

MODERN CHILD SLAVERY

THE COERCION
& EXPLOITATION
OF YOUTH
WORLDWIDE



BOOKLET No. 8 IN A SERIES ON INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ISSUES
YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL

MODERN CHILD SLAVERY

THE COERCION
AND EXPLOITATION
OF YOUTH
WORLDWIDE

BY AYSHA UPCHURCH



ABOUT YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL

The mission of Youth Advocate Program International (YAP International) is to promote the rights and well-being of the world's youth, giving particular attention to the plight of troubled and needy youth and to those victimized by conflict, exploitation, and state and personal violence.

YAP International works with and for young people worldwide, giving voice and visibility to new ways of improving the lives of children in the 21st century. Our program priorities include advocacy, education and youth participation on issues such as child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. YAP International was incorporated in 1994 and is registered in the United States as a 501(c)(3) organization.

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Back: Photo of Kailash Satyarthi. Mr. Satyarthi was quoted at the International Conference on Children, Torture and Other Forms of Violence: Facing the Facts, Forging the Future, Finland, 2001.

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CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Overview of the problem	1
Why is there child slavery today?	4
What are the forms of child slavery?	8
What is the impact of child slavery on families, communities and the world?	18
How can child slavery be stopped?	22
Conclusion	27
<i>Endnotes</i>	28
<i>To learn more about modern child slavery</i>	36
<i>Resource organizations</i>	37

About This Series

Youth Advocate Program International carries out research and publishes material on international youth issues as part of its mission to improve the lives of children. Booklets are published periodically to introduce readers to issues that demand world attention.

Booklet #1 Child Soldiers: Youth who Participate in Armed Conflict

Booklet #2 Child Labor: Exploited and Abused Youth at Work

Booklet #3 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:
Youth Involved in Prostitution, Pornography and Sex Trafficking

Booklet #4 Children Behind Bars:
Youth who are Detained, Incarcerated and Executed

Booklet #5 Children and the HIV/AIDS Crisis:
Youth who are Infected and Affected

Booklet #6 Discrimination Against the Girl Child: Female Infanticide,
Female Genital Cutting and Honor Killing

Booklet #7 Stateless Children: Youth who are Without Citizenship

Booklet #8 Modern Child Slavery: The Coercion
and Exploitation of Youth Worldwide

INTRODUCTION

For many people the term slavery conjures up an image from a history book. The assumption is that the abolitionist movement was victorious over a hundred years ago and the scourge of slavery was eliminated forever. Nothing could be further from the truth and, for that reason, the title of this booklet includes the word modern. We are saying loud and clear that slavery exists today. Furthermore, it is not confined to a few countries. Slavery is found on every populated continent, in countries rich and poor, and includes both adults and children.

If slavery is so morally deplorable that it has been outlawed in every country and in international agreements again and again, why are there millions of enslaved people today? And why are children so often the victims? Why are children and youth being used as disposable resources in agriculture, manufacturing, sports, domestic service, combat, the sex industry, and illicit activities? This publication will provide answers to those questions and it will highlight some extraordinary individuals and organizations who are modern-day abolitionists. Unlike other issues that this series has featured in the past—child soldiers, discrimination against the girl child, and execution of youthful offenders—there is no need to pass more laws to end slavery. What is needed is an educated, informed and energized population who will no longer tolerate disregard for existing law, corruption and economic structures that allow slavery to continue.

You will note that throughout this publication we have tried to refer to enslaved children rather than child slaves. Let us not forget that the victims in this abhorrent practice are first and foremost children whose rights and well-being are neither recognized nor allowed to flourish.

Nancy Nye
Director
Youth Advocate Program International

OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

- Millions of children are believed to exist in conditions that meet the modern definition of slavery.
- Slave labor is treated as an easily replaceable production cost by those who profit from this labor.
- Child slavery exists in all parts of the world.

