

# Reporter

Autumn 2021

**Protecting people and planet:  
how your support helps us  
campaign for workers' rights**



- Designer Louise Xin's catwalk campaign
- Focus on COP26 climate talks
- Nationality and Borders Bill

## Freedom is a fundamental right

We are the oldest international human rights organisation in the world – founded in 1839 to tackle the slave trade, and working hard ever since.

Today, we draw on our experience to work to eliminate all forms of slavery and slavery-like practices throughout the world.

We are not interested in easy solutions. Instead, we deal with the root causes of slavery and its consequences to achieve sustainable change.

**Our vision** is to realise freedom from slavery for everyone, everywhere, always.

### We aim to do this by:

- making ending slavery everyone's concern;
- acting as an ally to survivors and people at risk of slavery, elevating their voice and experience to create radical change; and
- with others, challenging and changing law, policy and practice so everyone, everywhere can be free from slavery.

### Climate-induced migration is contributing to modern slavery

Credit: Mike Erskine on Unsplash

### Tell us what you want from Reporter

By reading Reporter you're participating in a movement that has its roots in the battle against the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We're always keen to learn from our readers and would love to hear what you'd like to see in the magazine. Please drop us an email at [media@antislavery.org](mailto:media@antislavery.org) with any ideas, suggestions and comments – and thank you for being part of our movement.

### Follow us

Please follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date with our campaigns – you can find links to our social media on our website [antislavery.org](http://antislavery.org).

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# Protecting people, protecting planet



**Jasmine O'Connor OBE**  
Anti-Slavery International  
chief executive

Reflecting on the past 12 months of campaigning for, and delivering, freedom from slavery, it is hard to imagine a more turbulent time.

We continue to see examples of huge and widening inequalities as Covid-19 vaccines roll out across the world. Livelihoods remain destroyed in many parts of the world. Here in the UK, we grew more familiar with the importance of a robust supply chain as goods struggled to make their way to our supermarket shelves.

Those are the same supply chains that we help to scrutinise so that forced labour – including child labour – does not taint the goods we need to buy. In examining supply chains, we are increasingly identifying ways to tackle modern slavery alongside our responses to climate change. Our research shows that these remedies need to come in unison if we are to truly protect the planet and its people from exploitation.

I have been pleased to see how many of you are enquiring and commenting on this important link. Working together, along with government action, community action and responsibility from businesses, we can end the exploitation of nature and of human beings. When we act together, we will reach our goals.

As we continue our work pushing businesses to identify and remedy modern slavery in their supply chains, we also know that the real change comes from legislation. Robust laws would make sure that irresponsible companies cannot benefit from ignoring human rights by cheapening labour costs. We are pleased to see more and more companies agreeing with this stance; with their might, we hope we will soon see laws that truly protect the planet and secure freedom for everyone, everywhere, always.

I do hope that you find the work outlined in this issue of Reporter as inspiring as I do when I work with our partners and colleagues. You are absolutely a part of the movement that makes this work possible.

By donating, by campaigning and spreading awareness, your modern-day abolitionism is bringing us closer to seeing more people rising out of the horrors of slavery.

For your steadfastness and commitment – a huge thank you.

# Afghanistan:

## A worrying future lies ahead

**After western forces pulled out of Afghanistan the country was plunged into chaos. And this has created ideal conditions for modern slavery to thrive. Our CEO Jasmine O'Connor reflects on the impending rise of modern slavery and human trafficking in Afghanistan.**

After watching the return of Taliban rule, we now fear an increase in modern slavery, especially for women and girls.

Many projects to advance the rights of women in Afghanistan have undoubtedly delivered some progress, including laws to protect women's rights and advances in girls' education, women in the workplace and in government. But even before the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan remained one of the worst places to be a woman.

Socio-cultural norms in Afghanistan are often rooted in patriarchy and traditional values. They vary between regions and rural and urban locations, and changes in knowledge, attitudes and laws have not been enough to turn the tide on the traditional norms which dictated women's place in society.

Sadly, this is also the case when it comes to slavery. In July 2021 the US Department of State rated Afghanistan as a tier three country in its Trafficking in Persons Report. This means that it did not meet the State Department's minimum

standards for combatting human trafficking and slavery.

