



Arrested Development

Discrimination and slavery in the 21st century

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Anti-Slavery International 2008



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Cover image: 60 year old Shyari's hands are bound in cloth in an attempt to protect them against the bricks she has to shift for twelve hours a day.
Photographer: Pete Pattison - www.petepattison.com

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“No individual, no community, and no country can remain silent in the face of this evil. Slavery is a problem for all regions and for all governments. It must be confronted nationally, regionally and globally. We should also seek to understand why and how slavery is so common in so ‘civilized’ an age. We have to recognize that endemic poverty, social exclusion and widespread discrimination allow this practice to fester. Slavery’s practitioners thrive on the desperate, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged.”¹

United Nations Secretary-General, 2007

Introduction

In 2008, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrates its 60th anniversary. The Declaration has 30 articles which outline the rights that everyone in the world should be entitled to. These include freedom from slavery, torture, arbitrary detention or exile, as well as the right to a fair trial, privacy, family life, free choice of employment and freedom of expression.

In short, the Universal Declaration sets out what are today generally considered basic human rights. It is worth highlighting that Articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration state that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

It is no coincidence that anti-discrimination clauses are the first things dealt with in the Declaration. Slavery and other human rights violations are a direct result of what people do to other people and it is much easier for someone to enslave, torture or otherwise cause another person to suffer if they can convince themselves that the person they are abusing is their inferior.²

This is why during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the pro-slavery lobby systematically attacked African cultures and spread racist propaganda which claimed that Africans had

no society and lived like savages. Once Europeans considered that Africans were not their equals, then they were freed from the moral obligations to treat them as such. This provided the justification for Europeans to enslave millions of Africans and deprive them of almost all the rights and freedoms that are now enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Discrimination continues to play a crucial role in the process through which millions of people are enslaved today. The individuals who are responsible for enslaving others can be from the poorest as well as the richest sectors of society, but they usually share a common belief that their victims do not deserve to be treated any better. Some justify their actions by claiming the people they are subjecting to forced labour are their “family” and that they would be worse off if it was not for them.

Communities which face institutional discrimination become marginalised and consequently more vulnerable to slavery because they have less opportunities in life and are less able to defend their rights. They are often targeted precisely for these reasons.

If slavery is to be effectively eliminated from the world in the 21st century, then much more attention needs to be focussed on addressing its root causes, particularly discrimination and social exclusion.

¹ The United Nations Secretary-General’s message to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December 2007.

² Other key international standards include the same anti-discrimination clauses. For example: Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; Article 1 of the American Convention on Human Rights, 1969; Article 2 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 1981; and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, 1950.



What is Slavery?

Most people know that it is illegal to buy or sell another human being anywhere in the world and therefore assume that slavery no longer exists. Yet, despite the fact that there is international agreement that slavery should be prohibited and eradicated in all its forms, many millions of people continue to live in slavery.⁴

The practices which constitute slavery today are defined in various international standards, the most important of which are summarised on page 3.

The great majority of contemporary slavery practices contain a forced labour component, that is to say, the individual is compelled to work against their will under the threat of some form of punishment.



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Above: Jasmer Singh (second from left) threatened and assaulted a bonded labourer working for him, but claimed his workers "are like my children... whatever they need I will give them".³

Below: The 'Door of No Return' in Elmina Castle, Ghana. Hundreds of thousands of Africans passed through this door during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.



Pete Pattisison - www.petepattisison.com

³ Pete Pattisison, *Forgotten But Not Gone*, London, 2007, page 15.

⁴ This prohibition on slavery has been restated in numerous international standards including Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights, 1950; Article 8 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; Article 6 of the American Convention on Human Rights, 1969; and Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981.



International standards that define slavery

The Slavery Convention, 1926

In 1924, the League of Nations set up the Temporary Slavery Commission to review the situation of slavery “in all its forms” around the world. The results of the Commission’s work led to the drafting of the *Slavery Convention, 1926*, which defines slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised”. This was the first international standard against slavery and it called on governments to bring about “progressively and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms.”

The ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29)

In 1930, the International Labour Organization (ILO) approved its *Forced Labour Convention* which defines forced labour as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”

The Convention tried to tackle the exploitative practices used in the European colonies and elsewhere. It prohibited forced labour for private purposes; limited public work to minor communal services and normal civic duties; and restricted compulsory military service to work of a purely military nature. It also outlawed forced prison labour when the work was done for private companies. This was a problem in many countries at that time, including the United States, South Africa and India.⁵

The United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956

The 1956 Convention recognised that the previous international standards had not eliminated slavery practices and it sought to intensify national and international efforts towards this goal. It specifically states that debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage and the delivery of a child by their parents or guardian to another person for the exploitation of that child, are all slavery-like practices and requires that they be criminalised and abolished as soon as possible.

The ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No.182)

This ILO Convention requires governments to take immediate measures to prohibit the worst forms of child labour including those that would be hazardous to children or jeopardise their well-being. This includes all forms of child slavery (referred to as the unconditional worst forms of child labour), such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, child prostitution or pornography, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

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

This Protocol defines trafficking in persons and notes that it involves the movement of a person using violence, coercion, deception or the abuse of a position of power for the purposes of exploitation.⁶ This Protocol recognises that trafficking takes place for both sexual and labour exploitation, and requires governments to pass legislation which prohibits and punishes all forms of trafficking in people.

⁵ Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*, Altamira Press, Walnut Creek, 2003, page 147.

⁶ The Protocol’s full definition of trafficking is: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;”



“When the Burmese soldiers came to our village, they forced us to carry very heavy baskets for the whole day and night. When we women struggle with our loads they kicked and punched us. Whenever the soldiers force us to work for them I feel so angry.”⁹

May Rosy explains how the Burmese army use civilians as forced labour.

Below: The Tumen border detention centre.

All migrants caught seeking to leave the country have to perform forced labour in North Korea.

According to the ILO the *minimum* estimate of the number of people who are living in forced labour internationally is 12.3 million.⁷ This is in spite of the fact that, with the exception of China, every country in the world has specifically committed itself to prohibiting the use of forced labour.⁸

This does not mean that the development of international standards against slavery and the near universal endorsement of the need to prohibit forced labour have been ineffective. On the contrary, they have led to a decline in the use of forced labour by governments which are now only responsible for around 20 per cent of forced labour cases in the world. Notable examples of states which still use forced labour are Burma, China and North Korea.

Even though it is private individuals rather than state officials who are primarily responsible for using forced labour, all governments still have a direct responsibility to prevent this taking place. However, many governments consider that once they have passed legislation prohibiting and punishing slavery, then they have complied with their obligations.

Yet laws in themselves do not end slavery which normally takes place in unregulated or under-regulated sectors of the economy where it can be easily ignored. Effective implementation of these laws requires a proactive approach from governments and the allocation of appropriate resources. This rarely takes place as the issue is generally not considered a political priority. This reflects the fact that those affected by slavery are usually from marginalised communities and do not have a strong political voice.



Anti-Slavery International

The breakdown of who is responsible for forced labour in the world.¹⁰

● Private agents for economic exploitation:	7,810,000
● The state or the military:	2,490,000
● Private agents for commercial sexual exploitation:	1,390,000
● Mixed:	610,000

In order to effectively combat slavery, governments must have an integrated strategy for dealing with the problem which includes procedures and resources for the identification and prosecution of those responsible, the assistance and rehabilitation of victims and, most importantly, the delivery of programmes that deal with the root causes of the problem. The prevention component has traditionally received the least attention in the development of policies to tackle slavery, and the link between discrimination and slavery is rarely acknowledged or addressed at all.

⁷ International Labour Office, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour*, ILO, Geneva, 2005, page 10.

⁸ China is the only country in the world that has not ratified either ILO Convention 29 on forced labour or the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 8 prohibits forced or compulsory labour).

⁹ Pete Pattison, *op. cit.*, page 22.

¹⁰ International Labour Office, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour*, *op. cit.*, page 12.



The global link between slavery and discrimination

In the vast majority of cases involving slavery there is a discriminatory element which underpins that practice, regardless of which part of the world it takes place in. At the start of the 21st century, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted this fact: “Victims of slavery and slavery-like practices frequently belong to minority groups, particular racial groups or categories of people who are especially vulnerable to a wide range of discriminatory acts, including women, children, indigenous people, people of ‘low’ caste status and migrant workers.”¹¹

The following sections give examples of a range of slavery practices in different regions, which provide evidence to support the High Commissioner’s statement.

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Bonded labour in Asia

Debt bondage, which is also referred to as bonded labour, occurs when an individual offers their labour in exchange for a loan, but then loses all control over their conditions of work and the amount they are paid.¹² With a normal loan, the repayment terms are fixed and the capital sum borrowed is only subject to reasonable interest rates, but in bonded labour cases these safeguards do not exist.

Advances are used to trap the worker and retain a cheap and constant supply of labour which employers can use as they wish. Many workers are unable to repay the debt as it tends to increase due to low wages, high interest payments, inflated charges for other goods or services (e.g. food, accommodation, transportation, tools, days lost through sickness) and the need to take further loans to meet emergency expenditure or daily subsistence needs.

Bonded labourers are not free to look for other employment until they have repaid what they owe and in this way they are forced to work very long hours, usually without any days off, for little or no pay as their wages are used to service their debt. This may go on for many years and other family members may also become bonded. This can happen if the debtor dies or becomes too old or sick to work or if an additional loan is needed to pay for medicines, food or other expenses. Those who try to challenge their situation are subjected to threats, physical violence and restrictions on their freedom of movement.

Stefan Ruiz/COLORS Magazine



Top: Many bonded labourers work in agriculture.

Above: A stone quarry in Madhya Pradesh, India.

¹¹ Report to the 56th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2000/12).

¹² Debt bondage is defined in the 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on slavery as: “the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined.”

Bonded labour affects millions of people in south Asia, particularly in India, Pakistan and Nepal. However, it does not affect the populations of these countries equally - the vast majority of people who are in debt bondage are *dalits*, of ‘low’ caste status,



indigenous people or other minority groups.

In India, a survey conducted by the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the National Labour Institute (part of the Ministry of Labour) in 1978-79 remains the most detailed survey of bonded labour in the country to date. The survey was based on a random sample of 1,000 villages in 10 different states and from this data it was estimated that there were over two million bonded labourers working in agriculture in India at that time.¹³ The survey found that 84 per cent of those in debt bondage were from scheduled castes (*dalits* and 'low' castes) or scheduled tribes (indigenous groups). Scheduled castes and tribes make up just 24 per cent of the Indian population (2001 census) and are therefore disproportionately subjected to bonded labour.

This pattern is repeated in many different industries throughout India. For example, research carried out in 2000 by an Indian non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC), documented a high incidence of bonded labour amongst the three million mineworkers in Rajasthan and estimated that 95 per cent of them were *dalits* or indigenous people.

The allocation of labour on the basis of caste is a fundamental part of the caste system, which considers *dalits* and 'low' castes to be 'polluted' from birth and assigns them tasks and occupations which are deemed ritually polluting by other caste communities. Such occupations include work in agriculture, brick kilns, mines, leatherwork, domestic work and manual scavenging.¹⁴ It is not surprising that these are the very industries in which forced and bonded labour most frequently occur.

The Indian Government itself has accepted that more than 86 per cent of bonded labourers are from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.¹⁵ As Kiran Prasad, Director of an Indian NGO, Jeevika, notes: "Bonded labour in India is not

just an economic issue, but a social issue linked with caste. Unless we associate bonded labour with caste, we won't understand bonded labour, and we won't find a solution."

This same pattern is found in Pakistan where research by the Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research (PILER) estimated the total number of sharecroppers in debt bondage across the whole of Pakistan to be over 1.8 million people.¹⁶

The agricultural labourers who are in debt bondage or compelled to provide forced labour for the landlord¹⁷ are almost exclusively from minority groups, particularly religious minorities or indigenous groups.

Pakistan's Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the ILO, commissioned rapid assessment reports on bonded labour in Pakistan which were carried out between October 2002 and January 2003. These reports found bonded labour was prevalent in a variety of industries including, agriculture, brick kilns, mining, the carpet industry and domestic work.

In relation to domestic work, one rapid assessment report noted that, both in rural and urban settings, "...caste-based domestic service in the home of a landlord comprises the most oppressive labour arrangements and is most likely to involve bondedness."¹⁸ Another report stressed "the issue of social hierarchy - either in the generalised sense of 'high' and 'low' castes, or in the localised context of the political monopoly of an individual employer - is important in all instances of coercive and abusive labour arrangements."¹⁹

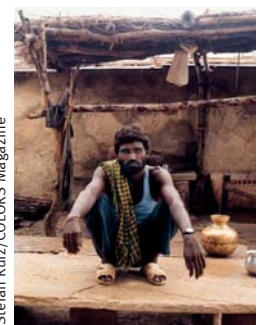
The link between caste, social hierarchy and bonded labour is made in many of the rapid assessments, one of which notes that "Some groups are systematically vulnerable and it would be a mistake to continue ignoring this finding in future research or policy."²⁰



Stefan Ruiz/COLORS Magazine



Stefan Ruiz/COLORS Magazine



Stefan Ruiz/COLORS Magazine

Above: Bonded labour affects millions of people in south Asia, the vast majority of whom are *dalits*, of 'low caste' or indigenous people. In some cases whole families are trapped in debt bondage.

¹³ Gandhi Peace Foundation and the National Labour Institute, National Survey of the Incidence of Bonded Labour, National Labour Institute, New Delhi, 1979, page 18.

¹⁴ Manual scavenging is the removal of human excrement from dry toilets and sewers using basic tools. For more details see page 21 of this report.

¹⁵ Ministry of Labour, Government of India, *Annual Report 2000-2001*, page 181. Quoted in Human Rights Watch, *Small Change*, New York, 2003, page 41.

¹⁶ PILER, *Bonded Labour in Pakistan*, Pakistan, 2000.

¹⁷ The provision of forced labour for a landlord on their farm or house is known as beggar. PILER estimates this affects more than six million people in Pakistan.

¹⁸ Bonded Labour Research Forum, with Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan, and ILO, *A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan*, Rapid Assessment Studies of Bonded Labour in Different Sectors of Pakistan, Pakistan, 2004 page 18.

¹⁹ Bonded Labour Research Forum, with Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan, and ILO, *A Rapid Assessment of Bonded Labour in Hazardous Industries in Pakistan: Glass Bangle-Making, Tanneries and Construction*. Rapid Assessment Studies of Bonded Labour in Different Sectors in Pakistan, Pakistan, 2004, page 80.

²⁰ Bonded Labour Research Forum, with Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan, and ILO, *A Rapid Assessment of Bonded Labour in Hazardous Industries in Pakistan: Glass Bangle-Making, Tanneries and Construction*, op. cit., page 83.



Bonded labour in brick kilns in Pakistan



A child works at night making bricks by candlelight.

A 2004 survey of brick kilns in Punjab by the Federal Bureau of Statistics found that nearly 90 per cent of brick kiln workers took loans from the kiln-owner. PILER's research indicates that up to one million brick kiln workers in Pakistan are bonded labourers.