Defining modern child slavery

Child slavery exists today around the world. Enslaved children are coerced to perform grueling work, are controlled through violence, and receive no pay for the work they are forced to do. In this age of increased global interdependence, millions of the world's children are being exploited and disposed of as commodities. Their human rights are being abused or ignored altogether.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) defines a child as a person under age 18 unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier. Because every country in the world has ratified the CRC except the United States and Somalia, age 18 is accepted as the worldwide standard and is used throughout this booklet. Gathering concrete data on the number of enslaved children is a difficult task, due in large part to the fact that so much of this abuse happens out of the public eye. Dr. Kevin Bales, a leading modern slavery expert and advisor to the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, estimated there to be 27 million slaves, adults and children, worldwide in 1999.¹ Given the fact that the world is experiencing a population explosion and close to half the population in some countries are children under age 15,² it can be assumed that a large number of slaves are children.

Various institutions and organizations have identified practices that are considered forms of modern slavery. The UN High Commission on Human Rights specified the sale of children and the exploitation of child labor as contemporary manifestations of sla-

very.³ International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182 included the sale or trafficking of children, debt bondage and forced labor as some of the forms of slavery or practices similar to it.⁴ The ILO stated that these abuses are “so fundamentally at odds with children’s basic human rights that they are absolutely prohibited for all persons under the age of 18.”⁵ Furthermore, it labeled child slavery as one of the “unconditional worst forms of child labor” and determined that 8.4 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, which include forced and bonded labor, forced recruitment into armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.⁶

Although all slavery has been legally abolished internationally and by national governments, modern slavery persists despite these legal instruments. In the past, slaves were expensive and valued for the services they could provide over a lifetime. Because they represented a significant investment by the slave owner, money and effort were put into acquiring ownership documents as well as looking after their health. People would steal slaves and even chase them if they escaped because they were valuable possessions. This has changed drastically in the modern age.

Today, slaves are valuable only as unskilled labor and slave labor has become an inexpensive cost of production. A slave frequently costs less than \$100,* sometimes as little as \$10. In contrast, during the trans-Atlantic slave trade over 150 years ago, an adult slave would cost the equivalent of tens of thousands of dollars.⁷ Consequently, there is no incentive to keep slaves for long periods of time or attend to even basic health needs. Enslaved children can be used and replaced easily.

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* All monetary references in this booklet are in U.S. dollars.

Bills of sale and formal evidence of ownership are now liabilities for those who want slave labor. Agents know that they can recruit or deceive families into selling their children. Traffickers create false visas and identification documents for enslaved children in order to move them from one location to another without detection.⁸

Throughout the world, there is an abundance of children who are vulnerable to becoming enslaved. According to Kevin Bales, certain demographic markers indicate where child slavery exists or is likely to exist. Abusive child labor conditions are readily found in countries with both a high infant mortality rate and high proportion of youth. A low gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and high international debt are economic conditions that indicate a nation's children are vulnerable to abusive labor conditions. Approximately three-fourths of the countries with the largest international debt have citizens who are regularly trafficked into slavery.⁹ Given these indicators, modern slavery can be found throughout the world. Modern slavery has many faces and occurs across industrial, agricultural, formal, and informal sectors of the economy. The forms of child slavery discussed in this book include forced labor, debt bondage, chattel slavery, and religious slavery.

The Price of Slave Labor

- Average price of an agricultural slave in Mississippi in 1850: **\$40,000***
- Average price of an agricultural slave in debt bondage in India today: **\$80***

* Amounts are based on the value of the U.S. dollar in 1999. Information provided by Kevin Bales in *New Slavery: A Reference Book*, (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 2000).

WHY IS THERE CHILD SLAVERY TODAY?

- Poverty, population pressure, conflicts, changing economies and lack of law enforcement are key factors that propel slavery today.
- Children are easily controlled through violence and intimidation.
- In many societies, children are still treated as the property of others rather than individuals with human rights.

The current estimated number of slaves, 27 million adults and children, is double the 13 million African slaves used during the Atlantic slave trade hundreds of years ago.¹⁰ Poverty is the major force driving modern slavery. In addition, Bales identifies three major factors that propel it: global population, social and economic changes, and police and government corruption.

There are about 132 million children born each year.¹¹ Close to half the population in some countries is under age 15. Additionally, the fastest population growth rates are being reported in the world's poorest developing countries.¹² The population explosion depletes resources in developing countries, resulting in large numbers of children born in areas with few opportunities, increasing their vulnerability to slavery.

