



AMERICAS
REPORT

THE
GLOBAL
SLAVERY
INDEX
2018

MODERN SLAVERY: A HIDDEN, EVERYDAY PROBLEM.



In 2016, 40.3 million people were living in modern slavery. It exists in every corner of the world, yet is seemingly invisible to most people. Unravelling this problem requires sustained vigilance and action. Take this fire in a clandestine textile workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina. These images are from 2006, yet the fight for justice for the five boys and a pregnant woman who were forced to work at this facility, and died in this fire, is still ongoing. In 2016, a court sentenced the workshop operator to 13 years prison for servitude and destruction of property causing death. This year, the court called for a deposition from the owner of the clothing brands, who also owns the property.

The fight to end modern slavery continues. We can, and must, do more.

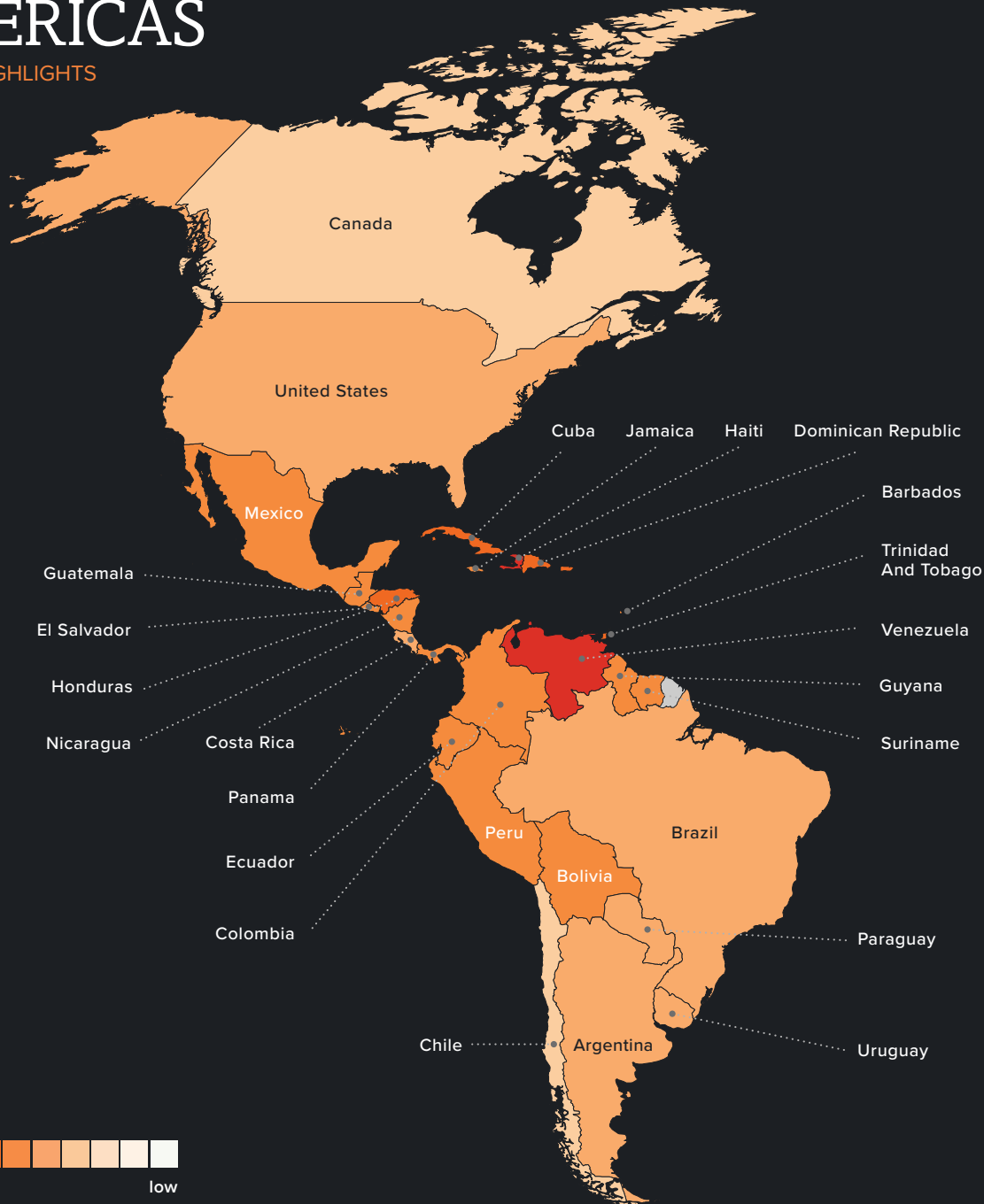


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AMERICAS

REGION HIGHLIGHTS



Estimated Number of People in Modern Slavery
1,950,000

Forced labour percentage
66%

Average Vulnerability Score



Regional Proportion of Global Estimate
5%

Forced marriage percentage
34%

Average Government Response Score

AAA AA A **BBB** BB **B** CCC CC C D

SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRESS



While no government has a fully comprehensive response to modern slavery, all countries in the Americas region have either maintained or improved their response. Most notably, the United States has retained its position as demonstrating the strongest response to modern slavery in the region, and the strongest response globally to prevent governments and business from sourcing goods or services linked to modern slavery. The United States is joined by Argentina and Chile, both of which have made improvements that result in the highest government response ratings in the Americas region of “BBB”. Other countries that have improved their response to modern slavery this year include Peru, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, and Bolivia.

In terms of tackling modern slavery in supply chains, the United States and Brazil are two countries in the Americas that have taken significant steps. With regard to public procurement, the United States has legislation, guidelines, and public policies for minimising the purchase and import of products tainted with forced labour and has provided specific training for its procurement officials. This is important given that the US annually imports an estimated US\$144 billion worth of products at-risk of being produced with modern slavery.¹ Similarly, Brazil showed commitment to keep forced labour out of government and business procurement through its “Dirty List,” which publicises a list of businesses that have been found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.² The Dirty List’s power to impede financing opportunities for non-compliant businesses continues to be critical,³ although there are questions regarding its ongoing utility as only a fraction of known businesses with supply chain issues are

represented on its current iteration.⁴ Brazil and the United States are also taking the most action more generally to respond to modern slavery. These countries tend to have lower vulnerability scores across all measures, which reflects effective governance across a broad range of areas, in particular a strong capacity to provide protections for vulnerable subgroups and ensure access to necessities such as food and water. Collectively, these factors mitigate risks of enslavement for citizens. However, high prevalence of modern slavery among these countries suggests that critical gaps remain around the implementation of existing legislation and policies and in tackling the root causes of exploitation. It is very likely that this reflects the reality that even in countries with seemingly strong systems, there are gaps in protections, with certain groups, such as irregular migrants, the homeless, or minorities, subject to intense and widespread discrimination, and typically less able to access protection.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Americas region encompasses countries that are destination, transit, and origin countries for modern slavery victims. Modern slavery is characterised by migrant flows within the region, with individuals moving from less developed areas to relatively more developed countries in search of work and economic opportunities.⁵ More restrictive immigration policies in the United States and as a broader regional trend have forced prospective migrants to undertake riskier methods of entering countries, such as trusting human smugglers to facilitate their entry.⁶ Some unaccompanied minors from Central America are vulnerable to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and extortion while attempting to enter the United States.⁷

These and other massive flows of migrant labour throughout the region contribute to the immense risk of exploitation that these populations face once at their destination.⁸ Additional risks are presented in informal or rural labour contexts where there is limited regulation or oversight and few labour inspections.⁹ Some agricultural seasonal, temporary, and undocumented workers are vulnerable to modern slavery in the United States,¹⁰ and sexual exploitation occurs throughout the region.¹¹ Child sex tourism in the Caribbean results in the exploitation of many children each year.¹² Child combatants have been used in protracted civil conflicts in Colombia resulting in long-lasting trauma for combatants and the need for intensive civil reintegration efforts.¹³ Forced marriage also remains a major concern for this region.¹⁴ Protracted economic and political instability in Venezuela has left its population vulnerable to modern slavery and has resulted in Venezuelan migrants moving to local regional economies such as Colombia, where they may become vulnerable to exploitation.¹⁵ Forced labour that occurs in global supply chains also remains an issue in this region and throughout the world.¹⁶

Estimating modern slavery in the Americas

In 2017, the Walk Free Foundation and the International Labour Organization (ILO), together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), produced the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, which estimated that 40.3 million people were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2016. Of these, an estimated 1.9 million men, women and children were living in modern slavery in the Americas. This region had a prevalence of 1.9 people in modern slavery for every 1,000 people in the region. Although these are the most reliable estimates of modern slavery to date, they should be interpreted cautiously and considered very conservative, given the gaps and limitations of data generally and for this region in particular.

The current Global Estimates of Modern Slavery do not cover all forms of modern slavery; forms such as trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, child soldiers, or child marriage that could also constitute modern slavery cannot be adequately measured at this stage. Further, there are gaps in survey coverage at the sub-regional level that may impact on the regional estimates produced in the Global Estimates. For example, there are no surveys conducted in North America where household surveys are not considered an effective approach to measuring modern slavery.

Key findings from the Global Slavery Index

In the Americas region, there are two main trends that arise from an analysis of the regional and national estimates of prevalence, measures of vulnerability, and assessment of government responses.

First, the protection of migrant and undocumented labourers is a major concern for this region. Within the Americas region, Venezuela, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba are the countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery. The United States, Brazil, and Mexico have the highest absolute numbers – together they account for over half (57 percent) of the victims, and 66.4 percent of the population,¹⁷ in this region. Several countries in the region have experienced high levels of immigration or emigration of undocumented migrants in recent years. Political crisis and economic collapse has seen a rise in the exodus of Venezuelan nationals to 66,000 a year in 2015.¹⁸ The Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba have among the largest diaspora in absolute terms in the Caribbean region, accounting for over a million emigrants each.¹⁹ A significant number of Haitian migrants work informally in the Dominican Republic with estimates ranging from one million to 1.5 million individuals; any figure is an estimate, with only a small proportion of Haitians registered and holding a work permit.²⁰ Many Dominicans move to the United States; while almost a million live legally, there are estimates of a further 100-300,000 undocumented Dominican migrants.²¹ By 2015, the total number of migrants from the Americas living in the United States had reached 22.8 million.²² Brazil and Mexico have shown declines in immigration rates in recent years with immigration rates of 0.07 percent per year and with a six percent decline of migration to Mexico between 2010 and 2015.²³ Brazil has also attempted in recent years to regularise the status of South American and Haitian migrants through its National Immigration Council (CNIg).²⁴ However, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico have seen increases of immigrants from Asia in recent years,²⁵ while Mexico continues to be a significant transit country in the region, with an estimated 377,000 Central American migrants crossing Mexico in 2015.²⁶

The role that migration plays in compounding vulnerability to modern slavery is widely recognised and reflected in the Walk Free Foundation's vulnerability data. A regional analysis of vulnerability measures suggests there is a higher risk of modern slavery in the Americas than is evident in the prevalence data. While having the second lowest vulnerability score (41 percent) globally, vulnerability related to inequality was highest in the Americas in comparison to all other regions. This reflects increasing income inequality, significant problems associated with violent crime, and lower confidence in judicial systems, all of which can disproportionately affect migrants. Haiti, Venezuela, and

Mexico scored highly across all measures of vulnerability, with Haiti scoring highest on disenfranchised groups and lack of basic needs, which also shows the ongoing effects of the 2010 earthquake and 2016 Hurricane Matthew and the continued vulnerability of its population to exploitation. Mexico and Colombia also scored highly on measures of conflict; the link between conflict, displacement and modern slavery is well documented.²⁷ Vulnerability scores in the region ranged from a high vulnerability score of 70 percent in Haiti to a relatively low vulnerability score of 10 percent in Canada.

High levels of vulnerability related to migration are reflected in the government response data. Cuba, Suriname, and Venezuela score poorly on all measures of a strong government response to modern slavery (CC ratings) in comparison to the regional average (B rating). The political crisis in Venezuela, for example, has led to a breakdown in normal government functions, which has led to more Venezuelan citizens migrating overseas and seeking asylum in Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Argentina, and Chile.²⁸ While protections for migrants exist in legislation across

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*The protection
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concern for the
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the region, these are generally limited in their implementation. Twenty-two of the 27 countries included in the Americas region in the Global Slavery Index have labour laws that cover all workers, including migrant workers and those in the informal economy, such as in domestic work and the fishing and construction sectors. However, only 15 of 27 countries regularly conduct labour inspections in the informal economy to identify cases of modern slavery. Despite having the strongest response in the region,

and one of the strongest responses globally, the United States (BBB rating) has excluded domestic workers from laws allowing them to unionise and develop protections for working in the private home of a family. Only Barbados, Brazil, and Honduras have implemented laws to ensure that migrant workers do not pay recruitment fees and that these are instead covered by employers. Canada and the United States have regulations that prohibit recruitment fees from being charged to the employee, but the provision is not included in federal legislation in either country. These limited protections allow migrant workers to slip through safety nets, thus increasing their vulnerability to modern slavery.

