Child slavery: denying children an education

- Opposing the Nationality and Borders Bill
- Protecting migrant worker’s rights
- Climate change and modern slavery

Running for freedom • Annual Supporter Conference • Get Inspired!
INTRODUCTION

As I look back over everything we have achieved in the past 6 months, I am so proud of our partners, supporters and team. Working to free people from modern slavery in a global pandemic and amid global crises is a challenging task, but we have learned so much. We are deeply saddened and outraged by the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and we are very concerned at the risks faced by people fleeing Ukraine. As we continue to monitor this situation and work to realise freedom from slavery for everyone, everywhere, always, I am buoyed by your support and commitment.

Since the Autumn 2021 Reporter, the UK hosted the long-anticipated climate conference, COP26, and we campaigned hard for governments to acknowledge the links between environmental degradation and modern slavery. With your help we continue to campaign on the Nationality and Borders Bill, and we stand strong in our belief that modern slavery has no place in an immigration bill. Do sign the petition and share it with your friends and family (more information on page 4).

We continue to fight to end child slavery, working with child domestic workers and children born into slavery, pushing for system change, legal protections and for children’s voices to be heard. Thank you so much for your continued support for this vital work, this movement has always been people powered. Through your involvement in our campaigns, your awareness raising and your donations, you are helping to bring freedom for everyone everywhere, always.
Why we are calling for a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act

We believe that consumers should have assurances that the products they are buying have not been made with forced labour. We believe that the government should hold businesses accountable for abuses in their supply chains. We believe that victims of these abuses should be able to access justice in British courts, regardless of where they are.

In January, Anti-Slavery International launched a campaign alongside the Corporate Justice Coalition, and many other organisations, to make the case for a new Business, Human Rights and Environment Act (BHRE). Current laws are not strong enough to stop multinational companies profiting from forced labour, and we will be campaigning until the law is introduced. As we launch this joint campaign, we are asking you to sign our petition demanding action from MPs. We want the government to stop companies being able to wash their hands of human rights and environmental abuses, such as those taking place in the Uyghur Region.

The proposed Business, Human Rights and Environment Act would:

- **Compel businesses to undertake human rights and environmental due diligence:** Companies, financial institutions and the public sector would be required to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for human rights abuses, including modern slavery, and environmental damage caused by their operations, subsidiaries, and value chains.

- **Help to level the playing field between businesses and provide clarity and certainty on legal obligations:** Currently, businesses taking appropriate steps to respect the human rights of their workers face considerable disadvantages against competitors profiting from lower costs gained through the exploitation of workers.

- **Hold companies and other organisations accountable for failure to prevent abuses through liability provisions:** The inclusion of strong accountability measures and liability provisions are fundamental to compel effective action on modern slavery.

- **Enable victims of abuses, including modern slavery, to access justice:** Currently, victims of modern slavery in UK company and public sector supply chains face enormous obstacles to access remedies or justice. The new law would provide victims of abuses with clear paths to access these.

The calls for stronger corporate due diligence laws are gaining traction around the world, with new laws in France, Germany and Norway and proposals in the EU, Austria, Switzerland and other countries, and growing support from businesses themselves.

We Uyghurs are so grateful for the support and solidarity we’ve already received from the UK. But we need the law to make sure that big business stops selling goods made off the back of human rights abuses and environmental destruction.

Rahima Mahmut, UK Director, World Uyghur Congress

Your support will be vital as we raise awareness of this issue with policymakers, with businesses, and with consumers. If you haven’t had a chance yet, please sign our petition at antislavery.org/take-action/campaigns, and together we can make sure that the government puts people before profit.
**Answering your child slavery questions**

Communications volunteer Sushma Puri spoke with international advocacy manager Kate Elsayed-Ali about child slavery around the world, and what we are doing about it.

**Sushma:** How widespread is child slavery, and is it getting worse?

**Kate:** Child slavery is the enforced exploitation of a child for someone else’s gain, with the child having no way to leave the situation or the person exploiting them. It includes children forced into begging, in debt bondage and forced labour, and children in sexual exploitation.

The 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* estimated that at least 10 million children are trapped in modern slavery. Staggeringly that means that a quarter of people living in modern slavery worldwide are children.