Once an advance is taken, workers are not free to leave and 50 per cent of those surveyed by the Federal Bureau of Statistics in 2004 stated that permission was needed to leave the kiln. The kiln owner may insist that members of an indebted family stay behind as surety.

Workers felt threatened and Bashir Ahmed, a kiln worker from Multan district, explained that leaving the kiln was not an option: "How can I leave this place without paying the debt? It is unthinkable to me; I know the owner will never let me go and even if I succeed in escaping he will track me down. I am a very poor person."²¹

Most workers interviewed for the rapid assessment field research stated that they did not think they or their children would, or could, ever be free of debt. Owners similarly conceded "that only half of indebted labour was able to redeem the (initial) advance."²² Of 200 workers surveyed in the PILER study in Multan, Faisalbad and Punjab, not a single worker had been able to repay the advance themselves.²³

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Forced labour in South America

In South America, it is indigenous peoples who are disproportionately affected by forced labour and debt bondage. This is seen in the private ranches in both Paraguay and Bolivia as well as in the logging industry of Peru.

In Paraguay, some 8,000 indigenous people are directly involved in forced labour or at risk of becoming forced labourers on agricultural estates in the northern Chaco region of the country, according to research carried out for the ILO.²⁴ This means nearly 10 per cent of all indigenous people in Paraguay are affected by forced labour, even though they make up just 1.7 per cent of the national population.

Work on the estates is one of the few employment opportunities available in the Chaco. However, the combination of paying salaries below the minimum wage and in arrears, overpricing goods in the estate shop, and providing a large part of their salaries in kind, means that when their wages are due to be paid, workers find they are left with little or no money or even indebted to the estate.



Terraviva

Above: An indigenous worker from the community of Buena Vista in the Chaco, Paraguay.

²¹ PILER and Anti-Slavery International, *Analysis of the effectiveness of interventions for the release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers in Pakistan*, Karachi, 2008, page 48.

²² Bonded Labour Research Forum, with Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan, and ILO, *Labour, Debt and Bondage in Brick Kilns*, Rapid Assessment Studies of Bonded Labour in Different Sectors of Pakistan, Pakistan, 2004, page 29.

²³ PILER and Anti-Slavery International, *op. cit.*, page 48.

²⁴ Alvaro Bedoya Silvia-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *Servidumbre por Deudas y Marginación en el Chaco de Paraguay*, ILO, Geneva, July 2005. For more details see Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2006, pages 2-7.



The long working hours, a lack of money for transport and other restrictions on leaving the estates, means workers cannot travel to buy goods elsewhere and are forced to pay inflated prices at the estate shop. This system maximises the profits for the estate and ensures that they have a cheap and secure labour supply.

An almost identical system exists in the ranches across the border in the Chaco region of Bolivia, where the ILO estimates that 7,000 Guaraní are in forced labour.²⁵ Indigenous workers on estates in Bolivia are paid very low wages and charged inflated prices for food and basic goods by their employer. This creates a dynamic of debt which affects just under two thirds of Guaraníes living on ranches.²⁶

While the debt exists workers are not allowed to leave the ranch to look for other work, and they rarely see any form of cash payment as their salary is taken to repay their debts. There have been cases where ranch owners exchange the debt for the title deeds on land which officially belongs to the Guaraní community, or where workers have been transferred between employers.

In the Peruvian Amazon, some 33,000 people are subject to forced labour in the logging industry and approximately 75 per cent of those affected are indigenous people.²⁸ Timber companies use middlemen to approach indigenous communities and offer them advances in the form of money, basic goods or public services, such as building a school or playing field. In return the community is contracted to provide an amount of timber of a specified quality.

The middlemen overcharge for the goods they provide whilst undervaluing the timber provided or rejecting it as being of inferior quality. Final payment on delivered timber is repeatedly postponed thereby increasing the debt. The communities' contract often states that they are not allowed to sell their timber to, or work for, anyone else, thereby trapping them in debt bondage.

The ILO estimates that a third of all forced labour in logging in the Peruvian Amazon takes place in illegal camps, most of which are located on the land of indigenous communities. In these camps food and basic goods are sold at inflated prices and workers also pay accommodation and medical costs. Camp bosses use the debt, threats of violence and the retention of documents to control workers who are often not paid until the end of the season. If their debts are greater than their earnings at this time they may be forced to return next season to pay off the outstanding debt.

Debt bondage in Bolivia

Germán Romero, a Guaraní with seven children, was effectively sold from Eltan Ruiz to Walter Cabezas. Cabezas paid off Romero's debt of 1,300 Bolivianos (US\$180) and Romero was then obliged to work on Cabezas' ranch for free until he had repaid the money.

Germán Romero had no choice in the matter - he could not refuse to be transferred or leave his new employer. He explained that following the move, "For approximately two years I did not know money and I worked only to pay off my debt, including the advances I received in kind or in food. I could not leave."²⁷

Descent based slavery in Africa

In some west African countries, including Niger, Mauritania and Mali, slavery status is ascribed at birth and passed on from one generation to the next.²⁹

These countries have a strict hierarchy in their societies based along ethnic and sometimes racial lines. Noble and freemen are at the top, followed by 'casted' groups which are usually occupational (e.g. blacksmiths or potters). Slaves and their descendants are at the very bottom and suffer discrimination because of their membership of a 'slave caste'.

This includes being denied education, not being allowed to own land or inherit property, not being able to marry people who are not from their 'slave caste' and their exclusion from decision-making processes. These discriminatory practices keep them impoverished and dependent on their masters.

In Mauritania, slavery is practiced predominantly by the Maures who control the economy as well as the vast majority of the administrative state, and to a lesser extent by the Peul and Soninké. The Hratine are the ethnic group most affected by slavery in

²⁵ Alvaro Bedoya Silvia-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *Eganche y Servidumbre por Deudas en Bolivia*, ILO, Geneva, January 2005. For more details see Bhavna Sharma, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Bolivia*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2006, pages 7-13.

²⁶ In 1999, a study by the Council of Guaraní Chiefs of Chuquisaca found that 63 per cent of Guaraníes living on ranches were in debt. Bhavna Sharma, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Bolivia*, *op. cit.*, page 8.

²⁷ Quoted in Bhavna Sharma, *Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Bolivia*, *op. cit.*, page 8.

²⁸ For more details, see Bhavna Sharma, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Peru*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2006, pages 3-6.

²⁹ Anti-Slavery International refers to this as decent based slavery. Those affected clearly fall within the 1926 *Slavery Convention* definition of slavery as they have a status where their master exercises "any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership" over them.



Mauritania. A similar situation exists in Mali, where the Bellah³⁰ are the equivalent of the Hrantine. In Niger, slavery is primarily practised by the Toureg and to a lesser extent by the Peul and Arab ethnic groups, all of which are themselves minority groups.³¹

The different ethnic groups who are enslaved today in these countries are treated as property by their masters. They are forced to work for their masters without pay, most commonly as domestic and agricultural workers. Women will typically care for the master's children, fetch water, gather firewood, pound millet, move tents and perform other domestic tasks. Men and children normally do agricultural work and care for the animals, which are usually camels, cows, and goats.

Slaves and their children are inherited and can be separated from their parents and given away as gifts by their masters. When a slave is married the dowry goes to the master and, if a slave dies, their property is claimed by the master.

In 2002-03, Timidria, a local NGO, and Anti-Slavery International, carried out research into the scale of slavery in Niger. It involved over 11,000 face-to-face interviews in six regions of the country (Agadez, Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Tillabéri and Dosso) and it showed that masters take basic decisions affecting the lives of those in slavery. More than 80 per cent of those who responded said that their master was solely responsible for deciding who they married and whether their children attended school.

The research estimates that more than 40,000 people are in slavery across Niger. In Mauritania, a local human rights organisation, SOS Esclaves, estimates that as much as 18 per cent of the population may still be in slavery.

Descent based slavery in Niger



Anti-Slavery International

Asibit's experience is typical of many former slaves in Niger. She was a slave for 50 years. She was born a slave. Her mother, husband and children were all slaves. She had to work all day from early in the morning, preparing food for the master and his family, milking camels, collecting water and firewood, and doing all the household chores. She had to move her master's heavy tent four times a day so he and the mistress remained sitting in the shade. She was never paid and had to survive on leftovers and a small amount of camel milk.

On 28 June 2004, Asibit escaped by walking 30 kilometres to freedom. Since then she has been assisted by Timidria to start a new life, of which she said:

"Life is still hard, you can see we have little - just this tent, a few pots and blankets, but I am free, I am happy, my children are free and happy. In the evenings we eat together, we sit and talk about the future, about how very soon my children will marry. Now we have a future."

³⁰ Bellah literally means slave of the Toureg and is considered a pejorative term. Historically, the Toureg raided indigenous black communities to use as free labour or to sell. Over the centuries the descendants of those enslaved in this way were assimilated into Toureg culture, although many remain in slavery. Those affected by this descent based slavery prefer to be called *Kel Tamasheq*, literally Tamacheq speakers.

³¹ It should be noted that while in Mauritania the Maures are in a position of dominance in society, the Toureg in Niger are themselves marginalised by the State.



The trafficking of people to developed countries

The vast majority of people trafficked to North America, Europe, the Middle East and other developed countries are migrant workers. They are trafficked into a variety of jobs including domestic work, agricultural work, prostitution and factory work. They are most commonly controlled through the removal of their documents or the manipulation of their migration status; the existence of a debt which must be repaid; and the use of threats, intimidation or violence by the trafficker.³²

While both local and foreign workers are subject to exploitative working conditions such as low pay or long working hours in countries around the world, the great majority of victims of trafficking in developed countries are foreign nationals.

In 2006, Anti-Slavery International carried out a short qualitative research project on trafficking for forced labour in the UK.³³ During the research, 27 cases were identified in which people had been trafficked for forced labour in agriculture, construction, domestic work, nursing, food processing and the restaurant trade. All of those affected were foreign nationals. This also proved to be the case for all the individuals identified during the research into trafficking for forced labour in the Czech Republic, Ireland and Portugal.³⁴

The same pattern holds true for women trafficked to the UK for sexual exploitation. The Poppy Project, which provides assistance to women trafficked into prostitution, had 820 women referred to it between March 2003 and December 2007. Less than three per cent of the women who were referred were UK nationals.

In the United States (US), there have been seven federal prosecutions of employers between 1997 and 2007 relating to the trafficking of workers to Florida to harvest crops. The traffickers promise good jobs, but when workers arrive at their destination these jobs do not exist and they are forced to work in harsh conditions to pay back their debts. Deductions are made from their wages for transport, accommodation, food, work equipment, and supposed tax and social security payments. Restrictions on their freedom of movement, threats and public beatings are used to ensure that workers do not try to escape.

In the seven prosecuted cases alone there were well over one thousand workers affected. The majority of these workers were migrants from Mexico, Guatemala and Haiti, some undocumented, but



Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures

others with a right to work in the US. It should be stressed that some of those trafficked were US citizens, mostly African-American, who were primarily recruited from homeless shelters.



Shiho Fukada

Top: Louisiana was trafficked from Lithuania to the UK after answering an advert for a cleaning and waitressing job. Once in the UK she was forced to work as a prostitute.

Above: Many migrant workers are trafficked into the United States and are forced to harvest crops on farms in Florida.

³² For more on the relationship between migration and trafficking see Mike Kaye, *The Migration-Trafficking Nexus*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2003.

³³ Klara Skrivankova, *Trafficking for Forced Labour: UK country report*, Anti-Slavery International, London 2006.

³⁴ Anti-Slavery International, et. al., *Trafficking for Forced Labour: Report on a study in the UK, Ireland, Czech Republic and Portugal*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2006.



Forced labour in the United States

Antonio was 21 years old when he paid a trafficker US\$1,700 to take him from Mexico to California to take up a well-paid construction job. Once across the border he was told he would be picking tomatoes in Florida instead. On arrival at a labour camp in Immokalee he and others migrants were delivered to another man. "I heard him say 'here are the people. You have to pay US\$500 for each.' That's when I realised I had been sold like an animal without any compassion."

Antonio lived in a trailer where 28 workers slept on mattresses on the floor and shared one bathroom. "In the morning when I woke up and wanted to go outside I realised the door was locked. We were told we could not leave until the debt was paid off." He worked for 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week. "It was hard work, very hot and we had to work constantly squatting down and carrying the heavy buckets of tomatoes. The first week I thought I'd earned good money. But from the wages I received he took out money for the driver, the rent, the water - everything."

Antonio was kept under 24 hour surveillance, was not allowed to make phone calls and faced constant threats of violence to himself and his family back home. "What made me most scared was when I heard about the people who had tried to escape. One of them had been beaten very badly." Antonio eventually escaped after four months when his crew leader fell asleep in the van on a weekly supervised trip to the local shop.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), very young children, often under the age of 10 years old, were routinely trafficked across borders to be used as camel jockeys up until 2005. Many children were abused by their employers, who beat them, deprived them of food, and forced them to work very long hours. As the children had been separated from their families, they were left completely dependent on their employers and were forced to do whatever they were told.

In 2005, the UAE Government estimated that some 3,000 children were being used as camel jockeys in the UAE. All the camel jockeys were foreign nationals, with the majority being trafficked from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sudan.³⁵

Unscrupulous individuals will compel anyone to provide forced labour if they have the opportunity, but, as illustrated above, migrants are much more vulnerable to trafficking than nationals of any given country. In some cases migrants do not have the same rights as nationals under the law, and in others they may be intimidated by the authorities or by what they perceive to be a generalised hostility towards foreigners. In other cases their vulnerability is linked to their being a minority group which cannot access normal protections because they do not have valid documents, do not speak the language, do not know their rights or do not know who to turn to for assistance.



Left: Until 2005, children were regularly trafficked from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sudan to become camel jockeys in the UAE. They were frequently deprived of food and water to keep them light.



Equal before the law?

The examples above show that people in slavery are primarily from minority and marginalised groups. The discrimination these groups suffer increases their chances of being trapped in slavery and reduces their opportunities to escape from it, both in the short-term and the long-term. This is particularly true when the discrimination is evident within the legal system and the way the law is enforced.

Legislation that is part of the problem

Some countries have laws that actively discriminate against certain groups of workers and thereby increase their vulnerability to forced labour and other slavery practices.

For example, since 2007, several southern provinces of Thailand, including Phuket, Ranong and Surat Thani, have approved laws that ban public assembly of more than five foreign workers, impose curfews on them and control their use of mobile phones. The migrants affected are mainly from Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

In Phuket, migrant workers cannot leave their residence after 8pm, unless they are under the supervision of their employer. Employers are required to submit the names of their migrant workers who own mobiles to the provincial authorities. Deputy Governor, Worapot Rattasima, has warned that those violating the regulations face penalties from a fine of Bt500 (US\$15) to up to three years in jail.³⁶

In February 2007, Malaysia's Home Ministry proposed that legislation be passed to confine all foreign workers to their *kongsi* or work areas. As in Thailand, such measures are justified in the name of crime prevention or national security. However, the Inspector General of Police in Malaysia is reported to have stated that only two per cent of crimes were committed by foreign workers in 2006.

Regulations like those in place in Phuket and Ranong restrict foreign workers' rights to freedom of movement, free speech and freedom of assembly purely on the basis of their nationality. In trying to justify the introduction of these discriminatory laws, governments have branded all foreign workers as potential criminals, thereby encouraging xenophobia and prejudice against foreigners amongst the national population.