Secondly, additional work must be done to address modern slavery in supply chains. The products and services produced as a result of the exploited labour of those in the Americas and further afield permeate global supply chains. Very little action has been taken in the Americas to combat the forced labour that ends up in global supply chains, with only four countries, the United States, Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia, taking any action at all. Bolivia and Paraguay have implemented policies to ensure that goods are not produced by child labour, such as the Bolivian "Triple Seal" certification, which is awarded to companies that have reduced the use of child labour, discrimination, and forced labour in the production of goods. In 2014, the seal had only been awarded to sugarcane products.²⁹

G20 countries, encompassing the world's strongest economies, are in a unique position to combat forced labour in supply chains by holding businesses and governments to account for any exploitation that occurs within their direct supply chains and those of their suppliers. The five G20 countries in the region, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and the United States, collectively import US\$172 billion per annum of products at risk of being produced with modern slavery. However, government response data reveals that of these five G20 countries, only Brazil and the United States are currently taking action to respond to forced labour in the private or public economy. The United States and Brazil lead the way globally in engaging with business on addressing modern slavery. For example, the 2010 California Transparency in Supply Chains Act requires retailers and manufacturers to disclose their efforts combating modern slavery in their direct supply chains.³⁰ Similarly, despite recent criticisms,³¹ Brazil's "Dirty List" continues to publicise a list of business that have been found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.³²

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*Additional work must be
 done to address modern
 slavery in supply chains*

These governments are beginning to recognise that public procurement is also at high risk of modern slavery. In Brazil, the "Dirty List" is used by public sector companies to inform contracting decisions. Executive Order 13126 (1999) and Executive Order 13627 (2012) in the United States require mandatory reporting and due diligence from all federal contractors and subcontractors to ensure that government agencies do not procure goods and services tainted by child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking.³³ Guidelines and training on forced labour is provided to all procurement officials, while the closure of a loophole in the 1930 Tariff Act (19 U.S.C. § 1307) has meant that goods are regularly seized and inspected if they are believed to be produced with forced or child labour.³⁴ More remains to be done, however, with GSI data revealing that the largest proportion (by US\$ value) of products at risk of modern slavery across all G20 countries are imported into the United States (US\$144 billion per annum). The United States, and the Americas region as a whole, should do more to ensure that goods and services are not produced using forced labour.



Recommendations

- › **Governments must collectively and independently work to ensure protections for migrant workers regardless of whether their entry was legal and increase efforts to protect vulnerable populations,** particularly minors, from abuse and exploitation by exploiters. Governments should strengthen laws to protect labour rights in both the formal and informal economies, including the rights of migrant workers, domestic workers, and workers in the fishing and construction sectors, regardless of whether their entry was legal. Labour laws did not cover informal sectors in five countries. Where necessary, reform labour laws to provide basic safety nets for vulnerable migrant groups across this region, provide more Spanish-language legal resources in Northern America and Brazil, and conduct regular labour inspections in informal industries and rural contexts.
- › **Governments should establish effective mechanisms to monitor the recruitment and employment of migrant workers.** Origin countries should closely cooperate with the region's destination countries, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada, to track and monitor unscrupulous recruitment agencies. Laws or policies in labour sending countries must ensure that recruitment fees are paid by the employer and not the employee. Only three countries banned recruitment agencies from charging fees to job seekers.
- › **Governments must improve victim support for all victim populations regardless of gender and citizenship.** Governments must extend victim services throughout the Americas, and in particular for the 23 countries in the region where services were not available to all victims of modern slavery, with men, children, and migrants being the most regularly excluded groups. Provide assistance to all persons at risk of modern slavery and exploitation, especially in informal industries and rural contexts.
- › **Governments should introduce and implement legislation criminalising forced marriage and raise the age of marriage to 18 for men and women across all countries in the Americas.** Five countries have legislation in place fully criminalising forced marriage; governments should enact equivalent laws in the remaining 22 countries. In countries where legislation exists, its effective implementation should be ensured by governments providing ongoing training and resources for police, prosecutors, and judges. Mainstreaming women's rights into national action plans and supporting the empowerment of women and girls through education will also support the reduction of forced marriage.
- › **Governments within the region with the capacity to do more must lead efforts to eradicate modern slavery from the national economy** by implementing laws to minimise risk of modern slavery in public supply chains and to encourage business to practice due diligence. In particular, G20 countries in the Americas should enact federal legislation requiring mandatory reporting for all large businesses with regard to the presence of modern slavery in their supply chains. All countries in the region should establish, and in the case of the US, implement legislation requiring all government contractors and suppliers to take steps to detect and eliminate modern slavery from publicly funded supply chains.

Caracas, Venezuela, 23 July 2018

A woman walks in front of a closed store with a graffiti reading 'Hay Pan?' ('Is there bread?'). Amid the financial and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the country is expected to see hyperinflation reach epic proportions: a million percent a year by the end of 2018, the International Monetary Fund said on 23 July. Political crisis and economic collapse has seen a rise in the number of Venezuelan nationals fleeing to 66,000 a year in 2015. These individuals are heading to neighbouring countries Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Argentina, and Chile and can become vulnerable to modern slavery.

Photo credit: Juan Barreto/AFP/Getty Images.

ABOUT THE INDEX

Walk Free Foundation

Modern slavery is a complex and often hidden crime that crosses borders, sectors, and jurisdictions. The Walk Free Foundation believes that a strong multifaceted approach is needed to end modern slavery. This includes building a robust knowledge base to inform action, driving legislative change in key countries and harnessing the power of businesses and faiths. Through a combination of direct implementation, grassroots community engagement, and working in partnership with faiths, businesses, academics, NGOs, and governments around the world, the Walk Free Foundation believes we can end modern slavery.

The Walk Free Foundation provides the Secretariat for the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, and champions business sector engagement in this regional program. It is also advocating strongly for all leading global economies to enact laws to ensure all organisations are held accountable for taking proactive steps to remove modern slavery from their supply chains.

The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index has developed world leading research to provide measurement of the size and scale of modern slavery, as well as assess country-level vulnerability and governmental responses. Together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Walk Free Foundation developed the joint Global Estimates of Modern Slavery.

Alongside this, the Global Freedom Network is working to catalyse world faiths in the fight against modern slavery. The Walk Free Foundation is also scaling effective anti-slavery responses in partnership with the Freedom Fund and seed funded the global activist movement, Freedom United, whose community of eight million supporters are campaigning for change. The Walk Free Foundation continues to work with faiths, governments and NGOs throughout the world to agitate for change and support initiatives dedicated to the eradication of modern slavery in all its forms.

What is modern slavery?

FIGURE 1

Modern slavery is an umbrella term



Terminology

Countries use differing terminologies to describe modern forms of slavery. This includes how they describe slavery itself, but also other concepts such as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children.

In this report, *modern slavery* is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on the commonalities across these concepts. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power, or deception.

Refer to Appendix 1 in the 2018 Global Slavery Index for full terminology, available for download at www.globalslaveryindex.org.

About modern slavery

Modern slavery is a hidden crime that affects every country in the world. In the period between this Index and the last (published in 2016), modern slavery was found in many industries including garment manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, and in many contexts, from private homes to settlements for internally displaced people and refugees. Instances have been identified in Thai fishing, coal mining in North Korea, in the homes of diplomats in Australia, car-wash stations in the United Kingdom, cocoa agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire, and cattle ranching in Brazil, just to name a few examples.

Modern slavery impacts on all of us, from the food we consume to the goods we purchase. It is everyone's responsibility to address and eliminate this crime everywhere it occurs.

Nearly every country in the world has committed to eradicate modern slavery through their national legislation and policies. Governments have a central role to play by enacting legislation, providing safety nets to their populations, and pursuing criminals who participate in this heinous crime. As no single actor can address all these challenges, governments need the support and engagement of the private sector, civil society, and the community at large.

The Index

The Global Slavery Index is a tool for citizens, non-government organisations (NGOs), businesses, and governments to understand the size of the problem, existing responses, and contributing factors so that they can advocate for and build sound policies that will eradicate modern slavery.

All supporting data tables and methodology are available to download from the Global Slavery Index website: www.globalslaveryindex.org.

METHODOLOGY

Estimating prevalence

In 2017, the inaugural Global Estimates of Modern Slavery were produced by the ILO and the Walk Free Foundation in partnership with IOM³⁵. The regional estimates produced through this collaboration form the starting point for the national level estimates presented here for 167 countries.

These national estimates were calculated³⁶ using individual and country-level risk factors of modern slavery. The analysis draws on data from nationally representative surveys implemented through the Gallup World Poll, including a module on modern slavery in 48 countries, and data from the Global Slavery Index Vulnerability Model.

The final set of risk factors were selected from an exhaustive list of variables to optimally predict confirmed cases of forced labour and forced marriage. The model was then used to generate average predicted probabilities of modern slavery by country. The regional totals in the 2017 Global Estimate were then apportioned based on each country's average predicted probability of modern slavery. A final calculation accounting for state imposed forced labour was performed to reach the final estimated prevalence of all forms of modern slavery.

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part B of the Global Slavery Index, available for download at www.globalslaveryindex.org.

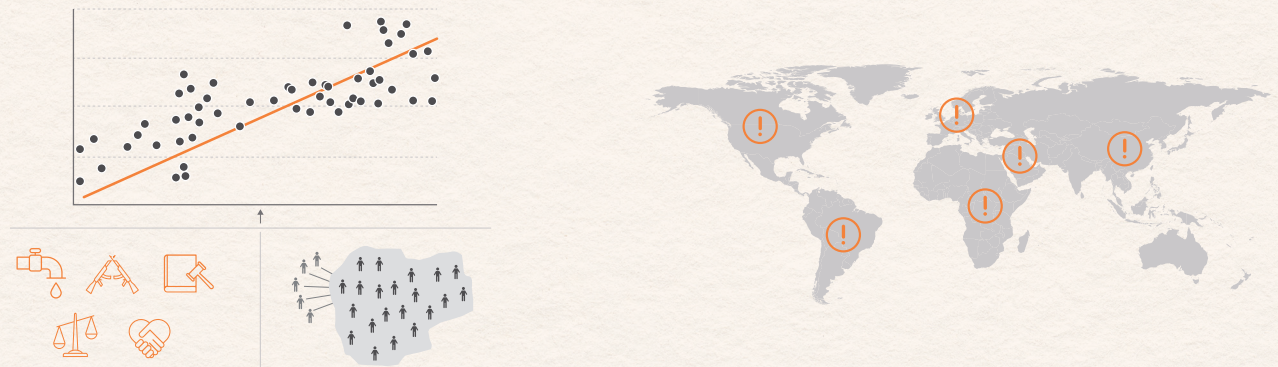


Interviewer for Gallup conducting an interview in Nepal.

Photo credit: Gallup.

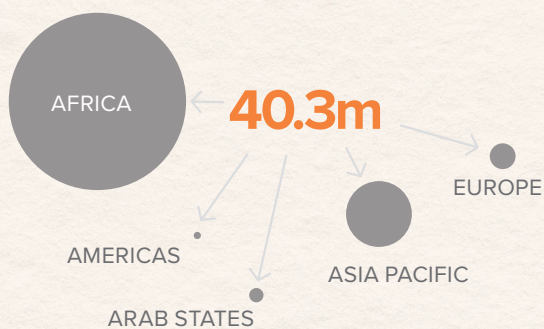
FIGURE 2

Estimating the prevalence of slavery at the national-level



1/ Individual and country-level risk factors were identified and then used to build a model that predicts modern slavery. This drew on data from the Global Slavery Index Vulnerability Model and nationally representative surveys.

2/ Individual predictions were aggregated into country-level risk scores.



3/ Regional-level population estimates of modern slavery from the 2017 Global Estimate were allocated to individual countries in the region, proportionate to each country's relative risk.



4/ The number of victims was then estimated by applying the country prevalence estimate to population data for each country and estimates of state imposed forced labour added to arrive at the final estimate of all forms of modern slavery.

