

## Global Experts Unite to Combat Modern Slavery's \$236 Billion Shadow Economy

*NEW YORK, July 29, 2024* — In a world where modern slavery continues to thrive despite decades of international efforts, the Human Trafficking Working Group of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) is taking action. The group, led by former UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner Kevin Hyland OBE, is convening a groundbreaking webinar that brings together an unprecedented panel of experts from law, religion, and corporate accountability. Their mission: to confront the alarming rise of forced labor and human trafficking, industries that have shockingly ballooned from a \$32 billion to a \$236 billion shadow economy in less than two decades.

In a statement, webinar organizers highlighted the alarming increase in forced labor and human trafficking over the past 25 years, despite international efforts to combat these issues. They emphasized the urgent need to reassess current strategies and develop more effective approaches to protect vulnerable populations.

"In 2008, the ILO estimated that out of 12.4 million people in forced labour, 2.5 million were trafficked accounting for approximately US \$32 billion in profits. Today, the estimate is 27.6 million in all forms of forced labour accounting for \$236 billion in profits," the organizers said. "These huge increases strongly indicate that strategies to protect the vulnerable and combat-forced labour and trafficking have not been effective."

Hyland, who will moderate the webinar, underscored the importance of a coordinated global response to this growing crisis:

"I believe that G20 nations should collectively be investing US\$30 billion every year in human trafficking prevention and responses by 2030," he said. "This crime generates at least US\$150 billion every year. If the 30 by 30 is effective, it could actually generate income and be cost neutral."

Highlighting the profound personal impact of human trafficking, Hyland shared a poignant example from his experience:

"I have personally seen a 13-year old girl imprisoned as an adult. She had a forged passport for a 27 year old when being moved from the UK to France to be sold into prostitution. Her appearance was not that of a 27 year old; she was even a young looking 13 year old. Yet she ended up in prison. This is actually disgraceful."

The webinar, titled "Preventing Modern Slavery - Future Policy and Practice Challenges," aims to bring together experts in practice and faith to discuss lessons learned from the past decade and explore necessary changes to substantially improve prevention and protection efforts.

Topics covered by the webinar will include:

- The evolution of forced labor and human trafficking since the Palermo Protocol and ILO Forced Labour Convention
- Analysis of successful strategies in combating modern slavery
- Identification of gaps in current prevention and protection measures
- The role of faith-based organizations in addressing modern slavery
- Innovative approaches to policy and practice for the coming decade

The virtual meeting on preventing modern slavery will take place on July 29, 2024 at 12 p.m. EDT.

Register for the free webinar at [https://bit.ly/prevent\\_modern\\_slavery](https://bit.ly/prevent_modern_slavery)

Speakers will include:

- **The Reverend Sarah Duggin** - Episcopal priest and Associate Professor of Law at The Catholic University of America, with expertise in corporate social responsibility and business and human rights
- **The Right Reverend Dr. Alastair Redfern** - Former Bishop of Derby and member of the House of Lords, who played a key role in the passage of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015
- **Duncan Jepson** - Former founder of Liberty Shared, recognized for groundbreaking investigations into forced labor in global supply chains
- **Reverend David Schilling** - Senior Advisor at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, with extensive experience in engaging corporations on human rights in global supply chains
- **Kevin Hyland OBE** - Former UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, chair of the IF20 Human Trafficking Working Group, and Senior Special Advisor to the Santa Marta Group. With over 30 years of experience in law enforcement, including leading London's Human Trafficking Unit, he has been at the forefront of global efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking.

### **About the G20 Process**

The Group of Twenty, or G20, is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, bringing together the leaders of Earth's most prosperous economies. Collectively, G20 members represent around 80 percent of the world's economic output, two-thirds of the global population and three-quarters of international trade. Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues as well as broader humanitarian issues targeted by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

### **About the G20 Interfaith Forum**

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives to help shape the overall G20 agenda. It draws on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. Through its extensive network of networks, it helps prioritize key global policy goals and point toward practical means of implementation at every level of society.

*For more information, please visit [www.g20interfaith.org](http://www.g20interfaith.org)*

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