Changing social and economic conditions add strain. This may be spurred by the economic pressure of structural adjustment programs that focus primarily on economic growth instead of sustainable development. Traditional subsistence farming is being replaced by technology-based agribusinesses, leaving many rural families homeless and out of work. These families become vulnerable to engaging in abusive labor conditions in order to survive.¹³

Political conflicts also continue to displace large numbers of people. This is especially true in countries plagued by civil wars,

where rural populations are most at risk. Additionally, wars are expensive. The controlling party or dictator may use all of the country's resources to produce weapons to support the war, which results in creating more poverty.

Finally, when governments fail to enforce their "power to protect" their citizens, the result is the abuse and enslavement of vulnerable people. Poor or nonexistent law enforcement and government corruption facilitate kidnapping, trafficking and modern slavery on a large scale. In several instances, police and government officials have acted as the slave catchers that hunt and punish escaped slaves. Police have been paid to ignore the use of slave labor.¹⁴

In addition to these three reasons for the existence of modern slavery, there are several factors that make children especially vulnerable. Children are particularly susceptible to trafficking, which is defined as the coerced recruitment and transportation of persons to be used for labor, involuntary servitude, debt bondage or slavery.¹⁵ The U.S. Department of State 2002 Trafficking in Persons Report stated that at least 700,000 people—possibly as many as 4 million men, women and children—are being trafficked worldwide annually.¹⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates 1.2 million child trafficking victims globally in 2000.¹⁷

In general, developing countries are source countries for trafficking victims and developed countries are destination countries, but many countries are both source and destination countries. For example, the United States is a destination country, receiving annually an estimated 50,000 women and children from many different parts of the world; children make up about 5 percent of this figure.¹⁸ However, the United States also is a source country for trafficking thousands of its own children from one state to another for purposes of sexual exploitation.¹⁹

Trafficking is very profitable to the agents and owners involved in the process. The UN estimates that human trafficking generates around \$7 billion per year.²⁰ Children often become enslaved through trafficking when agents directly give parents money for their children or convince the parents that their children will have profitable employment opportunities if they allow the child to go with them.²¹ Once taken, however, children are completely vulnerable to enslavement in debt bondage, domestic servitude, forced labor, prostitu-

tion, or forced military service. These lures are largely successful because of cultural traditions where children are sent with a relative or family friend to be an apprentice or take advantage of better living situations. Children are targeted because they are a lower flight risk and more easily manipulated. Trafficked within and across state borders, these children are exploited and abused and may never see home again.

Because of their immaturity, children are less knowledgeable of and less able to defend their own rights. They may be unaware of legal protections and social services. Therefore, they are the most likely to be affected by the failure to enforce civil and human rights that encourages the practice of modern slavery.

Many communities perceive children to be the property of their families rather than individuals with full human rights.²² These perceptions may be accompanied by expectations in which children are obligated to work to help the family. Poor families often place more emphasis on work that will contribute to their immediate well-being than on investing in the long-term benefits of education.²³ In the face of poverty, the obligation to help the family compels some children to leave home willingly, while others are pressured to leave to find any work opportunity. The result is that children are made more vulnerable to trafficking plots and to being used as collateral for a debt or traded for cash and goods.

Finally, children are valued for their cheap, manual labor. The ILO found that 70 percent of working children are found in the primary sectors—agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry.²⁴ Similarly, most of the work that enslaved children do is unskilled, and they are believed to be most often used in the agricultural sector.²⁵ Adult slaves are valued for their manual labor also, but with such a boom in the population, children are a more abundant source of labor than unskilled adults. Enslaved children receive no wages or receive symbolic amounts of money that do not allow for them to survive independently.

Although current population and economic dynamics help explain why modern slavery exists, targeting children for enslavement is not a new development. Historically, because slaves were seen as a lifelong investment, slave systems were dependent on and sustained by natural reproduction. Children were favored as the ideal

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commodity to be exploited—they could be compelled to work out of fear, provide immediate labor, and later be used to supply more slaves for the slaveholder. This was the foundation of attitudes toward children that regarded them as property so they could accommodate a socioeconomic strategy. In the early 19th century, enslaved children sold for higher prices than adults in the Americas.²⁶

Today, children are still targeted for enslavement but are valued more for being easily disposable. The younger the child the better because once a child is separated from his or her parents, the more dependent the child becomes on the adult controlling their enslavement. It is easy to keep a child isolated from people who might assist them if the child has been

enslaved before they have entered school, learned to read, or become an independently participating member of his or her community. Enslaved children are treated like batteries in an appliance—once they are all used up, or become too old or rebel, they are simply discarded and replaced by younger children. If they escape, they are left alone without identification and resources, sometimes in a foreign country, and have to fend for themselves or be trafficked once again into slavery.

