the passage of Law No. 13.344, Brazil's first piece of legislation addressing human trafficking.<sup>137</sup> Although these examples present the opportunity to successfully combat human trafficking, implementation and enforcement remain uneven.

South America serves as a source, route, and destination for human trafficking. Major forms include labor trafficking within and across national borders, sex trafficking of women and children, and trafficking of migrants from other regions like Central America.<sup>138</sup> Several economic and environmental factors contribute to trafficking vulnerabilities in South America:

- Economic disparities and lack of opportunities, especially for women in low-wage informal jobs, drive migration and trafficking flows from poorer to wealthier areas;<sup>139</sup>
- Transnational organized crime networks facilitate trafficking operations across borders;<sup>140</sup>
- Conflicts, natural disasters, and other crises increase vulnerability, as seen with Haitian children orphaned after the 2010 earthquake;<sup>141</sup>
- Restrictive immigration policies limit legal migration pathways, enabling traffickers to exploit irregular migrants;<sup>142</sup> and
- Government uninterest and corruption, including complicity between officials and traffickers, undermine anti-trafficking efforts.<sup>143</sup>

Detected trafficking patterns often mirror regular migration flows, with victims trafficked from poorer to wealthier nations. For example, Bolivian citizens are overrepresented among trafficking victims in Argentina compared to regular migration levels.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> [“Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.”](https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ386/PLAW-106publ386.pdf)

<https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ386/PLAW-106publ386.pdf>.

<sup>136</sup> [“Training Related to Combating Human Trafficking: Mexico.”](https://maint.loc.gov/law/help/human-trafficking/mexico.php) Library of Congress.

<https://maint.loc.gov/law/help/human-trafficking/mexico.php>.

<sup>137</sup> “Information Booklet on Brazil’s National Framework for Combating Trafficking in Persons and International Cooperation Procedures.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2021. [www.gov.br/mj/pt-br/assuntos/sua-protecao/trafico-de-pessoas/publicacoes/guias-e-manuais/UNODC\\_Trafico%20de%20Pessoas%20e%20Cooperacao%20Internacional%20%28Ingles%29](http://www.gov.br/mj/pt-br/assuntos/sua-protecao/trafico-de-pessoas/publicacoes/guias-e-manuais/UNODC_Trafico%20de%20Pessoas%20e%20Cooperacao%20Internacional%20%28Ingles%29).

<sup>138</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando. Trafficking in Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service, 2016. 4. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33200/40>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid at 4.

<sup>140</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016.” United Nations, 2016. 7. [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16\\_Chapter\\_2.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16_Chapter_2.pdf).

<sup>141</sup> Seelke, Clare Ribando. Trafficking in Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Congressional Research Service, 2016. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid at 3.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid at 4.

<sup>144</sup> UNODC. “Chapter 2: Interlinkages between Trafficking in Persons and Migration.” Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, United Nations, 2016, [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16\\_Chapter\\_2.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16_Chapter_2.pdf).

Religious groups leverage their moral authority and extensive networks to reach vulnerable populations and advocate for stronger anti-trafficking measures.<sup>145</sup> Faith-linked organizations play a crucial role in combating trafficking through awareness campaigns, victim assistance, and advocacy efforts in the Americas. The Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking, for example, equips faith leaders to act against trafficking through education and community mobilization.<sup>146</sup> Caritas Internationalis and the Christian Organizations Against Trafficking Network (COATNET) also work across borders to raise awareness and assist survivors in the region.<sup>147</sup>

### *Asia and the Pacific*

Human trafficking is a pervasive issue in Asia and the Pacific, with the region accounting for 59% of the global total of modern slavery victims (29.349 million people).<sup>148</sup> Asia and the Pacific have the highest absolute number of victims of both forced labor and forced marriage, with 15.142 million victims of forced labor (a prevalence rate of 3.5 victims per 1,000 people) and 14.207 million victims of forced marriage (a prevalence rate of 3.3 victims per 1,000 people) in the region.<sup>149</sup>

Asia and the Pacific follow international trends for drivers of human trafficking, including vulnerabilities exacerbated by poverty, underreporting and lack of accurate data, political corruption, poverty and economic vulnerability, and conflict and displacement. Workers within the fishing, agriculture, and construction industries are particularly at risk of human trafficking due to exploitation tactics such as debt bondage.<sup>150</sup>

Several countries in Asia have enacted domestic legislation to combat human trafficking, such as the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act in Thailand and the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act in Malaysia.<sup>151</sup> However, gaps and inconsistencies in these laws, coupled with weak enforcement, hinder their effectiveness. Their implementation is often hindered by competing priorities, lack of resources, and corruption. For example, corruption and low risk of prosecution enable traffickers to operate with impunity in some areas, while labor inspectors lack access to sectors like domestic work and fishing, where trafficking is highly prevalent.<sup>152</sup>

Religious groups play a significant role in combating human trafficking in Asia and the Pacific region. They are actively involved in raising awareness, providing support services to victims, and advocating for

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<sup>145</sup> “Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking.” UNICEF USA, 12 Apr. 2024, [www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit](http://www.unicefusa.org/about-unicef-usa/partnerships/humanitarian-organizations/faith-based-partners/interfaith-tool-kit).

