

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING & MODERN SLAVERY:

---

## A CALL TO ACTION

# Table of Contents

A Call to Action	<u>1</u>
Current Status	<u>2</u>
Legislative and Policy Approaches	<u>2</u>
The G20 Role	<u>3</u>
IF20 Working Group on Human Trafficking	<u>4</u>
The G20 Annual Index	<u>4</u>
The Role of Religious Organisations	<u>4</u>
Conclusion	<u>5</u>

---

# A Call to Action

This Call to Action analyses requirements and urges steps to improve efforts to prevent and respond to human trafficking and modern slavery. After nearly a century of legislation and laws in 180 nations to criminalise human trafficking, the scourge persists.

---

Victim identification remains low, and convictions are rare: if Yankee Stadium (capacity: 47,000) were filled with trafficking victims, five would see justice.

Human trafficking and modern slavery generate over \$236 billion in profits annually, making it the second most lucrative crime globally. It destabilises economic and national security. It funds terrorism, fuels corruption, feeds off the exploitation of women and children, transcends businesses and financial institutions, has grown with climate change, and has become the profitable crime of choice of organised criminals. A global shift towards enforcing legislation and implementing preventative measures is essential. The G20 is crucial to this shift, representing two-thirds of the world's population and the vast proportion of its GDP (85%) and trade (75%).<sup>[1]</sup> Initially focused on macroeconomic issues, the G20 agenda now includes trade, poverty, health, agriculture, energy, climate change, anti-corruption, and sustainable development. Already a global Sustainable Development Goal, the crime of human trafficking belongs on the G20 agenda.

This Call to Action proposes a new strategy to boost government investment in anti-trafficking measures. It urges G20 nations to commit US\$30 billion per year by 2030, and to enhance the proficiency and professionalism of their statutory agencies in tackling these crimes.

- Praeveni Global's new G20 Index, due out November 2025, will track the financial commitments made by member nations.

Although it would be a substantial increase, this amount represents a minute portion of the profits generated from human exploitation. This strategy seeks to promote sustainable development without reliance on traditional forms of official development assistance, and if successful, it will reduce the need for such assistance.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/g20-summit-what-you-need-to-know/>

# Current Status

Human trafficking and modern slavery are crimes motivated by financial gain. The International Labour Organisation estimates annual criminal profit from human trafficking and modern slavery at over US\$236 billion.

---

This figure does not account for organ trafficking, wage theft, or fees extorted to recruit and accommodate workers. The true figure is much, much higher. These vast profits are generated while most victims remain untraced. US State Department data suggests that less than 0.5 per cent of human trafficking victims are identified annually.<sup>[2]</sup> Once identified, the likelihood of redress and prosecution is minimal. One in every 8,700 victims will see their trafficker convicted, even fewer will receive compensation, and most will endure long-term effects from being trafficked. And the situation is not improving.

Human trafficking and modern slavery have been a source of serious concern to nations and the international community for well over a century. Children, women, and men of all ages and nations can be affected. The conditions conducive to human trafficking and modern slavery have persisted over time: poverty, inequality, corruption, conflict, governance vacuums, criminal business practices, and they have been added to more recently by climate displacement and advancements in technology.

A framework of national laws and international protocols exists to combat human trafficking and modern slavery, as does a loose global network of non-governmental entities that are committed to this cause. There have been many successes, and it is important to recognise effective efforts where they have occurred.<sup>[3]</sup> However, we must acknowledge the challenges that remain: inadequate support for victims, limited criminal justice interventions, and a lack of effective global prevention. Millions of children, women, and men continue to be victimised by forced labour, sexual exploitation, organ trafficking, domestic servitude, and other criminal activity.

## Legislative and Policy Approaches

Ending human trafficking and modern slavery is a duty for all governments. These crimes highlight a collective failure to protect the vulnerable. Impunity, no less than profit, attracts traffickers. Ensuring that crimes do not pay and increasing sanctions will lead to change. Over the past century, a range of legal instruments, conventions and protocols have been introduced, but none have proven truly effective.<sup>[4]</sup>

---

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

<sup>[3]</sup> Thousands of NGO organisations work globally against human trafficking and modern slavery, providing victim support, advocacy, legislative development, investigations, and business accountability. The business and finance sector also raises awareness and promotes actions against trafficking and slavery. The UN Guiding Principles for Business offer voluntary standards, and the International Standards Organisation and British Standards Organisation are developing national and international standards to address human trafficking.