WHAT ARE THE FORMS OF CHILD SLAVERY?

- Enslaved children are working in almost every industry.
- Bonded labor is the most common form of modern child slavery.
- Chattel slavery continues to exist in two countries today.

Forced labor

ILO Convention 29 defines forced labor as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not rendered himself voluntarily.”²⁷ This definition includes the elements of violence and coercion that characterizes slavery, both old and new. There are reportedly 5.7 million children engaged in forced and bonded labor.²⁸ Even in situations where children may leave home willingly or are given away by their parents through some agreement, their final resulting situation is abusive. There is no option of escape from the work they perform. Violence and abuse—physical, sexual and emotional—are used to compel the children to believe that they have no other alternative. Enslaved children are forced to labor for long periods of time, performing tasks that exceed their physical ability.²⁹ Furthermore, these children grow up believing that forced servitude is normal and the only way of life available to them.

Debt bondage/bonded labor

Debt bondage, or bonded labor, is the most common form of modern slavery. It occurs when a person is pledged as collateral on a loan or to pay a debt. The number of bonded child laborers is hard to pinpoint. Although the ILO estimates there to be 5.7 million children engaged in forced or bonded labor, a Human Rights Watch reports that there are 15 million bonded child laborers in India alone.³⁰

Children become subject to bonded labor in various ways. In situations where parents are barely able to meet the daily needs of the family and have no other form of credit, they sometimes give their children to creditors as payment on a debt. In other cases, a parent may pledge the labor of the entire family against a loan, creating a situation of chronic or intergenerational bondage where children are born into debt and slavery.³¹ Still other children are abducted or lured away by false hopes of employment and are trafficked to distant regions or across national borders into bonded labor conditions.

Slaveholders count journey costs, maintenance expenses (food and medicine), and fees paid to trafficking agents against the child, creating a situation where more is owed than can ever be earned. Sometimes children are sold to other slaveholders as a method of selling off debt. In some cases, enslaved children are forced to borrow money from the new slaveholder for living expenses and necessities, further increasing the debt. As these children mature, some are freed so that slaveholders may seek out newly indebted children. Others pass their debts on to younger siblings or parents, or leave it to be inherited by their own children.

Children enslaved as bonded laborers are usually unaware of the amount of their debt and the expected length of their service. Although they work extensive hours over several years in an effort to repay the debt, repayment seldom occurs. The debt bondage system is predicated on fraud—from the fundamental illegality of using children for forced labor to the arbitrary and ever-changing amounts of debt and interest calculated by the slaveholders.³²

Although the working definition of slavery in this publication is conditioned on the fact that children receive no pay, some paid bonded labor can be considered slavery. When the payment that enslaved children or their families receive is so meager that the child benefits in no significant way, the money becomes just another part of the guise that keeps them entrapped.

Chattel slavery

Chattel slavery is the most widely documented historic manifestation of slavery and no other form of modern slavery operates like it. According to historian, Dr. Hilary Beckles, the enslaved person is

treated as a “non-person, chattel, and real estate and has no identity before or within the law other than as a commodity.”³³ Chattel slaves are captured, born or sold into permanent servitude. They are completely owned by their masters and can be traded for money or a variety of goods, including weapons and vehicles.³⁴

This form of slavery constitutes a small percentage of slavery today, but is still practiced in Mauritania and Sudan. In both countries, the practice is carried out along ethnic lines. The ethnic division in Mauritania dates back to the 13th century when the black Africans of the south, or Haratines, were the slaves of the Arab Moors in the north, who controlled the government. Islam does not allow Muslims to enslave each other, so racial distinction was used to justify the practice. Today, a large number of the Haratine slaves in Mauritania are reported to be children.³⁵ The supply of slaves is maintained almost completely by birth. Because of this, slavery is the only condition that many people know, so the slave-master relationship is legitimized and can appear to have a harmonious dynamic.³⁶ Despite appearances, many slaves are sexually abused, forced to marry against their will and severely beaten for attempting to escape.

