

Committee: SOCHUM 2

Topic: The question of child slavery

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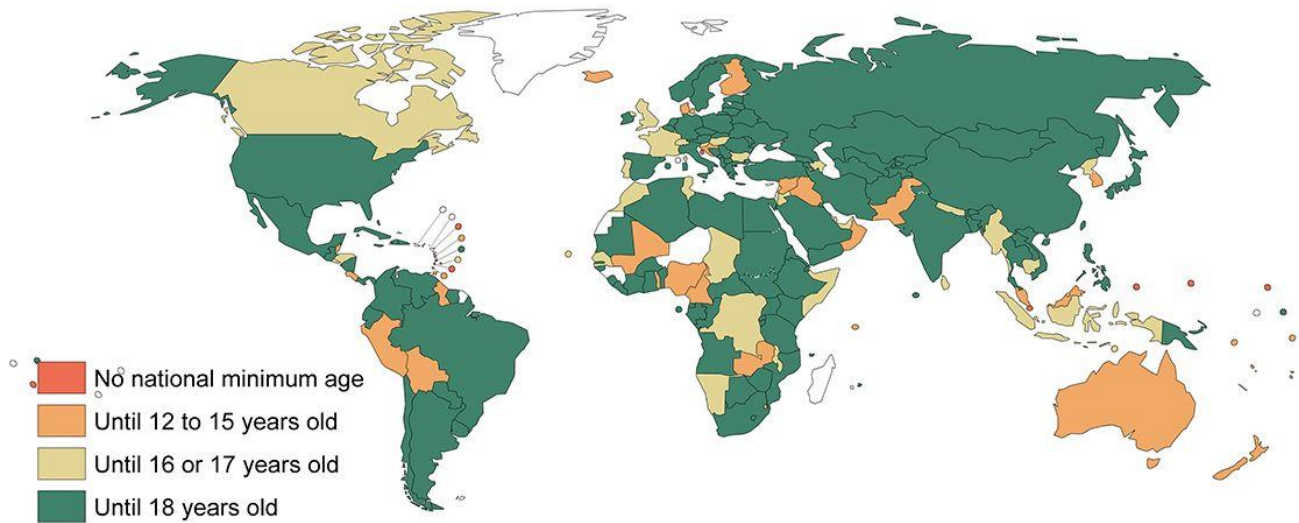
Summary

Child slavery is an issue that despite many efforts to eliminate it, still exists in many parts of the world. It is estimated that nearly 1 in 10 children are affected by child labour worldwide, with some forced into dangerous working conditions due to trafficking. Young boys may be forced into strenuous labour conditions by armed forces / militias. Trafficked children could also be subject to sexual exploitation, violence, along with other dangers to their health and development.

Child slavery can be extremely detrimental to childhood development, as it can deprive children of essential education, as education is a major contribution to class mobility and lack of education can prevent the ability of the children to have an improved quality of life in the future. Child slavery can also often be emotionally scarring to children that manage to escape it, it may be difficult for them to participate in society. Even when children are temporarily enslaved, it can have lifelong impacts that are both physical and emotional, children in hazardous conditions may encounter physical issues that affect them for the rest of their lives.

It is estimated that 1 in 150 people worldwide are trapped in some form of modern slavery, there is often a misconception that slavery is an issue that is unique to LEDC's, although around half of forced labour comes from upper-middle income or high-income countries. However, most forced labour in high-income countries involves adults, through systems such as penal labour in the United States, the kafala system in Qatar, along with similar systems in other wealthy middle eastern countries. Most child labour takes place in Africa and East Asia, which are generally less economically developed than the aforementioned countries.

How long are children protected from hazardous work when legal loopholes are considered?



Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Child Labor Database, 2016



Definition of Key Terms

Child – The OHCHR defines child as ‘every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.’

Slavery – The UN states that ‘Essentially it [slavery] refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power’.

Human Trafficking - The UNODC describes Human Trafficking as ‘the recruitment, ‘transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit.’