New Global Estimates on Modern Slavery are due to be released this year. What we do know is that since 2017 the drivers of child slavery have been increasing. These include the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the current and future impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

Our work with slavery affected communities around the world has shown that child slavery risks are gravely increasing, with many more children now vulnerable.

This is why Anti-Slavery International’s campaign to end child slavery is necessary now more than ever.

In Niger and Mauritania, we are working to end descent-based slavery, where children are literally born into slavery and are owned by a ‘master’. They are forced to work, subjected to violence and denied their rights to education and play.

In Tanzania and Ghana, we are working to prevent slavery of child domestic workers, who live in their employer’s home. We want to see child domestic workers enjoy a life free from abuse and exploitation, where their rights are respected and they can go to school and live full and independent lives.

**Sushma:** How is Anti-Slavery International tackling the issue?

**Kate:** Ending child slavery is one of Anti-Slavery International’s strategic priorities in pursuit of our vision of “freedom from slavery for everyone, everywhere, always”.

Children who are in or at risk of slavery are among the most marginalised and excluded in the world. Child slavery can be difficult to tackle. But it is possible, and it is necessary, and we are working with partners across the world to achieve exactly this.

We are calling for all governments to make ending child slavery a priority: to commit to action and initiatives that prevent child slavery, reach and protect affected children, and ensure sustainable freedom. Children in or at risk of slavery themselves also need to be heard and participate in the development of solutions which affect them.

When the global slavery estimates come out this year, we will be looking closely at what they mean for child slavery and for general trends. Be sure to keep an eye on our blog which will feature in-depth analysis.

James Fookes, Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group Coordinator, explains our concerns around the Nationality and Borders Bill.

The Nationality and Borders Bill has been making its way through the Houses of Parliament.

The Bill represents a dangerous and regressive move in the UK’s attitude to asylum, human rights and victims of trafficking. It is enhancing the failed hostile environment policy, which has already caused untold suffering and hindered the UK’s efforts to be a true world leader in tackling modern day slavery. Part 5 of the Bill, which concerns modern slavery and human trafficking is of particular concern.

Over the past decade, NGOs, survivors of modern slavery and the British government itself have sought to separate modern slavery from immigration. This Bill represents a step backwards, confusing immigration enforcement with trafficking prevention and victim support. This is wrong; modern slavery does not belong in an immigration Bill.

The measures in this Bill will harm victims of modern slavery. The sector is unified on this. The Bill harms victims by creating a harsher system for survivors with higher thresholds. This means a greater risk of support being rejected.

Survivors of modern slavery could be denied access to the support that will enable them to access safety and recover and rebuild due to an unreasonable evidence burden. This is exacerbated by the priority given to immigration enforcement. Measures in this Bill will put a duty on the police to arrest and prosecute anyone identified by them, for instance in a nail bar, brothel or drug farm, who is undocumented.

The Bill introduces cruel ‘trauma deadlines’ by putting a time limit on when survivors must disclose their experiences, after which their credibility is damaged. This is inhumane. It can take a person years before coming to terms with the trauma they have undergone and be able to disclose their exploitation. Damaging the credibility of a survivor for not disclosing within a time frame punishes them for their trauma.

The Bill will block access to support and criminalise victims and survivors who have criminal records, despite 49% of potential trafficking victims last year being forced to commit crimes. This will limit survivors’ ability to support in prosecutions and allow traffickers to evade justice.

Part 5 of the Bill ultimately removes protection hard won through the Modern Slavery Act, ignores best practice in safeguarding and victim support, ignores the recommendations of the police, the findings of the 2018 super complaint on data sharing, the warnings of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the expertise of NGOs and the experiences of survivors.

Instead, the Bill continues to focus on immigration enforcement and forcing modern slavery to fit inside the hostile environment. This is not only cruel it is simply administratively unworkable.

Together, we have been fighting against this bill throughout its journey through Parliament. We will continue to campaign against this bill and the policies that come from it if it becomes law.
Human rights cannot come in second place

In 2022, a year with both the Winter Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, we are calling on the institutions and sponsors that bring us these historic competitions to provide us with the assurance that human rights have been respected and prioritised in the build-up.