Afghan law does ban modern slavery, although it is not yet clear if the legal system will survive Taliban rule. The 2018 Criminal Code outlawed the use of child soldiers, labour trafficking and sex trafficking, as well as *bacha bazi*, a deeply embedded tribal practice that involves rich men forcing poorer boys to dress as women and dance seductively, often leading to sexual abuse. Anti-slavery laws were relatively new, as was the judiciary. Even before the fall of Kabul, judges often struggled to challenge prevailing norms.

State Department research in 2020 found the practice of *bacha bazi* persisted in government compounds, and that children continued to be pressed into service as soldiers. Many cases involving senior officials from the exiled president Ashraf Ghani's government were never investigated, and none of his military or police officials was held accountable for the use of child soldiers. Even when female sex trafficking victims were able to access formal justice, they



Credit: Alexandre Karslian on Unsplash

were sometimes penalised for 'moral crimes' such as sex outside marriage.

These kind of embedded gender and tribal norms made tackling slavery an uphill struggle. Now, under Taliban rule, it will take time to understand how slavery practices will develop and be dealt with. The Taliban's recruitment of young boys to become soldiers will probably continue. As people flee the country, migration and displacement will create opportunities for traffickers. And there are already reports of sexual slavery, as girls and women, especially widows, are increasingly being taken by members of the Taliban.

There are many lessons to learn about

the rights and wrong of the west's policies on Afghanistan, but one thing is clear: meaningful change requires changes in norms, not just new laws. This means engaging with people we disagree with, building momentum, patience and resilience – and, as always, local leadership.

It is this patience and resilience that we at Anti-Slavery see every day and that women's rights defenders in Afghanistan embody. We stand with them.

**I hope that all Afghan women will find resilience, like those who took to the streets of Kabul to protest against the Taliban, and be bolstered by our allyship.**

# Mrs F's fight for justice

**In a landmark legal ruling, Niger has been found guilty of trivialising legal justice for survivors of modern slavery by the West African Court of Justice. The case turned on one woman's ordeal. This is her story.**

Mrs F was born into slavery in Niger, and was given away at the age of seven as a wedding present to her slave master's sister. Mrs F was then sent to Burkina Faso to live with her new master. There, she was severely mistreated – and had six children from different fathers.

With support from a relative, Mrs F returned to Niger and made contact with our partner organisation – Association Timidria – and the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa. They helped Mrs F to launch a legal case in Niger against her former master, and a separate case to secure freedom for her three children, who still lived in slavery.

Niger's courts trivialised Mrs F's case and treated her former master's

offences as misdemeanours. Her lawyer then took the case to the West African Court of Justice, which found Niger in violation of Mrs F and her children's rights to a free trial, freedom from exploitation or enslavement, and freedom from discrimination against women as guaranteed by the African Charter on Human Rights. Niger has been ordered to pay significant compensation to Mrs F and her children.

The fight for freedom goes on. While Mrs F's case has been successful in the regional court, she still has two complaints pending before the domestic courts in Niger: one for the crime of slavery, and the other to secure her 15-year-old daughter's freedom from slavery.

**Thanks to your generous support, we supported Mrs F through project funds in Niger. We were able to help fund medical care, and education for her children. As this story shows, your donations can make a seriously positive difference in people's lives. Thank you.**

If you're feeling inspired by this story, please consider making a donation today – visit [antislavery.org/donate](https://antislavery.org/donate) now.



Credit: The blowup on Unsplash

## Stamp out slavery

**As Reporter went to print we had just started work with the Royal Mail on a new campaign to raise public awareness of modern slavery.**

Royal Mail delivers some 277 million letters a week, many of which have a postmark applied by sorting offices. In recent years, the company has worked with charities to highlight issues using the space available on the front of tens of millions of postal items every week – and we're proud that, around Anti-Slavery Day (18 October), Royal Mail will be marking items with our logo.

We're proud that millions of Royal Mail customers will be encouraged to visit our website to learn about our work – but, of course, postmarks alone aren't going to bring about the legal and social changes we need to see to put an end to slavery.

So, why not take the opportunity to send a letter during the campaign? You could:

- Write to a brand or business to ask what they're doing to make sure their goods and services aren't tainted by forced labour.
- Write to your MP to ask them for their view on the Nationality and Borders Bill – take a look at our feature on pages 12 and 13 to find out why we're concerned about it.