<sup>[4]</sup> These include the Slavery Convention of 1927; Forced Labour Convention of 1930; Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Article 4); Slavery Convention of 1956 (includes forced marriage as a form of slavery); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957; UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989; Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999; Optional Protocol on Child Prostitution and Child Pornography of 2000; Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 2000; UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children of 2000 (informally known as the Palermo Protocol); US Trafficked Victims Protection Act 2000 (includes TIP report); Council of Europe Convention 2008; EU Directive 2011; ILO Optional Forced Labour Protocol 2014.

Endorsement and support are also provided by UN agencies and institutions including: UNODC (Lead agency); ILO; IOM; UNHCR; UNICEF; WHO; UNPK; UNITAR; UNGA; and UNSC.

Most nations base their legislation on the Palermo Protocol of 2000.<sup>[5]</sup> In the UN, 180 member states have ratified the Protocol and have enacted various laws or policies to implement it. In Europe, for example, the protocol is regionally reinforced by the EU Directive and the Council of Europe Convention on human trafficking.<sup>[6]</sup>

Annex two of the Palermo Protocol declares:

- *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean 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;*

This definition encourages nations to introduce legislation covering all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery. It does not require physical movement or the crossing of a border. It includes abuse of power towards those in a position of vulnerability; how consent is gained is irrelevant. The wording ‘for the purpose of’ means that a crime is committed before actual exploitation has occurred. Ongoing failure to enforce legislation and policies invites impunity by criminals. Their lucrative crimes have become integrated into global socio-political and economic norms. This leaves 1.6 billion people who live in poverty vulnerable, and means that victims have little hope for justice even in nations with strong legal systems.

## The G20 Role

Nations and the global community have committed to eliminating human trafficking and modern slavery. Much can be done quickly to enhance prevention

efforts and protect vulnerable individuals and their communities. But addressing human trafficking and modern slavery solely as violations of human rights can impede the development of effective prevention structures. These are dreadful crimes perpetrated on a global scale. Like other serious offences, laws must be enforced. Perpetrators, whether individuals or corporations, must be held accountable before the criminal justice system. Current efforts in this regard are often project-based, focused on hot spots and supported only by short-term funding, rather than being integrated into national or regional systems that are resourced appropriately.

The G20 can drive change by building political will and increasing funding for effective prevention and response to human trafficking and modern slavery. The key is for the G20 community to commit **US\$30 billion per year by 2030** to this effort. Other areas suggested for priority attention include but are not limited to:

- Early intervention and deterrence in the crime planning stages are crucial. These crimes involve money laundering and corruption, and require enhanced governance in the business and finance sectors.
- Visibly enforcing legislative frameworks for corporate prosecutions will shift perspectives on culpability and liability, reducing criminals’ impunity.
- Pursuing criminal proceeds with a focus on victim reparations ensures those affected benefit from seized assets.
- Targeting those who benefit from enabling exploitation through transport, accommodation, and purchase of sexual services is an approach that could be applied to all forms of exploitation.
- Supporting worker-driven responsibility strategies.
- Expanding resources for elements of civil society engaged in battling human trafficking and modern slavery will sustain a needed focus on victim support.
- Improving corporate governance, risk management and standards of practice to identify risk to vulnerable people and prevent exploitation in global supply chains.

---

<sup>[5]</sup> It is formally known as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

<sup>[6]</sup> Even in Europe where the Strasbourg Human Rights Court (ECtHR) has set precedence on nation’s responsibilities, and in the UK where the High Court and Supreme Court have provided clarity on the seriousness of human trafficking and modern slavery, these crimes continue to increase and victim support remains poor.

## IF20 Working Group on Human Trafficking

For the past decade, the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) has worked to develop a voice for global faith communities in the context of G20 policy deliberations. The IF20 connects faith actors, strategic leaders, and policymakers, providing frontline insights to G20 Leaders. In the context of human trafficking and modern slavery, it seeks to offer policy recommendations for prevention, better victim services, reparations, and effective criminal justice interventions.