In Sudan, where there are reports of an estimated 5,000-10,000 enslaved children,³⁷ modern chattel slavery is directly linked to the civil war that has plagued that country since 1955 between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south. Slave raids have become a recent military tactic used by the northern militia against the population in the south. Once captured, adults and children alike become the complete property of their captor. They are forced to labor in the agricultural and domestic sectors, and are subject to being sold, exchanged and bartered.³⁸ Children are particularly vulnerable to the slave raids; once kidnapped, they are often forced to serve in the military.³⁹

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Religious slavery

Slavery through religious practices usually involves dedicating children to temple gods or priests. The trokosi system in Ghana represents a special case of debt bondage rooted in religious practices. The Ewe people in the Volta region in Ghana still practice this ancient form of slavery. The origins of the trokosi system can be traced back to the 17th century, when men would visit shrines before battle to ask for strength and victory and would promise to give a girl to the priests if they survived the war.⁴⁰ It also was possible to obtain a pardon for crimes by offering gifts and livestock to the priests. After the 18th century, people began offering girls to priests as a means of atonement.⁴¹ The priests used them for domestic labor and as sexual slaves.

Ghana's constitution prohibits slavery, but the trokosi system is honored because of its religious and cultural origins.⁴² However, the number of trokosi slaves has been decreasing due to increased efforts by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies and to the rise of other belief systems. Some reports estimate that there are 2,000 trokosi slaves, while according to international observers, only 100 girls were enslaved in shrines in 2001.⁴³

In India, devadasis also were enslaved through religious ritual. In a few communities, extremely poor families sometimes gave their daughters to a temple to serve the goddess Yellama.⁴⁴ The child was symbolically married to the goddess, which meant that she would not be able to marry anyone else and was forced to perform all the duties requested of her by the priests in exchange for food and shelter. A wealthy patron of the temple would pay a family for a girl child in order to dedicate her to the goddess. The patron received prestige and social status for this act.⁴⁵

Originally devadasis performed ritualistic dances in the temple—a practice that, over time, was corrupted so that the devadasis' dance culminated in offering their bodies to the priests and pilgrims in the name of the goddess. Temple owners sometimes would sell the devadasis to others for sexual services and keep the profits.⁴⁶ Although the practice is illegal in India today, there are occasional reports of girls still being enslaved under the guise of participation in the devadasi tradition.

A closer look at what enslaved children do

Through forced labor, children are enslaved in the fishing industry. In the Volta region of Ghana, over 100 young boys were involved in slave labor in 156 fishing villages in 1999.⁴⁷ These children are as young as six when they are kidnapped or trafficked into slavery. They are forced to fish and dive to untangle nets. Children sometimes drown, either because they did not know how to swim, became tangled in the nets, or suffered shock from extremely cold water temperatures. The children are constantly watched and kept in remote places to stop them from escaping. They are not paid and are not allowed to attend school. They are only valued for the physical labor they are forced to perform.⁴⁸

Debt bondage is widespread. In Brazil, where children (and entire families) are bonded laborers in charcoal production, four hundred enslaved children were found at one ranch in Mato Grosso do Sul.⁴⁹ In India, bonded child laborers work at making beedis (hand rolled cigarettes). They must sit with crossed legs and cut and roll cigarettes all day. Sometimes they are forced to keep a matchbox tucked under their chin so that they will keep their heads down and focus on work.⁵⁰ In Pakistan and India, children of migrant workers work alongside their families in debt bondage in brick kilns. Children as young as six work in intense heat, molding bricks and carrying stacks of them on their heads.⁵¹ There are reports of forced or bonded child labor in the gold mines in Peru and the garment and paper cup industries in Thailand.⁵²

Over a million children are estimated to be enslaved in the sex trade.⁵³ Child sex slaves are confined to brothels or fraudulent businesses associated with the sex trade, such as massage parlors, bars and dance clubs. Their earnings through prostitution are manipulated in the same fashion as most forms of debt bondage. They are exposed to violence and are at high risk of contracting HIV infections in addition to other sexually transmitted diseases.⁵⁴ One example of children enslaved in the sex trade is a report of 1,500 to 2,300 young girls trafficked to Italy from Albania and Nigeria to work in prostitution rings.⁵⁵ Throughout the world, the use of children in the sex industry is estimated to yield billions of dollars.⁵⁶

The following vignettes serve as examples of child slavery in three very distinct sectors—industrial, domestic, and sport. Additionally, these examples are from different regions of the world.