Whatever you send, we'd love to hear if you receive a response – let us know via [supporter@antislavery.org](mailto:supporter@antislavery.org). Together, let's take this opportunity to help stamp out slavery.



Credit: Ramadhani Azmi on Unsplash

## Focus on fashion

**We need dedicated commitment from the fashion industry to actively remove Uyghur forced labour from their supply chains. In recent weeks we saw a top designer take a stand against exploitation – even as a big brand faced tough questions.**



Designer's catwalk campaign

### Catwalk campaigner

We were delighted to see the Chinese-Swedish designer Louise Xin endorse our Call to Action to end Uyghur Forced Labour. At her digital show on 31 August, she sent her models down the runway with signs protesting the atrocities against the Uyghur people.

Speaking to Vogue Scandinavia, Louise said: "At the moment there are probably clothes in your and my

wardrobe that have had some touchpoint in forced labour. We need to ask in shops, go online and find out exactly where materials are coming from."

We really couldn't agree more – and we hope to see other designers take their lead from Louise's public stance against Uyghur exploitation.

Read the full feature in Vogue Scandinavia at [Inkd.in/d25zfAVC](https://www.inkd.in/d25zfAVC)

### Shining a light on discrimination

The Chinese fast fashion firm Shein has launched an investigation after discriminatory job adverts were posted on recruitment sites under its name, stating that people from certain ethnic minority backgrounds – including Uyghurs – were not welcome to apply. The adverts contained other concerning statements, including that workers did not need to test for Covid-19 or pass a medical exam.

Shein denounced the adverts as "false" and said it did not support discrimination. Even so, Chloe

Cranston, our business and human rights manager, noted that the firm has not yet committed to making sure there is no Uyghur forced labour in its supply chain.

The Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labour shared the ads with the BBC. We're a proud member of the coalition's steering committee and continue to call for respect for all workers – wherever they are.

Read the BBC article: [bbc.com/news/business-58284855](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-58284855)

## Progress against forced labour

**Celebrating every win is an important part of a long campaign. Although the fight against forced labour continues, recent news shows reasons for us to remain hopeful that we can end it.**

### Tesco's commitment against Turkmen cotton

Every year, thousands of people in Turkmenistan are forced to take part in its cotton harvest – an issue we have been highlighting for several years. We need to see businesses promise to remove Turkmen cotton from their supply chains. So we were pleased to see the retail giant Tesco strengthen



its existing commitment to ending Turkmen forced labour by signing the Turkmen Cotton Pledge. Tesco has joined 138 other companies that have signed the pledge, which calls for an end to Turkmenistan's cruel practice.

Check out the other signatories to the Turkmen Cotton Pledge: [sourcingnetwork.org/turkmensignatories](https://sourcingnetwork.org/turkmensignatories)

### US Import ban on solar panels produced by forced labour

As we reported in our last issue, this year Sheffield Hallam University uncovered the role of Uyghur forced labour in production of solar panels. Uyghurs are involved in crushing quartz rocks, and work in coal-fuelled furnaces to produce polysilicon. Our shared outrage was heard: as we were going to print, the US government banned imports of

solar panels made with components from one of the Chinese companies implicated in Uyghur forced labour.

We will continue to make these abuses known, and call for other governments to introduce import controls and laws to make sure companies respect human rights in their supply chains.

More than three quarters of companies operating within the UK think there is a likelihood of modern slavery occurring in their supply chains. As a consumer, you have more power than you think. Find out what your favourite brands are doing to make sure their goods and services are slavery-free. Check if they have a modern slavery statement on their website, and, if not, drop them an email or give them a call to ask why.



## Social audits – not the answer for ending forced labour

**The European Union has an incredible opportunity to protect people and the planet with new corporate due diligence laws. But we need this new legislation to require companies to go further than social audits.**

The European Commission will soon publish a proposal for a new EU business and human rights law. This important legislation would require companies operating in the EU to prevent and address human rights abuses and environmental damage in their global supply chains. This could help tackle forced labour and child

labour in supply chains around the world – but to be successful, it must require companies to go further than social auditing.

In social audits an external contractor generally visits a factory and completes a series of checks on how the workplace protects workers' rights. But the process is fundamentally

flawed: auditors rarely see the day-to-day reality of life in workplaces, and cannot meaningfully engage with workers to understand the conditions they face. We often see global corporations using social audits as a barrier to justice for victims' families.