This legal framework facilitates slavery as it greatly increases the employer's power over the migrant worker. The employer can force a migrant to work against their will by refusing them permission to go out in the evening or by threatening to report them to the authorities for breaking one of the regulations. Given that official policy seems to endorse a suspicion of foreigners, migrants may be afraid that they will be convicted on the word of their employer even if they have not broken any regulations. It is hard to imagine that any migrant worker who reported their employer for forced labour would get a fair hearing, let alone assistance.

In India, in May 2007, the Minister for Women and Children, Renuka Chowdhury, announced plans to prohibit Indian women under 30 from migrating to work as domestics in 17 countries in Africa, the Gulf and Southeast Asia. The ban is a response to repeated cases of Indian migrant domestic workers in these countries being trafficked and sexually exploited.

While this policy may be well intentioned, it clearly discriminates against young women by restricting their freedom of movement. Furthermore, given that domestic work abroad offers one of the few profitable options to earn money for this group of women, they may decide to use clandestine migration routes to take up jobs that they know are available. In this way the ban would actually increase this group of migrants' vulnerability to trafficking and forced labour by pushing them into irregular



Alex Smailes/COLORS Magazine

³⁶ Ranong has similar laws: foreign workers are not allowed to leave their homes between 10pm to 6am, unless their employer gives permission or they have a medical emergency. Nor are they allowed to gather in groups of five or more - unless they are working. The Nation, *Warm welcome for tourists doesn't extend to workers*, 1 May 2007.



migration channels where they can no longer have any recourse to official assistance.

Immigration rules which tie a migrant to a single employer can also increase their vulnerability to forced labour as it makes their right to stay in the country entirely dependent on their continuing to work for that individual. If the migrant is subsequently subjected to forced labour or other forms of exploitation they are then compelled to choose between submitting to that abuse or leaving their employer. If they leave their job they will have to return home, often with debts and no other employment options, or face deportation.

This was the situation for migrant domestic workers in the UK until 1998 when the Government recognised the problem and gave these workers a renewable one-year visa and the right to change employers. This facilitated their escape from exploitative and abusive situations as they could then come forward to the authorities and receive support and assistance knowing that they could still seek work with another employer and thereby not put their livelihood at risk.

Despite recognising that these measures have “greatly benefited” migrant domestic workers caught in this position, in 2008 the UK Government introduced plans to remove these safeguards.

Under the new proposals migrant domestic workers would get only a six month non-renewable visa and will not be allowed to change employers even if they are subject to abusive practices. Furthermore, they would not be recognised as workers, but rather as domestic “assistants” and consequently would not enjoy protection under employment laws. There is little doubt that, if approved, this type of proposal would increase the number of domestic workers who are exposed to trafficking, forced labour and other forms of exploitation.³⁷

In Indonesia, Government regulations require migrant domestic workers who are seeking work abroad to use government sanctioned recruitment agencies which charge extortionate rates for training, processing and placements fees, leaving migrants severely indebted before they can even take up their jobs abroad. They are also forced to sign contracts through these agencies which they

Treatment of migrant domestic workers in the UK

Statistics collected by Kalayaan, an NGO that works with migrant domestic workers in London, confirm that each year hundreds of migrant domestic workers are subjected to serious human rights violations including forced labour. Of the 340 migrant domestic workers registered with Kalayaan from April 2006 to March 2007:

- Just under a quarter reported instances of physical abuse (e.g. beating them, slapping them, throwing things at them, spitting in their face, pulling their hair).
- Nearly 70 per cent reported psychological abuse (e.g. shouting, insults, threats to throw them out or have them deported).
- Nearly one third had their passports retained by their employer.
- More than 60 per cent reported that they were not allowed out and had to work 16 hours or more a day without meal breaks.

The protections introduced in 1998 have allowed domestic workers to come forward for assistance and even cooperate with the police as they know they will not be deported and can look for work with another employer.



Kate Roberts/Kalayaan

³⁷ On 25 June 2008, the UK Government announced that the current visa system will be retained for two years and then reviewed.



cannot negotiate, and in most cases cannot even understand as they are written in a foreign language.

Once they arrive in the country of destination, usually countries in the Gulf, Hong Kong or Taiwan, they are trapped by the debt they owe the agency and the contract they have signed. Research indicates that 48 per cent of Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong are paid below the legal minimum wage, 61 per cent do not receive their weekly rest days and 24 per cent have endured physical and verbal abuse.³⁸

Migrants continue to be exploited and discriminated against even as they return home to Indonesia. All returning migrants must return through the specially-designated Terminal 3 of Soekarno Hatta International Airport, where there have been reports of migrants experiencing physical and sexual abuse, and having to pay bribes to officials. Migrants also complain that they were forced to take transport provided by the authorities from the airport, which was far more expensive than public transportation.³⁹

As the examples cited above show, some laws can directly contribute to an individual's vulnerability to slavery practices by excluding them from particular rights or protections which are available to the general population, and making them increasingly dependent on their employer.

Accessing justice

A far more pervasive problem is that governments do not properly enforce laws against slavery. One of the principle reasons for this is that the discrimination that underpins slavery practices also helps to maintain them. The following cases are illustrative of this pattern which takes place around the world.

India

The *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act* was passed in India more than 30 years ago, but bonded labourers seeking to access their rights under this law have to confront at every stage the same discrimination which was key



Wing Shya/COLORS Magazine

to their enslavement in the first place.

Although the number of people affected by bonded labour in India is estimated to be in the millions, between March 2000 and the end of 2006, the Government only identified 3,030 bonded labourers across the country. This is due to what the ILO Committee of Experts termed a “certain reluctance” by state governments in India to participate in efforts to identify and release bonded labourers.

However, even when cases are identified and brought forward, district magistrates usually refuse to release them. The NGO Volunteers for Social Justice (VSJ) has filed more than 2,000

Above: South Horizons Tower, Hong Kong, where a 20-year-old migrant domestic worker from Indonesia was made to work from 5.15 am to midnight every day and was beaten with a stick if her employers were not satisfied with her work.

³⁸ *Baseline Research on Racial Discrimination Against Foreign Domestic Helpers*, Asian Migrant Centre & Coalition for Migrants Rights, Hong Kong, 2002.

³⁹ Mike Kaye, *The Migration-Trafficking Nexus*, *op. cit.*, pages 21-23.



Right: Bonded labourers at a brick kiln seek their liberation from government officials. None were freed that day and of the 165 bonded labourers at the kiln only 14 were eventually released. The rest were sold on as a group to another brick kiln.⁴¹



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cases for the release of bonded labourers in Punjab State since 1990, but only a handful of these people have been formally freed to date. In Rajasthan, surveys identified a total of 213 bonded labourers, but the district magistrates only confirmed five cases as bonded labour.⁴⁰

The former Labour Secretary for the Indian Government noted that there “have been cases where the magistrate has refused to issue a release certificate even after all the ingredients of the bonded labour system have been proved beyond doubt.”⁴²

Such a case occurred in 2002, when a District Magistrate refused to free a family of bonded labourers, stating that it is a “social phenomenon in villages where the farmers borrow money from landowners”. She told the family to pay back the debt and not to leave the village without doing so. This ruling is in direct contradiction of the law.

In this context it is hardly surprising that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) found that “the prosecution of offenders under the bonded labour system has, in fact, been neglected in every State reviewed.”⁴³ In its

2004-05 report, it drew particular attention to Uttar Pradesh, where prosecution “remain totally neglected”, and Madhya Pradesh, where prosecution powers were only being used “reluctantly”. Successful prosecutions are very rare and even then those convicted are only likely to receive a small fine, rather than imprisonment.

The Government of India acknowledges that the number of prosecutions is low, but says this is because disputes are being resolved informally at village level through bodies known as *Nyaya Panchayat* or *Lok Adalts*. These bodies are dominated by high caste members of the landowning community and it is common for bonded labourers to be summoned and made to sign a written statement that they cannot read, in which they say that they were never bonded and there is no dispute with their employer.

Some officials may not be implementing the law because they are corrupt or afraid of the power of the local elite which use bonded labourers. However, in other cases, officials and administrators are not acting to implement the law or are actively blocking the

⁴⁰ As of 7 October 2004. Cited in National Human Rights Commission, Annual Report, 2004-2005.

⁴¹ Pete Pattison, *op. cit.*, page 18.

⁴² Dr L Mishra, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Labour, *Bonded Labour*, presentation in the National Consultation on Forced Labour, 21-22 September 2000, New Delhi, page 35.

⁴³ National Human Rights Commission, Annual Report, 2001-02.



process because they and the institutions they represent are inherently prejudiced against *dalits*, indigenous people and other 'low' caste groups and sympathise with the idea that these people owe a duty of labour to landlords and other high caste employers for little or no pay.

Niger

In Niger, the Government prohibited slavery in June 2003. However, in the subsequent five years, the authorities have not taken any measures to release or rehabilitate slaves or initiated any prosecutions against anyone for their involvement in slavery. As those in slavery are at the bottom of social hierarchy, no priority is given to applying the law that would free them.

In one case, the Government initially agreed to take part in a ceremony on 5 March 2005 in In Atès, Tillabéri, where local chiefs intended to free some 7,000 people. However, the Government then warned masters not to release their slaves officially, stating that if they do, they could be subject to 30 years in prison. As a result the slaves were not freed.

The only successful prosecution to date was brought by an NGO, Timidria. On 25 July 2006, Seidimou Hiya was found guilty of the offence of slavery and was ordered to serve one year in jail with a further four years suspended and fined the equivalent of £500. He was also ordered to pay his former slave, Houalata Ibrahim, £1,000 in compensation. Houalata said her master "treated me as his slave, as he did my mother before me.... Every time he thought I was late or that the work was done badly, he beat me.... He told me I was just a stupid slave and had no rights."

Even in this case, the sentence was dramatically reduced on appeal to a suspended prison sentence of 18 months and a fine of the equivalent of £100. The punishment of the crime of slavery with a suspended sentence does not reflect the seriousness of the offence and is not likely to be a deterrent. The message sent to those using slavery is that they can continue to do so with relative impunity.

Bonded labour in India

In 2006, Balbir Singh borrowed Rs 5000 (US\$117) from his landlord to pay for medical treatment for his son. He then became ill himself and when he returned to work his landlord attacked him with a metal rod for not paying back the loan and killed him. Balbir's wife said, "We all feel so angry, but what can we do? Recently the landlord came around to our house and taunted us. He said 'you can't do anything against me'."⁴⁴



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Above: Houalata Ibrahim.

⁴⁴ Pete Pattison, *op. cit.*, page 16.



Above: In the United Arab Emirates, children race, train and tend the camels in over 40C heat during the summer.

Bottom right: Indigenous people protesting in Asunción, Paraguay.

United Arab Emirates

In the UAE, the use of children under 15 as camel jockeys was prohibited in the Federal Labour Code in 1980 and has been restated in numerous different regulations since. These laws were never effectively implemented despite the fact that, up until 2005, very young camel jockeys could clearly be seen at any public race. In May 2005, the UAE's Ministry of Interior itself estimated that there were roughly 2,800 camel jockeys under 10 years of age in the UAE.

Discrimination and status directly explain why the Government denied the existence of this problem for so long and the absence of effective prosecutions. Wealthy UAE citizens are closely involved in camel racing, for example Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan was both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Emirates Camel Racing Federation. By contrast, camel jockeys are exclusively foreign children from poor families who usually have nobody in the UAE to protect their interests.

Consequently, only a handful of individuals have been prosecuted since 1980 for this offence and Anti-Slavery International is not aware of any cases where UAE citizens have been convicted for employing under age camel jockeys. For example, according to information provided to the ILO in October 2003, there were only three successful prosecutions in the previous year for using children under the age

of 15 as camel jockeys, and all of those prosecuted were foreign nationals.⁴⁵

Paraguay

In Paraguay, there are a number of laws set out in the Labour Code which, if implemented, would be effective in preventing debt bondage on agricultural estates. For example, the Labour Code states that a contract will be void when it fixes a salary under the minimum wage, and that only 30 per cent of wages can be paid in kind and the value of these goods must be the same as those at the nearest urban settlement.⁴⁶ In reality, indigenous workers are routinely paid wages far below the minimum wage, receive up to 53 per cent of their salaries in kind and have to buy basic goods at the estate store for up to 81 per cent more than the price at the nearest town.⁴⁷ Although indigenous people have the law on their side they have little confidence in the authorities and therefore do not make complaints. One survey found that less than 50 per cent of indigenous people from the Departments of Boquerón and Presidente Hayes felt comfortable reporting an issue to the local authorities including the police and public prosecutors.⁴⁸

Even if a worker is ready to seek redress for slavery or other labour violations, they would still have to find the money to travel to the capital, Asunción, as the Ministry of Labour and the National Institute for the Indigenous (INDI) do not have a single office in Chaco or the three departments west of the Rio Paraguay, nor are there any labour judges in the area.



⁴⁵ Information given to the ILO direct contacts mission to the UAE (18-22 October 2003).

⁴⁶ Articles 47, 231 and 176 of the Labour Code respectively. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay, op. cit.*, page 5.

⁴⁷ Alvaro Bedoya Silva-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *op. cit.*, pages 17-18. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay, op. cit.*, page 5.

⁴⁸ The Indigenous Census of 2002. Alvaro Bedoya Silva-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *op. cit.*, page 8. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay, op. cit.*, page 6.



This situation briefly changed in March 2006 when an Office of Inspection was created in Mariscal Estigarriba in the Chaco and staffed by two labour inspectors. However, the inspectors resigned some six months later because of inadequate resources and a lack of support from central government. This included not being provided with funding to cover transport costs to carry out investigations, which meant they were unable to take forward any prosecutions for forced labour.

Challenging an unresponsive legal system

It should be stressed that those who bring slavery cases before the authorities often put themselves in great personal danger. Anti-Slavery International has documented many cases where individuals seeking their own liberation or working on behalf of others have been harassed, beaten, arrested, kidnapped and threatened. Such acts are generally committed with impunity.

The case of Hadijatou Mani.

In Niger, those seeking to use the judicial system to access their rights under the law continue to encounter serious obstacles and take substantial risks in bringing cases before the authorities.

This is clearly demonstrated by the case of Hadijatou Mani (pictured right). In 1982, Hadijatou was sold into slavery for less than \$500 at the age of 12. She carried out domestic and agricultural work and also lived as a sexual slave or *sadaka* to her master, who already had four wives and seven other *sadaka*. Hadijatou was never paid for her work and was subjected to regular beatings and sexual violence.

On 18 August 2005, her master released her - providing a 'liberation' certificate - with the intention of legalising his 'relationship' with her. When Hadijatou sought to exercise her newfound freedom and leave, he refused to let her go, arguing that she was in fact his wife. She appealed to a local tribunal which found that there had been no marriage between them. Hadijatou then married a man of her own choice, but her former master brought a complaint against her for bigamy and also laid claim to her new baby which was fathered by her real husband. The judge ruled in the master's favour and on 9 May 2007 Hadijatou was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

On 7 April 2008, Hadijatou took her case to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Community Court of Justice on the grounds that the Government had failed to implement laws against slavery. The Government of Niger is accused of not only failing to protect Hadijatou Mani from slavery, but also of continuing to legitimise this practice through its customary law, which is discriminatory against women and in direct conflict with its own criminal code and various international standards.