When it came to the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics, we repeatedly called on the International Olympics Committee (IOC) to show their commitment to human rights. The actions they took were not enough.

For months, the Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region (of which we are a co-founder) had been corresponding with the International Olympics Committee, asking for information on their due diligence to make sure that its suppliers, which have operations or supply chains in Uyghur Region, are not complicit in human rights or labour rights abuses in their broader business.

When it comes to sporting events, it is not good enough that human rights are simply an afterthought, if they are even considered at all.

Ultimately, the realisation struck: the IOC would not provide credible assurance that it isn’t sourcing products linked to forced labour and human rights abuses in the Uyghur Region and elsewhere. The IOC has simply refused to provide meaningful transparency, in the name of neutrality. We believe that silence is complicity not neutrality.

On page 18 hear from Chloe Cranston, business and human rights manager, about how we are campaigning to end Uyghur Forced Labour.

Climate change and modern slavery: A growing crisis

In the previous Reporter, we were preparing for COP26 in Glasgow. You can read our reflections of the conference: COP26: least developed countries left in the lurch.

Our advocacy work continues, and we co-hosted a virtual conference involving scholars and practitioners from around the world which highlighted that contemporary slavery, environmental destruction and climate change are intrinsically connected and mutually reinforcing. Dr Chris O’Connell, CAROLINE Research Fellow at the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University, reflects on the key lessons from the event.

1. There is clear evidence that climate change acts as a ‘stress multiplier’, with both sudden disasters and slow-onset events driving unsafe migration and deepening existing vulnerabilities to exploitation and slavery.

2. The climate crisis is not the only environmental issue worsening vulnerability. From brick kilns in India, to gold mining in Peru, and deforestation in Brazil, participants provided numerous examples of the close relationship between forced labour and environmentally degrading activities.

3. This situation is underpinned by unequal power relations that treat the rights, livelihoods and eco-systems of some people as disposable. In other words, the issue of who is and is not made vulnerable, and which areas may be sacrificed, are determined by powerholders at local, national and international levels.

4. Finally, and most crucially, the conference contributions began to map a holistic pathway toward a just and sustainable world. Among the overarching concepts highlighted were the importance of systems thinking and rights-based approaches to climate change, and the need for a just transition that respects the rights of all.

The conference was organised by researchers from Dublin City University and the University of Hull, with the support of the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation, and Anti-Slavery International. Watch the full conference on our YouTube channel.
Protecting Migrant worker’s rights: the grievance process at the Migrant Resource Centre, Mauritius

In collaboration with the local partner, Confédération des Travailleurs des Secteurs Publique et Privé (CTSP), and with the support of ASOS and IndustriALL Global Union, we’ve contributed to the creation of a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Mauritius, where migrant workers can present their work grievances and find support to their resolution, a key step to improve access to remedy. As part of our efforts to encourage brands to collaborate with the MRC, we have mapped out a typical process where a grievance has been resolved by the MRC through the intervention of a brand in their supply chain.

Our business advisory services help businesses to understand the modern slavery risks within their supply chains and to empower local workers. If this is something your business may be interested in, then please reach out to supporter@antislavery.org for more information.

A case study demonstrating effective collaboration between ASOS and the Migrant Resource Centre to ensure successful grievance resolution.

Context
The Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) was contacted by a migrant worker from Madagascar. He reported that he, and a further 10 Malagasy and Bangladeshi colleagues, had been moved by their employer to quarantine accommodation after they discovered they had Covid-19.

Grievances
- The rooms and toilets were dirty
- There were not enough beds, meaning some workers were forced to sleep on tables
- The food was inadequate and there were no cooking utensils
- There was no hot water
- They had not been provided with medication or been visited by a doctor, despite them having respiratory issues due to Covid-19.

The migrant workers raised their grievances with their employer, to no initial avail. As a result, they reached out to the MRC to report their case and request support for remediation. To substantiate their claims, the workers shared some pictures of the quarantine accommodation.

Action
ASOS requested some additional information from the MRC (e.g. total number of workers affected, length of stay in the accommodation and information about the sanitary facilities available), to clarify the situation and be able to intervene appropriately.