Two examples show why we cannot accept social audits as adequate proof that businesses are protecting workers' rights:

- Nine years ago, a fire killed 250 workers in the Ali Enterprises factory in Pakistan. Workers were trapped behind barred windows without any firefighting equipment as the fire engulfed their workplace. Three weeks earlier, a social audit had been undertaken and deemed the factory safe, but the auditors reportedly didn't even visit the building. This fire might have been prevented if proper auditing had been carried out.
- Two auditing firms visited companies operating in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region in China, and said they found no evidence of labour abuses. But since the audits, US authorities have implicated the companies in human rights abuses against Uyghurs. The companies' products, destined for popular US stores, were found to be made with forced labour. But the social audits failed to identify or acknowledge this. Both auditing firms have now announced that they will not audit in the Uyghur Region.

“Alongside 15 other human and labour rights organisations, we are urging EU politicians not to accept social auditing as adequate proof of human rights due diligence.”

This just isn't good enough – workers need to know that their rights are upheld and defended. Too often, social auditing conceals abuses and consigns workers to continued suffering. That's why, alongside 15 other human and labour rights organisations, we are urging EU politicians not to accept social auditing as adequate proof of human rights due diligence.

The proposed EU legislation is an opportunity for companies to be held accountable for abuses in their supply chains. The law must require companies to take meaningful actions, which go beyond social audits, to prevent forced labour in their supply chains. That must involve ongoing engagement with workers – including through trade unions – sustained efforts to address modern slavery in lower tiers of supply chains, and changes to the business models and practices which drive exploitation.

Our campaign continues.

Read our joint letter to the EU:  
[bit.ly/3iDoAWD](https://bit.ly/3iDoAWD)

# Nationality and Borders Bill update

**In the last issue of Reporter we noted that the UK government had introduced its Nationality and Borders Bill in parliament. The Bill aims to put the government's 'New Plan for Immigration' into effect. And it has us seriously concerned.**

It's been nearly ten years since the Home Office first touted its hostile environment policy, and it's profoundly disappointing to see the mindset behind that approach continuing to affect legislation.

We have several concerns with the Nationality and Borders Bill, including:

- It allows the government to treat an asylum claim as inadmissible if the applicant could have made the claim in another safe country which they travelled through. There are many good reasons why someone might wish to claim asylum in a particular destination, including family and cultural ties, and language. Turning people back could re-victimise them, as well as leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.
- It introduces a requirement for people who have been trafficked to present evidence of their ordeal within a specified timeframe and states that failure to do so will damage their credibility. Imposing any such deadline fails to allow for the fact that many people who have experienced trafficking may take a long time to be able to tell their full story, because of the trauma they have experienced.

- It broadens the group of people who can be refused access to support through the National Referral Mechanism to anyone who is considered a threat to "public order", which includes people who have received a prison sentence of 12 months or more. This is a very low threshold, and could have a serious effect on trafficked people, many of whom are targeted because they have some history of offending. Claims made in "bad faith" can also be refused support, but "bad faith" is not defined. This gives the government broad powers to exclude those who are identified as potential victims of trafficking from protection and deport them, if they are foreign nationals.

There are several other clauses that give us reason for concern. In the months ahead we will be engaging with people in parliament and beyond to challenge every provision that could cause harm to victims and survivors of modern slavery. Your continued support helps us to do that – keep an eye on our social media for details on how you can help us in this important legislative effort.

“ In the months ahead we will be working with friends in parliament and beyond to challenge every provision that could cause harm to victims and survivors of modern slavery. ”



## Climate change: new report exposes impact on modern slavery

**The climate emergency is putting more people at risk of modern slavery, according to our new research report with the Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED).**

In September we published a new report, Climate-Induced Migration And Modern Slavery: A Toolkit For Policy-Makers, in partnership with IIED. In the report, we exposed the link between climate-induced migration and modern slavery.

Research for the report found that climate change makes people who are already vulnerable – due to conflict or inequality – more likely to become victims of modern slavery, in the aftermath of devastating sudden events or due to the slow onset of climate-induced changes. Two examples illustrate this serious problem:

- In northern Ghana, severe drought brings low crop yields and food shortages. Young men often move

south to work as farm labourers or miners, and become victims of bonded labour. To cope with climate-induced devastation, some families force children into marriage or labour. When migrating south to escape these practices, women and girls as young as 14 are subjected to forced labour and debt bondage.