<sup>146</sup> “Faith Action on Human Trafficking.” Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University, 9 May 2024, [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/subprojects/faith-action-on-human-trafficking](http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/subprojects/faith-action-on-human-trafficking)

<sup>147</sup> Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking.” UNICEF USA, 12 Apr. 2024.

<sup>148</sup> “Human Trafficking - Caritas.” Caritas, 22 Apr. 2024, [www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/](http://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/human-trafficking/).

<sup>149</sup> “Asia and the Pacific | Walk Free.” Walk Free, 29 Mar. 2024, [www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/asia-and-the-pacific/](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/asia-and-the-pacific/).

<sup>150</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 18.

<sup>151</sup> “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2022. 122.

Caballero, Mely. “Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia.” *Finance & Development*, vol. 55, no. 3, Sept. 2018, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero).

<sup>152</sup> Caballero, Mely. “Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia.” *Finance & Development*, vol. 55, no. 3, Sept. 2018, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero).

<sup>153</sup> “Human Trafficking in Asia-Pacific: ICMC and Other Church Responses.” The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), 13 Jan. 2020, [www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/](http://www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/).

policy changes to address the root causes of trafficking. Regional religious groups leverage their moral authority, grassroots networks, and transnational connections to combat human trafficking through a multifaceted approach of prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts.<sup>153</sup> In Thailand, the Catholic Network Against Trafficking (CNATT), in collaboration with the Talitha Kum Network, has established a structure of 27 members who share information, raise awareness in schools and parishes, and train government officials to identify and respond to trafficking cases.<sup>154</sup> In Australia, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) advocates for policy changes, raises awareness through educational programs, and supports seasonal workers to prevent exploitation.<sup>155</sup>

Australia, more broadly, takes a comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking within the Asia-Pacific region, emphasizing regional cooperation, capacity building, prevention, investigation, prosecution, and victim support, while also advocating for global action against these crimes.<sup>156</sup> Australia co-chairs the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime with Indonesia, which is a key regional forum for policy dialogue, information sharing, and practical cooperation to address human trafficking and related crimes.<sup>157</sup> Australia has provided substantial support to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states through programs like ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking (ASEAN-ACT) to strengthen their counter-trafficking efforts.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Bodakowski, Michael. “Regional Approaches to Combatting Trafficking in Southeast Asia.” Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 23 Apr. 2013, [berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia](https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/regional-approaches-to-combatting-trafficking-in-southeast-asia).

“Human Trafficking in Asia-Pacific: ICMC and other Church Responses.” International Catholic Migration Commission, 13 Jan. 2020, [www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/](https://www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/).

“Young People Join Religious Sisters in Global Fight Against Trafficking.” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.usccb.org/news/2024/young-people-join-religious-sisters-global-fight-against-trafficking](https://www.usccb.org/news/2024/young-people-join-religious-sisters-global-fight-against-trafficking).

Carolan, Christine. “Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on Australia’s ‘New International Development Policy’.” Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, 6 Mar. 2024, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/new-international-development-policy-submission-acrath.pdf](https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/new-international-development-policy-submission-acrath.pdf).

<sup>154</sup> “Human Trafficking in Asia-Pacific: ICMC and other Church Responses.” International Catholic Migration Commission, 13 Jan. 2020, [www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/](https://www.icmc.net/2020/01/13/human-trafficking-in-asia-pacific-icmc-and-other-church-responses/).

<sup>155</sup> Carolan, Christine. “Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on Australia’s ‘New International Development Policy’.” Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, 6 Mar. 2024, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/new-international-development-policy-submission-acrath.pdf](https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/new-international-development-policy-submission-acrath.pdf).

<sup>156</sup> “Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy.” Department of Social Services, Australian Government, 1 Apr. 2024, [www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/anti-human-trafficking-strategy](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/anti-human-trafficking-strategy).

“Australia’s Response to TIP.” ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/](https://www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/).