Action
The MRC contacted ASOS to inform them of the grievance and to ask for their support in resolving it. The MRC took this action because the employer is part of the ASOS supply chain.

Outcome
ASOS communicated the achievements of the employer to the MRC and in turn the MRC contacted ASOS to confirm that the workers were all now back to work and in their usual place of residence. The case was officially closed.

Action
ASOS arranged a call with the supplier to address the concerns and discuss potential solutions. ASOS attendees including the ethical, sourcing and buying teams, and supplier attendees included the Director and human resources team. During the call, the supplier provided some explanations for their actions but also admitted to wrongdoing and confirmed their intention to resolve the matter.

Action
Following the call, ASOS monitored the case resolution closely and requested regular updates from the supplier, who took prompt action once ASOS was involved. This included providing breakfast to quarantined workers; medical visits and free medicines as well as undertaking cleaning of the facilities.
Meet the new members of the team

Emily

Hello, I’m the new Trusts & Major Gifts Officer. I write proposals for funding and reports to our brilliant trusts and also cultivate and steward our relationships with some of our amazing donors, making sure they are kept up to date with all the amazing work going on across the organisation.

I absolutely love writing, forging, and fortifying new relationships with donors, so I’m very excited to be able to do all of this at Anti-Slavery International. I grew up living abroad, travelling, and learning about other countries and cultures as my family were in the military. When I was a teenager, I spent time in Ghana and Kenya, and it was the first time I understood the unique issues affecting countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

I always wanted the opportunity to do meaningful work that supports the places that I care about and that hold so many wonderful memories and friendships for me and my family.

Chris

I joined in October last year and I am really enjoying working for an organisation that is values driven. Anti-Slavery International’s razor-sharp focus on ending modern slavery and building a movement is so inspiring, particularly given its long history.

I’m currently working in the programme partnerships team, which means I handle our applications for government funding and our subsequent relationships with them. I find this work so interesting for a whole host of reasons: from making sure that our programmes are designed to get the most impact to building relationships with donors that work towards ending modern slavery. They are such an important part of the solution.

I’m really excited for my future at Anti-Slavery International – growing our movement, galvanising action to end modern slavery, and changing the systems that drive it. We have a such a key part to play in making sure that the voices of survivors are at the heart of what we do.

Olivia

I recently joined as Safeguarding Manager. I work with our partners in the UK and around the world to uphold the highest standards in everything we do to make sure that the people we work with are protected from harm. To do this most effectively, our own procedures must be rooted in best practice, and tailored to the contexts in which we work. As safeguarding is about continually developing and improving our practices, I spend time learning from, and alongside, our partners and those who the policies are in place to support.

One of the best things about my role as Safeguarding Manager is that it is so varied. A typical day starts with checking the Safeguarding email inbox – where any safeguarding reports or concerns are sent. A large part of my role involves working with our partners to build their capacity, I develop training materials, review policies and identify tools useful for different contexts and spend time each week learning from each others.
Child slavery: denying children an education

Accessing education is a human right. However, children in and vulnerable to slavery experience immense barriers in accessing education. A lack of access to quality free education can increase the risks of child slavery, trapping children in a brutal cycle of poverty and exploitation. Protecting education is therefore critical.

Multiple factors increase the risk of child slavery, including poverty, religious traditions, socio-cultural norms, migrant status, gender and ethnic discrimination:

- Poverty can force parents to push children to work, heightening the risk of entering forced – often hazardous – labour.
- Many children in rural areas lack access to education. Those who live far from schools may be further excluded as families may fear for the child’s safety and ‘honor’ on the journey to school and in the school setting itself.
- Children of ‘lower castes’ and other discriminated ethnic groups can face exclusion from mainstream education or discrimination in the classroom, making them more likely to drop out.
- Children born into slavery often work long hours and are denied identification documents by their ‘masters’.
- Child domestic labourers also work long hours with little rest, while child marriage often means children drop out of school.

Children who’ve had an education are more likely to have the skills-training skills also have greater opportunities to access decent work as adults. Adults with numeracy and literacy skills also have greater opportunities to access labour rights.

We therefore need to break the cycle and ensure education for all children. Firstly, we must challenge the embedded barriers to education including poverty and gender-based discrimination. Across our programmes we work to support education for children so that they may gain the skills necessary to influence the decisions that affect them.