- In 2020, when Cyclone Amphan swept across the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh, more than two million people were evacuated from their homes. Three quarters of households reported that at least one family member had migrated from home – often to urban slums, where they face poverty, homelessness and become vulnerable to modern slavery.

Our new report shows that policy makers need a coherent response to the risk of climate-induced migration and modern slavery in climate-affected populations. We must act now.

Download a copy of our report here: [tinyurl.com/3x89nvcd](https://tinyurl.com/3x89nvcd).



Mexican migrant caravan

## Indigenous voices: key to preventing modern slavery

**While the impacts of climate change affect us all, indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable because of their dependence on natural resources to maintain their livelihoods and habitats, writes Dr Chris O'Connell.**

The climate crisis exposes millions of people to the risk of exploitation, as explained in our report From A Vicious To A Virtuous Circle. Indigenous peoples are often among the worst affected. Extractive activities like mining and industrial agriculture harm their livelihoods through land grabbing, pollution, deforestation, and overuse of scarce water. This can mean they are displaced and exposed to risks of trafficking and exploitation.

Bolivia's second-largest lake, Lago Poopo, disappeared in 2015 and 2021 because of droughts. Around 200 animal species were killed, including many fish; this destroyed the livelihoods of the Urus-Matos indigenous people, who were forced to migrate to cities or abroad in search of subsistence. Many people found themselves in exploitative, dangerous, and degrading labour in agriculture, textiles, construction, and domestic work.

Climate change contributed to the droughts as temperatures soared and rainfall declined. This was exacerbated

by extractive activities and export-orientated agriculture, which diverted waters for irrigation and mining, and by toxic residues from nearby mines. Perversely, many Urus-Matos have been forced to seek work in the same mines that have destroyed their way of life. This is the vicious circle of climate change, environmental destruction, and contemporary slavery.

It would be a mistake to think that indigenous peoples are helpless victims: their livelihoods and knowledge can make important contributions to combating climatic and biodiversity crises.

A 2017 report from the International Labour Organization noted that Brazilian forests managed by indigenous peoples produce 27 times less emissions. A recent UN report also found significantly lower rates of deforestation in indigenous and tribal territories. Indigenous peoples therefore find themselves at a strange juncture. While their activism, knowledge and systems provide hope for humanity, their livelihoods, rights and survival are increasingly threatened.

As COP26 approaches, we hope world leaders will work hard to understand – and protect – indigenous peoples, who so often stand to lose everything because of the climate crisis.

**This research has received funding from the Irish Research Council and from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 713279.**

## Drought in Ghana



Credit: Marina Sto on Shutterstock.

## COP26: a critical opportunity

**In November, the UK will host the COP26 UN climate change summit. Our climate change and modern slavery advisor Fran Witt highlights how world leaders must tackle the related issues of climate change and modern slavery.**

Low-income countries suffer some of the most severe climate impacts, have the least capacity to adapt, and find it hardest to recover from the loss and damage caused by climate change. In many cases, this forces people to migrate, leaving them open to exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery.

As Arifur Rahman from OKUP, our partner development organisation in Bangladesh, explains: “Each time our country battles through an environmental disaster, we see a subsequent rise in cases of slavery and human trafficking.”

When the leaders of the world’s wealthiest nations met at the G7 summit in the summer, the lack of progress on low carbon development, financing for adaptation activities, and the loss and damage experienced from climate breakdown was disappointing.

COP26 opens the discussion to a broader community of nations, offering a major chance to protect people and planet. But action needs to be fast, participatory and fair to help power sustainable, more equal, and resilient societies.

We need:

### 1. Lower global temperatures

COP26 must commit to limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C, through a rapid transition from fossil fuels, a global commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 45% below their 2010 levels by 2030 and to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. This transition must be fair, respecting everyone’s fundamental rights.

### 2. Support for developing nations

The effects of climate breakdown are felt most acutely by developing countries, where people are increasingly vulnerable to modern slavery. But support for developing countries to adapt to climate change has stagnated, at only 20% of overall climate finance. COP26 must re-commit to providing US\$100 billion annually to support climate action in developing countries and work towards financial goals that consider their needs and aspirations.