Measuring vulnerability

The Global Slavery Index Vulnerability Model is built on statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery. The 2018 Vulnerability Model provides a risk score for 167 countries based on an analysis of data covering 23 risk variables across five major dimensions.

Refer to Appendix 2: Part A in the Global Slavery Index, available for download at www.globalslaveryindex.org.

FIGURE 3
Vulnerability Model 2018



Measuring government response

The Government Response Index provides a comparative assessment of the legal, policy, and programmatic actions that 181 governments are taking to respond to modern slavery. This is based on data collected on 104 indicators that are relevant to understanding how each government is tracking towards achieving five milestones:

- 1/ Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of slavery.
- 2/ Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery.
- 3/ Coordination occurs at the national and regional level, and governments are held to account for their response.
- 4/ Risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed.
- 5/ Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.

Refer to Appendix 2: Part C in the Global Slavery Index, available for download at www.globalslaveryindex.org.

FIGURE 4
Government Response Index 2018





LOGGING AND SLAVERY IN THE AMAZON: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BRAZIL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

André Campos | *Researcher, Reporter Brasil**



Logging is a major contributor of deforestation in the Americas and illegal extraction still occurs in an enormous share of the exploited areas. Much of these crimes take place on indigenous lands and within environmental protection territories, thus threatening the preservation of the Amazon's wildlife and the survival of many traditional communities.

This is a relatively well-known and well-documented reality. Certainly, much more exposed than the lives of the men behind the chainsaws, who make a living by filling up trucks with precious logs. These workers, often described as cold criminals, are often subjected to contemporary forms of slavery while laboring at the very bottom of a complex supply chain, with many global ramifications.

Since 1995, when the Brazilian government acknowledged before the United Nations the persistence of modern slavery in the country, timber extraction is one of the key economic sectors where the problem has been identified. According to data from the Ministry of Labor and the Catholic's Church Pastoral Land Commission, 931 extracting workers were rescued during federal inspections from 2003 to 2016. They surely account for a minor part of the problem, since many cases are never reported or inspected at all.

One of the reasons is that slave labor is almost always associated with illegal logging. For fear of being charged with environmental crimes, exploited victims rarely seek authorities.

But even when they do, inspectors must deal with sawmill owners' "counter-intelligence" expertise to avoid investigation. When they realise that inspectors or the police are arriving in a region, they even use radio communication to disperse groups working in extraction areas.

Inside the forest, men and women are subjected to a tough routine, including months of isolation in precarious shacks with dirty floors and no walls. Risk of snake bites, and no access to clean water or decent food are commonplace. The payment is calculated based on the amount extracted, which encourages exhausting working hours. It is no surprise that many serious accidents, including amputation and crushing deaths, are linked to worker fatigue.

Worker's testimonies also reveal situations where they are forced to remain on-site until the task is finished. Commonly they find themselves in isolated camps from where it is simply impossible to leave by your own means. Lack of payment after the job is done is also a common complaint – as well as death threats when people attempt to collect what they were owed by their employers.

Slavery hidden in wood exports

The sawmills who recruit these workers are usually small fish in a big business. Their role is to saw the trees into boards, planks or beams, which are then sold to larger Brazilian industries, which use this as raw material for producing higher value-added products – like decking. Much of this is sold overseas. Europe and the United States together account for more than half of the Amazon's timber exports. Trading companies in these countries distribute timber products to local retailers, furniture makers, and construction sites.

With so many middlemen between workers and the final buyer, cases of forced labor might easily remain hidden along the way. But an investigation from Repórter Brasil revealed how major multinationals are at risk of having products derived from forced labour on their shelves. These multinationals had bought wood products from traders supplied by a fragmented network of industries, including sawmills officially caught using modern slavery by Brazilian inspectors.³⁷

The global wood market has barely started to wake up to the problem. One first and basic step for dealing with it is developing traceability systems accounting for all the manufacturing steps of their products. This is particularly challenging in an industry operating largely under the shadows, where documentation fraud is widespread.

The illegal logging industry takes specific measures to ensure the timber they extract isn't traced back to where it was harvested. When market-valuable trees are cut down in indigenous lands or protected areas, the logs are taken to sawmills on trucks without license plates. At the sawmill, the illegal origin is "laundered" with handling documents that change the harvest location to legal sites. That's how not only environmental crimes, but also slavery, can be washed-out of global supply chains.

The Brazilian government dramatically fails to avoid this fraud on a large scale. From the companies' perspective, this means that a different approach to sourcing policies is needed. Necessary steps include an independent tracking process of extracting areas, as well as establishing labor standards capable of reaching all of the supply chain, including workers inside the forest. For this to become a reality, importers must go beyond simply relying on information provided by their immediate supplier.

() André Campos is a researcher from Repórter Brasil, a Brazilian NGO who investigates modern slavery in global supply chains*

Porto Velho, Brazil, 26 June 2017.

A man works in a sawmill in a deforested section of the Amazon rainforest near Porto Velho, Brazil. Deforestation, caused by human activity, is increasing in the Brazilian Amazon and rose 29 percent between August 2015 and July 2016. According to the National Institute for Space Research, close to two million acres of forest were destroyed during this timeframe amid a hard hitting recession in the country. Work not related to extractive and exploitative industries is limited in the region. Workers earn \$US21 per day at the pictured sawmill. Many others are subjected to modern slavery while labouring at the bottom of a complex global supply chain.

Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images.



CHILD LABOUR IN THE UNITED STATES: ABUSE PERSISTS DESPITE RECENT EFFORTS

Davina Durgana | Senior Researcher, Walk Free Foundation

On any given day in 2016, there were 24.9 million people in forced labour in the world. Of these, 16 million were victims of forced labour exploitation in sectors such as agriculture/fishing, construction, domestic work, and manufacturing.³⁸ Agriculture is a particularly risky industry as 11.3 percent of victims of forced labour worldwide were exploited in agriculture and the fishing industry.³⁹ Globally, 68 percent of victims of forced labour in agriculture, forestries, and fishing were male and 32 percent were female.⁴⁰ Forced labour prevalence in the Americas is a significant problem and represents 1.3 per 1,000 people.⁴¹

In the Americas region, there are several inherently vulnerable populations that comprise known victims of modern slavery, such as seasonal and temporary agricultural workers, international migrants, and undocumented migrants, situations in which children are even more endangered. The third largest number of international migrants globally was born in Latin America and the Caribbean (38 million).⁴² While there are many migration trends throughout the Americas, one notable country of destination is the United States. These migrant populations to the United States are especially vulnerable due to recent border control measures, including recent controversy over the separation and subsequent detention of at least 2,342 children from their parents during attempted border crossings by US border officials.⁴³

In 2017, the United States held the largest number of international migrants (50 million), which is 19 percent of the world's total international migrant population.⁴⁴ Many of these are seasonal and temporary agricultural workers who also face hazardous and exploitative working conditions.

Often, children of undocumented seasonal and temporary workers, who may or may not be US citizens themselves, are particularly vulnerable and involved in hazardous and exploitative labour. This is exacerbated because existing labour laws and protections for children are difficult to enforce if the populations are not easy to find and when the exact nature of the work conditions of the minors is difficult to ascertain,⁴⁵ such as on tobacco farms in the United States.⁴⁶

There were an estimated 1.3 million child labourers in tobacco fields in 2011.⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch has found that hundreds of thousands of children work in agriculture in the United States, often forgoing educational opportunities and requirements, fair wage payments and labour protections, and imperil their health and lives, while facing potential exploitation in modern slavery as they continue to work under exploitative conditions.⁴⁸ "Men, women, and children who cultivate tobacco experience long hours of stoop labour, harassment in work activities, abject poverty, staggering debt, exposure to nicotine and pesticides, and

poor health.”⁴⁹ Work on tobacco farms is considered to be dangerous for children due to the potential for acute nicotine poisoning from close proximity and handling of tobacco. Acute nicotine poisoning includes symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, headaches, loss of appetite, and sleeplessness.⁵⁰ This poisoning, also called “green tobacco sickness”, occurs when workers absorb nicotine through their skin while having contact with tobacco plants.⁵¹ In fact, in the United States, agriculture as an industry often involves vulnerable children without work authorisation or with limited English language skills due to limited oversight and regulation by the government, representing one of the most vulnerable groups in the Americas to labour exploitation.⁵²

While the tobacco companies benefitting from this child labour must be held accountable, there are many efforts that the United States government can and should also undertake to ensure the protection of minors in all hazardous fields. While comprehensive reform to US legislation regarding child labour on farms and in hazardous conditions is still necessary to ensure that their education and health are safeguarded, there are positive developments to protect minors from the dangers of tobacco farming. The Sustainable Tobacco Programme (STP) covers 180 tobacco leaf suppliers and five million smallholder farms in 52 countries.

Under this commitment and in compliance with the UK Modern Slavery Act, the British American Tobacco has recently complied with audits of their direct supply chains and risk assessments of indirect supply chains.⁵³ However, the challenge of removing child labourers from the tobacco industry is described as a “double burden”⁵⁴ both due to the labour issues involved, as well as the dangerous nature of this crop for children and others to handle.

Additionally, as more scrutiny is given to this issue in the United States, it appears that total numbers of child labourers in American tobacco fields has decreased but also increased in other areas with less available protections. This population is believed to have shifted from more developed countries such as Turkey, Brazil, and the United States, to Argentina, India, and Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2013.⁵⁵ Despite these changes, many child labourers still believe that child labour will persist as a major issue in tobacco farming in the United States. Former child labourer, Jacqueline Castillo, states, “You can barely spot us, because we’re really small and short...There’s still a lot of 7, 12, 13-year-olds working. I don’t think it’s ever going to change.”⁵⁶

Washington, DC, 15 May 2014.

Former child farm workers Celia (centre), 20, and Eric, 17 (right), recount their experiences harvesting tobacco in North Carolina during a news conference organized by Human Rights Watch at the US Capitol visitors center. Human Rights Watch published a study on child labour in US tobacco farming, highlighting the package of unique risks children face when working with tobacco, including nicotine poisoning, exposure to pesticides and physical injury.

Photo credit: Chip Somodevilla / Getty Images.



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN BRAZIL

Luciana Temer | Director President, Liberta Institute



The situation of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Brazil is very serious. We are the country with the second highest rates. And the impression is that no one knows this, because nobody talks about it.

In an effort to resolve the problem, the Brazilian Ministry of Human Rights has created a national free hotline to report human rights violations, including human rights abuses. The national hotline, “Dial 100”, (*Disque 100*) records cases of sexual exploitation in thousands of municipalities across Brazil. Cases occur in different contexts, such as big construction projects; criminal gangs and militias in urban slums; along highways; and within the coastal and Amazonian tourist areas.

Integrated into *Disque 100* is *Proteja Brasil*, a mobile application created by UNICEF and the government’s Human Rights Secretariat, which facilitates reporting of violations against children. It was launched as part of the “Convergence Agenda for the Promotion, Protection and Defense of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Major Events” with the aim of preventing the exploitation of children during sporting and other events.

Even so, there is a lack of in-depth research on the scale of the problem. Recent studies estimate that 500,000 children and adolescents are exploited per year. Most of them are between seven and fourteen years of age.

One of the best research reports we have is by the Federal Highway Police in partnership with Childhood Brazil, which is responsible for mapping the vulnerability points of the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents on federal highways.

Vulnerability mapping began in 2004 and since 2009, they have classified vulnerabilities at four levels: low to medium risk, high risk, and ultimately critical. From 2005 until today, this work has already removed 4,766 vulnerable children and adolescents from places of risk. Police actions are planned and carried out according to the degree of vulnerability, which determines the form and urgency of the responses.

The last edition of the study was conducted between 2017 and 2018 and identified 2,487 vulnerability points for sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, an increase of 20 percent over the previous report conducted in 2014.

This is one of the good initiatives supported by NGOs at the national, state, and local levels.

Another good example that we can mention is the initiative of some NGOs (Liberta Institute, Plan Internacional, Childhood Brazil, Abrinq Institute) that, together with the National Secretariat for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, joined forces to form a coalition a year ago to face the problem of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Each organisation with its expertise, works together to build national awareness campaigns, with the intention of making Brazil see how serious this problem is and, above all, make our society react to this tragic situation.

The big problem is that in a society with strong patriarchal values, sexual exploitation tends to be normalised and often victims are blamed for the situation in which they find themselves. These factors obviously result in a very low number of reported cases. There is also a tendency to distinguish between exploitation affecting younger victims, under 14, and adolescents aged 15 to 17 years of age. It is assumed that older victims are voluntarily involved in commercial sex.