Hadijatou's case illustrates that laws to prohibit slavery and protect the rights of women are not being applied in practice and that those seeking to use the judicial system to secure their release from slavery can end up being criminalised and incarcerated.

However, cases such as this can have a very important impact in terms of challenging slavery. Hadijatou's case was heard in the capital of Niger and attracted a lot of positive media coverage both nationally and internationally. This generated a lot of public discussion in Niger about slavery, the law and discriminatory attitudes in society. This in itself may help to ensure that the law is implemented better in future, but it also helps to empower individuals affected by slavery practices and motivates them and groups working on their behalf to use legal mechanisms to protect their rights. If there is a positive judgement in this case (due to be announced in October 2008) it will set a precedent that will not only apply to Niger but to the whole of west Africa.



Anti-Slavery International



Anti-Slavery International



Above: Ilguilas Weila, arrested on false charges in 2005 and jailed for two months in Niger.

Alex Lloyd



Above: Dilli Chaudhary, arrested during a peaceful protest in 2006, in Nepal.

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Above: Jai Singh, arrested and jailed for a week in 2007 for participating in a peaceful demonstration in India.

For example, in Niger, the President of the NGO, Timidria, Ilguilas Weila, and his colleague, Alassane Biga, were arrested on 28 April 2005 on allegations of fraud following the planned release of slaves in Tillabéri. A government spokesman was quoted the following month denying the existence of slavery in Niger and accusing those who raised the issue of being determined “to damage the country’s image and its leaders”. The two members of Timidria were released on bail after two months in jail and the charges against them were only dropped after a year.

In Nepal, Dilli Chaudhary, Director of the NGO, Backward Society Education (BASE), was arrested with around 100 other demonstrators on 18 July 2006. They had been peacefully protesting against the Nepal Government’s failure to provide former bonded labourers with food, shelter, land, employment and education, as required by law.

On 9 September 2007, Jai Singh, the Director of VSJ in India, was arrested for disturbing the peace when he took part in a peaceful demonstration against bonded labour and held in prison for one week. On 13 September, around 30 bonded labourers, including women and children, who were taking part in a march against bonded labour were injured when they were attacked by landlords. The police made no effort to stop the attacks or arrest the landlords responsible for the violence.

As illustrated above, minority groups seeking to use the judicial system to access their rights under the law continue to encounter discriminatory attitudes and policies which range from disinterest and apathy to harassment and violence. Such attitudes need to be challenged and changed so that the law can provide an effective route out of slavery.

Making the law work

Laws on their own will not be enough to end slavery. However, the existence of quality legislation that prohibits and adequately punishes slavery is an essential first step towards its eradication.

As we have already seen, getting anti-slavery laws implemented is particularly difficult for minority groups because they are often unable to access their right to equal and

effective protection before the law because of societal discrimination. Governments therefore need to recognise the existence of discrimination and its link to slavery in their respective countries and introduce appropriate measures which ensure that the available legal remedies can be effectively accessed.

At the legislative level, this may involve introducing national anti-discrimination laws and/or repealing discriminatory regulations (e.g. those against migrant workers which curtail their human and labour rights).

When the legal framework is in place the Government then has to challenge institutional discrimination and societal prejudice in a concerted and pro-active manner. This will involve providing training to all those responsible for law enforcement at both a local and national level including labour inspectors, police, magistrates, lawyers and immigration officers. This training should not only cover what the laws are to fight slavery, but also their obligations to ensure the law is fairly applied without discrimination of any kind.

Officials also need to be made aware of their responsibility to actively seek out slavery cases and not simply wait for individuals to come forward and make complaints. Those who are in slavery may be unable to seek assistance, may not trust the authorities or may fear the consequences of making a complaint.

Such concerns are easily understood in the context of trafficked people who risk detention, deportation and threats to the lives of themselves and their families if they go to the authorities.

Similarly, bonded labourers seeking their freedom will have to use a system where the officials responsible for assisting them will usually be from the same caste as those who compel them to provide forced labour. Even if they are successful and obtain their freedom, they may be subject to violence or social and economic boycotts which can deprive them of any source of income.

Institutional training will need to be reinforced with performance targets for law enforcement organisations, high profile public prosecutions and consistent public



statements from senior officials condemning slavery and underlining the consequences for all those involved in using people as forced labourers. Governments will also need to allocate sufficient resources to ensure that laws can be fully implemented at a national level, including in isolated rural areas.

The number of successful convictions and sentences passed should be published, by region, on a regular basis. Where state officials or institutions are not applying the law the Government needs to take immediate action to correct this. This could involve retraining, disciplining or firing officials who have either failed to implement the law properly or have obstructed its application and amending legislation to remove any confusion or inconsistencies about how it should be interpreted.

Proactive measures along these lines can, over time, erode institutional indifference or animosity to enslaved minority groups and establish confidence amongst these communities that they can win their freedom through the legal system.



Carlos Kipperu & Ministério do Trabalho

Above: The Special Mobile Inspection Group has freed more than 27,000 workers from forced labour in Brazil.

Right: Workers are given identification documents and compensation after their release.



Carlos Kipperu & Ministério do Trabalho

Making laws against slavery work in Brazil

On 11 March 2003, President Lula da Silva launched Brazil's *National Plan for the Eradication of Slavery*. The National Commission for the Eradication of Slave Labour (CONATRAE) is responsible for implementing this plan and also coordinates the work of different government departments, the federal police and NGOs against slavery.

The Government's Special Mobile Inspection Group has proved an effective mechanism for enforcing the law against slavery, even in remote areas where estate owners have significant political power. By the end of 2007, the Special Group had inspected more than 1,870 estates and released more than 27,600 workers from forced labour. Successful claims for compensation reached nearly US\$2,000,000 in 2003.

The Special Group is a federal and multi-agency institution made up of labour inspectors, federal police officers and attorneys. The involvement of federal police in operations means that charges can be brought immediately against those using slave labour and provides protection for the members of the Special Group. The mobile courts which accompany the Special Group can impose immediate fines, freeze bank accounts and seize assets. This ensures that those who use forced labour are immediately punished and workers receive the compensation they are owed.

In 2004, the Government introduced a Register of Employers for all those using slave labour. As of July 2007, there were 192 individuals or companies on the list; none of them can access public grants, credits or other forms of financial assistance. This is an important additional sanction against those using slave labour.

The Government has had to contend with strong opposition from interest groups who have sought to use legislative and judicial mechanisms to block and undermine these measures. For example, the legality of the Register of Employers has been challenged in court; the Senate started an inquiry into the Special Group leading to a suspension of inspections; and Congress tried to remove labour inspectors' powers to issue on the spot fines and award compensation payments.

However, the Government has shown a determination to take forward its agenda despite these difficulties. It is proposing a Bill to ensure that any challenge to the Register of Employers will not be successful and is considering new legislation to introduce tougher penalties for those convicted of using forced labour. It has also restarted inspections by the Special Group by guaranteeing legal assistance to any official who may be implicated in any proceedings arising from an inspection. This example shows the level of political commitment that is needed, over several years, in order to resist challenges from the affected elites and ensure that legislation is properly implemented.



Navsarjan

Above: Manual cleaning of a private dry latrine.



Navsarjan

Above: A man hole worker going in to sewer.



Navsarjan

Above: A manual scavenger dumping waste and excrement.

Poverty and prejudice

Discriminatory practices against certain groups of people systematically narrow their opportunities and choices in life leaving them socially excluded. In this way discrimination often plays an important role in determining which members of society are worst affected by poverty and most at risk of slavery.

As already noted, certain occupations are allocated on the basis of caste. One example of this is manual scavenging, which is the removal of human and animal excrement using brooms, small tin plates and baskets carried on the head. Manual scavengers are employed by local government authorities and by private households throughout South Asia. In India alone it is estimated that 1.3 million *dalits*, the majority of whom are women, make their living this way.

A survey conducted in Andhra Pradesh found that 98 per cent of manual scavengers in the state were *dalits*. Those who try to refuse the work allocated to them may be threatened, physically attacked or subjected to social boycotts.

Needless to say, manual scavengers are exposed to the most virulent forms of viral and bacterial infections which affect their skin, eyes, limbs, respiratory and gastrointestinal systems. Tuberculosis is rife among the community. They also end up in debt bondage as they receive a pittance for their work and even this wage is not always paid regularly. This forces them to borrow money from the upper-caste people they work for, usually at very high rates of interest.

The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 punishes the employment of scavengers or the construction of dry (non-flush) latrines with imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine as high as Rs. 2,000 (US\$50). There is also a national scheme for the identification, training, and rehabilitation of manual scavengers throughout the country. However, neither the law nor the rehabilitation scheme have been adequately implemented due to a lack of political will.⁴⁹

Manual scavenging in India

Forty-year-old Manju described her daily routine as a manual scavenger:

“In the morning I work from 6.00 am to 11.00 am cleaning the dry latrines. I collect the faeces and carry it on my head to the river half a kilometer away seven to ten times a day. In the afternoon I clean the gutters. Another *Bhangi* collects the rubbish from the gutters and places it outside. Then I come and pick it up and take it one kilometer away. My husband died 10 years ago since then I have been doing this. Today I earn 30 rupees a day (US\$0.75)... For the last two months we have not received anything. Every two months they pay, but there is no certainty. We are paid by the Nagar Palika municipality chief officer.”⁵⁰

Even when the type of work minority groups are allowed to do is not ascribed, their options remain extremely limited. Agricultural work is one of the primary areas of employment for these groups, but very few actually own any of the land they work.

In India, over 86 per cent of *dalits* are landless or almost landless.⁵¹ The situation is similar in countries like Paraguay, Peru and Bolivia where the indigenous populations had their land confiscated many years ago. In west Africa, individuals considered of a slave caste are not allowed to own land at all. Without access to their own land, these groups have little choice but to work for others for subsistence rates or, in many cases, simply for food and a place to sleep.

Groups who are allotted particular occupations from birth and excluded from access to land are trapped in the lowest paid jobs. They usually live well below the poverty line and have no opportunity to save money.

In the case of those born into a slave caste in Mauritania or Niger, their chances of accumulating wealth or accessing greater opportunities in life are further limited by the

⁴⁹ For more information on manual scavenging, see the Dalit Solidarity Network website at: www.dsnu.org

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Broken People*, New York, 1999, page 143.

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, *Small Change*, op. cit., page 43.



fact that they cannot inherit property or marry someone who is not of their own caste.

Discrimination can also prevent or inhibit certain groups from accessing education, health care, clean water and credit, all of which play a role in increasing their vulnerability to slavery and reducing their opportunities of escaping it.

In many cases minority groups do not have access to social services because they live in isolated areas and/or they are not prioritised by central or local governments when resources are allocated. For those on very low incomes, the costs associated simply in travelling to schools or health centres can in themselves prevent them from accessing these services, even before the expense of paying for medicine or school equipment is taken into consideration.

In other cases, minorities have been discouraged from trying to access these services because they have encountered discrimination. This would include being ignored, made to sit separately from other people, told they are not entitled to the service offered or being publicly abused.

When minority or marginalised groups are excluded from education it severely curtails their future economic and social opportunities and significantly increases the danger of their being trapped in some form of forced labour.

Those who have only received a very basic education are unlikely to be able to obtain anything other than low paying jobs and will rarely know their rights or how to defend them.

If they are not literate they will not be able to read contracts presented to them by traffickers or challenge the terms and conditions they contain. If they are not fully numerate it is much easier for employers to keep them in bonded labour by manipulating the debt and presenting them with accounts which they cannot challenge.

Without access to clean water or basic preventative health care, people are more likely to become ill and incur costs that they

cannot afford. Temporary loss of income because someone is sick or the added expense of seeing a doctor or paying for medicines is often all it takes to force an individual into slavery. It may be the last straw which leads them to take a decision to send their child away to become a domestic worker, to take up a job offer abroad or to take a loan that will leave them in debt bondage.

The following examples from Albania, the Republic of Congo, Paraguay and India give a clear picture of how the cumulative impact of poverty and prejudice increases people's vulnerability to slavery.

Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania

In 2007, Anti-Slavery International in partnership with Terre des hommes - Albania, managed research into child begging in the towns of Tirana, Elbasan and Korca in Albania and in Thessaloniki in Greece, where Albanian children are also known to beg.⁵² All of the child beggars identified for this research were from the Roma or Egyptian communities.⁵³ Hardly any children from the majority Albanian population beg at all.

Around one third of children who took part in interviews and were currently begging were forced to beg through the threat or use of violence or being denied food. This figure is likely to underestimate the true extent of forced child begging as children are likely to be reluctant to report abuse by their parents because of a sense of loyalty or fear of reprisals. While most parents do not use violent means to force children to beg, many tell them to do so and some would also coerce them. For example, one mother from Korca explained that the children had to beg: "If they do not want to starve, they have to go."

The research shows that many children start begging at around the age of four or five and just under three quarters of the children who were currently involved in begging were 12 or under. The majority of children interviewed beg most days of the week, with around a third



Terre des hommes Albania

Below: Begging on the streets, Albania.

"Begging is not good... I feel ashamed of people looking at me."

12 year old boy from Korca.

⁵² Research was conducted by Terre des hommes, Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) and Children of the World and of Albania (FBSH) and involved in-depth interviews and group discussions with 234 individuals (child beggars, ex-child beggars, children at risk and parents of child beggars or ex-child beggars). Emily Delap, *Begging for Change*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2008.

⁵³ The Egyptian community are an Albanian ethnic group whose roots may or may not be historically traced back to Egypt, but who are commonly described as 'Egyptian' within Albania. Although commonly lumped together, the Roma and Egyptian communities have quite distinct ethnic identities.



of child beggars begging everyday.

Discrimination against the Roma and Egyptian ethnic groups has been widely documented in terms of access to employment, education and other basic services, and this appears to be a pivotal factor in explaining why these families cannot meet their basic needs.

All of the child beggars who took part in the research had parents who had either no education or only very limited education and were either unemployed or in low paid occupations. Fathers most commonly work collecting cans for recycling or in construction, whilst mothers tend to beg or work as street cleaners. Unemployment disproportionately affects Roma and Egyptian groups, with some research suggesting that 71 per cent of Roma and 67 per cent of Egyptian adults are unemployed as compared with a national average of around 18 per cent.

Those interviewed linked unemployment to a lack of education and discrimination against the Roma or Egyptian communities. Mothers in Tirana commented that: “There aren’t jobs for our hands (i.e. for people from our ethnic group)” and “There aren’t jobs for the white, who are educated, imagine for us, we don’t even know how to write our names.”

NGO workers observed a marked increase in begging amongst Roma and Egyptian communities following the fall of communism, with some arguing that there was little or no begging during this time. This suggests that for many families begging is a survival mechanism and may be a response to a decline in social security and state sponsored job opportunities rather than a ‘tradition’.