### 3. Adaptation

COP26 needs to allocate 50% of climate finance to adaptation to support countries in adapting to the effects of climate change, and help build resilient communities. Investment must meet the needs of women, children, and other groups, including those vulnerable to climate-induced migration, trafficking and modern slavery.



**Aerial view of devastated coastal area after Cyclone Amphan hit Bangladesh (May 2020)**

Credit: Insight-Photography on Shutterstock

### 4. Financial recovery

Finance is needed to help people whose lives and livelihoods have been destroyed by climate change such as desertification. Governments must unlock resources to provide support and alternative livelihoods for affected communities. Economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic must also include positive action on climate change.

### 5. Investment in responsible renewables

As well as providing support to workers in carbon intensive industries, the renewable energy industry must commit to making sure it does not use forced labour or modern slavery. We need a UN special rapporteur on human rights and climate change to investigate, monitor and recommend solutions to tackle slavery and climate change.

COP26 could help address these critical challenges. As leaders gather in Glasgow, they know the world is watching – we hope they take action that fits the scale of the challenge facing people and the planet.

## Meet the team: new starters at Anti-Slavery International

**We depend upon our team to support our campaigns in the UK and worldwide. Here, we welcome two of our new colleagues, and explain how they will be helping to advance the cause for freedom for everyone, everywhere, always.**

### Liz Arif-Fear digital officer

“ I’ve been at Anti-Slavery International for around two months, and love working in such a close team. Knowing that I’m contributing to helping prevent modern slavery and protect survivors is incredibly important to me. When I wake up in the morning, I want to know that the job I’m doing is making a difference to the world. That’s my driver when taking on a new role.

I knew I wanted to dedicate my life to human rights since I was in sixth form. From joining my school’s Amnesty group, I went on to study languages and human rights at university – with a focus on women and children’s rights and minority freedoms. After graduating I started working in communications and outreach for an NGO supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Breaking down linguistic and cultural divides, helping others and building a safer society are my



passions. I’ve worked with anti-trafficking organisations across the UK, and learned how modern slavery devastates people’s lives. I’ve campaigned for women’s rights and supported organisations helping to protect children from female genital mutilation and child marriage, and I’ve travelled to Calais and Dunkirk to help those who’ve faced extremes of inequality and injustice. After launching an internationally recognised blog, I also soon discovered that communications – in digital outlets – was my niche.

Having worked in international development for the last four years, I’m delighted to now be working for Anti-Slavery International in the new role of digital officer. Building networks, engaging donors, raising awareness and strengthening campaigns through our website and social media is critical in this increasingly digital age. The world feeds on timely, engaging content; and charities, in particular, rely on building critical networks through high-impact communications.

I look forward to the future with Anti-Slavery International and supporting survivors and communities globally. ”

### Nelson Idama parliamentary officer

“ I grew up in the great city of Liverpool in a Nigerian household, and have had a keen interest in politics since I was a teenager. In fact, while I was at school a friend and I lied about our ages so we could appear in the audience for the BBC’s Question Time.

I studied international relations at university, and then put my political interest to good use working in government relations for the Environment Agency. From there, I went to work in the House of Commons doing media and communications work for select committees.



I decided to leave the House of Commons and join Anti-Slavery International because working here gives me the opportunity to have a positive influence on the parliamentary process, rather than just passively facilitating it. I’m excited about delving deeper into

my role here, to help promote the organisation and our key aims in parliament. I’m especially keen to help us to influence key pieces of legislation and policy, especially the Nationality and Borders Bill. ”

Find out more about the team at:  
[antislavery.org/about-us/staff](https://antislavery.org/about-us/staff).



## National poetry day: your winning entry

For National Poetry Day on 1 October, we asked you to send us your poems on the theme of freedom. We're delighted to publish the winning entry by Rhiannon Croker, *Trafficked Into Invisible Chains*. Congratulations Rhiannon and thank you to everyone who submitted a poem.