A recent survey commissioned by the Liberta Institute shows us something very important. Almost all respondents know that paying to have sex with a 10-year-old or even 16-year-old is a crime seriously punished by criminal law.

However, 74 percent of those who saw something like this did not report it. These data confirm that Brazilians do not attach much importance to this crime. Probably for cultural reasons that naturalise the woman as a sexual object. And this also tells us that the last campaign whose slogan is: "Sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. You are not a client, you are a criminal", is on the right track.

Like other forms of sexual violence, the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is a criminal problem but, above all, a cultural problem, and cultural issues take time to change. But we believe that we have already begun the slow and difficult process of change here.

Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil, 8 May 2018

Adolescents live on the streets of the city and survive by engaging in prostitution. Reports to a national hotline operated by the National Ombudsman's Office for Human Rights reveal thousands of cases of sexual exploitation of children occurring across Brazil.

Photo credit: Ricardo Nogueira / Folhapres.

FORCED LABOUR IN ARGENTINA

Marina Sala | General Director and Georgina Introini, Public Relations Coordinator, *Fundación para la Democracia Internacional*

Slavery is abolished in most countries of the world but has not ceased to exist. At the moment, it is presented in more complex forms, more elusive to a superficial look, but equally cruel and degrading. That is why we seek to give greater visibility to this scourge, since although it happens around us, it seems to be invisible.

According to Forced Labour Convention No. 29, Article 2, of the International Labour Organization (ILO), “the term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. Argentina ratified this Convention in 1950 and in 2016 ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention.

Previously, in 2008 the National Congress approved Law 26,364 on Prevention and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to its Victims and amended it in 2012, through Law 26,842. The updated text defines trafficking in persons as the offer, recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation, either within the national territory, from or to other countries. Furthermore, the law also defines exploitation and it includes forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, different forms of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and removal of organs.

According to the National Rescue Programme for Victims of Human Trafficking, since the enactment of Law 26,364 until December 31st, 2017, 11,853 victims were rescued and assisted. Fifty-four percent of the victims had been subjected to labour exploitation.

In addition, 53 percent of the victims were foreigners and nine percent were minors.⁵⁷ It is important to highlight that there is no disaggregated information about the forms of labour exploitation these people were subjected to, nor on the companies responsible for it.

The report “Telephone reports about trafficking in persons. Analysis of the cases received through Line 145”⁵⁸, of 2016, indicates that 19 percent of the cases received from July 2015 to January 2016 corresponds to situations of trafficking for labour exploitation purposes and 45 percent refers to sexual exploitation purposes. Of that nineteen percent of complaints, 43 percent are connected to textile sweatshops, 31 percent to commercial establishments, and 17 percent to situations of exploitation in rural areas. However, there is no disaggregated information about the responsible companies or the type of establishment where people were subjected to exploitation. Nevertheless, as the report “Child labour, forced labour and quality youth employment in Argentina: contributions from the United Nations System 2000-2017”⁵⁹ shows, there is a clear difference between the number of complaints made in the urban and in the rural area. It does not mean that labour exploitation has greater occurrence and incidence in one space than in another, but simply that exploitation in urban areas is reported more regularly.

The 2017 report entitled “Trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour exploitation. Strategies for the detection and investigation of the crime”⁶⁰, quoted the report made by the same Office in 2014.⁶¹ This report shows there are not any people connected to large textile or agricultural companies among people accused of labour trafficking.

Finally, it is important to observe the lack of information on forced labour in Argentina. Because of that, it is necessary to mention the work done by the Ombudsman of the

City of Buenos Aires regarding the situation of textile sweatshops,⁶² where forced labour and trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour exploitation are present in the production process of the clothing industry. Besides, *Fundación para la Democracia Internacional* has begun to analyse the situation of tobacco workers in the North of Argentina in order to determine if there is forced labour or not in this sector of the economy.

Buenos Aires, 5 April 2006.

Bolivian citizens listen to a speech during a demonstration in the streets of the Flores neighbourhood in Buenos Aires, where a large part of the Bolivian community lives. The demonstrations were in response to a fire in a clandestine textile workshop that left five boys and a pregnant woman dead. While this image is from 2006, the fight for justice is still ongoing. In 2016, a court sentenced the workshop operator to 13 years prison for servitude and destruction of property causing death. This year, the court called for a deposition from the owner of the clothing brands, who also owns the property.

Photo credit: Daniel Garcia / AFP / Getty Images.

MODERN SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAS



Modern slavery in the Americas affects men, women, and children and manifests as forced labour, forced marriage, and forced sexual exploitation. Forced labour in South America and some parts of the Caribbean has been identified more often than in Central America.⁶³

Brazil has documented cases of forced labour on cattle ranches, logging and mining camps, and on soybean, corn, and cotton plantations.⁶⁴ Between 1995 and 2016, Brazil's Pastoral Commission of the Land reports that 16,816 people were rescued from forced labour on ranches, 11,635 people from sugarcane agriculture, 4,969 people from temporary crops agriculture, 4,784 people from permanent crops agriculture, 3,787 people from charcoal industries, 2,771 people from deforestation activities, 2,426 people from construction industries, and 344 from mining, among other industries.⁶⁵

Additionally, indigenous people in Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay are vulnerable to exploitation in the mahogany, brickmaking, and gold mining industries in Peru and Ecuador.⁶⁶ Gold mining in illegal mines in Peru often involves modern slavery.⁶⁷ Debt bondage is frequently employed to maintain control over these vulnerable populations and has also been used to coerce indigenous groups in nut harvesting and sugarcane production in Bolivia.⁶⁸ While general awareness of the issue is increasing and labour inspections are taking place in many of these industries, these inspections are not able to keep pace with the scale of the exploitation. In Brazil, for example, inspections are delayed by up to four or five months due to the remoteness of the location where the exploitation is taking place, and the decreasing number of mobile units of labour inspectors.⁶⁹ This can prevent the detection of modern slavery.

Domestic servitude is a difficult form of modern slavery to detect as victims are often held within the confines of private homes with limited interaction with the public.

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 nine million*

Between 1995 and 2010, the number of domestic workers in the Americas region increased by nine million, particularly due to the economic growth in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina and increased demand for domestic workers.⁷⁰ Those working in domestic work in Latin America and the Caribbean also represent 37 percent of the 52.6 million domestic workers globally.⁷¹ Domestic workers experience forced labour in the Americas whereby their passports are confiscated and threats of violence and actual assault are used to keep victims from leaving their situation.⁷² In Nicaragua, the International Organization for Migration identified cases of women trafficked to the western coast of the country and to Spain for domestic servitude.⁷³ Diplomatic officials and private citizens have been reported to exploit domestic workers within their homes, including in the United States. A survey of over 2,000 domestic workers across the United States found that 19 percent of all respondents had been threatened, bullied or verbally abused in the prior year, which signifies the vulnerability of this group to forms of exploitation and modern slavery. It was reported that 36 percent of live-in domestic workers experienced abuse.⁷⁴

In 2017, Northern America, encompassing Bermuda, Canada, Greenland, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and the United States, hosted the third largest number of international migrants (58 million) and Latin America and the Caribbean (10 million) hosted the fifth largest number of international migrants in the world.⁷⁵ These international migration flows have also contributed to significant changes in the demographics of the Americas region with positive net migration accounting for up to 42 percent of the population

growth observed in Northern America between 2000 and 2015.⁷⁶ In 2017, the United States held the largest number of international migrants (50 million), which is 19 percent of the world's total international migrant population.⁷⁷ The third largest number of international migrants globally was born in Latin America and the Caribbean (38 million).⁷⁸ In 2017, 17 million migrants from Asia, eight million migrants from Europe, and 26 million migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean moved to Northern America.⁷⁹ In this context of large-scale global migration to the Americas region, many migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Importantly, it is estimated that approximately 1.5 million seasonal farm workers from South America and the Caribbean migrate to the United States to work in the agricultural sector each year.⁸⁰ These populations are particularly at risk of abuse because seasonal and temporary workers are often located in rural and isolated locations and may not speak local languages, making it very difficult for them to understand their rights or access local support networks and services. Exploitation of Central American and South American migrant agricultural workers are not limited to the United States. Victims of modern slavery in the agricultural sector have been identified in other strong regional economies as shown by the exploitation of Guatemalan workers in Mexico.⁸¹

There are several contributing factors to the vulnerability of seasonal and temporary workers migrating from South and Central America to the relatively stronger economies in Mexico, United States, and Canada. Stricter immigration and border control policies compel vulnerable migrants to trust smugglers to deliver them into the United States.⁸² For example, approximately 70-80 percent of unaccompanied minors from Central America are believed to be reliant on human smugglers to enter the United States through Mexico. Many of these minors are sexually and physically abused in addition to being used in extortion schemes involving their families to ensure their safety.⁸³ Not only is the process of migration inherently dangerous due to several obstacles to regular migration, once seasonal workers arrive in their destination, they remain vulnerable. Research into the working and living conditions of farmworkers in the United States reveals that the power inequity between employers and their low-wage immigrant workers contributes to a climate of rampant sexual violence.⁸⁴ Trafficking occurs at border crossings throughout Central America and Mexico when undocumented persons who have not been able to enter the United States are forced into commercial sex work, which is also a trend along the Mexico-Guatemala border.⁸⁵

Many of these seasonal and temporary agricultural workers also face hazardous working conditions. Children of undocumented seasonal and temporary workers, who may or may not be US citizens themselves, are involved in hazardous and exploitative labour, particularly on tobacco farms in the United States.⁸⁶ In the United States, agriculture

as an industry often involves vulnerable children without work authorisation or with limited English language skills due to limited oversight and regulation by the government.⁸⁷ Work on tobacco farms is considered to be dangerous for children due to the potential for acute nicotine poisoning from close proximity and handling of tobacco. Acute nicotine poisoning includes symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, headaches, loss of appetite, and sleeplessness.⁸⁸ Generally, working conditions in rural areas are known to be challenging and potentially hazardous due to their mostly informal nature with few available protections or written contracts to formalise employment relationships.⁸⁹

Conflict and political instability drives modern slavery in South America. Children are at risk of exploitation as child combatants in armed conflict in Colombia. Although a final peace agreement was signed between the government of Colombia and *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) in 2016, there is evidence that approximately 230 children were recruited and used in conflict by FARC and other armed groups in 2017.⁹⁰ Children have been used as guerrilla fighters in this protracted

conflict to install landmines, transport explosives, kidnap other minors, and other violent activities.⁹¹ Many of these children faced threats of execution if they attempted to leave the fighting forces. Additionally, Colombia's National Police and military previously included over 15,000 children.⁹² Among 70 percent of those captured were 14 or younger, with children as young as eight involved in the fighting.⁹³ The final peace agreement includes special provisions to separate and reintegrate

children associated with FARC and to not prosecute those who were under 18 when they committed acts in the context of armed conflict.⁹⁴ However, children exposed to this type of violence at young ages are vulnerable to further exploitation later in life, including sexual and physical abuse. Many of these child soldiers feel isolated as they attempt to reintegrate into society and the risk for relapse among minors is greater than it is for adult former combatants, with increased risk that these former child soldiers will return to violent lives.⁹⁵ Venezuela's ongoing political and economic crises have forced many to flee to regional cities in Colombia and in the Amazon region to attempt to obtain food, medicine, and other resources. These vulnerable migrants are at risk of modern slavery in their new environments and are left with limited options to return to Venezuela.⁹⁶

Forced sexual exploitation of adults and commercial sexual exploitation of children are also serious problems in the Americas region. While children are often trafficked domestically, young women and men may be trafficked internally or internationally, sometimes with familial involvement.⁹⁷ Vulnerable individuals are attracted to the prospect of gainful employment and prosperity in relatively stronger economies and often aspire to escape poverty,

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*In this context of
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 to exploitation*

violent conflict, and limited opportunities for growth in their own countries and localities. Victims from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have been identified in Chiapas, Mexico, where they are exploited in bars and brothels.⁹⁸ Reports from UNICEF and the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala indicate that in Guatemala City, Guatemala there were approximately 15,000 children identified by civil society organisations as victims of commercial sexual exploitation.⁹⁹

A United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report on trafficking within Central America indicates that most sex trafficking victims in the region are identified in Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, and El Salvador.¹⁰⁰

Tourism and the commercial sexual exploitation of children remains a problem in the Caribbean. Difficult economic conditions in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica encourage households to exploit the income-generating capacities of children through commercial sex tourism.

