

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery



ALLIANCE



FORCED LABOUR AND FORCED MARRIAGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



International
Labour
Office



**WALK FREE
FOUNDATION**

In partnership with



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Global estimates
of modern slavery:
forced labour
and forced marriage

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Executive summary

GENEVA, 2017



On any given day in 2016



METRICS

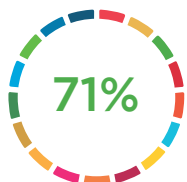
40 million people were victims of modern slavery. This includes:

- 25 million people in forced labour
- 15 million people in forced marriage

PREVALENCE

There were 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people in the world in 2016.

There were 5.9 adult victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 adults in the world and 4.4 child victims for every 1,000 children in the world.



GENDER

Women and girls accounted for 71 per cent of modern slavery victims.



DEBT BONDAGE

Debt bondage affected half of all victims of forced labour imposed by private actors.



CHILDREN

One in four victims of modern slavery were children.



IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, 89 MILLION PEOPLE EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF MODERN SLAVERY FOR PERIODS OF TIME RANGING FROM A FEW DAYS TO THE WHOLE FIVE YEARS.



Executive summary

The 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery are presented as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular to Target 8.7, which calls for effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking, as well as child labour in all its forms. It is intended to inform policy making and implementation of target 8.7 and related SDG targets. These include eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (SDG 5.2), eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilations (SDG 5.3), ending abuse, exploitation, and trafficking of children (SDG 16.2), and facilitating orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies (SDG 10.7).

The estimates herein are the result of a collaborative effort between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). They benefited from inputs provided by other UN agencies, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In the context of this report, modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, other slavery and slavery like practices, and human trafficking. Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. Essentially, it refers to situa-

tions of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.

The Global Estimates of Modern Slavery focus on two main issues, **forced labour** and **forced marriage**. The estimate of forced labour comprises **forced labour in the private economy** (forms of forced labour imposed by private individuals, groups, or companies in all sectors except the commercial sex industry), **forced sexual exploitation of adults and sexual exploitation of children**, and **state-imposed forced labour**.

Due to limitations of the methodology and data, as detailed in this report, these estimates are considered to be conservative.

The global figures

An estimated **40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016**. In other words, on any given day in 2016, there were likely to be more than 40 million men, women, and children who were being forced to work against their will under threat or who were living in a forced marriage that they had not agreed to.

Of these 40.3 million victims:

- **24.9 million people were in forced labour**. That is, they were being forced to work under threat or coercion as domestic workers, on construction sites, in clandestine factories, on farms and fishing boats, in other sectors, and in

the sex industry. They were forced to work by private individuals and groups or by state authorities. In many cases, the products they made and the services they provided ended up in seemingly legitimate commercial channels. Forced labourers produced some of the food we eat and the clothes we wear, and they have cleaned the buildings in which many of us live or work.

- **15.4 million people were living in a forced marriage to which they had not consented.** That is, they were enduring a situation that involved having lost their sexual autonomy and often involved providing labour under the guise of “marriage”.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, accounting for 28.7 million, or 71 per cent of the overall total. More precisely, women and girls represent 99 per cent of victims of forced labour in the commercial sex industry and 58 per cent in other sectors, 40 per cent of victims of forced labour imposed by state authorities, and 84 per cent of victims of forced marriages.

One in four victims of modern slavery were children. Some 37 per cent (5.7 million) of those forced to marry were children. Children represented 18 per cent of those subjected to forced labour exploitation and 7 per cent of people forced to work by state authorities. **Children who were in commercial sexual exploitation** (where the victim is a child, there is no requirement of force) represented 21 per cent of total victims in this category of abuse.

Over the five years of the reference period used in these estimates, a total of nearly 90 million people were in any of the forms of modern slavery for at least a few days. The average length of time victims were in forced labour varied from a few days or weeks in some forms imposed by state authorities to nearly two years for forced sexual exploitation.

The regional figures

Modern slavery occurred in every region of the world. Modern slavery was most prevalent in Africa (7.6 per 1,000 people), followed by Asia and the Pacific (6.1 per 1,000) then Europe and Central Asia (3.9 per 1,000). These results should be interpreted cautiously due to lack of available data in some regions, notably the Arab States and the Americas.

For forced labour specifically, the prevalence is highest in Asia and the Pacific, where four out of every 1,000 people were victims, followed by Europe and Central Asia (3.6 per 1,000), Africa (2.8 per 1,000), the Arab States (2.2 per 1,000) and the Americas (1.3 per 1,000).

While noting limits of the data in key regions, particularly the Arab States, the data suggests prevalence of forced marriage is highest in Africa (4.8 per 1,000), followed by Asia and the Pacific (2.0 per 1,000).

Forced labour

This study examined different forms of forced labour, distinguishing between forced labour imposed by private actors (such as employers in private businesses) and that which was imposed by states. Of the 24.9 million victims of forced labour, 16 million were in the private economy, another 4.8 million were in forced sexual exploitation, and 4.1 million were in forced labour imposed by state authorities.

FORCED LABOUR EXPLOITATION

An estimated 16 million people were in forced labour in the private economy in 2016. More women than men are affected by privately imposed forced labour, with 9.2 million (57.6 per cent) female and 6.8 million (42.4 per cent) male. Half of these men and women (51 per cent) were **in debt bondage**, in which personal

debt is used to forcibly obtain labour. This proportion rises above 70 per cent for adults who were forced to work in agriculture, domestic work, or manufacturing.