### Trafficked into Invisible Chains

University of Birmingham  
Harboured 12% of students  
from China,  
According to the Daily Mail.  
I was a percentage in this  
statistic,  
Before the puppeteer's sale  
Two whole years ago.  
I still feel like cargo,  
As though I was transported  
From Cape Coast Castle –  
Through the 'Door of No Return'.  
Life would be safer harboured  
in an urn.  
Suicidal ideation plagued me.  
They erased me,  
Sold me.  
Yet, I was not put to sea –  
Like those in the past,  
From an untouchable caste.  
I am a modern slave.  
A victim of human trafficking  
From Beijing.  
My student visa ended,  
After three whole years  
Of studying Political Economy.  
Fees kept me free.  
At this time,  
My mum  
Thrust herself into the sea  
Of sorrow.

There was no tomorrow!  
Financial support ceased to  
exist,  
And I was propelled into  
Birmingham's  
Depraved mist.  
My percentage became nil –  
So,  
I was sold to a slave trader  
On Soho Road,  
Handsworth.  
She promised me a job in retail,  
But instead,  
I boarded an illusory boat ready  
to sail.  
One Albanian man  
Installed fear into three others -  
Brothers from Tirana  
And an Italian friend,  
Whom named me 'girlfriend'.  
The Sauna hosted clients.  
The Sauna housed women  
Without their permission –  
Beating them into submission.  
Commissioned with no volition.  
The Night wept in silent solitude,  
Lacing the ground with silk-  
stained dew –  
Waking to a transactions debut.  
Sold and bought.  
Bought and sold.

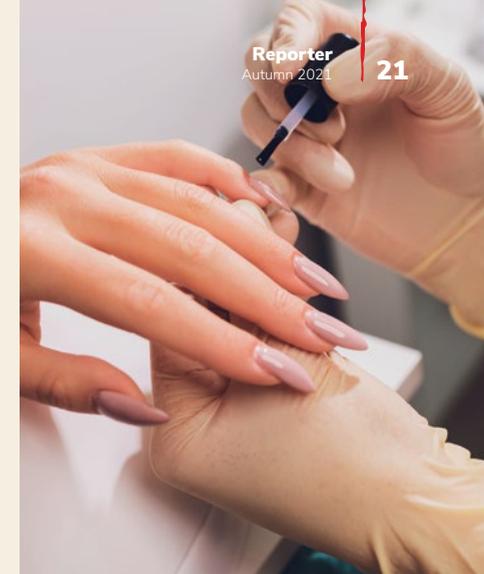
Controlled.  
Silenced so my story remained  
untold,  
Until now.  
A shack in the back  
Was my home.  
I ate,  
Slept,  
And cried  
In this pit of melancholy.  
God felt sorry,  
Whilst men relished in their folly.  
A one-night stand,  
A dawn of delight,  
Constituted my ongoing plight.  
Autumn emerged;  
The Equinox.  
Harvest merriments echoed  
through  
The crevices of this surreptitious  
city -  
Drawing memories of plantation  
slaves,  
Blanketed in timeworn waves.  
Invisible shackles snarled at my  
feet,  
And my body danced to the  
gentleman's beat  
On demand  
In this debauched land –  
Reminiscent of Cape Coast's  
bleeding sand.

## Equipping our communities to fight modern slavery

Would you like your community group to learn more about modern slavery and how you can join our fight? We offer talks to all community groups, from faith groups, schools, Women's Institutes and more.

Our fundraising and communications executive, Lizzie Muir, recently gave a talk to Hull University's Anti-Slavery Society. Their president, Sarah Colley said: "Modern slavery touches all of our lives, through the food we eat, the clothes we wear, where we get our cars washed or nails painted to who cleans our hotel rooms. We are shocked to think that there are approximately 40 million slaves in the world today and wanted to play our small part in raising the issue within the University student community and hopefully further afield into the wider Hull and East Yorkshire region.

"We approached Lizzie regarding talking to us about Anti-Slavery International. She kindly gave us a presentation on the topic of modern slavery one evening, and took the time to do a Q&A with the group afterwards.



"Lizzie was not only friendly and approachable, but she was also knowledgeable on the topic. We all learnt something new, felt we had a better understanding about the forms of slavery in the UK and overseas and what actions we could take.

"A number of our members went on to get very muddy in the Get Caked Fun Run to raise money for Anti-Slavery International. Other members are training as social workers and wanted to be better prepared in their future work with vulnerable children and adults – for example, in how to spot issues like child sexual exploitation, county lines, forced labour and so on. We hope this will be the start of an on-going relationship."

Give your community group the chance to learn more about modern slavery through a talk given by Lizzie or another member of our team.