There is also the reality of children who must support themselves without familial support and who remain vulnerable to participation in modern slavery in commercial sex tourism.¹⁰¹

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*Forced sexual
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 the Americas*

Haitian children are exploited in these countries as well, with Haitian children crossing the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and forced into commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁰²

Forced and child marriage occurs in every region in the world but represents a substantial problem in the Americas that has not yet been adequately addressed, despite significant attention focusing on this issue. A 2017 report

by UNICEF estimates that approximately 25 percent of Latin American girls are married before age 18.¹⁰³ This report also estimates that forced or child marriages are most often reported in the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. Forced marriage also occurs in the United States and Canada. The United States lacks federal legislation prohibiting forced and child marriage, with the minimum age for consent to marry as young as 12 in some US states. According to research on

marriage license data in the United States from 2000 to 2010, 167,000 children in 38 states were married to men mostly over the age of 18. Most of these 167,000 children were girls, and some were as young as 12 years old.¹⁰⁴

Comparability of the prevalence estimates with the previous Global Slavery Index

This edition of the Global Slavery Index introduces important improvements to the ways prevalence of modern slavery is measured. Building on the collaborative work undertaken with the ILO and IOM on the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, the Global Slavery Index results reflect changes to scope, methodology, and expanded data sources. The estimates are presented as a stock (or point in time) calculation rather than a flow (total over a period of time), include state imposed forced labour, and better estimates of sexual exploitation, and children in modern slavery. Further, we were able to count exploitation where it occurred more consistently due to a considerably larger number of surveys.

As a result of these advancements, the national prevalence estimates are not comparable with previous editions of the Global Slavery Index. Nonetheless, the strengthened methodology reflects stronger data, increased levels of data, and more systematic coverage of different forms of modern slavery. As such, while comparability from previous years is lost, the changes are justified by the need to continually improve our knowledge base. A detailed description of the changes to the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part B of the Global Slavery Index, available for download at www.globalslaveryindex.org.

Ixtepec, Mexico, 5 August 2013

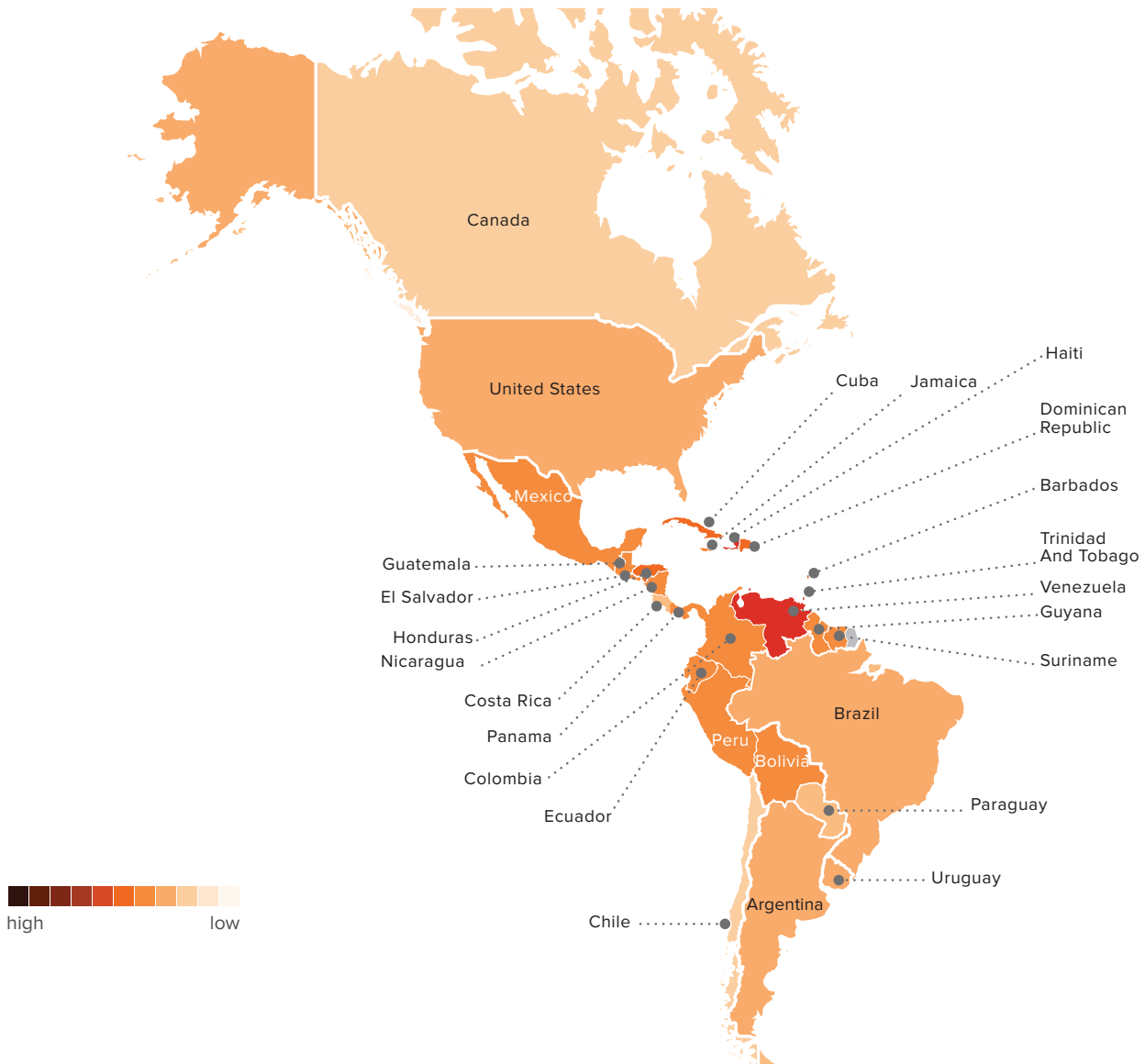
Genenis Yamileht, 20, from El Salvador, spends a night at the Hermanos en el Camino immigrant shelter in Ixtepec, Mexico. She said she planned to ride a freight train north with her husband the next night as part of their journey to the US border and eventually to Houston, Texas. She hopes to get employment as a domestic worker. Thousands of Central American migrants ride atop the trains, known as 'la bestia', or the beast, during their long and perilous journey through Mexico. Many of the immigrants are robbed, extorted, raped or otherwise assaulted by gangs who control the train tops. Those who make it to the border and past the considerable US border apparatus, then face potential forced labour exploitation upon arrival at their destination.

Photo credit: John Moore/ Getty Images.



PREVALENCE

FIGURE 5
Prevalence rating by country



In 2017, the Walk Free Foundation and the International Labour Organization (ILO), together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), produced the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, estimating that 40.3 million people were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2016. Of these, an **estimated 1.9 million men, women and children were living in modern slavery in the Americas. This region had a prevalence of 1.9 people in modern slavery for every 1,000 people in the region.**

When considering the forms of modern slavery, the rate of forced labour (1.3 victims per 1,000 people) was higher than the rate of forced marriage (0.7 victims per 1,000). A little over a third of victims of forced labour exploitation were held in debt bondage (37.9 percent), with similar proportions of men and women in the region trapped through debt. The region also accounted for four percent of all victims of forced sexual exploitation worldwide.

Within the region, Venezuela, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic have the highest prevalence of modern slavery, however the United States, Brazil, and Mexico have the highest absolute numbers and together account for over half (57 percent) of the victims in the region (Table 1) and 66.4 percent of the region's population.¹⁰⁵

These regional figures, while important, should be interpreted cautiously given the gaps and limitations of data in key regions. The current Global Estimates of Modern

Slavery do not cover all forms of modern slavery; forms such as trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, child soldiers, or child marriage that could also constitute modern slavery cannot be adequately measured at this stage. Further, there are gaps in survey coverage at the sub-regional level that may impact on the regional estimates produced in the Global Estimates. For example, there are no surveys conducted in North America where household surveys are not considered an effective approach to measuring modern slavery.

TABLE 1:
Estimates of prevalence of modern slavery by country

Regional rank	Country	Estimated prevalence (victims per 1,000 population)	Estimated absolute number of victims	Population
1	Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	5.6	174,000	31,155,000
2	Haiti	5.6	59,000	10,711,000
3	Dominican Republic	4.0	42,000	10,528,000
4	Cuba	3.8	43,000	11,461,000
5	Honduras	3.4	30,000	8,961,000
6	Trinidad and Tobago	3.0	4,000	1,360,000
7	Guatemala	2.9	47,000	16,252,000
8	Nicaragua	2.9	18,000	6,082,000
9	Barbados	2.7	1,000	284,000
10	Colombia	2.7	131,000	48,229,000
11	Mexico	2.7	341,000	125,891,000
12	Guyana	2.6	2,000	769,000
13	Jamaica	2.6	7,000	2,872,000
14	Peru	2.6	80,000	31,377,000
15	El Salvador	2.5	16,000	6,312,000
16	Ecuador	2.4	39,000	16,144,000
17	Suriname	2.3	1,000	553,000
18	Bolivia, Plurinational State of	2.1	23,000	10,725,000
19	Panama	2.1	8,000	3,969,000
20	Brazil	1.8	369,000	205,962,000
21	Paraguay	1.6	11,000	6,639,000
22	Argentina	1.3	55,000	43,418,000
23	United States	1.3	403,000	319,929,000
24	Costa Rica	1.3	6,000	4,808,000
25	Uruguay	1.0	4,000	3,432,000
26	Chile	0.8	14,000	17,763,000
27	Canada	0.5	17,000	35,950,000

VULNERABILITY

FIGURE 6
Overall vulnerability scores map



Our assessment of vulnerability is conducted at the national level and covers five dimensions: governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups and effects of conflict. The average vulnerability score in the Americas (41 percent) suggests a higher risk of modern slavery in this region than is evident in the prevalence data. The Americas region performed relatively well on the dimensions that measure impact of conflict and acceptance

of minority groups, with a better average score than other regions, but relatively poorly on the governance and the inequality dimensions, which can reflect increasing income inequality, significant problems associated with violent crime, and lower confidence in judicial systems (see Figure 7). Across all dimensions of vulnerability, scores in the region ranged from a high of 70 percent in Haiti to a low of 10 percent in Canada.

Haiti, Venezuela, and Mexico had the highest overall vulnerability scores in the region, while Canada, the United States, and Uruguay had the lowest overall vulnerability scores. Uruguay, for example, ranked 35th globally and remains at the top of regional rankings in the 2017 Global Peace Index,¹⁰⁶ illustrating its relative peacefulness compared to other states in the region. However, it is important to realise that within any single country there are clear areas and populations of vulnerability that may be masked by well-performing national figures. For example, the relative wealth and work opportunities in the United States and Canada attract vulnerable migrant populations from their countries of origin. Some of these populations have heightened vulnerabilities, such as the large migrant worker populations and unaccompanied migrant youth in the United States who can experience labour exploitation.¹⁰⁷

Our vulnerability data indicates that **Venezuela, Haiti, and Cuba had the highest vulnerability scores relating to governance issues.** This includes political instability, women's physical security, weapons access, and the government's response to modern slavery. In Venezuela, tension between an increasingly authoritative government and opposition groups has intensified, and President Nicolas Maduro's efforts to consolidate power amid a deepening economic and humanitarian crisis are adding to the vulnerability of people, whereby severe shortages of food and medicines are making it difficult for people to meet their basic needs.¹⁰⁸ These factors have contributed to large numbers of people leaving the country and heading to Colombia and Brazil.