Child Carpet Weavers

Child slave labor is a rampant problem in the carpet weaving industry in India, Pakistan and Nepal. Two-thirds of the world's carpets come from these three countries⁵⁷ and close to one million children work in the carpet industry in the region.⁵⁸ The number of children enslaved is hard to pinpoint because they usually work in unregistered production units or loomsheds that subcontract work from the registered factories. This makes it difficult to locate and rescue the children.

Enslaved children in the carpet-weaving industry are kept in small, poorly lit and ventilated spaces where they are forced to work up to 20 hours per day, seven days a week. They are exposed to chemical dyes and are vulnerable to eye damage, lung disease, stunted growth and arthritis. Some are tied to the looms and must work and sleep in the same space. Forced to exist in small cramped spaces, many enslaved children suffer swelling of the lower limbs and spinal deformities.⁵⁹ The work is very intensive and includes dyeing, spinning yarn, weaving, knotting, cutting, and washing the carpets. Many people believe that their small nimble fingers make them more adept at carpet looming, but this is false. The truth is that children are simply more easily intimidated and controlled, and cheaper to employ than adults. Bonded children are rarely if ever allowed to go home. Loom owners beat the children and often prohibit them from leaving the loomshed. Some children have been branded with irons and had acid thrown in their eyes.⁶⁰

In India, 300,000 children are estimated to be working in the carpet industry.⁶¹ The majority of these children are believed to be enslaved. They are recruited and trafficked from impoverished regions of India and Pakistan.⁶² In Pakistan, under the peshgi system, parents are given a cash advance in exchange for the labor of their children. Agents manipulate the child's earnings, entangling them and their families in a debt bondage cycle. A majority of these Pakistani carpet workers are girls under age 14.⁶³ In Nepal, there are about 1 million bonded child laborers working in the carpet industry, brick

kilns, construction, and on plantations.⁶⁴ The number of bonded laborers is decreasing as a result of legislation that banned the kamaiya system, Nepal's traditional practice of debt bondage, in July 2000.⁶⁵

Domestic Servitude

Forced to labor inside of homes, child domestic servants are at risk of enslavement because their working conditions are not easily monitored. Around the world there are millions of domestic servants; however, not all domestic service is considered slavery. It is difficult to pinpoint the number of enslaved child domestic servants because they are so inaccessible. Numerous media accounts of the abuse and mistreatment of child domestics, in both developed⁶⁶ and developing countries, indicate that many of these children are at high risk of enslavement.

Girls are believed to constitute about 90 percent of the world's child domestic servants⁶⁷ and domestic service employs more girls than any other type of employment. In Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, 20 percent of all girls between ages 10 and 14 work as domestic servants. Half a million girls are reported to be working as domestics in Jakarta, Indonesia, alone.⁶⁸ There are reported to be over 300,000 child domestic servants in the Philippines.⁶⁹

In many cultures, children are sent to relatives to receive training in a trade or skill and in exchange they are expected to provide some service around the house. However, in many instances, children are abused and forced to perform chores that surpass their physical limitations and their health and educational needs are neglected. They are not paid for their work and may not be permitted to return home. In these cases, domestic service is child slavery. The children never receive the promised training and are valued only for the labor they can provide around the house.

Because child domestics are kept out of the public eye, they are easily manipulated through fear and violence. Their status as a servant is made very clear and enslaved child domestics are controlled through beatings, fed minimally, and isolated from normal society. The enslaved child is at the command of everyone in the household, including the master's children, who may be younger than the enslaved child. Their workday is long, often beginning before sunrise and ending only when all chores have been com-

Haitian Restavec Children are Vulnerable to Enslavement

“Restavec” is Creole for “stay with.” Each year approximately 300,000 children in Haiti are sent by poor families to stay with wealthier families that force them to perform grueling domestic labor.⁷⁰ Jean-Robert Cadet was one of these children, given a broom at the age of four and regularly abused until he was kicked out and left to reinvent his life. Cadet, director of the Restavec Foundation, has committed his life to eradicating Haiti’s restavec system.⁷¹

Cadet: When you spend your entire childhood in that situation [as a slave], your foundation as a person is affected by it. I didn’t grow up having a normal life. I grew up knowing I had only one pair of shorts, one pair of pants, one shirt, and no shoes. I would get up at 5 a.m. and sweep the yard, empty the chamber pot, water the plants, wash the car, set the table, make breakfast, clear the table, mop the floors, make the beds, clean the furniture and bathrooms, and run errands. My duties would increase as I got older. I could not eat inside the house. I had to eat leftovers from the table. I never had a bed. I slept on old dresses underneath the kitchen table.