Slavery affects around 10 million children worldwide. Before the pandemic, over 258 million children were out of school. Covid-related school closures are affecting over 90% of students worldwide.
Ending forced labour in the Uyghur Region will take new strong laws

Adapted from an article first published in Ethical Consumer magazine written by Chloe Cranston, business and human rights manager.

We now have a good understanding of the link between China’s persecution of the Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim groups and our global consumer products. But current laws aren’t strong enough to stop products made with forced labour ending up in our shops. We are calling on the UK government to create a law that would make it easier to hold companies accountable and provide victims with access to justice.

In November, Sheffield Hallam University published a momentous report, which tracked shipping data and detailed how cotton from the Uyghur Region is very likely to make its way onto shop shelves around the world.

The very fact that they were able to conduct this research shows that the fashion companies’ excuse that the complexity of supply chains makes it too difficult to fully identify risks, is inadequate. Clearly it is possible!

The British government continues to claim that the Modern Slavery Act can compel companies to clean up their supply chains. However, it has not achieved meaningful industry-wide action to address modern slavery in supply chains, and many companies have approached modern slavery reporting requirements as a ‘tick-box’ exercise.

There are now calls from both civil society, business, and the general public for the UK government to move beyond the Modern Slavery Act and introduce a stronger, overarching law.

Binding laws with uniform standards can bring benefit to workers, communities, consumers and businesses.

See pages 4-5 for more information on getting involved in the campaign for a new Business, Human Rights and Environment Act.

Get inspired by young abolitionists

It is so crucial that the next generation of future change-makers learn about modern slavery and join our fight. We have been thrilled to hear about the Notting Hill and Ealing High School’s Year 11 student’s fundraising efforts.

Year 11 students were delighted to be fundraising for us, stating:

“...we felt inspired by how the charity helps those trapped in modern slavery. We organised quite a few events throughout the term like selling sweets to students; we baked lots of different cakes and cookies for our bake sales, which we held at breaktime and lunchtime. We also held two big charity events; one was a movie & pizza lunchtime where we showed Mean Girls and sold pizza; the second was teachers’ karaoke where the students could come and watch their teachers sing! We had fun raising money for charity and are glad we could do our bit to help the charity and the people in need.

If you are a teacher and would like your students to get more involved with fundraising, why not get inspired by these fantastic ideas and start warming up your vocal cords for a charity karaoke! There are so many ways to get students involved in fundraising. Not only is it exciting and entertaining, but students are also given the opportunity to learn more about modern slavery and join the movement fighting against it.

If you’d like to learn more about how your school can get involved in fundraising, or if you would value an informational talk on modern slavery, please email Lizzie at e.muir@antislavery.org, or call her on 020 8142 7723.
Annual Supporter Conference

In November 2021, many of us gathered virtually to mark our achievements together and share knowledge at our Annual Supporter Conference.

We looked back at our impact in 2021. Together, we supported **17,880 people** across **21 projects** in **10 countries** and were reminded how strong this movement is when we stand together against injustice.

Two Anti-Slavery International researchers spoke about our Recovery Needs Assessment project, and the process which UK modern slavery survivors must go through to access the support they need. The researchers outlined their current progress and findings in a very informative presentation. The full report will soon be available at: antislavery.org/atmg

Supporter, Jonathon Davis, talked about his motivation to run for Anti-Slavery International in the London Marathon, where he raised an impressive **£3,075**, and how he’s encouraging his employer to support our vital work tackling slavery in supply chains.

The panel on climate change and modern slavery, hosted by Lucy Watson from ITV News, and featuring, Shakirul Islam, from our partner OKUP in Bangladesh, youth activist, Ishaan Shah, and Fran Witt from Anti-Slavery International, was enlightening as they discussed climate-induced migration and the vulnerabilities this creates leading to modern slavery. When asked at the end, what they want us to take away from the discussion, Ishaan replied: “we as consumers, and as citizens, have a lot more power than we think”.

The Amies Freedom Choir sang us in and out of the Annual Supporter Conference, with two beautiful songs: **We Will Rise** and **Thula Thul**.