Both children and adults repeatedly identified poverty as the principle reason for begging, the earnings from which make a substantial difference to family incomes. Children commonly earn between 200-500 Leke (US\$2.58-6.45) per day, which is roughly the same as a street cleaner, but in Tirana it could be as much as 2000 Leke (US\$25.78) per day.

Children reported that they lived in cramped and basic accommodation, with many sharing one or two rooms with five to ten family



Terre des hommes Albania

members. The research indicates that discrimination plays an important role in their being denied government help with accommodation or access to basic services.

Above: A child out on the streets in Albania. Child beggars can work up to 12 hours a day.

Children and parents spoke of racial discrimination, mainly on the part of other pupils, but also by teachers, as the key reason why Roma and Egyptian children do not attend school.⁵⁴ This is reflected in the following comments from girls in Korca: “The teacher beats these (Roma) children”; “At school the other girls mock me”; and “We are black and others look at us differently”.

Institutional discrimination against these ethnic minorities, particularly in terms of their access to housing, employment and education, is therefore a key factor behind forced child begging among the Roma and Egyptian communities.

Indigenous people in the Republic of Congo

In 2007, Anti-Slavery International carried out research in the Republic of Congo which found that indigenous people⁵⁵ were routinely used as forced labourers for the dominant ethnic group, the Bantu.

⁵⁴ Other reasons given for not going to school include not having enough money to buy books and uniforms, child care responsibilities, early marriage and disruption caused by migration.

⁵⁵ The 1984 census recorded that indigenous people make up 2.29 per cent of the Congolese population which totals around 3.7 million.



In many cases indigenous people are forced to work without remuneration under the threat of violence or some other form of punishment. In other cases they are promised a day's wage of up to 500 CFA in cash (US\$1.20) for agricultural work or hunting.

Sometimes this is not paid because the Bantu claim that the indigenous people have not done enough work or it is paid in kind in which case they receive goods which do not match the value of the work they have done. One indigenous man stated:

"We must work for the Bantu masters. We cannot refuse to do so because we are likely to be beaten or be victims of insults and threats. Even though we agree to work all day in the fields, we are still asked to work even more, for example, to fetch firewood or go hunting. Most of the time, they pay us in kind, a worn loincloth for 10 workdays. We cannot refuse because we do not have a choice."⁵⁶

Indigenous people also report having to ask permission before going hunting and not being allowed to work for other people. One Bantu was quoted as saying: "You are my Pygmy.⁵⁷ You belong to me. You cannot go to work for others or to follow them."

Indigenous people are also trapped in debt bondage by the Bantu who sell them various goods including clothes, food, medicine and cigarettes at inflated prices and add exorbitant interest rates if they are not paid on time. The debts are used to force indigenous people to provide free labour to Bantu and are accompanied by threats and the use of physical violence if they do not comply.

Often the debt itself is manufactured. For example, when indigenous people go hunting for the Bantu they are given a rifle and bullets, but everything they catch goes to the Bantu who keep all the profit. If more bullets have been fired than animals caught, the Bantu charges them 1,000 CFA (US\$2.40) per bullet claiming that they are keeping animals for themselves. Another example involved Bantu giving indigenous children a small amount of food and then taking all the fish their parents had



caught during the day in exchange for the 'debt'.

The overt discrimination suffered by indigenous people means that they are excluded from many key social services. Little effort is made to prevent or eradicate diseases in indigenous communities like river blindness, malaria and sleeping sickness and, on a visit to Boyélé, indigenous women complained to the researchers that they were refused entry into the "mixed" health centres where a vaccination campaign was taking place.

The transport and other costs involved in visiting hospitals or medical centres means many indigenous people cannot afford to use them. A survey of five regions carried out by UNICEF found that less than 15 per cent of indigenous people interviewed had access to a health centre.⁵⁸ This not only has direct implications for their health, but also means that most indigenous children are born at home and do not receive birth certificates.

Figures on indigenous children's school attendance are difficult to get, but, according to data published by PRAEBASE, in November 2005, 2,936 indigenous children were enrolled in school in nine regions. PRAEBASE believes that only between 15 to 20 per cent of indigenous children are enrolled in school and few actually complete their primary education.⁵⁹

The principle reasons for this are that indigenous families cannot afford the school fees, do not have birth certificates required to enrol children or the children drop out because they are teased and bullied by Bantu children.



All images this page: Anti-Slavery International

Top left: Hunting and gathering to survive in the jungle, Congo.

Top right: Indigenous people can expect a daily payment for their labour of CFA 500 (US\$ 1.20), the cost of just one fish.

Middle: Life long discrimination reinforces the poverty and vulnerability of indigenous people to slavery, Congo.

Bottom: Fresh water obtained from a tree in the jungle.

⁵⁶ Interview on 6 November 2007 at Mapati. Quoted in Sheila Keetharuth and Romana Cacchioli, *Sold down the river - slavery in the Congo*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2008.

⁵⁷ The term 'Pygmy' has a pejorative connotation, insinuating a state of inferiority. This report refers to hunter-gathers of Central Africa as indigenous people.

⁵⁸ UNICEF, *Survey on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of indigenous people in HIV/AIDS prevention and their access to basic social services*, Brazzaville, 2007, page 6.

⁵⁹ PRAEBASE, *Summary of the education of Pygmy children in the Republic of Congo*. Quoted in Sheila Keetharuth and Romana Cacchioli, *Sold down the river - slavery in the Congo*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2008.



Above: Preparing a bitter leaf salad from herbs gathered in the jungle, Congo.

In some cases, debts and concern for their children's safety also play a role, as one indigenous woman explained:

"Some of us don't send our children to school because we have debts, especially during the honey-collecting season. We take out loans hoping that we can collect a lot of honey and when we don't find enough, the Bantu can take everything and leave us nothing...we are afraid to send our children to school where the Bantu can find them.

Our children are also treated differently in school. The Bantu children don't want to sit next to our children, and if there is a problem, the teacher tends to beat our children and not the Bantu ones. If one of our children comes first in class at the end of the school year, the others are not happy."

Conservation policies have been framed without consultation with indigenous people or considering the impact they will have on their lives. This has led to indigenous people being forced off their traditional land which is then designated a protected area. They are also prevented from hunting for many months of the year. As indigenous communities frequently depend on hunting and gathering to survive and have no other source of income, these regulations have left them dependant on the Bantu for work.

The discrimination that indigenous people face in all aspects of their daily lives reinforces their poverty and isolation from the rest of Congolese society. They have been left with higher illiteracy levels and poorer health than the general population and deprived of their traditional means of supporting themselves without any alternative being provided. This has left them with no way to escape their subjugation by the Bantu who continue to compel the indigenous people to provide forced labour.

Testimonies regarding the treatment of indigenous people in Congo

An indigenous man interviewed in November 2007 described the discrimination which his community faced on a daily basis:

"When the colonists left, the Bantu became our masters and began to exploit us. As a result, relations with the Bantu are currently delicate. We cannot share the same seat or even a cup with them. At the restaurants there are cups and plates for only indigenous people. They are never washed and they are dirty. It is because we are Pygmies. They say that we are dirty, that we stink and that we live like animals because we sleep on the ground. We have to go get water from springs, sometimes very far away, because the Bantu chase us from the wells that are here in the village. They ignore us. The village chief and the committee members are all Bantu. They never consult us. We just have to do what they say. We don't have a choice, because we are Pygmies."

A Bantu man interviewed in the research highlighted how difficult it was to challenge violations of indigenous peoples' rights because of the risk of retaliation from local leaders:

"Even for us Bantus who defend the rights of the indigenous people, the situation is difficult. A Bantu can forbid you from communicating with the indigenous people by saying: 'Do not speak to my Pygmies!' Last year, I went in Enyele district for training. I was in Motaba, where the Bantus meet all day...One day, I saw an indigenous bound to a tree and beaten because he had not brought back enough game following a shooting spree. I wanted to intervene in favour of the indigenous person. The masters threatened me and said that I could not return if I challenged their authority. There was nothing to do because it was too dangerous."



Indigenous people in Paraguay

In Paraguay, the indigenous population represents 1.7 per cent of the national population and is the most socially excluded sector of Paraguayan society. Much of the indigenous land was sold off to foreign speculators by the Paraguayan Government in 1885, obliging many indigenous people to become labourers on the estates.⁶⁰ Few indigenous people today have access to their own land and those that do lack the capital to use it commercially or cannot live from it because their holding is too small or the land is infertile.⁶¹ Unemployment is extremely high, with the cattle ranches being the only real source of employment in the Chaco.

Over 50 per cent of indigenous people are illiterate as compared with the national average of just seven per cent. The high illiteracy rate amongst indigenous people and the fact that only a fraction speak Spanish, further limits their employment options.⁶²

Where they are employed, indigenous people are paid less than their Paraguayan colleagues for equal work. Indigenous workers on estates will receive the equivalent of US\$35-78 a month whereas other Paraguayans will get US\$87-155 a month with housing and food provided free.⁶³

Of the 164 indigenous communities which live in the Departments of Boquerón and Presidente Hayes, 19 per cent do not have access to a primary school and 46 per cent do not have regular access to any type of health professional.

Those living in urban areas also lack access to basic public services. For example, in Casa Pasajera near Filadelfia there is no electricity, sporadic access to water and three latrines for some 400-500 people.

Structural discrimination has left tens of thousands of indigenous people without access to jobs, land, education or health care and extremely vulnerable to debt bondage on the estates in the Chaco.



Terraviva

Left: The indigenous community of Buena Vista located 40 km from the city of Concepción, Paraguay.

Dalits, 'low' caste and indigenous people in India

The vast majority of *dalits* and other scheduled castes and tribes in India are initially trapped in debt bondage because they have no other way of subsisting apart from taking a loan from a landlord. The Gandhi Peace Foundation survey found that just over 81 per cent of bonded labourers took a loan because they did not have enough money to meet their basic daily needs (food, medicine, clothes, etc.) or to pay for a specific event like a wedding or a funeral.

Most of these people are enslaved for comparatively small amounts of money. For example, the Gandhi Peace Foundation survey found that in nearly 70 per cent of cases the individual was bonded for an initial loan of Rs700 or less - the equivalent of US\$16 or less.

Although nearly 60 per cent of the individuals who took these loans were aware that they would work for an indefinite period in order to repay the debt, this did not dissuade them because their expenditure was unavoidable and there was no other means of securing the money.⁶⁴ However, once the loan is taken these bonded labourers often find there is no way out of slavery, either for themselves or for their families.

Children may become bonded because a

“Animals are treated better than bonded labourers. The law states that animals must not work for more than eight hours a day, but bonded labourers work all day, every day.”

Jai Singh
Quoted in Pete Pattison,
Forgotten But Not Gone,
2007

⁶⁰ Stephen Kidd, *The working conditions of the Enxet indigenous people in the Chaco*. Printed in *Enslaved Peoples in the 1990s: Indigenous peoples, debt bondage and human rights*, Anti-Slavery International and IWGIA, Copenhagen, 1997, page 156.

⁶¹ Only 45 per cent of indigenous communities in Paraguay have land despite the fact that it is guaranteed to them in the constitution. Alvaro Bedoya Silvia-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *Servidumbre por Deudas y Marginación en el Chaco de Paraguay*, *op. cit.*, page 30. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay*, *op. cit.*, page 3.

⁶² Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay*, *op. cit.*, page 6.

⁶³ Alvaro Bedoya Silvia-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *op. cit.*, page 16. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of Slavery in Paraguay*, *op. cit.*, page 7.

⁶⁴ Gandhi Peace Foundation and the National Labour Institute, *op. cit.*, pages 41 and 43.



Above: Muktar Allam demonstrates the heavy and dangerous loads he carried when he was a bonded labourer, India.

Above right: A bonded labourer working in a brick kiln, India.

Below: Child bonded labourers turning bricks to dry them in the sun, India.



debt is increasing or a new loan is needed and this normally ends their chances of getting a decent education. A study conducted for UNICEF and the Punjab State Human Rights Commission shows that 71 per cent of children working in brick kilns are *dalits* and 'low' castes and that the school drop-out rate for children at brick kilns is 89 per cent.⁶⁵ The removal of these children from school because they are bonded, or because they are subject to discrimination at school, perpetuates their marginalisation in society.

Bonded labourers often work in dirty or dangerous jobs which increases their chances of becoming ill and needing medical treatment. For example, the study conducted by MLPC of mineworkers in Rajasthan found that employers took no steps to protect workers from health risks associated with mining and, as a result, almost a quarter of the female workforce were widows of mine labourers who had died of silicosis and tuberculosis. If a family member becomes sick or dies from these work-related illnesses, the debt is simply passed on to the spouse or children along with the additional debts incurred for medicines or a funeral.

A Human Rights Watch's report on bonded child labour in India's silk industry found that a high proportion of these children suffer from work-related injuries and illness. Medical examinations carried out on two hundred children (aged six to 14) in the silk industry found that 86 per cent had respiratory diseases and 70 per cent had skin infections. The majority of these children were *dalits*.⁶⁶ Illness increases their debts through lost work days and medical fees and, in cases like those cited here, is likely to undermine their health in the long-term.

Gender discrimination and slavery

Gender inequalities and discrimination clearly play an important role in contributing to women's vulnerability to slavery as well as the type of slavery practices they are subjected to.

Some forms of slavery uniquely affect girls. For example, *trokosi* is a form of slavery that takes place in Ghana and some other parts of west Africa by which girls as young as six years old are given to a local priest as penance for a 'sin' committed by a relative, which may be as trivial as gossiping or stealing an earring. A ritual is performed signifying the girl is married to a god and then she becomes the shrine's *trokosi*.

Although the girl has not committed any crime herself she cannot refuse to become a *trokosi*. She then is forced to have sex with the priest and bear his children and also has to work all day maintaining the shrine or working in the fields. The girl does not benefit in any way from her work.

A local NGO, International Needs - Ghana, has helped release 3,500 *trokosi* from 52 shrines by working directly with priests and local chiefs, and making them aware that the practice is harmful and that there are other ways for people to atone for their 'sins', such as paying a fine with animals or money. However, it is estimated that this practice still affects up to 1,500 women and girls in Ghana alone.

The roles performed by women in society are frequently undervalued and in some countries daughters are considered a burden because of the costs associated with marriage.

This is reflected in the *sumangali* system which only affects girls and operates in the spinning mills of Tamil Nadu in India. Research carried out by the Centre for Education and Communication between 2004

⁶⁵ This is in line with the findings of the National Survey on the Incidence of Bonded Labour (1981) which found that 90-94 per cent of bonded labourers had no school education.

⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Small Change, op. cit.*, page 26.



and 2007 included interviews with 54 girls who were currently working in the *sumangali* system and 43 who had previously done so.

These girls are bonded because their parents have taken an advance payment and then sent them to the mills with a broker. All the girls interviewed signed contracts, but none of them had a copy and most had no idea what was in the contract, either because they were illiterate or because they had signed blank papers.

The girls have to work for a specified period, usually three years, during which they are paid a small monthly wage, the equivalent of between US\$10-25, but are promised a lump sum payment of around US\$700 at the end of the contract. This is usually used to arrange their marriage.

Although the girls believed that they would be working one shift of eight hours, practically all of them worked 12 hours a day. Most girls also had to do some occasional domestic work for the mill owner.