Extreme poverty and unequal income distribution, particularly between rural and urban populations, persist as serious economic challenges within the region. According to our assessment of vulnerability, **Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras were rated with the highest vulnerability in terms of lack of basic needs.**

This includes undernourishment and lack of access to water, health services and social safety nets. Haiti continues to face significant humanitarian and developmental

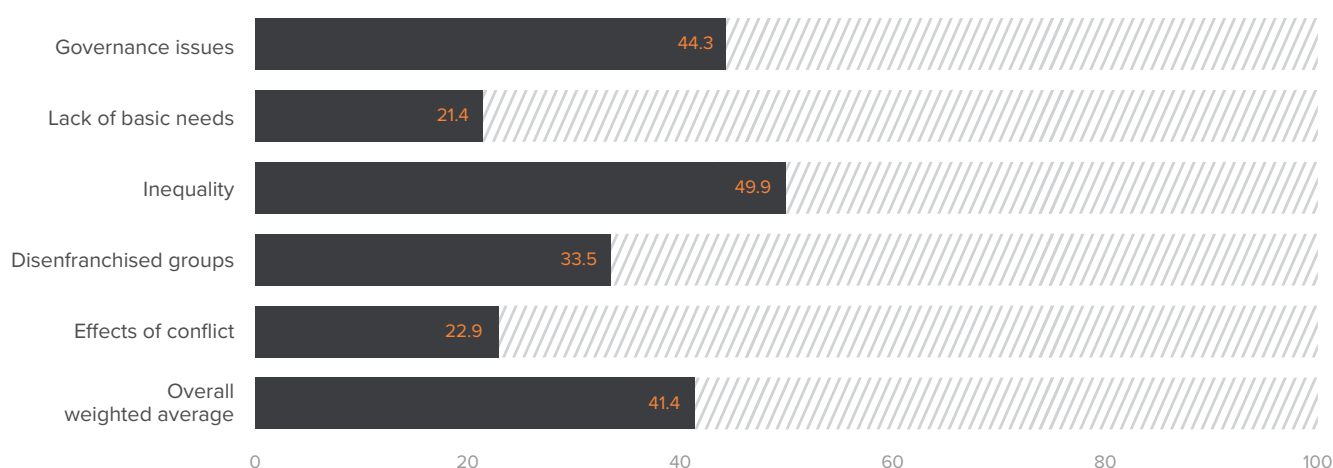
challenges with high poverty rates and limited access to electricity, water, sanitation, or healthcare for many people. Hurricane Matthew in 2016 illustrated these challenges when 806,000 people were left in need of urgent food assistance.¹⁰⁹ Such disasters add to vulnerability by leaving populations desperate to meet their needs, displaced, or willing to migrate to areas that leave them more vulnerable to exploitation. At the opposite end of the scale, Suriname, Argentina, and Trinidad and Tobago were rated with relatively low vulnerability to the above factors.

Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica are highest rated in terms of inequality, which includes income inequality, violent crime, confidence in judicial systems, and the ability to come up with emergency funds. Though improving, inequality in Paraguay remains widespread with data from the General Statistics Surveys and Census Bureau suggesting that the poorest 40 percent of Paraguayans earn only 12.5 percent of the nation's revenues, while the richest 10 percent earn 37.1 percent of all income.¹¹⁰ This inequality exacerbates existing vulnerabilities. In Trinidad and Tobago, violent crime remains a major social problem that has intensified insecurity and lack of trust in the government's capacity to deal with this issue.¹¹¹ This is illustrated in Trinidad and Tobago's drop in score in the 2017 Global Peace Index, which measures the level of peacefulness in each state.¹¹²

In terms of disenfranchised groups, certain populations in Haiti, Barbados, Cuba, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have the highest vulnerability. This variable is assessed on measures such as the acceptance of immigrants, acceptance of same sex rights, and acceptance of minorities in these countries. In Jamaica, the LGBTQI community, particularly among the poor and homeless, have a heightened vulnerability to sex trafficking and exploitation. Discriminatory laws and high levels of violence and harassment contribute to their vulnerability.¹¹³ The stigma of same sex relationships and same sex prostitution forces these vulnerable populations to remain hidden and discourages them from reporting or seeking help as necessary, further adding to their vulnerability.¹¹⁴

FIGURE 7

Regional average vulnerability scores by dimension, Americas



Our vulnerability data highlight **Mexico, Colombia, and Honduras as having the highest vulnerability to modern slavery due to high levels of conflict, terrorism, and displacement.** Ongoing conflicts in the region continued to create vulnerability through displacement. Large drug cartels and criminal gangs operating in Central and South America create hostile, violent conditions, increasing the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking for vulnerable populations. With the limited capacity of states to respond to organised crime and reported complicity of police in dealing with these crimes,¹¹⁵ criminal syndicates can operate with relative impunity.

This is evident in Mexico where the escalation of violence and conflict between criminal organisations and government forces since 2006 has seen drug-related

violence kill an estimated 80,000 Mexican soldiers, police officers, politicians, and civilians.¹¹⁶ In Colombia, internal conflict between the government and various insurgent groups including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) has left as many as 220,000 dead and 5.7 million displaced over the last half century.¹¹⁷

The ceasefire and ongoing peace process did see an improved score on a series of indicators in the 2017 Global Peace Index, but a slight deterioration of Colombia's overall score reflects continued incidents of armed conflict by the ELN and a lag in financial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.¹¹⁸ Displacement also rose in Colombia despite the peace process,¹¹⁹ putting already vulnerable populations at further risk of forced sexual and labour exploitation.

TABLE 2:

Estimated vulnerability to modern slavery by country (%; the higher the score, the higher the level of vulnerability)

Country	Governance issues	Lack of basic needs	Inequality	Dis-enfranchised groups	Effects of conflict	Overall weighted average
Haiti	62.4	49.7	54.1	56.8	20.1	69.6
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	65.1	19.7	60.4	34.3	27.8	57.9
Mexico	47.3	23.7	59.0	37.8	68.8	57.3
Honduras	55.5	26.5	58.9	36.5	32.7	55.5
Cuba	60.2	25.9	37.6	47.8	17.3	52.4
Guatemala	51.0	25.8	58.1	40.9	27.4	52.1
Colombia	45.7	19.2	56.4	32.6	63.5	51.6
El Salvador	50.5	23.0	59.8	43.6	22.7	50.7
Guyana	49.5	25.6	60.4	28.1	12.4	45.4
Peru	44.3	24.7	48.0	38.2	27.5	44.3
Jamaica	39.5	24.2	62.2	47.8	15.5	44.2
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	50.9	25.8	46.3	32.1	13.4	44.1
Nicaragua	48.2	24.5	43.3	35.3	22.8	43.9
Dominican Republic	42.5	28.7	46.1	38.8	21.8	43.1
Suriname	55.5	10.7	50.8	28.1	16.3	42.1
Barbados	47.6	14.3	52.5	47.8	9.2	41.9
Ecuador	46.0	23.0	46.4	29.1	23.0	41.3
Paraguay	38.3	21.0	64.7	32.7	22.7	40.9
Trinidad and Tobago	38.6	13.0	62.4	47.8	13.7	39.1
Panama	44.2	21.0	42.6	33.1	9.4	36.4
Brazil	43.1	13.6	56.2	19.8	24.0	36.4
Argentina	39.3	11.4	45.0	23.6	13.4	28.9
Costa Rica	35.2	16.7	40.7	29.4	12.2	28.4
Chile	28.5	13.8	50.0	23.5	20.3	25.6
Uruguay	31.9	13.5	34.3	15.4	9.5	19.7
United States	18.3	18.2	30.3	15.6	28.6	15.9
Canada	16.6	20.7	20.1	9.2	21.5	10.2



Corinto, Cauca department, Colombia, 6 July 2018.

A man of the Nasa ethnic group stands guard during the indigenous trial of two ELN guerrillas, in Corinto, Colombia. Colombian indigenous people tried two National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas captured in rural Caloto, Cauca department, and sentenced them to 37 lashes and eight years of prison. Conflict in Colombia has heightened the population's vulnerability to modern slavery through displacement and use of child soldiers. Although a peace agreement was signed with Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in 2016, there is evidence that approximately 230 children were recruited and used in conflict by FARC and other armed groups in 2017. There also continues to be incidents of armed conflict by ELN.

Photo credit: Luis Robayo/AFP/Getty Images.

IMPORTING RISK:

G20 countries and import of products tainted by modern slavery in the Americas region



As the analysis in the Global Slavery Index confirms, citizens in G20 countries enjoy relatively low levels of vulnerability to the crime of modern slavery within their borders and many aspects of their government responses to preventing it are comparatively strong. Nonetheless, businesses and governments in G20 countries are importing products that are at risk of modern slavery, with hardly any effort being applied by governments to regulate the labour conditions involved in their production. Accordingly, we conducted research globally to identify and validate a short list of products at risk of modern slavery, and then map out the extent to which these products are imported by G20 countries.¹²⁰

There are five G20 countries in the Americas region: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and the United States. G20 countries in the Americas region represent both the lower and upper ends of the range of annual imports of at-risk products by G20 nations, with Argentina importing goods worth US\$740 million and the United States importing US\$144 billion.

One of the G20's member countries, the United States, is one of the world's largest exporting and importing economies. While this list is not exhaustive, the top five products at risk of modern slavery (according to US\$ value) imported by G20 countries in the Americas region are presented in Table 3. These products are sourced from 18 countries and are valued at US\$172 billion. These imports are primarily from China (84.7 percent).

While G20 countries have imported risk for some time, they are in the early stages of responding to the connection between modern slavery and supply chains of businesses and public procurement. The Government Response Index tracks the progress of governments towards achievement of five milestones, including "Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour" and it is clear that existing efforts fall short of what is required. G20 countries achieved an average score of only 11 percent for their efforts to stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour. Argentina, Canada, and Mexico are among the G20 countries that scored zero on these indicators, while the highest score in the Americas and in the entire Global Slavery Index was reported for the United States (65 percent). Brazil also scored highly in the Americas (26.7 percent). Argentina, Canada, and Mexico have yet to implement laws to minimise the risk of modern slavery in public supply chains, or to encourage business to practice due diligence.

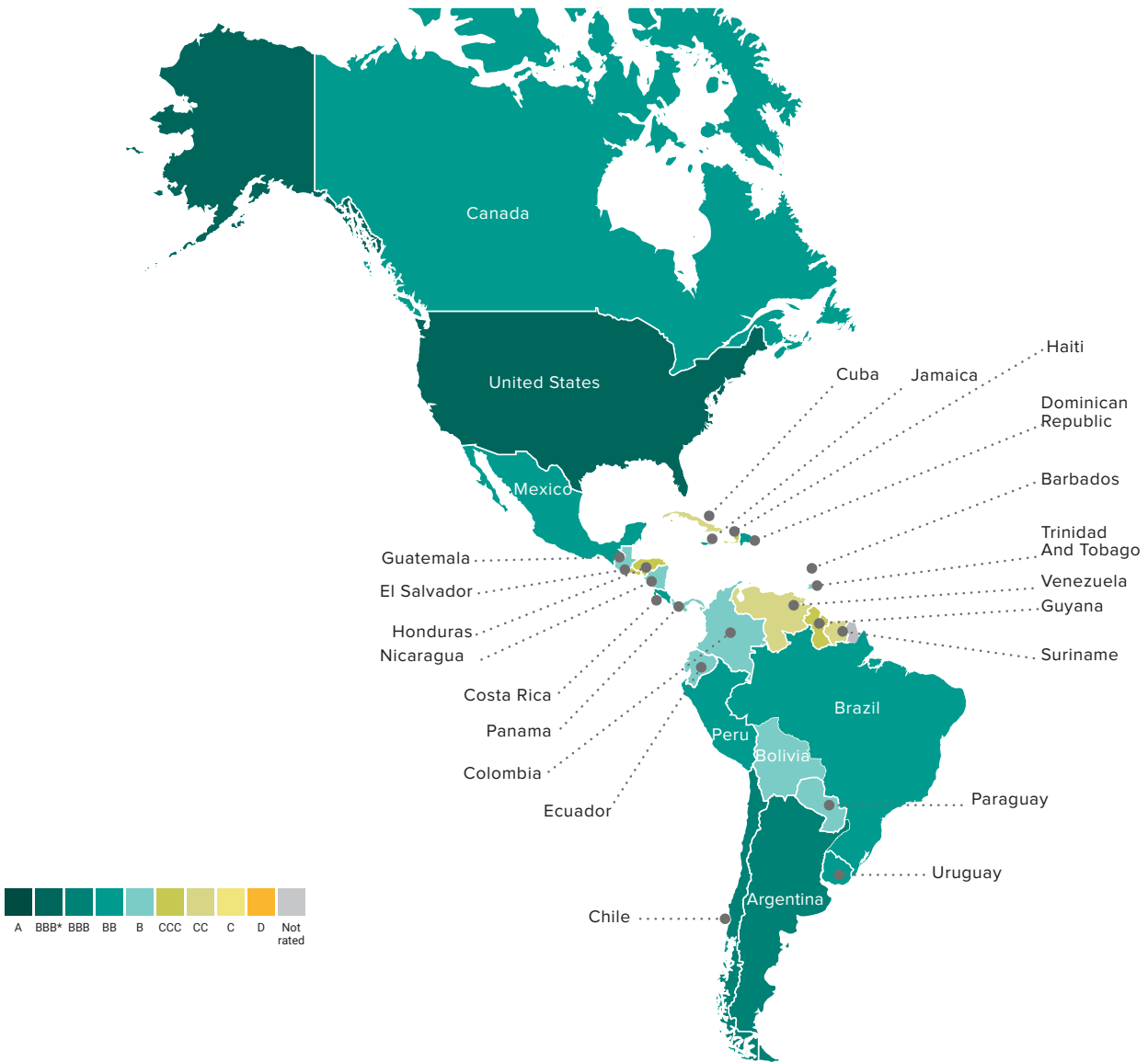
TABLE 3:

Top five products at risk of modern slavery (according to US\$ value) imported into G20 countries in the Americas region

G20 country	Import product at risk of modern slavery
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Laptops, computers and mobile phones 2/ Apparel and clothing accessories 3/ Timber 4/ Fish 5/ Carpets
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Apparel and clothing accessories 2/ Laptops, computers and mobile phones 3/ Fish 4/ Cattle 5/ Cocoa
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Laptops, computers and mobile phones 2/ Apparel and clothing accessories 3/ Gold 4/ Fish 5/ Sugarcane
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Laptops, computers and mobile phones 2/ Apparel and clothing accessories 3/ Fish 4/ Timber 5/ Cocoa
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Laptops, computers and mobile phones 2/ Apparel and clothing accessories 3/ Fish 4/ Cocoa 5/ Timber

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

FIGURE 8
Government response rating to modern slavery by country



In 2017, **the United States remained the country that took the most steps in response to modern slavery across the Americas.** This was evident across most aspects of a government response,¹²¹ including tackling forced labour in business supply chains and public procurement. The United States also remains a model for survivors’ leadership through the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, which draws upon the expertise, experience, and advice of 11 survivor leaders to develop recommendations

to improve federal anti-trafficking policies.¹²² However, not all victims are able to access support services in the United States, with gaps in longer term services for men, victims of labour trafficking, and LGBTQI victims.¹²³ There is also evidence that foreign victims were detained for immigration violations rather than being identified as potential trafficking victims and provided with support,¹²⁴ as well as evidence of state imposed forced labour in administrative detention.¹²⁵

Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, and Bolivia all improved their ratings since 2016

(see Table 4). Argentina improved its rating from BB to BBB due to recent evidence of government organised training for social workers, doctors, and teachers,¹²⁶ the opening of five regional counter-trafficking offices providing physical and mental health services,¹²⁷ and evidence of the first successful issuing of restitution for a trafficking case in 2016.¹²⁸ Chile improved from B to BBB, Peru and Uruguay improved from B to BB, and Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, and Bolivia improved from CCC to B.

Chile and Trinidad and Tobago significantly increased their responses to modern slavery thanks to combined efforts across all milestones. Chile increased its prosecution efforts, but penalties remain inadequate; none of the eight convicted traffickers served prison terms.¹²⁹ Similarly, Trinidad and Tobago made significant steps forward, implementing its 2016-2020 National Action Plan, identifying more victims, and initiating more prosecutions for trafficking-related crimes.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, there has yet to be a conviction for human trafficking with 23 cases still awaiting scheduling before the magistrate court.¹³¹

Cuba, Suriname, and Venezuela continue to have the weakest responses to modern slavery, all three maintaining their CC rating – the lowest in the region.

In general, this reflects a combination of limited political will, political instability, and a lack of resources. Venezuela continues to be affected by protracted economic and political instability,¹³² which has left the government unable to respond to modern slavery. Corruption and official complicity in Suriname,¹³³ and poverty and limited resources in Cuba,¹³⁴ hinder their responses to modern slavery.

This year, for the first time, the Global Slavery Index included smaller Commonwealth countries and island states in the assessment of government responses. Within the Americas region, we included the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and Dominica. Given this is the first year that data has been collected for these countries, and thus, we cannot suitably compare progress with that of other countries in the region, we have not publicly reported their milestone and overall ratings.

However, we found that in general, victim support services are lacking in these smaller countries. For example, in Grenada there were no reporting mechanisms for modern slavery crimes and support services are available only for victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse.¹³⁵ Similarly, in Saint Kitts and Nevis there are no services available to trafficking victims or any mechanisms to report these crimes, and domestic legislation did not exempt modern slavery victims from prosecution for crimes committed during their enslavement, except for violations of immigration law.¹³⁶ A positive development is the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' 2011 Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, a comprehensive law that provides important legal rights for trafficking victims, including immunity from criminal liability and immigration-related offenses as well as assistance with obtaining temporary, permanent residence permits and citizenship.¹³⁷

TABLE 4:
Change in Americas government response rating 2016 to 2018

Country	2016 Rating	Change in rating	2018 Rating
United States	BBB*	◀▶	BBB*
Argentina	BB	▲	BBB
Chile	B	▲	BBB
Canada	BB	◀▶	BB
Jamaica	BB	◀▶	BB
Dominican Republic	BB	◀▶	BB
Brazil	BB	◀▶	BB
Peru	B	▲	BB
Mexico	BB	◀▶	BB
Uruguay	B	▲	BB
Costa Rica	BB	◀▶	BB
Trinidad and Tobago	CCC	▲	B
Ecuador	B	◀▶	B
Nicaragua	B	◀▶	B
Guatemala	B	◀▶	B
Panama	CCC	▲	B
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	CCC	▲	B
Colombia	B	◀▶	B
Paraguay	B	◀▶	B
Haiti	CCC	◀▶	CCC
Barbados	CCC	◀▶	CCC
El Salvador	CCC	◀▶	CCC
Honduras	CCC	◀▶	CCC
Guyana	CCC	◀▶	CCC
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	CC	◀▶	CC
Suriname	CC	◀▶	CC
Cuba	CC	◀▶	CC
Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**			

*Countries that scored -1 on a negative indicator could not score above a BBB rating

**Included for the first time in 2018, therefore a rating is not provided. All data are still available via the Global Slavery Index website

Overall government response trends in the region were mixed, with the identification of victims remaining weak. A third (9) of the countries in the Americas region reported in the 2018 Global Slavery Index have adopted and used clear guidelines for screening and identifying potential victims, and only eight countries – Barbados, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Argentina and the United States – currently have a National Referral Mechanism in place. While most (25 out of 27) countries (all but Bolivia and Cuba) provided a reporting mechanism, in just over a half (16 countries) were these hotlines operating on a 24/7 basis, and only in nine countries were they available in multiple languages.

A majority of countries provided and supported victim support services, however in 23 countries in the region, services were not available to all victims of modern slavery, with men, children and migrants being the most regularly excluded groups. In terms of legal support and protection for victims, only 11 countries have legal provisions meaning that victims of modern slavery will not be criminalised for crimes committed while exploited. Providing compensation or restitution was more common, with 21 of 27 countries allowing victims to access compensation as part of their modern slavery legislation. Child friendly legal services, such as the use of child friendly questioning, was less prevalent, with only 18 countries providing these services. This shows a trend that while government responses are improving at a basic level, there is still room for improvement in terms of providing support to all victims of modern slavery.

A similar mixed response could be found in criminal justice responses, with strong legislation accompanied by gaps in enforcement. Sixteen of the 27 countries in the Americas region included in the Global Slavery Index have criminalised human trafficking. However, fewer than half have criminalised slavery (11 countries) and forced labour (12 countries), and only five countries in the Americas region – Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, and Paraguay – have legislation fully criminalising forced marriage. Training for front line police, prosecutors, and the judiciary remains stable, with 17 countries out of the 27 providing this training, but systematic training for non-police “first responders”, including labour inspectors, border guards, immigration officials, doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers, occurs in only four countries.

Corruption remains an issue in modern slavery cases throughout the Americas region. In 12 countries there were reports that allegations of individual officials’ complicity in modern slavery cases were not investigated. Non – investigation into alleged official complicity has been reported in Argentina, Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Peru, among others, despite national laws criminalising corruption in the public sector.

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Among other impacts, corruption in a country facilitates the abuse of regular migration channels for vulnerable populations and prevents sufficient penalties from being levied against perpetrators.¹³⁸

Similarly, gaps in enforcement can be found in coordination and accountability mechanisms. More than 77 percent of countries in the Americas region have a National Action Plan (NAP) to combat some form of modern slavery, but only three (Brazil, Jamaica, and Uruguay) have an independent body to monitor the government’s response and only five countries use the NAP as a framework for reporting their actions. Furthermore, evidence of full funding for these Plans was found only in Bolivia, Brazil, and Canada. Cooperation across borders is a more common with 17 out of 27 countries in the region providing labour agreements that include explicit protections for migrant workers.

In general, states have taken steps to implement laws, policies, and programs to reduce the risk of slavery by addressing the attitudes and social systems that contribute to vulnerability. Awareness campaigns on human trafficking have been conducted by almost all the countries of the region with only one exception (Barbados). However, the effectiveness of these campaigns is unclear. Over half of the countries in the Americas have conducted labour inspections in the informal sector to identify cases of modern slavery. In addition, 22 countries, with the notable exception of the United States, have labour legislation that extends to everyone, including migrant workers, domestic workers, and those in the fishing and construction sectors. In the United States domestic workers are excluded from laws to unionise and form protections when working in the private home of a family. In terms of recruitment fees for migrant workers, Barbados, Brazil, and Honduras have implemented laws to ensure that recruitment fees are not charged to the employee. Canada and the United States have regulations that prohibit recruitment fees from being charged to the employee, but the provision is not included in federal legislation in either country. Furthermore, 20 countries out of the 27 countries in the region provided training on modern slavery to their diplomatic and consular staff. Gaps in the implementation of protections for migrant workers continue to leave this group vulnerable to exploitation.

In terms of tackling modern slavery in supply chains, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States are the only four countries in the Americas that have taken any steps towards responding to this issue. Bolivia and Paraguay have implemented policies to ensure that goods are not produced by child labour, such as the Bolivian “Triple Seal” certification, which is awarded to companies that have reduced the use of child labour, discrimination, and forced labour in the production of goods. In 2014, the seal had only been awarded to sugarcane products.¹³⁹ With regard to public procurement, the United States has clear guidelines and public policies for minimising the purchase of products



El Ingenio, Peru, 3 March, 2007.

An informal artisan miner exits a gold mine in El Ingenio, Peru, 420 kms south of Lima. Artisan mining accounts for the livelihood of more than 40 thousand Peruvian families, though almost 15 percent of the nation's gold production comes from this activity. Since the 1980s many extracting camps have been converted into small mining towns lacking basic services and containing high levels of pollution. Indigenous people in Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay are vulnerable to exploitation in the mahogany, brickmaking, and gold mining industries in Peru and Ecuador. Gold mining in illegal mines in Peru often involves modern slavery.