Among cases where the type of work was known, the largest share of adults who were in forced labour were **domestic workers** (24 per cent). This was followed by the **construction** (18 per cent), **manufacturing** (15 per cent), and **agriculture and fishing** (11 per cent) sectors.

Most victims of forced labour suffered **multiple forms of coercion** from employers or recruiters as a way of preventing them from being able to leave the situation. Nearly one-quarter of victims (24 per cent) had their wages withheld or were prevented from leaving by threats of non-payment of due wages. This was followed by threats of violence (17 per cent), acts of physical violence (16 per cent), and threats against family (12 per cent). For women, 7 per cent of victims reported acts of sexual violence.

FORCED SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF ADULTS AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

An estimated **3.8 million adults were victims of forced sexual exploitation and 1.0 million children were victims of sexual exploitation** in 2016. The **vast majority of victims (99 per cent) were women and girls**. More than seven in ten victims were exploited in the Asia and the Pacific region. This was followed by Europe and Central Asia (14 per cent), Africa (8 per cent), the Americas (4 per cent), and the Arab States (1 per cent).

STATE-IMPOSED FORCED LABOUR

There were an estimated 4.1 million people in state-imposed forced labour on average in 2016. They included citizens recruited by their state authorities to participate in agriculture or construction work for purposes of economic development, young military conscripts forced to perform work that was not of military nature, those forced to perform communal services that were not decided upon at the community level and do not benefit them, or prisoners forced to work

against their will outside the exceptions established by the ILO supervisory bodies.

Forced marriage

In 2016, **an estimated 15.4 million people were living in a forced marriage**. Of this total, 6.5 million cases had occurred in the previous five years (2012-2016) and the remainder had taken place prior to this period but had continued into it.

While men and boys can also be victims of forced marriage, most victims (88 per cent) were women and girls, with more than a third (37 per cent) of victims under 18 years of age at the time of the marriage. Among child victims, 44 per cent were forced to marry before the age of 15 years. While noting limits of the data in key regions, particularly the Arab States, the data suggests prevalence of forced marriage per 1,000 people is highest in Africa (4.8 per 1,000), followed by Asia and the Pacific (2.0 victims per 1,000).

Data sources and methodology

As no single source provides suitable and reliable data for all forms of modern slavery, a combined methodology has been adopted, drawing on a variety of data sources as required. The central element is the use of 54 specially designed, national probabilistic surveys involving interviews with more than 71,000 respondents across 48 countries. Administrative data from IOM databases of assisted victims of trafficking were used, in combination with the 54 datasets, to estimate forced sexual exploitation and forced labour of children, as well as the duration of forced labour exploitation. Forced labour imposed by state authorities was derived from validated sources and systematic review of comments from

the ILO supervisory bodies with regard to ILO Conventions on forced labour.

The methodology used to build these Global Estimates combined this data, which covers a five-year reference period from 2012 to 2016. All the data on cases of forced labour and forced marriage that took place between 2012 and 2016, representing a total of nearly 90 million people, was analysed and processed to build the main estimates of modern slavery presented in this report.

Conclusions and way forward

Ending modern slavery will require a multi-faceted response that addresses the array of forces – economic, social, cultural, and legal – that contribute to vulnerability and enable abuses. There can be no one-size-fits-all solution; responses need to be adapted to the diverse environments in which modern slavery still occurs. But it is nonetheless possible to identify some overarching policy priorities in the lead-up to 2030 from the Global Estimates and from experience to date.

Stronger social protection floors are necessary to offset the vulnerabilities that can push people into modern slavery. Extending labour rights in the informal economy – where modern slavery is most likely to occur – is needed to protect workers from exploitation. Given that a large share of modern slavery can be traced to migration, improved migration governance is vitally important to preventing forced labour and protecting victims.

Additionally, the risk and typology of modern slavery is strongly influenced by gender, and this must also be taken into account in developing policy responses. Addressing the root causes of debt bondage, a widespread means of coercion, is another necessary element of forced labour prevention, while improved victim identification is criti-

cal to extending protection to the vast majority of modern slavery victims who are currently unidentified or unattended. Finally, we know that much of modern slavery today occurs in contexts of state fragility, conflict, and crisis, pointing to the need to address the risk of modern slavery as part of humanitarian actions in these situations.

Further efforts are needed to improve the evidence base on modern slavery in order to inform and guide policy responses in all of these areas. Key measurement priorities identified through the preparation of the Global Estimates include the improved measurement of modern slavery affecting children and specifically cases of sexual exploitation involving children and child marriage. There is also a need to more effectively capture specific sub-populations such as adult victims of forced sexual exploitation and victims in conflict contexts. The ability to track changes in modern slavery over time will be critical for monitoring progress in the lead-up to 2030. But perhaps the most important priority is to strengthen and extend national research and data collection efforts on modern slavery to guide national policy responses.

International cooperation in addressing modern slavery is essential given its global and cross-border dimensions. Alliance 8.7, a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, has an important role to play in this regard. The Global Estimates indicate that the vast majority of forced labour today exists in the private economy. This underscores the importance of partnering with the business community – alongside employers' and workers' organisations, and civil society organisations – to eradicate forced labour in supply chains and in the private economy more broadly. Cooperation should be strengthened between and among governments and with relevant international and regional organizations in areas such as labour law enforcement, criminal law enforcement, and the management of migration in order to prevent trafficking and to address forced labour across borders.





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GLOBALLY TO END
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