To strengthen human dignity and combat exploitation, the IF20 has succeeded in having human trafficking and modern slavery included in the G20 Leaders Declaration since 2018. The time has passed for awareness raising. Action is now needed to recognise these acts as serious crimes, implement systemic prevention, enhance professionalism, target criminal profits, ensure offenders face justice, and provide support and reparation for victims.

To give substance to these goals, the IF20 has partnered with Praeveni Global to form a Human Trafficking Working Group (HTWG). The HTWG will identify, present, and advocate for effective public policies that help prevent and respond to the phenomenon of human trafficking and modern slavery. It will leverage the G20 and IF20 platforms to promote its findings and align its research with the G20's structures and capabilities.

The HTWG, led by Praeveni Global, will focus its initial efforts on the '**30 by 30**' campaign.<sup>[7]</sup> The campaign urges G20 members collectively to allocate **US\$30 billion annually by 2030** to support efforts to combat human trafficking and modern slavery and their effects. It will urge G20 governments to fully fund their agencies and action plans, implementing measures that will honour national and international commitments made over the past century. At a key moment in time, the initiative will demonstrate G20 leadership in making the global economy more sustainable, more humane, and more equitable.

## The G20 Annual Index

The other focus of the HTWG is to develop policy recommendations for spending the US\$30 billion in the most effective way possible. Praeveni Global will begin this work by creating an annual Index of the funding allocations made by G20 governments to combat human trafficking and modern slavery. Currently, there is no reliable or comprehensive database to indicate the level of global expenditures for this effort.

Praeveni Global's Annual Index will be updated each year and presented to the G20 Leaders' Summit. The first Index will be released at the G20 Social and Leaders' Summit in Pretoria, November 2025.<sup>[8]</sup>

## The Role of Religious Organisations

Religion occupies a vital place in efforts to address the horrors of human trafficking and modern slavery. For victims, first and foremost, religious faith provides a haven. It represents a place of safety and protection for dignity and self-respect, when everything else they are experiencing seeks to diminish them. It is an active, essential means that empowers victims, past and present, identified and still unknown, to attempt to deal with the trauma these crimes inflict.<sup>[9]</sup>

For several decades, human trafficking and modern slavery have been a priority among the hundreds of faith-based projects and networks that operate globally. Religious entities have prioritised the issue of human trafficking and modern slavery highly, and endeavour to engage with global leadership on the matter.

Active groups within the faith community have unique frontline resources that make them familiar with both victims and traffickers. The work of these groups at the forefront is vital, particularly for victim care, and it merits continued support. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, the crime of human trafficking and modern slavery remains the second most profitable illicit activity worldwide. There is an urgent need for governments to prioritise the issue by increasing funding, improving oversight, and developing the political will needed to combat these crimes on a global basis.

---

<sup>[7]</sup> <https://www.praeveniglobal.org/>

<sup>[8]</sup> <https://www.praeveniglobal.org/annual-index>

<sup>[9]</sup> Forced Migration: Trauma, Faith, and Resilience, Giovanna Ginesini, Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2018), Journal of the North America Associations of Christians in Social Work

# Conclusion

Without the increased funding and political commitment described above, the global crimes of human trafficking and modern slavery and the criminal profits they generate will continue to grow apace. A collective investment by G20 nations of **\$30 billion annually by 2030**, used to develop and implement effective policy, can change that future. Criminal assets can be identified and diverted to pay wages, invest in communities, and build ethical businesses among the world's most vulnerable populations, thereby reducing reliance on international aid funding.

As believers in faith and the fundamental dignity of every human being, the IF20 and Praeveni Global call on the G20 governments to take effective steps to eradicate and prevent these crimes. To address this challenge, trust in international conventions, national legislation and other instruments is vital. But more compelling is the injunction found in biblical scripture and reflected in every faith tradition around the world:

*"Do to others as you would have them do to you."*

We recognise the mammoth challenge it will be to defeat human trafficking and modern slavery, but we also believe in the deeply moral significance of the effort. The leverage, financial capability, and political will of the G20 will provide the best platform possible to bring human dignity to settings where it is sorely missing: workers will reap the benefits of their work, women will no longer be used as instruments of pleasure, and children will receive an education and enjoy their childhood.

Such is the opportunity we have, the privilege and duty, to create a better world for many generations to come.

## CONTACT

[www.praeveniglobal.org](http://www.praeveniglobal.org)  
[info@praeveniglobal.org](mailto:info@praeveniglobal.org)

---