Photo credit: Ernesto Benavides/AFP/Getty Images.

tainted with forced labour and has provided specific training for its procurement officials. The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act (2010) is an important piece of legislation in ensuring slavery-free procurement, requiring retail sellers and manufacturers (wherever incorporated) doing business in California and with a global annual revenue of more than US\$100 million to disclose their efforts to eradicate modern slavery from their direct supply chain for tangible goods offered for sale.¹⁴⁰ While it applies only to one state in the United States, California itself is the world's sixth largest economy and thereby has considerable influence on corporate behaviour.¹⁴¹

Similarly, Brazil showed commitment to keep forced labour out of supply chains through its "Dirty List," which publicises a list of businesses that have been found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.¹⁴²

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While in 2014 the Supreme Court of Brazil suspended the disclosure of the Dirty List, a court ruling in 2017 ordered the government to resume its publication. Despite this, there is criticism that the list has not been updated¹⁴³ as the 2017 list identifies only 68 businesses as opposed to the 609 names listed in 2014 at the time it was suspended,¹⁴⁴ raising concerns about the credibility of the list as well as the broader issue of how to tackle supply chain transparency in business within Brazil.¹⁴⁵ This list is used by public sector companies by preventing those on the list from tendering for public contracts.¹⁴⁶ Businesses on the list are subjected to investigations, bank lending penalties, and are barred from receiving public funds. The Dirty List's power to impede financing opportunities for non-compliant businesses continues to be critical.¹⁴⁷



TABLE 5:
Government response by milestone percentage, overall score, and rating

Rating	Country	Support survivors	Criminal justice	Coordination	Address risk	Supply chains	TOTAL
BBB*	United States	92.6	75.6	56.3	66.7	65.0	71.7
BBB	Argentina	70.0	70.6	62.5	78.6	0.0	62.6
BBB	Chile	76.5	53.9	50.0	76.2	0.0	62.3
BB	Canada	52.4	72.8	75.0	61.9	0.0	58.6
BB	Jamaica	50.6	72.8	75.0	64.3	0.0	58.6
BB	Dominican Republic	69.1	78.3	37.5	69.0	0.0	58.0
BB	Brazil	38.9	47.8	87.5	73.8	26.7	55.6
BB	Peru	75.9	42.2	62.5	54.8	0.0	52.5
BB	Mexico	53.7	62.8	56.3	69.0	0.0	52.4
BB	Uruguay	40.6	49.4	50.0	78.6	0.0	50.4
BB	Costa Rica	53.7	41.7	62.5	59.5	0.0	50.0
B	Trinidad and Tobago	67.2	50.0	31.3	66.7	0.0	49.9
B	Ecuador	61.1	55.6	37.5	52.4	0.0	46.4
B	Nicaragua	34.4	70.0	25.0	66.7	0.0	46.3
B	Guatemala	42.2	25.6	62.5	69.0	0.0	45.2
B	Panama	32.6	60.0	31.3	78.6	0.0	43.9
B	Bolivia, Plurinational State of	21.3	43.9	62.5	61.9	8.3	41.3
B	Colombia	40.4	42.2	62.5	69.0	0.0	41.1
B	Paraguay	26.1	56.7	37.5	71.4	10.0	40.9
CCC	Haiti	49.6	42.8	18.8	47.6	0.0	39.7
CCC	Barbados	53.3	26.1	37.5	45.2	0.0	39.4
CCC	El Salvador	31.7	39.4	43.8	64.3	0.0	37.4
CCC	Honduras	27.6	25.6	62.5	54.8	0.0	37.0
CCC	Guyana	33.1	44.4	25.0	45.2	0.0	31.5
CC	Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	23.3	43.9	12.5	52.4	0.0	28.2
CC	Suriname	24.3	5.6	31.3	54.8	0.0	27.1
CC	Cuba	13.0	15.0	18.8	42.9	0.0	20.8
No rating	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ¹⁴⁸						

*Indicates where a country could not score above a BBB. These countries have received a negative rating for policies that hinder their response to modern slavery.

Immokalee, Florida, US, 25 September 2015.

Silvia Perez works at The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) headquarters, a nonprofit that fights for worker rights, in Immokalee, Florida. Perez, originally from Guatemala, worked in the fields and was sometimes abused by the men. Agricultural workers from Central America and Haiti are often subject to labour trafficking, underpaid, and forced to work long hours without breaks in agriculture in the US. CIW's fair food program acknowledges farms that have signed onto providing good labour practices for its agricultural workers by placing fair food labels on their produce. The nonprofit is largely run by former farm workers.

Photo credit: Melanie Stetson Freeman/The Christian Science Monitor via Getty Images.

REGIONAL RESPONSE



In terms of a regional response, institutions and mechanisms in the Americas have largely focused on facilitating the exchange of information, experiences, and strategies to achieve a more cohesive and coordinated response. The challenge remains to increase the individual responsibility and accountability of each state in taking steps to reduce modern slavery.

The Organization of American States (OAS) continues to play an active role in promoting anti-trafficking policies and facilitating training programs to assist member states in their anti-trafficking efforts.¹⁴⁹ In 2014, the OAS approved the *Second Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere 2015-2018*. This plan works as a reference to guide actions by member states and to inform the OAS General Secretariat as they assist states in combating trafficking in persons.¹⁵⁰ It also allows member states and the Secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the work plan by, in part, helping member states develop common indicators in the areas of prevention, prosecution, and punishment, along with assistance for and protection of victims.¹⁵¹ Under the OAS, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is taking a proactive stance in holding states accountable for modern slavery and human trafficking crimes. For example, in a landmark decision, the Court in 2016 ordered the Brazilian government to pay more than US\$5 million to 128 former farm workers who were enslaved on a Brazilian farm between 1988-2000.¹⁵²

In South America, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) promotes cooperation between the judicial authorities of its member states through the exchange of information, experience, and training. UNASUR has also created a high-level *Human Rights Cooperation and Coordination Group*, the objectives of which include the regional prevention and elimination of human trafficking.¹⁵³ This group promotes the exchange of good practices and has recently encouraged adherence to the UNODC Blue Heart campaign against Human Trafficking.¹⁵⁴

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However, it is important to note that in April 2018, six countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay – suspended their membership in UNASUR due to disagreements with the group’s leadership and priorities, which may affect their effectiveness in combating modern slavery in the region.¹⁵⁵

Focusing on migration, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), also known as the “Puebla Process,” is a multilateral regional forum for the exchange of information, experiences, and best practices. This includes providing technical assistance to immigration authorities of member states and producing general guidelines and manuals regarding the return of migrants, assistance for migrant children and women, and repatriation of trafficked persons.¹⁵⁶ The RCM works primarily in three areas, namely migration policy and management (including human trafficking and migrant smuggling), human rights (including groups in vulnerable situations), and migration and development (including remittances, temporary migrant workers, and the private sector).

The Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors is a mechanism that enables prosecutors to exchange information on trafficking cases and promote joint investigations. In 2017, 17 prosecutors signed a declaration and “guidelines of action” outlining the need to change the network into a formal cooperation channel for joint investigation teams. Importantly, the declaration emphasises the need to view cases within a regional context rather than isolated situations in an individual country.¹⁵⁷

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments should:

Strengthen legislation

- › Ratify and implement ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the ILO P029 Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and translate these into national legislation to ensure protection for migrant workers.
- › Enact legislation, or strengthen existing legislation, to ensure that all forms of exploitation are criminalised and penalties for crimes associated with human trafficking, child exploitation, forced labour, and modern slavery are appropriate for the severity of the crime.
- › Introduce and implement legislation criminalising forced marriage and raise the age of marriage to 18 for men and women. Only five countries in the Americas region – Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, and Paraguay – have legislation fully criminalising forced marriage – equivalent laws should be enacted in the remaining 22 countries.
- › Investigate all allegations of government complicity in modern slavery crimes. There were reports that official complicity in modern slavery cases were not investigated in 12 of the 27 countries assessed in the region.
- › Ensure all workers, irrespective of sector or status, are granted equal protection under national labour laws and that these laws cover the informal sector across the region. Labour laws did not cover informal sectors in five countries and only three countries banned recruitment agencies from charging fees to job seekers. Where necessary, reform labour laws to provide basic safety nets for vulnerable migrant groups across this region.
- › Implement existing legislation effectively by establishing training programs on modern slavery legislation, conducting modern slavery investigations, and on victim-centred approaches, drawing on existing model curricula and standard operating procedures, for police, prosecutors, judges, and defence attorneys.

Improve victim support

- › Improve victim support and identification efforts for all victim populations throughout the Americas, and in particular for the 23 countries in the region where services were not available to all victims of human trafficking, with men, children and migrants being the most regularly excluded groups.
- › Build the capacity of embassies in receiving countries to support domestic workers who have escaped exploitative workplaces. Twenty of 27 governments have provided training on modern slavery for consular staff. Ensure all embassy staff are trained and able to provide counselling and legal support, and that decent and safe living arrangements are available for these victims while their cases are resolved.
- › Establish a National Referral Mechanism for victims of modern slavery and ensure that the mechanism is actively being used to direct victims to support services. Only eight countries had National Referral Mechanisms that were active during the reporting period.
- › Ensure through legislation and policy that compensation and restitution mechanisms exist so that victims can access redress, including back-payment of wages. Currently, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru and Suriname do not have laws which allow victims to receive compensation or restitution for damages incurred as a result of exploitation.
- › Bolster victim access to justice mechanisms by ensuring their inclusion in existing laws. For example, only 18 of the 27 countries assessed provide child friendly services during the criminal justice process – these should be extended to cover children in all countries.
- › Improve victim assistance programming by hosting meetings and capacity building workshops for civil society organisations, especially those that work with victims, and government representatives to share good practices and learnings, with an additional focus on the efficacy of longer-term reintegration programs aimed at breaking the cycle of exploitation.

Strengthen coordination and transparency

- › Governments of labour sending countries should cooperate with one another to advocate common standards for the protection of migrant workers, in part so that a destination country cannot simply shift its recruitment to other sources if it is banned from receiving migrant workers by a particular sending country.
- › The governments of sending and receiving countries should cooperate in establishing effective mechanisms to monitor the recruitment and employment of migrant workers to ensure that workers' rights are upheld following migration.
- › Governments should develop their own National Action Plans or strategies, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, that are based on research and data on the nature and trends of human trafficking and child exploitation. In the Americas region, 21 countries have a National Action Plan with clear indicators and allocation of responsibilities. Among those countries, only five – Brazil, Canada, Jamaica, Mexico, and United States – have a government that routinely uses the National Action Plan as a framework for reporting its actions. Only three countries – Bolivia, Brazil, and Canada – have fully funded all activities in the National Action Plan. These Plans should be drafted, implemented, and fully funded in all remaining countries in the Americas region.
- › Countries should work together to improve migration governance by developing standard form migration agreements, including those that holistically protect migrant workers and that ensure repatriation is voluntary. Only 17 of the 27 countries assessed in the region have agreements with other countries on labour migration that provide protection for labour migrants, which given the prevalence of exploitation of migrant workers, should be extended to cover the remaining countries.
- › All national governments in the region should work together to standardise data collection on modern slavery and encourage the formation of a central repository for data on modern slavery.
- › Each country in the region should have an Independent Slavery Commissioner to address all efforts in the public and private sector to end modern slavery. Currently only three countries, Brazil, Jamaica, Uruguay have a such a Commissioner in place.

Address risk factors

- › In destination countries, particularly in North America, protect the rights of migrants regardless of whether their entry was legal. Across the region, increasingly restrictive immigration policies have the potential to increase vulnerability of migrant workers. All governments should do more to ensure that increased control of borders does not occur at the expense of migrants' rights by reviewing existing policies to identify their impact on migrating populations, providing alternative safe migration pathways, ensuring labour laws cover all workers, and establishing visa options for those who have been exploited.
- › The governments of this region should collectively and independently work to reform immigration opportunities for migrant workers and increase efforts to protect vulnerable populations, particularly minors, from abuse and exploitation by human smugglers.
- › Closely cooperate with the region's host countries, often the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada, to establish effective mechanisms to monitor the recruitment and employment of migrant workers.
- › Host countries in Northern America and Brazil should provide more Spanish-language legal resources and assistance to all persons at risk of modern slavery and exploitation, especially in informal industries and rural contexts. Regular labour inspections are important in many informal industries and rural contexts to ensure the protection of vulnerable migrants.
- › Launch targeted information campaigns to ensure that prospective migrants are informed both of the risks they may face on the journey, as well as risks they may face living and working in the host country and their rights with respect to authorities.
- › Monitor local recruitment agencies for deceptive recruitment practices, such as substituting contracts and charging excessive recruitment fees, and enforce national laws in all countries in the Americas region to ensure compliance. In the Americas region, there are only three countries – Barbados, Brazil, and Honduras – with laws or policies that state that private recruitment fees are paid by the employer, not the employee.
- › Cooperate with other sending countries to advocate common standards for the protection of domestic workers and availability of resources for assistance in countries of destination in multiple languages.

- › Conduct widespread, systematic education campaigns to counter stereotypical attitudes of migrant workers and promote diversity. Alongside a growth in restrictive immigration policy, is a growth in anti-immigrant sentiment. All governments should work with schools, universities, and religious leaders to encourage inclusivity via all media platforms.
- › As a major donor of foreign aid, the United States should support programming in origin countries to promote women's empowerment, education for all, and support for displaced persons. Patriarchal structures and conflict are among the risk factors that increase vulnerability to modern slavery. Strengthening respect for women's rights and tackling trafficking that occurs as a result of conflict helps to prevent exploitation of these populations on the move.

Eradicate modern slavery from the economy

- › The region's G20 countries, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the United States should enact federal legislation requiring mandatory reporting for all large businesses with regard to the presence of modern slavery in their supply chains.
- › All countries in the region should establish and, in the case of the United States, implement legislation requiring all government contractors and suppliers to take steps to detect and eliminate modern slavery from publicly funded supply chains.

APPENDIX:

Endnotes



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This report is part of a series that builds on the information presented in *The Global Slavery Index 2018* to provide an in-depth look at modern slavery at a regional level. The reports will be available from <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/resources/downloads/> as they are released. *The Global Slavery Index 2018* is now available to download.

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