Australian Federal Police. “Human Trafficking and Slavery Strategic Plan 2023-2026.” Australian Federal Police, 2023, [www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf](https://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf)

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “Amplifying Our Impact: Australia’s International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery.” Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf](https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf).

<sup>157</sup> “Australia’s Response to TIP.” ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/](https://www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/).

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

Australia's Ambassador for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking progresses the country's regional and international efforts to combat human trafficking and modern slavery.<sup>159</sup>

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has dedicated Human Trafficking Teams responsible for investigating human trafficking allegations, with an approach focused on prevention, detection, disruption, investigation, and prosecution.<sup>160</sup> The AFP works collaboratively with domestic and international partners, including government organizations, NGOs, and foreign agencies, to counter these crimes.<sup>161</sup> Australia's National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25 guides the government's strategy, which includes initiatives for prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, and victim support.<sup>162</sup>

Australia actively supports efforts to combat human trafficking and slavery in UN processes and promotes regional and international cooperation.<sup>163</sup> Australia's International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery (2016) outlines the government's four pillars of engagement: prevention and deterrence, detection and investigation, prosecution and compliance, and victim support and protection.<sup>164</sup> Australia strives to be a regional leader in deterring and combating human trafficking and slavery, working cooperatively with other governments both regionally and internationally.<sup>165</sup>

### ***Europe and Central Asia***

Europe and Central Asia has the second highest prevalence rate of human trafficking in the world with 6.9 victims per 1,000 people (6.424 million modern slavery victims).<sup>166</sup> The region counts 4.137 million victims of forced labor (a prevalence rate of 4.4 victims per 1,000 people), with migrant workers a

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<sup>159</sup> "Australia's Response to TIP." ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/](http://www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/).

<sup>160</sup> Australian Federal Police. "Human Trafficking and Slavery Strategic Plan 2023-2026." Australian Federal Police, 2023, [www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf](http://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf)

<sup>161</sup> Australian Federal Police. "Human Trafficking and Slavery Strategic Plan 2023-2026." Australian Federal Police, 2023, [www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf](http://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf)

<sup>162</sup> "Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy." Department of Social Services, Australian Government, 1 Apr. 2024, [www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/anti-human-trafficking-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/anti-human-trafficking-strategy).

Australian Federal Police. "Human Trafficking and Slavery Strategic Plan 2023-2026." Australian Federal Police, 2023, [www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf](http://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/HumanTraffickingandSlaveryStrategicPlan2023-2026.pdf)

<sup>163</sup> Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "Amplifying Our Impact: Australia's International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery." Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf).

<sup>164</sup> Australia's Response to TIP." ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking, 29 Apr. 2024, [www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/](http://www.aseanact.org/about/australias-response-to-tip/).

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "Amplifying Our Impact: Australia's International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery." Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf).

<sup>165</sup> Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "Amplifying Our Impact: Australia's International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery." Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023, [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/amplifying-our-impact-australias-international-strategy-to-combat-human-trafficking-and-slavery.pdf).

<sup>166</sup> "Asia and the Pacific | Walk Free." Walk Free, 29 Mar. 2024, [www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/asia-and-the-pacific/](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/asia-and-the-pacific/).

particularly vulnerable group facing exploitation in the mining, domestic, fishing and forestry industry.<sup>167</sup> Türkiye, Tajikistan, and Russia have the highest prevalence rates of modern slavery regionally (standing at 15.4, 14.0, and 13.0 victims of modern slavery per 1,000 people respectively).<sup>168</sup> Drivers of modern slavery and forced labor in this region include conflict, demand for cheap labor, strict immigration policies, inequality between nations, governance issues, and poverty.<sup>169</sup>

Forced marriage is a problem in Europe and Central Asia, with 2.28 million victims of forced marriage (a prevalence rate of 2.5 victims per 1,000 people) in the region—accounting for 10% of the world’s total forced marriages.<sup>170</sup> In parts of Central Asia, the practice of bride kidnapping or *Ala-Kachuu* persists, where men abduct girls or women and force them into marriage.<sup>171</sup> Despite laws prohibiting it, *Ala-Kachuu* continues to occur within in Kyrgyzstan, with an estimated 12,000 cases per year—estimated to be an abduction rate between 16% and 23% for women in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>172</sup> Regionally, poverty and social exclusion drive families to marry off daughters at a young age.<sup>173</sup>

Most countries in Europe and Central Asia have laws criminalizing human trafficking in line with the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol. However, the effectiveness of these laws varies greatly across the region. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and other countries, legislation covers all forms of trafficking indicated in the Protocol.<sup>174</sup> Other countries, like Romania, have seen a decline in trafficking convictions after initially robust enforcement, suggesting challenges in sustaining efforts.<sup>175</sup> Lack of victim identification, weak investigations, and low prosecution rates remain obstacles in many European and Central Asian countries.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 18.