Background Information

Child slavery comes in many forms, children are often forced into begging for money as human traffickers often exploit people’s sympathy for young children to make money. According to Reuters ‘At least 300,000 children across India are drugged, beaten and forced to beg every day’. In India, this form of child slavery is often perpetuated by cartels who often inflict wounds on the children to make them more pitiable and hence receive more money. 40,000 children in India are abducted annually, a quarter of them go untraced and many end up in forced begging or other kinds of forced labour.

Child slavery often happens at plantations in Cote d'Ivoire where there is often limited oversight by the government. It is estimated that between 10 and 15 thousand children from Mali are working on plantations in Cote d'Ivoire, many of these children have been trafficked. Child trafficking in the production of cocoa is not uncommon, recently 10 people in Cote d'Ivoire have been arrested for 10 years for trafficking 40 minors via ferry from Burkina Faso.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

- **ILO** (International Labour Organisation)
- **UN** (United Nations)
- **OHCHR** (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- **UNICEF** (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)
- **UNODC** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)
- **India** is the country with the most people trapped in some form modern slavery, with an estimated 18.4 million people in slavery as of 2015.
- **The DPRK** has not ratified ILO's Forced Labour Convention (Convention 29) or the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (Convention 105) and is estimated to have 2.6 million people in modern slavery as of 2021, with over 1/10th of the population in modern slavery, making it the country with the most slaves relative to its population.
- **Eritrea** has the 2nd most people in modern slavery relative to its population, with just over 9% of its citizens in modern slavery.
- **Turkmenistan** has not ratified ILO's Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138) or the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (Convention 182) and has 1.19% of its citizens in modern slavery.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
1919	The ILO was founded, A critical organisation in significantly reducing child slavery, in the same year, ILO convention number 5 (the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention) is created, prohibiting children under the age of 14 from working in any 'industrial

	undertaking' with some exceptions. Many other conventions are made by the ILO regarding minimum age across forms of work.
1948	The universal declaration of Human Rights is created, addressing slavery in article 4 'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.'
1989	The UN CRC (Convention on Rights of the Child) is introduced, protecting children from trafficking in article 11 'States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad'. Article 32 protects children from hazardous work.
1999	The ILO adopts Convention number 182, protecting children against the worst forms of child labour. In this convention 'all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict' is defined as one of the worst forms of child labour, which this convention attempts to combat.
2016	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are adopted by all UN member states, SDG target 8.7 in relation to SDG goal 8's objective of decent work for all calls for the eradication of forced labour.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

The most relevant UN Treaty to the issue of child slavery is the CRC. The CRC provides many rights and protections to children which can prevent children from being forced into labour. Along with the CRC, ILO Convention 182 calls for elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The World Day Against Child Labour, observed on June 12th every year is held in by the ILO in collaboration with the UN to raise awareness about child labour and encourages efforts to eliminate child slavery along with other forms of child labour.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The UN and its specialised agencies have made multiple attempts in the past to reduce the number of children being trafficked and sent into slavery, along with many non-profits such as the Walk Free Foundation, Anti-Slavery International, and Global Fund to End Modern Slavery.

Possible Solutions

As most approaches to attempt to solve an issue as large as this are, effectively addressing child slavery requires a multifaceted approach that builds on successful previous efforts. Helplines have proven successful in the past at helping prevent child trafficking, which could lead to child slavery, UNICEF has recently expanded helplines with workers trained on how to identify human trafficking into Ukraine, along with providing helplines in Ukrainian in countries across Europe. Further investment in helplines where children in slavery or children at risk of becoming slaves can seek help will likely reduce the number of children forced to work.

Increased and more comprehensive legal repercussions for enslaving children may help reduce the number of children being forced into slavery. According to the World Economic Forum 'In 94 countries, a person cannot be prosecuted for enslaving another human being'. Although people who enslave others will likely be prosecuted through related laws, the legal systems in many countries may allow loopholes for criminals to avoid punishment. Countries investing more in creating comprehensive legislation around preventing slavery and studying effective legal repercussions for enslavement could be a significant part of a possible solution to child slavery and slavery in general.

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