Of those interviewed who were still employed in the mills, 85 per cent were 15 or younger when they started work. These girls were confined in the camps with 83 per cent reporting that they had not been allowed to visit their home village and the remaining girls only being allowed to leave for the marriage or death of a close relative. Of those who had previously worked in the mills, two thirds said that they suffered verbal abuse and over 10 per cent said they were beaten by their employers.

Women frequently suffer exclusion from large sections of the labour market and regularly end up in jobs which are unskilled and poorly paid. Even when in work they often have worse terms and conditions than men. For these reasons, women, and in particular families headed by women, often struggle to survive on lower incomes than men and are susceptible to offers from traffickers who promise to arrange well paying jobs in other cities or countries.

This pattern is clearly seen in Peru, where only 35 per cent of the economically active female population are able to find work. When they



Pete Pattisson - www.petepattisson.com

Trokosi in Ghana

Adzo Akpobi (above) explains the realities of life as a *trokosi*:

“When I was young, my jobs were to sweep up, wash plates and clean the shrine, but as I grew older I had to go and work in the fields. We were given a set area to clear and could not return until we had done it. If we failed to finish the work, we wouldn’t get fed. Of course we were not paid for any of this work. Eventually I ran away from the shrine and found a boyfriend in a nearby village I had a child with him, but when he found out I was a *trokosi* he broke off the relationship because he thought his family would suffer. There are many bad things about being a *trokosi*; worst of all your own people reject you.”⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Pete Pattisson, *op. cit.*, page 46.



Jiera (19, Lithuanian) was a victim of human trafficking.

“My life has been ruined by two men I thought were my friends. They trafficked me into prostitution when I was 17.” What Jiera thought was going to be a holiday in London became a year-long nightmare before she escaped with the help of a Lithuanian punter. He took her to the police but they said they couldn’t help, so he took her to the Lithuanian Embassy. From there she was referred to POPPY, who run the UK’s only shelter for trafficked women. She has taken refuge in drink and drugs.

“I want to go back home, but I am afraid of what people will say. Even if my friends don’t judge me for what happened, they will always know what I did. They will never forget, and neither can I.”

Quoted from *Slave Britain* Exhibition 2007



Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures

Dominican women trafficked to Argentina

Between 1995 and 2002, some 12,000 Dominicans migrated to Argentina, attracted by the parity between the Argentine peso and the US dollar. Around 90 per cent of these migrants were women with children. In many cases, the break up of a relationship and the lack of financial support from the father left the mother solely responsible for providing for her children.⁷⁵

While most of these women were not unemployed, they wanted to improve their income as over half of those interviewed were earning the equivalent of between US\$13 and US\$100 per month. Their options for getting better paid jobs in the Dominican Republic were limited by the economic crisis and by their own limited educational qualifications - only just over half of those interviewed in the research had completed primary education.

The majority of these women borrowed money to finance their trip to take up jobs in Argentina, but many of them were deceived and ended up being trafficked into prostitution.⁷⁶

are employed, their jobs pay well under the minimum wage of 460 soles a month (US\$137). Around 20 per cent of households are headed by women, and this is an increasing trend. With less employment opportunities and lower wages than men, women are becoming increasingly desperate to find reasonably paid work and are therefore more open to offers from traffickers.⁶⁸

In Paraguay the percentage of the population living in poverty rose from 34 to 48 per cent between 2001 and 2002. Extreme poverty was higher in the countryside where basic social services do not even cover 40 per cent of the rural population.⁶⁹ This economic crisis particularly affected women whose employment options were already very restricted. In this context, an offer of work in another country was an attractive proposition, especially as many families were already receiving money from relatives working abroad.⁷⁰

However, many women who took up these offers were trafficked into sexual exploitation. Research carried out by Grupo Luna Nueva in 2005 recorded cases involving nearly 500 women and girls, three quarters of whom were trafficked to either Argentina or Spain. The number of women affected increased sharply as poverty levels grew: from 42 women trafficked in 2002 to 236 in 2004.⁷¹

Research also shows that gender based violence is a factor which increases vulnerability to trafficking and other slavery practices. In Paraguay, there is a high degree of tolerance in society for physical and sexual violence against women, with 25 per cent of all violent crime in the country being against women and girls in the home.⁷²

A study carried out of trafficked women in several European countries found that 60 per cent of the women who were interviewed had experienced some form of violence prior to being trafficked.⁷³ Other recent research has also highlighted the link between domestic violence and trafficking.⁷⁴ Gender based violence directly contributes to trafficking as women and girls are desperate for opportunities to escape this violence and more likely to accept offers of help or employment, even if they have misgivings about how genuine such offers are.

⁶⁸ Movimiento el Pozo and International Organization for Migration, *Trata de Mujeres para Fines Sexuales Comerciales en el Perú*, Lima, IOM, 2005, page 24.

⁶⁹ Grupo Luna Nueva, *La trata de personas en el Paraguay*, Buenos Aires, IOM, 2005, page 40. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., page 8.

⁷⁰ The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that more than US\$500 million is sent to Paraguay as remittances each year. Quoted in Brigitte Colmán, *Remesa de emigrantes ayuda a paliar la pobreza en Paraguay*, *Ultima Hora*, 27 November 2005, page 2.

⁷¹ Grupo Luna Nueva, op. cit., page 51. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., page 9.

⁷² Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., page 8.

⁷³ Zimmerman et al., *Stolen Smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents in Europe*, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, 2006.

⁷⁴ Stephen Warnath, *Examining the Intersection between Trafficking in Persons and Domestic Violence*, 2007.

⁷⁵ CAREF, *Migración y trata de mujeres Dominicanas en la Argentina*, IOM, Buenos Aires, 2003, page 25. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Argentina*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2006, pages 3-4.

⁷⁶ CAREF, op. cit., pages 28-32. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Argentina*, op. cit., page 4.



It will come as little surprise to most people to learn that 98 per cent of those trafficked into sexual exploitation around the world are women and girls. However, there are also more women trafficked for forced labour than men. This means that some 80 per cent of all people trafficked for both economic and sexual exploitation are women and girls.⁷⁷

In Indonesia, poverty, high unemployment and a lack of educational opportunities have driven Indonesian migrants abroad in search of work since the 1980s. By mid-2001, over 70 per cent of Indonesian migrants were women, and 43 per cent worked in the informal sector, usually as domestic or factory workers.⁷⁸

Addressing gender inequalities in society would greatly help to reduce the number of women and girls who end up in slavery. For example, if women were given the same opportunities for education and employment as men and paid the same salaries for equal work, far fewer would be compelled to migrate as a survival mechanism or send the children out to work at a young age. Achieving this would involve getting many societies to fundamentally change the way they value jobs done by women.

This is particularly true for domestic work. Currently, in many countries domestic workers can be legally subjected to terms and conditions of employment which would be illegal in any other occupation. In Paraguay, for example, an adult domestic worker can be paid 40 per cent of the national minimum wage; their maximum work day can be 12 hours, rather than eight; they do not have a right to days off on Sundays or national holidays; and they do not have to be provided with a written contract.

More than 20 per cent of all economically active women in Paraguay are employed in domestic work, so any improvements to their pay and other entitlements would have a direct and immediate impact on their standard of living and that of their families.



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This could prevent many children from being sent away to become domestic workers as a lack of money and food are key reasons why this takes place. One survey of families of child domestic workers found that more than 50 per cent were living on an income equivalent to half the minimum wage or less.

It should also be stressed that attitudes relating to the employment of women also have a direct impact on how girls are treated. That is to say, as long as it is legally and socially acceptable to exploit adult domestic workers in Paraguay, it is extremely likely that many child domestics will have to live in conditions of slavery.

The majority of child domestic workers in Paraguay are girls who are separated from their families at 13 years old or younger and go to live with their employer on whom they are left totally dependent for their welfare. They have no realistic alternative but to perform whatever work they are given and they are commonly subjected to extreme exploitation for little or no pay.⁸⁰

One survey found that around 45 per cent of Paraguayan child domestics worked every day. Many child domestic workers are also subject to physical, psychological or sexual abuse. Of those child domestics in Paraguay who wanted children in the future, 80 per cent said they did not want them to work as domestics because of their own negative experiences.⁸¹

Left: 'Indra', from Sri Lanka: (not her real name)

"I left Sri Lanka because my family was very poor and my parents were very old. My family is also very big, I have three brothers and five sisters. I left when my children were very small, so I was very sad. I went to an agency to find work in the Gulf even before I had finished breast-feeding my youngest child."

"I started work at 12 years old. Since then, I never saw my family... They did not allow anybody to see me because they always beat me. I always wanted to tell my parents how difficult my life was - but there was no chance..."

Child domestic worker, Philippines
Quoted in Jonathan Blagbrough, *They Respect Their Animals More*, 2008

⁷⁷ International Labour Office, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour*, op. cit., page 15.

⁷⁸ Indonesia Country Report, *Asian Migrant Yearbook 2000*, The Asian Migrant Centre (AMC), Hong Kong, 2001.

⁷⁹ Line Bareiro, et. al., *Necesarias, invisibles, discriminadas. Las trabajadoras del servicio doméstico en el Paraguay*, ILO and CDE, Paraguay, 2005, pages 36-39. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., page 21.

⁸⁰ The 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on slavery notes that where a child is delivered to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of that child, this constitutes a slavery practice.

⁸¹ Clyde Soto, et. al., *Prevención y Eliminación del Trabajo Infantil Doméstico en Paraguay*, ILO-IPEC, Paraguay, 2002, pages 48-49 and 6. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., pages 21-22.



Left: Mideleine Chersetal is a 13 year old Haitian domestic worker. She works from 5am to 11pm each day. Her work includes taking her employer's children to school, but she is not allowed to attend school herself.

The most exploitative type of child domestic work in Paraguay is called *criadazgo*. Under this system, Paraguayan children are not paid at all and live and work as domestics in exchange for accommodation, food and a basic education. One study estimated that there were 11,449 children between 5-17 working in *criadazgo* in Asunción alone.⁸²

The real figure is likely to be much higher as employers do not consider that children in *criadazgo* are working, so it is generally not recorded when official statistics on child labour are compiled. Employers regard themselves as benefactors who are giving children better opportunities in return for some help with domestic chores. The children themselves often do not identify what they are doing as work, because it is not valued as such and because they are not being paid.

The situation in Paraguay is illustrative of the situation facing millions of children around the world. Child domestic labour is the single largest area of employment for girls under 16 years old internationally.

In many cases, parents think their children will be better off working in someone else's home.

Below: Traffickers' promises of a better life can be hard to resist to those living in poverty.



They believe that they will be properly fed and that they will have an opportunity to get an education that they cannot afford to give them because of the associated costs (e.g. transport, uniforms, books or fees).

In most cases this proves to be a false expectation. Many employers do not allow children to go to school as they want them to be available to work all the time or because they do not consider education important for girls or child domestic workers. Of those children who do go to school, most of them are too tired to actually learn anything and many drop out.

A survey of 1,029 child domestics in Brazil found that 93 per cent were girls, mostly from very poor families and of African-descent. Nearly 90 per cent of these child domestic workers began working before the minimum age of 16, often when they were as young as five or six years old. Many of these children were not allowed to attend school, resulting in very low levels of formal education, with 86 per cent having either no formal education or only primary education.

Without an education, girls are left with a limited skills base and their future employment opportunities are generally restricted to unskilled and poorly paid work, and the cycle of poverty and vulnerability to slavery practices is replicated in the next generation. The survey in Brazil found that nearly two thirds of child domestic workers' mothers had been child domestic workers themselves.⁸³ Research in the Dominican Republic found that this was

⁸² Ernesto Heisecke, et al., *Las Criaditas de Asunción*, 1995. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, op. cit., page 20.

⁸³ International Labour Organization, *Perfil del Trabajo Infantil Doméstico en Brasil, Colombia, Paraguay y Perú: contexto, estudios y resultados*, OIT-IPEC Sudamérica, Lima, 2004, page 60.



true of 50 per cent of child domestic workers in Santo Domingo.⁸⁴

Multiple discrimination and slavery

Women and girls are often subjected to discrimination both on the grounds of their membership of a minority group and because of their gender. This is evident when families are enslaved together and women are frequently not recognised as workers in their own right. In these cases women work longer hours than men, but receive less pay or even nothing at all.

In Bolivia, bonded Guaraní families work together on private ranches. While men get 10-15 bolivianos (US\$1.28-1.29) a day, women and children are paid nothing, despite working both in the fields and in the employers' house during a work day that lasts from 4am to 6pm. In Paraguay, indigenous women doing domestic work for their employer receive less than half of what men earn and can just receive a symbolic payment.⁸⁵

In South Asia, women are bonded along with their husbands and carry out domestic and agricultural work for landowners as well as household work for their own families. One survey of sandstone mineworkers in India found that most workers were bonded and women were paid about half that of men.

Discrimination against the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania is a key factor leading to begging, but the decision about who is sent out to beg is closely related to power within the household and men are best able to avoid this occupation of last resort.

Begging declines for both boys and girls at puberty as it is seen as a shameful activity, but while boys are unlikely to re-enter this profession, girls are often forced to start again after they are married.



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In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in India, girls are subjected to different slavery practices known as *Devadasi*, *Jogini* and *Mathamma* and generically described as *Devadasi*.

Above: Artwork by *Jogini* women depicting the ceremony of the bride being dedicated to the Goddess.

The different *Devadasi* practices share key common features. These include the dedication of a girl, her subsequent 'marriage' to the deity and her deflowering immediately after the ceremony or at puberty - usually by family members, village elders or a man who has paid for the privilege. Most girls are 'married' between the age of eight and 12, and initiated by the age of 15. After this they are considered available for sexual use by men of the community. While initiations are in decline, it is estimated that tens of thousands of women in India have had their lives ruined by the practice.⁸⁶

All *Devadasi* are girls from scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (Dalit and indigenous groups).⁸⁷ The girls become *Devadasi* without their consent and are consequently subject to non-consensual sex with one or many followers of the deity, often on demand. They are then stigmatised because they have had sex with men who are not their husbands.

Becoming a *Devadasi* therefore reinforces and adds to existing discrimination based on caste and gender. They are discriminated against by all parts of society, including their own community, because of their status, which

“Nothing good ever came of me being a *Jogini*. My health was spoiled. My home was spoiled. My relationships were spoiled. My whole life was spoiled.”

Pulimanni was made a *Jogini* when she was 12.
Quoted in Maggie Black, *Women in Ritual Slavery in India*, 2007.

⁸⁴ IPEC, *Helping hands or shackled lives*, ILO, Geneva, 2004, page 19.

⁸⁵ Alvaro Bedoya Silvia-Santisteban and Eduardo Bedoya Garland, *op. cit.*, pages 16-17. Quoted in Mike Kaye, *Contemporary forms of slavery in Paraguay*, *op. cit.*, page 3.

⁸⁶ The latest available official statistics indicated that there were up to 23,000 *Devadasi* in Karnataka and up to 17,000 *Jogini* in Andhra Pradesh. Quoted in Maggie Black, *Women in ritual slavery*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2007, page 10.