YAP-I: Describe your relationship with the master family.

Cadet: I was controlled by violence. The fear of getting beat up would compel me to do everything I was supposed to. They beat me with a whip. It hung on the kitchen wall as a reminder. So really there was no relationship. To me, a relationship means communicating with the person and the person communicates with you. If you have a need [as a child], you express it and the adult will fulfill that need. So, in a restavec situation, there is no such thing as a relationship. The restavec child is like a machine—fueled by minimal food, a little bit of sleep, and that’s it.

pleted to satisfaction. When the children have finished the daily chores, they sleep wherever they have been given space, which often means on the floor, under a table, on a roll-up mattress or mat, or in separate quarters.⁷² It is not uncommon for child domestics to be denied basic medical attention for injuries or illnesses. In some cases, they are kicked out of the house if they are ill and the master family will obtain a new, younger, healthier child.⁷³

Camel Jockeys

Camel racing in the Gulf States is similar to horse racing elsewhere. Like jockeys for horse racing, camel jockeys are small in stature. However, camel jockeys are often young boys, valued for their small size and exploited for the sport. They are kidnapped and trafficked primarily into the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Other children are taken from Sudan and brought to Qatar. Boys, sometimes as young as two, have been sold for as little as \$7.⁷⁴

The life of a camel jockey is very harsh. They are purposely malnourished to keep their weight down so the camels will run faster. They are also beaten and forced to exercise the camel every day in the extreme heat. The agents like the younger children because the camels run faster in response to their cries.⁷⁵ The young camel jockeys are strapped to the camels so they will not fall during a race. Although using rope to strap the children to the camel was banned by the racing industry, trainers began to use other materials not specifically outlawed, such as Velcro.⁷⁶ The ride is brutal and boys suffer serious injuries, including crushed genitalia. Some boys fall and are trampled. In April 2001, a seven-year-old Bangladeshi jockey died from kidney damage caused by camel racing.⁷⁷

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JOCKEYS.

The boys are easy to control through violence because they are in a foreign country, far from their family, culture, and native language. Once they are too heavy to compete, or if they rebel they are abandoned to become stateless children in a foreign country, left to survive on their own or die.⁷⁸

In 1993, UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan banned the practice and the UAE Camel Jockey Association ruled it was illegal to use children under age 14 or weighing less than 45 kilograms.⁷⁹ However, these measures have been largely ineffective, as there are stories steadily emerging about injured, abandoned, or dead camel jockeys. In September 2002, the UAE government outlawed the use of children under age 15 and less than 45 kilograms.⁸⁰ The government has pledged to establish a medical committee to monitor the age and weight of the jockeys. Also, the stable owners will be responsible for the cost of repatriating children found to be under age 15. The ILO would like to see the government set the minimum age for employment of camel jockeys at 18.⁸¹

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF CHILD SLAVERY ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND THE WORLD?

- Enslaved children who become sick or rebellious often are abandoned and left to fend for themselves.
- Enslaved children miss opportunities for their educational development.
- Slavery is the ultimate denial of children's human rights.

Modern child slavery is first and foremost detrimental to the children involved. Worldwide, children are being treated as disposable goods. Under the guise of economic profit, children are losing their lives. The health, societal, and economic costs of child slavery are real and manifest themselves in different ways.