It's time to equip our communities with the knowledge and tools to help fight modern slavery: email [e.muir@antislavery.org](mailto:e.muir@antislavery.org) today.

## Running for freedom

Every year we are blown away by our incredible supporters who put their trainers on and run for freedom. Recently Catherine, Lucy, Libby and Flo took on their own challenges and shared their experiences with us.



“ To give me some motivation to get fit in lockdown, I decided to sign up and run the London 10K. To make sure I didn't fall back in my training, I decided to raise some much-needed funds for Anti-Slavery International. I was so pleased to raise more than £600 for this great charity, and look forward to fundraising for Anti-Slavery International again – although after all the hard work and training needed, I may decide to do a bake sale next time!

**Catherine Stevens** ”



“ We chose to run a half marathon for Anti-Slavery International as we realise legislation criminalising the practice of slavery does not make it a thing of the past. With clothing brands' supply chains being contaminated with cotton from Uyghur forced labour, prisons in the US (and elsewhere) paying nothing yet profiting from their work, and even workers in British factories being paid as little as £3.50, the evil of modern slavery still takes place.

We were hugely dedicated to our training throughout the cold Covid-19 months because we believe more attention should be given to the issue of modern slavery, and champion Anti-Slavery International's activism. We are really proud to have raised money for Anti-Slavery International, and completed our half marathon.

**Lucy, Libby and Flo** ”

## Abolitionist power couple

For Hannah and Jon, fighting for freedom is a family affair: Hannah has joined our dedicated team of volunteers and Jon is running the London Marathon.

“ After the pandemic, both of us really wanted to give something back but were unsure where to start. My studies in ethics, looking into the issues in inequality along with how corporate social responsibility works, led me to the great work Anti-Slavery International do across the world. Reading through the website gave me a much greater insight into the massive problems faced by people, and it really made me want to reach out to the team to see how I could get involved. I'm now volunteering at Anti-Slavery International while studying for a psychology and criminology degree, and I am excited to be part of the team helping wherever I can.

**Hannah** ”



“ I have worked in the hospitality industry for my whole career and am very aware of the issues Anti-Slavery International deal with. When the opportunity to get involved was presented I jumped at the chance to be able to give back.

I'm raising money by running the London Marathon. Running the marathon was something that immediately came to mind when thinking about how I could contribute to the great work the team do, and I am really honoured to have been selected as one of the charities representatives. Being able to do something, however small a contribution, for those who are vulnerable in the UK and abroad is something I know will continue post marathon.

**Jon** ”

Feeling inspired? Every year we have places in running events, or you can get your own place and fundraise for us like Catherine, Lucy, Libby and Flo. You'll get your own Anti-Slavery International running vest and support from our team. Email us at [supporter@antislavery.org](mailto:supporter@antislavery.org) for more information and to get running for freedom in 2022.



## The people you help: **Bimala from Nepal**

The people of the Haliya caste in western Nepal are some of the most discriminated and vulnerable people in Nepal. Historically, Haliya people have suffered under a debt-bondage system where they're forced to work to pay off inter-generational debt. The labour is often imposed under brutal circumstances and many find that repayment of the loan is impossible as the debt increases.

Access to education is one of the largest barriers to Haliya people escaping slavery. Many Haliya haven't received an education, as families struggle to afford to send their children to school. This perpetuates the cycle of exploitation as young people are unaware and unable to stand up for their rights.

18-year-old Bimala grew up in bonded labour with her family. Her mother took on extra work to pay for Bimala's education and she finished school with excellent results. Despite their hard work, further education was out of reach.

Thanks to our scholarship project, Bimala has been able to train as a laboratory technician. With her qualification, Bimala will be able to get a good job and end her family's cycle of poverty. She is excited to complete her training, which will provide her with the skills to access better employment opportunities in the future. One day, she hopes to open her own lab.

### **Please donate now to give the gift of freedom:**

- **£12** could help pay for school supplies for two children for a whole year.
- **£24** could help pay for a whole year's education for a child born into slavery.
- **£50** could help provide microcredits to support survivors of slavery to set up their own small business.

### **Donate today**

at [antislavery.org/donate](https://antislavery.org/donate)

To join as a member for  
£5 per month, go to  
[antislavery.org/membership](https://antislavery.org/membership)

or call us on **0207 737 9434**