Bérestégui, Pierre. “Labour Exploitation of Migrant Workers in Construction and Forestry.” The European Trade Union Institute. 2021. [www.etui.org/news/labour-exploitation-migrant-workers-construction-and-forestry](http://www.etui.org/news/labour-exploitation-migrant-workers-construction-and-forestry).

<sup>168</sup> “Europe and Central Asia | Walk Free.” Walk Free, 30 Mar. 2024, [www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/europe-and-central-asia/](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/europe-and-central-asia/).

<sup>169</sup> Prpic, Martina. “Understanding EU Action Against Human Trafficking.” European Parliamentary Research Service, June 2023,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690616/EPRS\\_BRI%282021%29690616\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690616/EPRS_BRI%282021%29690616_EN.pdf);

“Human Trafficking: The EU’s Fight Against Exploitation.” European Parliament, 21 Sept. 2023, [www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230921STO05705/human-trafficking-the-eu-s-fight-against-exploitation](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230921STO05705/human-trafficking-the-eu-s-fight-against-exploitation). Accessed 22 July 2024.

<sup>170</sup> “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.” ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation. 2022. 18.

“Europe and Central Asia | Walk Free.” Walk Free, 30 Mar. 2024, [www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/europe-and-central-asia/](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/regional-findings/europe-and-central-asia/).

<sup>171</sup> United Nations Population Fund. “Child Marriage in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Regional Overview.” UNFPA, 2014, <https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Child%20Marriage%20EECA%20Regional%20Overview.pdf>.

<sup>172</sup> UN Women. “Violence Against Women and Girls: Gender in Society Perception Study (GSPS) of the Kyrgyz Republic.” UN Women Europe and Central Asia, 2018, [https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2020/04/Gender%20in%20society%20perception%20study/GSPS\\_VAWG\\_ENG.pdf](https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2020/04/Gender%20in%20society%20perception%20study/GSPS_VAWG_ENG.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> UNFPA. “Child Marriage in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Regional Overview.” UNFPA, 2013, <https://menengage.unfpa.org/en/resources/child-marriage-eastern-europe-and-central-asia-regional-overview>. 6.

<sup>174</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Glotip16\_Country\_profile\_E\_EuropeCentral\_Asia.pdf.” UNODC, 2016, [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16\\_Country\\_profile\\_E\\_EuropeCentral\\_Asia.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Glotip16_Country_profile_E_EuropeCentral_Asia.pdf)

<sup>175</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Trafficking in Persons to Europe for Sexual Exploitation.” June 2010, [www.unodc.org/documents/publications/TiP\\_Europe\\_EN\\_LORES.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/TiP_Europe_EN_LORES.pdf).

<sup>176</sup> “Trends and Challenges in Addressing Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Civil Society and Survivor Perspectives.” OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 8 Apr. 2024, [www.osce.org/odihr/484979](http://www.osce.org/odihr/484979)

Religious groups play a crucial role in combating trafficking through awareness, prevention, victim assistance, and advocacy efforts in Europe and Central Asia. The Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE) is one such example. Talitha Kum sisters established the network when they noticed a regional gap in religious groups coordinating their anti-trafficking efforts.<sup>177</sup> Their work includes annual meeting of the RENATE Working Board with representatives from 20 European Countries,<sup>178</sup> researching victim needs,<sup>179</sup> and raising awareness in education settings.<sup>180</sup>

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has bodies dedicated to combating human trafficking, but progress has been slow. There is potential for ASEAN to engage more actively with faith communities working on this issue at the regional level.

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<sup>177</sup> "RENATE: Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation." Talitha Kum, [www.talithakum.info/en/members/170/renate-religious-in-europe-networking-against-trafficking-and-exploitation](http://www.talithakum.info/en/members/170/renate-religious-in-europe-networking-against-trafficking-and-exploitation). Accessed 21 July 2024.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> "RENATE Launches New Research on Legal Practitioners Working with Trafficking Victims Across 5 European Countries." RENATE, 23 July 2024, [renate-europe.net/renate-launches-new-research-on-legal-practitioners-working-with-trafficking-victims-across-5-european-countries/](https://renate-europe.net/renate-launches-new-research-on-legal-practitioners-working-with-trafficking-victims-across-5-european-countries/).

<sup>180</sup> "Schools Awareness." RENATE Europe, <https://renate-europe.net/category/latest-news/schools-awareness/>. Accessed 23 July 2024.