The choir, whose members have survived trafficking, meet weekly to sing and be together in a joyful, supportive space. The women credit singing with the choir as a source of empowerment and confidence, as well as a place of friendship.

We were delighted to work with videographer Emma Bailey to capture the brilliance of the choir in two pre-recorded videos.

The Amies Freedom Choir is part of Pan Intercultural Arts, who use the arts to inspire and implement social change and funded by Youth Music, Arts Council England, Lifelines International and Maingot Trust.

You can watch the highlights of the Annual Supporter Conference on our YouTube channel. We hope to see you at the 2022 conference, details to be confirmed. If you want to speak with us sooner, please email supporter@antislavery.org or invite us along to your workplace, community group or school.
Running for freedom
We asked supporter Charles Gibbs why he runs and what inspired him to support us

Runners run for a multitude of reasons. Whether it’s the stresses of work or to free the mind, there are hundreds of reasons, but none of them happen without motivation.

Fifteen years ago, I motivated myself to run trails because the job I had was sedentary. I spent hours sitting at a desk, answering a phone and using a computer. Running became something to get me out and moving after work. Today, I find that trail running has become personal. Yes, it is cheap, has health benefits and increases determination, but, most importantly, whenever I finish a run, no matter how short, I feel immense achievement.

Challenges are fantastic for motivation but finding a worthy cause can be just as fulfilling. It gives a sense that the challenges you complete are not only making a difference personally but also to those you run for. Running for Anti-Slavery International, an organisation actively making a difference to those living in modern slavery, gives me a huge incentive. When I was eight, I went to India and saw first-hand the evidence that confirmed the stories I was told about what parents would do to their infants to make them better at begging. This is still in the news today, but now there are also stories of girls and women being abducted, abused or sold into the sex trade. This is why I run for Anti-Slavery International. This is why I run.

Charles is currently completing ‘brutal runs’, running up and down hills covered in mud and water – aptly named ‘brutal’!

If Charles has inspired you, why not grab your trainers and fundraise for us!

We have some fantastic opportunities for you to get involved in:

The Great North Run
We have eight places for this year’s Great North Run – the world’s biggest half marathon! Taking place on 11 September, get your feet moving and join 57,000 runners, in an unbeatable atmosphere to raise money for Anti-Slavery International.

Royal Parks Half Marathon
We also have eight places for this exciting half marathon happening on 9 October. Run through central London’s famous Royal Parks, including Hyde Park, Green Park, St James’s Park and Kensington Gardens. You’ll also be cheered on by an electric crowd and help bring about freedom through your fundraising.

Charity Challenge
If running isn’t quite your thing but you’d still like to be active on your feet, why not check out charitychallenge.com. They offer a fantastic range of challenges, from trekking Machu Pichu, to cycling from Saigon to Angkor Wat, to dog sledding in Sweden! Not only will you get the experience of a lifetime, you’ll also be raising money for our incredible partners at the same time!

If you are interested in taking on any of these challenges for Anti-Slavery International, email Lizzie at e.muir@antislavery.org, or call her on 020 8142 7723.
We all want to leave the world in a better place through the actions we take in our lifetime. We take comfort in the knowledge that our loved ones will build a better future for themselves, through the legacy we leave.

But for the 10 million children living in slavery, a better future can seem out of reach. They are born into situations which make them vulnerable to slavery and exploitation, and a way out is not always clear.

**Thanks to gifts in Wills from supporters like you, Neysha was able to escape her life as a child domestic worker.**

Neysha was just 13 when she became a child domestic worker, a decision led by her family’s need for further income. After just a few months, Neysha was working extremely long hours, being treated horrifically and had not been paid.

Through our partners, and thanks to supporters like you, Neysha was informed of her rights and empowered to leave the abusive household she was working in.

**Could empowering young girls to realise their rights and find their freedom be part of your legacy?**

When you remember Anti-Slavery International in your Will, you are leaving a legacy of freedom and protecting future generations from slavery.

Every bequest makes a difference. Please take a moment to consider remembering Anti-Slavery International in your Will.

For more information about gifts in Wills and how your support can have a lasting impact, please visit [antislavery.org/legacy](http://antislavery.org/legacy) or email supporter@antislavery.org