

Forum: Human Rights Committee

Issue: The question of recrudescence of slavery

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Introduction

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) around 21 million men, women and children around the world are in a form of slavery.

This practise continues nowadays, in one form or another, affecting people of all ages, gender and races: women are forced into prostitution, children or entire families are forced to work in agriculture or factories for no form of remuneration, young women are forced to marry older man to please their families and so on.

Definition

Slavery is one of the most important human rights violation. Someone is identify as a slaver if:

- He's not free to choose to work for somebody or not, through physical or mental threats;
- He's not the owner of himself, he's always controlled by an "employer" who have the complete control (physical and mental) of the person;
- He's treated like an object, sold and bought by someone who needs him to work.

Various type of slavery

Unfortunately, today there is more than one form of slavery in our society.

- ❖ **Bounded labour** – someone becomes a bounded labour when he has to work as a means of repayment for a loan. Usually, this kind of slavery passes from one generation to the following ones. At the end, the person end up working more than the originally sum of money that was previously borrowed. It is a particularly cruel form of slavery for its violence, threats, and sometimes the imprisonment of the aforementioned person. This concerns especially the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and India. – even though governments of countries are aware of the situation, they do not improve or enforce laws against this type of violence, consequently people who are ready to exploit the desperate conditions of poor people will continue to do so.
- ❖ **Child slavery** – the ILO estimated that more than 8.4 million children are in slavery. Children are defined slaves when:
 - Other people profit from them, through violence, threats, abuses, illicit activities such as drug trade;
 - They are forced to child labour such as in agriculture, factories, brick kilns, mines;
 - They are forced to take part in armed conflicts. There are about 300,000 child soldiers involved in over 30 areas of conflict worldwide and after conflicts they could suffer from long-term trauma;
 - They are considered as domestic workers, far from home, with no pay, in abusive environments and in terrible conditions.
- ❖ **Child and forced marriage** – Estimates suggest that 11% of women worldwide were married before reaching the age of 15 (UNICEF 2012), in fact those who suffer more of this kind of slavery are girls. We have to consider the great impact that these marriages have on young girls, including their education and above all the risks to their health. Children are defines forced to marriage when:
 - They have not expressed their own desire to marry with their free consent;

- They are forced to marry someone that imposes his “ownership” on the child taken in consideration. This will led to non-consensual sexual relations, forced domestic chores, abuses and threats.

Many children have little or no control of their life and especially girls are commonly controlled though a life of violence, humiliations and loneliness. In this way, entry into slavery through marriage as a child is likely to lead to a life in slavery for the adults they become.

- ❖ **Forced labour** – It is a kind of work that people are forced to do, most of the times under some forms of punishment. Forced labour touches all men, women and children especially in industries such as agriculture and fishing, manufacturing and packaging, prostitution and sexual exploitation, market trading and illegal activities. It is a problem spread all over the world with at least 20.9 million of people forced to work worldwide:
 - Asia and Pacific: 11.7 million (56%)
 - Africa: 3.7 million (18%)
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: 1.8 million (9%)
 - The Developed Economies (US, Canada, Australia, European Union, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Japan): 1.5 million (7%)
 - Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe (non EU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CSEE): 1.6 million (7%)
 - Middle East: 600,000 (3%)

We have to underline that in some cases the State is directly responsible for the use of forced labour, like in Uzbekistan, Burma, North Korea and China. However, most of the times it is used by private employers who want to take profit of individuals in tragic conditions of poverty.

- ❖ **Human trafficking** – it is a problem that involves all the people brought into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will. It is common for forced prostitution, domestic servitude, forced labor, forced criminality, forced marriage and forced organ removal. It is difficult to have precise statistics of the number of people trafficked, but the ILO has estimated that more than 2.5 million people have been trafficked. Many people who are trafficked live in poverty, so are willing to accept every kind of job proposed by family, friends or agencies in their country or in another one, in order to send back to their family the money they need to survive. Once understood that the job they will take part do not exist, they are forced to work in conditions and situations they did not agreed. Now they have no choice.

Two concrete examples of slavery

- CONGO - The Democratic Republic of the Congo has always faced a history characterized by widespread violence. In eastern Congo today, the mines have become a source of not only conflict minerals, but also a source of human slavery. Here rape victims are forced to work in conditions of slavery in mines, producing gold and tin necessary to manufacture jewellery. The mines of Eastern Congo are under the control of multiple armed groups, which attack and rape civilians in order to gain control. The armed groups are then financed by profits from the mineral resources, which are often extracted and transported using slave labor. The “Congo Report: Slavery in conflicts minerals” released by the organization “Free The Slaves”, has pointed out that several forms of slavery are taking place in that area: use of child soldiers, peonage, forced labor, sexual slavery, child slavery, and debt bondage. Child slaves in particular are employed for the worst and hardest labors, such as diggers at the mine sites, or porters assisting in the transport of conflict minerals. Children, especially girls, are also susceptible to sexual exploitation and slavery by mine operators and

soldiers. Slavery here is considered as a free or cheap labor for armed groups, letting them continue their trade in conflict minerals

- NIGERIA – On April 14, 2014, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Nigerian jihad group named Boko Haram (“Western Education is forbidden”), has kidnapped over three hundred schoolgirls. In a video message released three weeks later, Shekau claimed responsibility for the kidnappings, calling the girls slaves and threatening to sell them in the market. Shekau also announced that the kidnapped girls have been converted to Islam. He had claimed to be waging a jihad against Christianity.

Possible solutions

- Ensure, with national organisations and the Governments of the countries, that well rounded education will be given to children of the countries more affected by the aforementioned problems;
- Work, through special communities, to raise awareness among families about the risk of human trafficking, child and forced labour, in order to protect their children and prevent these problems in the future;
- Implement a massive education campaigns in every country, in order to increase education and information about every form of slavery;
- Appoint a special committee in order to clarify, change, improve and transform previous laws about slavery, making them stricter.

Organizations

Here there is a list of the most famous organizations (most of them are non-profit), campaigns and movements such as, but not limited to:

- Alliance Against Modern Slavery www.allianceagainstmernslavery.org
- Defend Dignity www.defenddignity.ca
- Free-Them www.freethem.ca/
- Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking <http://www.endhumantrafficking.net>
- Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in Humans <http://www.pact-ottawa.org/>
- International Human Rights Law Group www.hrlawgroup.org
- Free 2 Work www.free2work.org
- United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking <http://www.no-trafficking.org/>
- United Nations Development Program – Anti-Trafficking – Armenia www.antitrafficking.am
- Anti-Slavery International www.antislavery.org
- National domestic workers movement (NDWM) MUMBAI <http://www.ndwm.org>
- Task Force on Human Trafficking <http://tfht.org/>
- S.O.S Esclaves www.sosesclaves.org
- Gender Equality Centre Mongolia www.stoptrafficking.mn
- Child Workers In Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) <http://www.cwin.org.np>
- The Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan
- Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking LA www.castla.org
- Free The Slaves www.freetheslaves.net
- Historians Against Slavery <http://historiansagainstsavery.org/>
- Invisible Children www.invisiblechildren.com
- Not For Sale <http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/>
- Ukrainian World Congress Task Force to Stop Human Trafficking www.ukrainianworldcongress.org
- Help Us Help The Children Anti-Trafficking Initiative www.chornobyl.ca
- Anti-Slavery International.