

The Global Slave Trade:

A Cause for Our Time

by International Justice Mission

Ted Haddock/International Justice Mission

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. – Psalm 10:17, 18

As Christians, we worship a God who is passionate to rescue the oppressed. He has given us a biblical mandate to “seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1:17). According to a National Geographic Magazine article published in September 2003, “there are more slaves today than were seized from Africa in four centuries

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of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The modern commerce in humans rivals illegal drug trafficking in its global reach—and in the destruction of lives.” Two common forms of modern-day slavery are forced labor and forced prostitution. In both situations, people profit by inflicting horrific abuse on the vulnerable. For victims of slavery, rescue is not an abstract concept but an urgent and desperate need.

At International Justice Mission, we have the joy of seeing God rescue people out of slavery into a life of freedom. International Justice Mission is a collection of lawyers, criminal investigators and trauma social workers who take on individual cases of abuse and oppression referred by ministries and relief and development workers serving among the poor. They bring IJM cases

International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression.

of violence, slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of oppression. IJM then investigates these cases to bring about four things: rescue and relief for the victims; provision of aftercare to meet their broad and complicated needs; pursuit of justice for the perpetrators; and finally, structural prevention to keep the abuses from happening again.



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A young slave boy carries heavy bricks to be laid in the sun to dry.

Forced Labor Slavery:

Forced labor slavery is the continual labor of an individual forced to work by mental or physical threat. Forced labor slaves are owned by an employer to whom the slave or slave's family is indebted. They are forced to work long hours, often seven days a week, for meager wages, if any, attempting to pay back a debt that increases at exorbitant interest rates. In reality, there is no

way to repay the debt and the laborer becomes essentially a slave for life. Many bonded slaves are children who are beaten and abused if they do not fulfill the extreme expectations of the owner. National Geographic estimates that there are approximately 27 million slaves in the world today. In 2005, the U.S. State Department reported that cases of forced labor were documented in 112 countries worldwide.

IJM investigates and documents cases of forced labor slavery, then works with local law enforcement within the country's legal system to emancipate slaves and bring slaveholders to justice. IJM also works to secure quality aftercare for the victims.

Nagaraj grew up in a brick factory, working as a slave since the age of 12. For him, the worst part was seeing his own children grow up as another man's property. Forbidden to go to school, Nagaraj's children worked exhausting hours alongside other laborers in the searing heat of the kiln. IJM and local authorities raided the brick factory in 2004, resulting in release certificates for 78 people who had been held as slaves. Together with their families, 138 men, women and children were released from the kiln. Nagaraj now owns and operates his own brick kiln, and his children are free to go to school.

Forced Prostitution:

Around the world, many women and children are forced into prostitution or sexual slavery, often at the hands of sex traffickers or brothel owners who exploit them for financial gain. Traffickers sell individuals to make a profit in what has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise. Sex trafficking often consists of the movement of persons across or within borders, but may not entail actual physical displacement. UNICEF estimates that nearly two million children are used in the commercial sex trade, where they routinely face sexual and physical violence. According to the U.S. State Department's 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report, the illegal industry of worldwide human trafficking generates about \$9.5 billion dollars each year.

IJM investigators spend thousands of hours infiltrating brothels and uncovering the world of sexual exploitation. IJM staff then work with local authorities to conduct raids and rescue victims from this horrific nightmare, placing them in safe homes where they receive aftercare and begin new lives of freedom. IJM lawyers work to secure the conviction and sentencing of brothel keepers and other perpetrators involved in sex trafficking. These convictions help to deter future perpetrators and change the system that traffics women and girls for sexual exploitation.

When Manna was 14, she ran away from her abusive brother and sought refuge with a woman who promised her a job selling fabric. The woman offered Manna a place to stay for the night but, when Manna woke up the next morning, she found herself in a brothel, forced to sell her body instead of fabric. When Manna refused customers, the brothel keeper pulled her hair, punched her and beat her repeatedly until she gave in to the men who had come to rape her. After two years, Manna and three other young girls were rescued from the brothel by IJM investigators and local authorities. Manna now lives in freedom in an aftercare home, while IJM legal casework led to the conviction and sentencing of her brothel keeper to five years of rigorous imprisonment.

International Justice

Mission:

International Justice Mission began operations in 1997 when a group of human rights professionals, lawyers and public officials conducted a study to determine the specific needs for public justice advocacy in the developing world. Since then, IJM has established thirteen operational field offices located in Bolivia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Kenya, the Philippines, South Asia, Thailand, Uganda, Rwanda and Zambia. The incredible suffering of those for whom the law is not enforced is often prevalent in poorer regions where the lack of resources heightens the occurrence of injustice.

You can join International Justice Mission in the fight against injustice by being an agent of change. There are many outlets for people to make significant contributions to the fight against injustice. IJM recognizes the potential of all people to be effective leaders in the fight for

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Young women being rescued from a brothel in South Asia wait to be escorted to safety.