⁸⁷ In the Karnataka study, 398 (93 per cent) of those interviewed were scheduled caste, as compared to 32 (seven per cent) from scheduled tribes. Quoted in Maggie Black, *op. cit.*, page 3.



Above: Lakshmi: "If there is no one to care for my daughter, when the time comes I will make her a *Jogini*."



Above: Yashoda is a 30 year old *Jogini*. She has two children, but the father has no contact with her. "When my children ask about their father, I say that he is dead."

All case studies quoted in Maggie Black, *Women in Ritual Slavery in India*, 2007.

they cannot renounce. This is manifested in the way Devadasi are paid less than others for equal work. Most Devadasi are obliged to work in order to survive and many enter into seasonal contracts working in cities as unskilled labourers in agriculture or construction. They are paid lower rates than other workers because of their status, typically 20 rupees a day (US50 cents).

Accessing services and other benefits to which they are entitled is also a common problem as it often requires them to declare their status which in turn may expose them to further discrimination and humiliation.

The fact that a man usually does not accept paternity of any Devadasi child makes school registration problematic. Teachers can create difficulties over the child's registration on the basis that they do not have the father's name or segregate the child by putting them at the back of the class and ignoring them. The children may also face bullying from other students. As a result many Devadasi women do not send their children to school and this further limits their opportunities in later life. A study of *Devadasis* in Karnataka found that only 24 per cent had received any formal education.

Similarly, if they visit a health care centre, they may be kept at the end of the line and asked to pay for medicines they cannot afford, even though they should receive them free. Some Devadasi women also thought they were only entitled to pensions of 250 rupees when the official amount is 300 rupees, which suggests that either they have not been properly informed about their rights or officials are retaining part of their pensions.

It is almost impossible for Devadasi to overcome their status and have a normal marriage and family life, so in most cases they bring up their children on their own. The multiple discrimination suffered by Devadasi leaves them even more impoverished and marginalised than other women from scheduled castes and tribes. One consequence of this is that girls born to Devadasi are most at risk of being dedicated as they have no means of supporting them and cannot afford a dowry. A 20-year-old *Jogini* woman called Lakshmi noted: "If there is no one to care for my daughter, when the time comes I will make her a *Jogini*."

Jogini in India

Nagamma was made a *Jogini* when she was 10 years old. Her oldest sister was married and another of her sisters died. "So my parents had the idea that that they should convert me into a *Jogini* since I was an eligible age. They decided to do this quickly before someone came to ask for me in marriage - at that time, it was common to be married at nine or ten whether you were physically mature or not." A man close to the family expressed interest in her, and so her parents accepted his proposal that she be made a *Jogini* at his expense.

By the age of 12, she was mature. For six months she had an intimate relationship with her 'master'. She became pregnant and when her daughter was born, she had a serious illness. "I sent word that the new-born was very poorly, and begged him to provide the money for proper treatment. He blindly rejected his daughter and disowned his paternity - he said I had slept with some other person. After a month and a half, the child died."





Kicking them when they're down: discrimination based on enslavement

As the Devadasi example above clearly illustrates, many groups face additional discrimination and marginalisation simply because they have been subjected to some form of slavery. In many cases, the prejudicial attitudes that people hold towards those who have been enslaved increases the chances of that person being trapped in that practice or forced into a different form of slavery.

For example, in Belgaum in Karnataka, it is widely believed that trafficking by temple managers, brothel owners, pimps and older Devadasi takes place and that some Devadasi are initiated as a precursor to becoming involved in prostitution with recruiters paying the costs of the 'marriage' ceremony. The survey in Belgaum showed that over 40 per cent (232 women) had gone at some stage in their lives to Mumbai, Goa or other major towns to work in prostitution.

In many countries, a woman will face discrimination and isolation if it is known that she has been trafficked because she will be viewed as a prostitute, regardless of the fact that she was forced into sexual exploitation against her will. Her opportunities for work or marriage are then seriously curtailed and she is left ostracised and unsupported in her community. In such circumstances it becomes much easier for traffickers to coerce these women back into the sex industry.

The vast majority of North Korean migrants who have crossed the border into China were fleeing extreme economic hardship rather than political oppression. However all migrants who are caught trying to leave the country or who are deported by the Chinese authorities are compelled to carry out forced labour in

Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures



Left: Daina (20, Lithuanian) brushing her hair. She was a victim of human trafficking.

extremely harsh conditions in North Korean detention camps.⁸⁸

When these border crossers are eventually released from forced labour, they find themselves in a worse position than when they left the country. The food insecurity that made them migrate in the first place continues, but

Below: A sign in Jilin Province, China along the border with North Korea, which reads: "It is strictly forbidden to harbour, help or employ border crossers".



Anti-Slavery International

Discrimination against North Korean border crossers⁸⁹

After being released from detention in December 2005 one woman from Hoeryong returned to her home town and described the treatment she faced:

"At first, I tried to live in North Korea with my daughter [...] but I couldn't due to the constant public humiliation I received for border crossing. I was forced to participate in self-criticism sessions, which were held in the town centre. They made me go in front of everyone so that people could openly criticise me. It was so humiliating. In March 2006, I took my daughter and returned to China."

Another woman from Soongram was first released from detention in August 2001, she tried to return to China, but was caught and sent back to a prison camp where again she had to perform forced labour. She explained why she risked the second journey into China:

"I went back home and tried to look for work, but couldn't find any. So, I went back to my old job selling food at the market but nobody would buy from me because I was an illegal border crosser. There was a soldier in my village who wanted to marry me. I said no but he kept coming to my house and bothering me. He was always drunk. I decided that I couldn't stay in North Korea anymore."

⁸⁸ In 2006-07, Anti-Slavery International carried out interviews with North Koreans migrants who had been in forced labour, 93 per cent of those interviewed stated that food insecurity and economic hardship were the primary reasons behind their decision to seek work in China. For more details see Norma Muico, *Forced labour in North Korea*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2007.

⁸⁹ Anti-Slavery International interviews carried out in January 2007. Norma Muico, *Forced labour in North Korea*, *op. cit.*, page 25.



Georgina Cranston/Anti-Slavery International

Above: Educating former child bonded labourers at a rehabilitation centre, India.

they now find themselves branded ‘defectors’ and rejected and stigmatised by their own communities. This leaves them with less income generating options than they had before and many see no alternative but to try and return to China. If caught again they face being subjected to forced labour for an even longer period of time.

Even if individuals do not find themselves worse off after they have escaped or are freed from slavery, they will still have to confront the same discrimination and social exclusion which made them vulnerable to slavery in the first place. Unless this is dealt with these individuals are very likely to be forced back into slavery at some point in the future.

Breaking the cycle of discrimination and social exclusion

A very significant proportion of the millions of people in slavery today might have been able to avoid this fate if they had been able to meet their basic subsistence needs. The absence of employment opportunities, land and social service provision all play a crucial role in forcing people into slavery. As we have seen, groups who suffer discrimination are least likely to have access to these.

Education

If children do not regularly attend school then their potential for personal and professional development in the future will be seriously affected. Employment opportunities for those who are illiterate or only have a basic education are extremely limited and they are likely to remain on a very low income for the rest of their lives.

As has been described above, communities suffering from discrimination and slavery are also less likely to send the children to school, both because of the costs involved and because their children are likely to be bullied and abused.

However, this does not indicate that education is not valued. On the contrary, many parents send their children away to become domestic workers precisely because they think this will enable them to get an education. Similarly, many parents from the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania saw education as an important means of gaining respect and finding a way out of poverty. One noted: “We know that the best for our children is to stay at home, to eat, to drink and to go to the school but we have a lot of problems.”

Efforts therefore need to be made to enable families and children to overcome the barriers they face in getting into the school system. The first of these is to ensure that the costs associated with getting an education are not



prohibitive. This might involve building more schools in rural or isolated areas or providing free transport to those who have to travel long distances. It may also include providing free uniforms, lunch or school equipment to those attending school.

Where children have already been excluded from the education system for some time, short term informal courses should be provided so that the children can learn basic skills and get used to the structure of schooling before they enter formal schools.

Work also needs to be done with teachers and local authorities to reduce discrimination in schools, whether it comes from teachers, parents or other students, so that minority groups feel comfortable attending classes. It is also likely that some parents will need to be encouraged to adopt a more supportive attitude towards education, particularly in relation to girls.

Facilitating access to education for marginalised and minority groups in this way will help to combat slavery as children are less likely to be sent away where they may become victims of trafficking or domestic servitude. It will also reduce their vulnerability to slavery in the long term as their knowledge, life skills and income generating potential will all be significantly raised. Furthermore, schools can be an important forum in which discriminatory attitudes regarding race, caste or gender can be challenged and changed.

Sustainable livelihoods

The Brazilian Government has responded positively to the problem of forced labour in the Amazon and managed to release nearly 10,000 people from slavery between 2002 and 2004. Despite this achievement, a significant proportion of these workers had been freed more than once.⁹⁰

This indicates that freeing individuals, and even securing them the money that they are owed, has not stopped the use of slavery in Brazil. One of the key reasons for this is that the workers have remained vulnerable to forced labour because they have not been

able to access sustainable livelihoods.

In relation to trafficking, many countries have focussed their preventative work on funding awareness campaigns which seek to evoke fear in potential migrants and dissuade them from travelling abroad. Such campaigns will be largely ineffective when migrants are only leaving their countries as a last resort because they have no alternative means of support at home.

Preventing slavery therefore requires policies that give those people affected the opportunity to support themselves. In rural areas, initiatives that support land reform, fairer leasing arrangements and improved land management could have a major impact in reducing the incidence of slavery. If families have access to even small amounts of land for cultivation, this can provide them with a means of subsistence or an additional source of income to supplement work as day labourers.

Micro-credit schemes that provide families with alternatives sources of finance and opportunities to generate their own income could also be very effective in helping to eradicate bonded labour and other slavery

“The best time in my life was when my employers agreed to send me to school”

Child domestic worker from Nepal.

Quoted in Jonathan Blagbrough, *They Respect Their Animals More*, 2008



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Left: Girls sieving millet, Niger. Micro credit schemes enable those coming out of slavery to generate their own income and provide for their families.

Bottom: Mothers' micro credit meeting, Niger.



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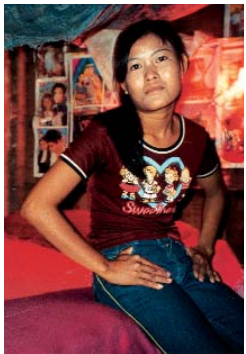
⁹⁰ One article cited statistics from the Department for Labour Inspections stating that in the eight year period up to 2004, 40 per cent of workers freed from forced labour had been released more than once. *Correio Brasiliense, De volta ao trabalho escravo*, 1 February 2004'



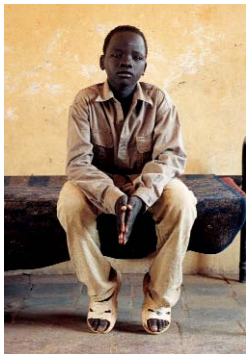
Alex Smailes / COLORS Magazine



Nick Nostitz / COLORS Magazine



Pieter Hugo / COLORS Magazine



Top: Dieusibon Delice was a child domestic worker in Haiti.

Middle: Kadum, who was 18 when this picture was taken, was forced into prostitution in Cambodia.

Bottom: Garang Lual was abducted during Sudan's civil war. Kidnapped children are used as servants, porters and child soldiers.

practices. Projects that facilitate access to regulated and non-exploitative loans and credit schemes for both business purposes (buying of seeds, fertilisers, etc.) and social reasons (paying for funerals, building wells etc.) offer both short-term and long-term solutions to situations that may force individuals into slavery.

For those in employment it is vital that labour regulations are strictly observed, particularly in relation to minimum wages, when wages are paid and what deductions can be made from wages. For those without jobs the provision of basic social services becomes even more important. For example, that they have access to clean water and basic healthcare, including free medicine. For many families ensuring that they are paid the minimum wage on a regular basis or that they can get free medicine will be sufficient to stop them getting into debt bondage or other forms of slavery.

The double edged sword of development policy

National and international initiatives that promote development have the potential to make a real contribution to combating slavery through targeted development assistance which provides those released from slavery or at risk of becoming slaves with key social services and the opportunity to establish a sustainable means of income for themselves and their families.

For example, development programmes can lead to the building of schools, health centres and wells in marginalised communities which have no access to these services. They can also provide training and micro credit schemes to enable small businesses to be developed or existing land to be used more productively.

Where migration and development policy are linked this can help promote sustained economic and social development and address some of the factors which make people vulnerable to slavery. For example, the flow of remittances to countries of origin could be maximised through official low cost

money transfers or by governments in both sending and receiving countries financing development projects as a proportion of official remittances.

Such policies could have a major impact on both the micro and macro level. Remittances allow families to cover expenditure on food or medicine, invest in developing a business, or support a child through school. At a national level, remittances are often one of the most valuable sources of income for an economy. Remittances from Latin American migrant workers in 2006 were estimated to be over US\$62 billion, exceeding the combined total of all direct foreign investment and foreign aid to the region. The Inter-American Investment Bank estimates this figure could reach US\$100 billion by 2010.⁹¹

If those responsible for designing and implementing development policies do not specifically consider slavery issues then these projects are likely to be negotiated with and approved by existing elites and traditional leaders who have no interest in promoting the rights of people who they consider to be their inferiors.

In these circumstances any potential benefits are likely to bypass those in slavery as they are not involved in any of the decision-making processes and have no way of ensuring they are given access to resources made available.

In some other cases development projects could actually reinforce existing power structures and leave discriminated groups even more vulnerable to slavery. For example, some landowners may encourage the building of schools or health clinics on their land and then use this as a mechanism for attracting and retaining bonded labourers.

In Niger, during the food crisis in 2006 a food for work programme was introduced whereby people could access vouchers for food aid by carrying out agricultural work. However, masters came to claim and were given the vouchers for the work done by their slaves which meant the assistance did not benefit the people it was intended to help.

⁹¹ Duncan Kennedy, *Latin America migrant money tops aid*, BBC News, 19 March 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6465297.stm>



Community schools in Niger - an integrated approach to combating slavery

In October 2007, Anti-Slavery International and Timidria opened three community schools in the villages of Inazgare, Danloussaye and Intatolene in Niger. The support of the local community, the village chiefs and the Ministry for Education were essential for the project's success and schools were only set up after consultation with these groups.

Teachers were trained by the Ministry of Education to deliver the national curriculum and by Timidria to ensure that they were aware of the challenges of enrolling and keeping girls in education and the importance of highlighting human rights themes within their education, particularly in relation to non-discrimination and the rights of citizens.

The schools also have social welfare officers who play a critical role in linking the project to the wider community by liaising with parents, raising awareness with the general population (e.g. on health issues, the risks of early marriage and the importance of education) and resolving any problems as they arise.

As part of this work they supervise and monitor the micro-finance fund. This facility has benefited 116 women who have used the money on a range of projects such as setting up a shop and buying young goats for fattening up and resale. Each woman has made average profits of around US\$13 a month and they have put 10 per cent of these profits back into the schools.

