

Human Slavery

Choose to respect non-human and human lives

Human trafficking, or slavery, is the third-largest and fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the world, exceeded only by drugs and arms. Slavery is defined as all cases in which the use of force, fraud, or coercion is used to get people to work or have sex against their will. Human trafficking does not require humans to be smuggled or transported.

Facts

Approximately 27 million people are affected by global slavery. In addition to American citizens forced into slavery, over 14 thousand people are brought into the U.S. to be used as slaves. The low number of convictions involving human trafficking in the U.S. doesn't begin to make a dent in trafficking. While sex slavery is more common than other forms of forced labor, nearly every aspect of commerce—from industry and agriculture to nannies and housekeepers—has been infiltrated by trafficking.

Sex slavery

Sex slavery represents the largest category of forced labor in America. The average age of entry for prostitution is 12-14 years. Sex traffickers, commonly known as “pimps,” control 75% of minors by targeting vulnerable children, luring them away with false promises, and then using violence and psychological intimidation to hold them. The internet is a frequent recruiting tool. Other vulnerable victims are shelter and street youths, including runaways, a third of whom are lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.

Agriculture

The commercial power of giant buyers and retailers, like Walmart (selling 19% of U.S. groceries) and Yum Brands (the world's largest fast-food company), squeeze growers and suppliers for the lowest prices. This pushes producers to find the cheapest possible labor. Many people serve as forced labor against their will in a modern-day version of slavery: terrorized by violent employers, watched by armed guards under conditions of near-incarceration, living in severely-inadequate, overcrowded spaces without proper sanitation. In Florida, it is not uncommon to find instances of workers chained to poles, locked in trucks, physically beaten, and cheated out of pay.

Domestic service

Both undocumented workers, as well as those with visas, are at risk for suffering from human rights violations, as happens to many of the thousands who come to America to work as live-in domestics. Workers involved in these situations are subjected to assault and battery, threats of harm, limited freedom of movement (locks, bars, confiscation of passports and travel documents, chains, threats against family members), health and safety issues, privacy invasions, psychological abuse, and more.

Sweatshops and factories

In American facilities as well as abroad, situations range from dangerous, inhumane conditions surrounded by oppression to outright captivity, in which the employees never venture outside. While the garment districts in New York City and Los Angeles are home to some of America's sweatshops, other industries including restaurants and hotels, landscaping, and construction, both in the cities and the suburbs, have expanded the use of sweatshops.

Slaughterhouse workers

Employees in slaughterhouses and other animal farming operations are often immigrants, people of color, and economically vulnerable people. These workers are subjected to unlivable wages and deplorable conditions, including filth from the animals' bodies, long hours, and line speeds that lead to worker injuries. Frequent injury and deaths result from common slaughterhouse conditions; including crushed limbs, loss of extremities, and a number of other serious accidents. Studies have shown that more than 27 workers a day suffer amputations or other injuries severe enough to require hospitalization.

How can you make a difference?

Shopping

When shopping, look for companies that prescreen and regularly monitor suppliers, build long-term relationships with suppliers, disclose their suppliers, and, preferably, make screening reports publicly available.

Raise awareness and encourage change

Broad-based public awareness campaigns; strict monitoring of industries vulnerable to forced labor; increased training of and coordination among law enforcement officials; and strong protections for survivors of forced labor are key steps needed to eliminate slavery.

Report

You can help stop human trafficking. Learn the signs and report to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 800.373.7888 or [HumanTraffickingHotline.org](https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org).



PO Box 2011
Southeastern, PA 19399

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