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Freed slave children share a cup of tea with IJM president Gary Haugen. Many of these children were forced to roll cigarettes for 12 hours a day with only a short break for lunch.

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international human rights and aims to build a justice generation. Below is a list of some suggested ways to get involved.

What can you do?

Expose: Educate yourself and others about the biblical mandate to seek justice (begin with Isaiah 1:17 and Micah 6:8).

Explore: Investigate issues of injustice on short-term missions and find ways to seek justice by partnering with the local church.

Engage: Pray for the work of justice, pay for the rescue the poor cannot afford, protect the vulnerable and pursue a career in human rights.

Report a case: Since many *Mission Frontiers* readers may work among the poor in the developing world,

situations of injustice are probably familiar to many of you. If you know of a specific case of illegal abuse of power in your country, visit our Web site www.ijm.org to report a case.

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How can you partner with IJM in prayer?

You can sign up to become a regular prayer partner with IJM and receive weekly e-mails highlighting specific prayer requests for the work of justice. Visit www.ijm.org to sign up for this ministry. Some general requests for IJM's work are listed below:

- Please ask God to inspire and equip local government authorities to combat slavery.
- Please pray for the Christian community in the areas of the world where slavery is rampant. Ask God to bless the local Body of Christ with conviction, wisdom and courage so that they might intervene to stop this violence.
- Please ask God to comfort all who are held in slavery and awaiting rescue. Please also pray for the full restoration of those who have been rescued.
- Please ask God to raise up qualified Christian professionals to join IJM or to start their own organization to rescue people from slavery.
- Please pray that God will bring awareness to the Body of Christ around the world concerning modern-day slavery, the biblical mandate for Christians to seek justice and the need for financial resources to pay for the rescue the poor can not afford. 🌐



RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GLOBAL SLAVE TRADE

Human Trafficking Potential Multi-media Resources:

- “Lives for Sale”- About trafficking in Latin America
- “Born into Brothels”-About children of prostitutes in India. Available from vitalvoices.org

The following are available from vitalvoices.org

- “Anonymously Yours”-About sex trafficking in Myanmar
- “The Day My God Died”-About child trafficking in India
- “Dying to Leave”-About the big-picture of human trafficking (2004 film)
- “Four Years in Hell”-Trafficking in Nepal
- “A Question of Rights”-Trafficking in a former Soviet Republic
- “Highway to Hell”-Trafficking in Nepal
- “Sacrifice”-Trafficking in Burma and Thailand, “Trading Women”- Overview of women in sex trade and trafficking, narrated by Angelina Jolie
- “Sex Slaves”-Frontline documentary overview of the problem
- “Children for Sale”-Dateline documentary about child trafficking
- “Fields of Mudan”-2006 docudrama about China and sex slavery

Faith-based NGOs:

- The Amazing Change Campaign (www.theamazingchange.com)
- The Asha Forum (www.asha.viva.org)
- Food for the Hungry (www.fh.org)
- International Justice Mission (www.ijm.org)
- Just Food, Inc. (www.justfoodinc.org)

- Justice for Children International (www.jfci.org)
- The Garden of Hope (www.goh.org.tw/english)

Secular NGOs:

- American Anti-Slavery Group (<http://iabolish.com>)
- Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
- Anti-Slavery International (www.antislavery.org)
- Free The Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net)
- Future Group (www.tfg.webmaster.web.aplus.net)
- Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
- www.humantrafficking.org
- Vital Voices: Global Partnership (www.vitalvoices.org)

Documents/Books/Articles:

More Information on the following items may be obtained by searching the Web

- “Falling Short of the Mark: An International Study on the Treatment of Human Trafficking Victims”
- “Not for Sale” by David Batstone, HarperCollins Publishers
- “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children”
- “Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air”
- “Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings”
- “Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000”
- “Trafficking in Persons Report”
- “The New Global Slave Trade” by Ethan B. Kapstein, Foreign Affairs

FAST FACTS on the Global Slave Trade provided by

The American Anti-Slavery Group at iabolish.com • 1-800-884-0719

- Slavery today is defined as forced labor without pay under threat of violence.
- 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked internationally every year. Approximately 80% of them are women and children.
- Slavery was officially abolished worldwide at the 1927 Slavery Convention, yet it continues to thrive thanks to the complicity of some governments and the ignorance of much of the world.
- In the 2000 Refugee Report, “Trafficking in Women and Children: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery,” former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright calls human trafficking “the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world.”
- Slavery is an extremely profitable, international industry. Experts estimate trafficking in the US yields \$9 billion every year. Around the world, trafficking in women for commercial sex purposes nets \$6 billion per year. The trade of human flesh is so lucrative that authorities complain that even as they close in on one smuggling ring in the US, another one pops up.
- The four most common types of slavery are: chattel slavery, debt bondage, forced labor, and sexual slavery.