The social welfare officers also supervise the school canteen where children are provided with one meal at midday. This was the only meal many of the children received and this was evident as some fainted or could not concentrate in class. A nutritionist found that 10 per cent of the children were suffering from severe malnutrition and that 89 per cent were underweight and a decision was taken to provide breakfast from April 2008 until the end of the school year to build up their

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Top: Children participating in their lessons.

Middle: Sharing the midday meal.

Bottom: A pupil at the community school.

“Educate a child and you educate a nation.”

A classroom slogan.

strength. This ensures that students are able to focus and learn while in school and provides an extra incentive for them to attend.

Funds were also raised to build wells in the three communities as it was recognised that if there were insufficient rains, children would have to be withdrawn from school by their parents to help find and retrieve water for their families. As well as ensuring that children do not have to drop out of school, these wells benefit an estimated 2,300 people and their animals.

Work in schools is complemented by public education and outreach work done by Timidria on human rights and development issues. This includes broadcasting one-hour radio programmes, running a stall on market day, and hosting discussions with the NGO community, religious leaders and government officials to discuss strategies for the eradication of slavery.

This project has led to 150 children being enrolled in the three schools, with roughly 50 per cent being girls. School inspectors visited each school to ensure that that teaching standards are being met and reported that attendance was exemplary. Overall 73 per cent of the children passed the first year of primary education.

The Ministry of Education has agreed to fund the teachers' salaries as a contribution to the project and will take full responsibility for running the schools after five years, ensuring that the project will be sustainable in the long term.

Education has given the children an understanding of their rights and the confidence and ambition to follow careers in the future. It has helped to erode the traditional barriers that descendants of slaves faced and while no children of masters attended these schools in the first year, social welfare officers are working with them and hope that they will send their children in the future.



For these reasons it is vital that all national, international and inter-governmental organisations involved in development work consider whether slavery exists in the area in which they are working and, if so, how they can contribute to tackling its root causes.

Conducting some form of slavery analysis when implementing development policies is not about setting a new agenda for these institutions, but rather about ensuring that poverty reduction goals are met by targeting resources at the most socially excluded groups.

Conclusions and solutions

As has been outlined above, many discriminated groups are forced to the margins of society where their isolation and poverty makes them extremely susceptible to enslavement. Once they have been enslaved their opportunities, and those of their families, are narrowed even further, increasing the probability that they will remain enslaved or that they will be dragged back into slavery at some point in the future.

The first step in breaking this vicious circle is to ensure that those in slavery do not remain 'invisible'. This means that governments should support initiatives to carry out comprehensive and independent national and/or regional surveys to identify the total number of people in their national territories who are victims of debt bondage, trafficking, forced labour or other forms of slavery. These surveys should include breakdowns of those affected by age and gender as well as nationality, caste or ethnic group, as appropriate.

Collecting and breaking down data in this way will be of great benefit in combating slavery. This is because it establishes where slavery exists, the scale of the problem and who is affected - all of which are key to developing strategies to eradicate the practice. However, this information is often difficult to obtain, both at the national and international level (see box on right - data collection gaps)

As has already been noted, it is vital that



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states develop appropriate and specific legislation to criminalise slavery practices. These must be actively enforced, along with relevant labour laws, such as those relating to minimum wage, non-discrimination, regulation of recruitment agencies and the right to organise.

If these laws are going to be effectively implemented then there needs to be a proactive approach to the identification and release of those in slavery. This could be done by undertaking surveys as noted above, but would also require appropriate labour inspection and regulation systems, outreach work to organise, unionise and monitor at-

Above: Bonded labourers returning to the brick kiln. If no effort is made to identify those in slavery then they are likely to remain 'invisible'.

Data collection gaps on child slavery

In the ILO's 2002 Global Report on Child Labour, it estimated that there were 8.4 million children in slavery (referred to as the unconditional worst forms of child labour).⁹² Unfortunately, the 2006 Global Report does not provide any breakdown of how many of the 126 million children in the worst forms of child labour are in slavery, even though it acknowledges that, with some exceptions in relation to measures against child prostitution and trafficking, efforts to tackle child slavery have generally been neglected.

Without specific figures on the number of children in slavery we cannot tell whether the problem is increasing, decreasing or static. This in turn makes it difficult to target children in slavery, improve our knowledge base of how these practices occur or know whether projects to combat child slavery are being effective. As well as knowing how many children are in slavery, we also need to know where they are, so a geographic breakdown would also be beneficial in ensuring resources are targeted efficiently.

⁹² International Labour Office, *A Future Without Child Labour*, ILO, Geneva, 2002.



risk sectors and public awareness-raising around workers' rights and the existence of slavery practices.

Identification in itself will not lead to successful prosecutions, particularly if victims do not have confidence in law enforcement bodies, either because they consider them corrupt or fear they will be discriminated against or re-victimised.

Governments, therefore, will need to ensure that these institutions are properly trained in relation to slavery and non-discrimination laws and that prejudice or corrupt personnel are disciplined or removed. It is also important that the relevant agencies are properly resourced, including being able to offer victims of slavery appropriate assistance and protection. Research has shown that where victims are provided with specialised support this makes them more likely to cooperate with the authorities.

Releasing individuals from slavery will not necessarily prevent them or other people from being enslaved in the future, if the issues that led to their enslavement have not been addressed. As has been noted in relation to bonded labour in Pakistan:

“It is quite possible that the *hari* family is not indebted and nevertheless its freedom of movement, employment and schooling are circumvented by the *zamindar* (landlord), who represents an omnipotent authority. A solution to indebtedness will therefore not solve the issue of bondedness, and may only be of short-term significance.”⁹³

In other words, discrimination, social exclusion and the power structures within society are often the most important element in understanding and combating slavery practices in the long term.

In order to address this, all governments and inter-governmental agencies (like the World Bank, UNICEF, IPEC, WHO, UNIFEM and the UNDP) should put in place and fully implement national and/or regional action plans to eradicate all forms of slavery by 2015.

Such plans should cover the policy areas of data collection, identification, prosecution, protection and rehabilitation referred to above,



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as well as programmes to prevent slavery such as land reform, rural development programmes, micro-credit schemes, providing access to education, health care and sustainable livelihoods.

Above: Ashama (left) explains the significance of the artwork depicting the dedication of the Devadasi bride to the Goddess to the district chief of police and non-governmental organisations.

As has been highlighted above, if these actions plans are to be successful they will need to integrate measures to combat discrimination or be accompanied by a national strategy to eliminate discrimination which can be carried out simultaneously. A key aspect of this will be training and sensitising

Community level action against slavery

In India, self-help groups (*sanghas*) have been effective in raising awareness of ritual slavery and helping to eradicate these practices. These groups have been most effective where they have focussed on prevention and active rehabilitation programmes, such as providing education and health care services for Devadasi and their children; trying to reduce stigma and exclusion; enlisting Devadasi themselves to stop further dedications of young girls; organising marriages for Devadasi and their daughters; providing housing or other assets; helping Devadasi obtain ration cards for subsidised government food; and trying to break the links between Devadasi, trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

The self-help groups have also been able to identify where existing initiatives have had unintended negative consequences. For example, legislation passed in Karnataka was designed to support the reintegration of Devadasi by offering 3,000 rupees (US\$74) to a couple who married. However, in practice the grant acted as an incentive for pimps and other unscrupulous individuals to marry Devadasi women in order to claim the allowance. Once formally married, the woman lost her right to other benefits, such as specific housing grants or pensions, and ended up worse off than she was before.

⁹³ K. Lieten and J. Breman, “A Pro-Poor Development Project in Rural Pakistan: an academic analysis and a non-intervention”, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol.2, No.3, July 2002, page 338.



officials at a national, state and local level on the need to combat slavery and discrimination and what their role is in this.

Multi-agency groups should be convened to both draft these action plans and ensure that they are implemented in a set timeframe. These multi-agency groups must include participation from members of the affected communities as they will be best placed to make recommendations on how to combat both discrimination and slavery and how to empower the affected communities and reverse their isolation from wider society.

They will also be best placed to try and identify patterns which explain why some members of communities which are vulnerable to slavery manage to avoid these practices and also to assess whether policy initiatives put in place are having the desired affect on the ground (see box on page 40 - community action against slavery).

Closer than you think

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the fact that there are millions of people living in slavery and that in order to eradicate these practices we have to tackle huge social issues like discrimination and social exclusion.

However, there have been some very significant advances in the struggle against slavery in the last decade and sometimes progress happens much faster than expected. For example, Nepal (2002), Niger (2003), Brazil (2003), the United Arab Emirates, (2005) and Mauritania (2007) are some of the countries that have recently introduced or amended laws so that slavery practices are now prohibited and punished. In Nepal and Brazil alone more than 100,000 people have been released from slavery and measures have been adopted to assist these people.

At the international level, there is also a much greater awareness of slavery and more priority is given to combating it. This is reflected in the United Nations' decision to create a new Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 2008 who will report directly to the UN Human Rights Council on measures needed to fight slavery. This is the first new UN mechanism on slavery in over 30 years.



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It is also true that people's attitudes can be changed in a relatively short period of time. In the 1770s, slavery was considered legitimate, profitable and vital to the interests of Britain. The vast majority of people considered it to be 'normal' and some even saw trading in human beings to be "a creditable way of life." There was no substantial organised resistance to the Transatlantic Slave Trade until 1787 and this started with a group of just 12 people.

Despite this, in less than twenty years, this campaign not only managed to convince people that slavery was wrong, but also that they had an obligation to do something about it. Hundreds of thousands of people consequently signed petitions against the slave trade and boycotted sugar produced by slaves. This dramatic change in public opinion contributed to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

This shows what is possible. Yet a world without slavery remains an aspiration rather than a reality even 60 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude. It is long past the time when every human being - without exception - should be able to live a life free from slavery.

There are many ways to contribute to the fight against slavery. If you want to see what you can do to make slavery a thing of the past once and for all, please visit:

www.antislavery.org/noexceptions

Above: Former bonded labourers in Punjab, India demonstrating for an end to this abuse and enforcement of the laws against it.

⁹⁴ For more details see Mike Kaye, *1807-2007: Over 200 years of campaigning against slavery*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2005.



Further reading and resources

Publications

For a full list of publications, educational materials, exhibitions and all other resources please go to: www.antislavery.org

They Respect Their Animals More: Voices of child domestic workers

Anti-Slavery International 2008
ISBN: 978 0 900918 65 9
www.antislavery.org

Forgotten But Not Gone: Slavery and Resistance 200 Years After Abolition

Pete Pattison 2007
ISBN: 978 0 9555485 0 5
www.petepattison.com

Women in Ritual Slavery in India

Anti-Slavery International 2007
www.antislavery.org

Trafficking for Forced Labour in Europe: Report on a study in the UK, Ireland, the Czech Republic and Portugal

Anti-Slavery International 2007
www.antislavery.org

Forced Labour in North Korean Prison Camps

Anti-Slavery International 2007
www.antislavery.org

Trafficking for Forced Labour: UK country report

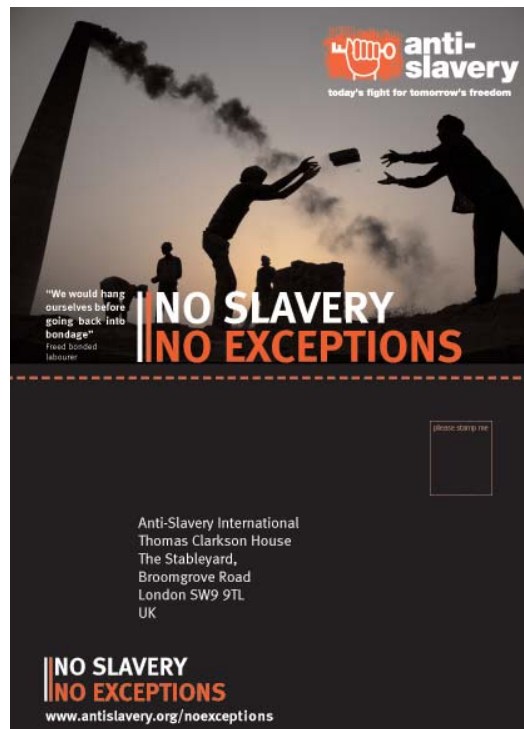
Anti-Slavery International 2006
www.antislavery.org

Slavery in Latin America: (Individual reports on the following countries: Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru and Bolivia)

Anti-Slavery International 2006
www.antislavery.org

1807-2007: Over 200 years of campaigning against slavery

Anti-Slavery International 2005
ISBN 0 900918 61 6
www.antislavery.org



Sign up to our *No Slavery, No Exceptions* campaign pledge online and help us to eradicate slavery once and for all. For more information go to:

www.antislavery.org/noexceptions

DVD and Video

Hell on Earth: Slavery Today

A 15 minute campaigning DVD and video that focuses on modern forms of slavery which affect more than 12 million people around the world today. The film includes footage shot in 2006 in Niger and the Philippines and interviews with those directly affected by slavery practices. Anti-Slavery International 2007
www.antislavery.org



Exhibitions

Recovered Histories

Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom. Free web resources on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and new *Recovered Histories A2* exhibition. (17 x panels at 420 x 594 mm) - www.recoveredhistories.org

Campaigning against Slavery, from the 18th to the 21st Century exhibition

This exhibition takes the audience on a visual journey through history from the time of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to slavery in contemporary society. It also looks at how these contemporary forms of slavery were challenged through popular standards to prohibit them. (16 x panels at 420 x 594 mm) - www.antislavery.org

Anti-Slavery International has produced this report in the context of our new *No Slavery, No Exceptions* campaign which calls on all governments to commit to eradicating slavery by 2015. There are at least 12 million people in slavery today and the vast majority of these men, women and children are from minority or marginalised groups which suffer from institutionalised discrimination.

This publication includes analysis of the situation of forced labourers in the Republic of the Congo, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru; bonded labourers in India, Nepal and Pakistan; trafficked people in developed countries (including the UK, the United States and the United Arab Emirates); as well as forced child begging in Albania, ritual slavery in Ghana and India, and descent based slavery in Niger and Mauritania.

In all these examples of slavery practices from around the world, the groups primarily affected are victims of discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, nationality or gender. Discrimination is a pivotal part of slavery because it allows people to disengage their humanity and justify or tolerate the violation of other people's human rights. Discrimination also limits certain groups' access to education, jobs and healthcare, leaving them to subsist at the margins of society where they are extremely vulnerable to enslavement as they look for ways to provide for themselves and their families.

60 years ago, the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that all human beings, without distinction of any kind, should be free from slavery. Yet this remains an aspiration rather than a reality. In order to effectively eradicate slavery we need to tackle the discrimination and social exclusion which underpins it.

This publication highlights what action needs to be taken by governments and other international agencies to ensure that every human being - without exception - should be able to live a life free from slavery. For more on this campaign and how you can get involved, go to:

www.antislavery.org/noexceptions

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, is committed to eliminating all forms of slavery throughout the world. Slavery, servitude and forced labour are violations of individual freedoms, which deny millions of people their basic dignity and fundamental human rights. Anti-Slavery International works to end these abuses by exposing current cases of slavery, campaigning for its eradication, supporting the initiatives of local organisations to release people, and pressing for more effective implementation of international laws against slavery. For further information see: **www.antislavery.org**

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