Health

In modern slavery, little attention is paid to the health of the slaves. Because agents and owners know there is a large pool of potential slaves, children are kept and used for shorter periods of time and simply discarded after they become too sick or too old. In the case of Haitian restavecs, the children are abandoned after they reach age 15 because the law states that they must be paid at that point. These children are often dumped into the streets, where they become street beggars.⁸²

Left on the streets and in their work environments, enslaved children are forced to put their health and lives in grave danger. Forced and bonded child laborers in the agricultural sector frequently in-

hale pesticides, causing respiratory problems. In the glass bangle-making factories, children inhale kerosene fumes all day and suffer burns and other injuries. Child miners also are at risk for respiratory disease and injury or death due to mining accidents.⁸³

These injuries, although frequently ignored because employers know that they can kidnap or recruit more children, do come with a price. In India, total costs for work-related injuries to child laborers range from an estimated \$101 million to \$2.43 billion annually. In the South African agricultural sector, this number is estimated to be \$10 million each year.⁸⁴ Female child slaves are especially vulnerable because they are frequently sexually abused. They have to face pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and are vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.⁸⁵

In addition to physical injury, enslaved children suffer mentally and psychologically. Much of the violence and coercion in modern slavery is mental versus physical because slave owners value the physical labor that the children perform. Therefore, they aim to destroy the minds of the children before they physically destroy them.⁸⁶ They are socialized to accept forced servitude as a normal condition. Moreover, their ability to function in normal society is hindered.⁸⁷ Some programs, such as the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, focus on rehabilitating the children into mainstream society so that they feel like humans and not like victims.⁸⁸

Former restavec Jean-Robert Cadet admits to still having nightmares about his past in Haiti, where his mother died and his father gave him away to become a restavec. He says it was a struggle to speak about his experiences to his wife and to explain to his son why Daddy does not have any parents.⁸⁹

Education and society

In addition to lack of attention to health, enslaved children are often denied access to education. The loss in a child's life from not receiving an education is harmful to the child and society at large. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that every child has a right to education and compulsory education is mandated in almost every country. However, in the face of extreme poverty many families believe they must prioritize work over education.⁹⁰

It is rationalized that working children are engaged in an activity that teaches them a skill and how to make money. The immediacy of poverty and the upfront costs of sending a child to school make it a less attractive option. A survey that covered over 70 countries and varying levels of economic development concluded the average child receiving a primary education earns more than enough to cover upfront costs.⁹¹ Beyond the economics, when children go to school, they are investing in themselves and helping society on a grander scale. Some of the long-term benefits linked with investing in children's education are an increased likelihood of involvement in the political process, decreased fertility rates that slow population growth, and longer life expectancy.⁹²

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Family and community ties

Child slavery is damaging to the family structure and larger surrounding community. Chattel slavery and intergenerational debt bondage seem to normalize forced servitude as an acceptable family condition. The family unit is destroyed when children are trafficked or kidnapped from their homes. In some of these situations, the family may be too poor to spend time searching for their lost child because they are working and supporting the rest of the family.⁹³ For some children who do survive slavery and return home, they may not receive a warm welcome. Some families view these children as irreparable because of the abuse they have suffered.⁹⁴

Slavery symbolizes the poisoning of the sense of community. In Senegal, as in many other places, the traditional agricultural society and its cultural norms are being challenged by commercialization and the desire to acquire wealth. Where the village collectively used to contribute to the upbringing of the children in the community, now nuclear families are forced to compete with each other for re-

sources. The extended family many not be able to provide the support it once did because of the pressure on every adult to earn money. In this struggle in Senegal, some children become talibés, or street beggars, and fall prey to trafficking schemes.⁹⁵

World economy, wages and the consumer

The total annual profit generated by slavery has been estimated at \$13 billion.⁹⁶ In addition to the human costs, the costs of slavery can be calculated in terms of expenditures, wages and consumer prices. Goods are generally cheaper in areas where there is slavery because employers can pay less for labor. Business developers seeking to take advantage of lower production costs may create a greater demand for that labor through contracting with local businesses that are not ensuring that children are protected from slavery. Consumers are distanced from the production process, unaware that some of the products they purchase may have been at the expense of enslaved children. The benefits of using cheap, exploited enslaved children in production are bargain prices for consumers and high profits for retailers.

Human rights

The nearly universal ratification of the CRC establishes a worldwide acceptance of child rights as a subset of basic human rights. The CRC prescribes the child's claim to both participation rights and protection rights. Participation rights are the rights to something, including the right to freedom of education, expression, religion and association. Protection rights are rights to be protected from something. These include protection from abusive and degrading treatment, exploitation or deprivation of liberty. Child slavery fundamentally denies a child of both participation and protection rights and is therefore a denial of all basic human rights.

Child slavery demonstrates a lack of respect for the very life of the child. That millions of children are subjected to this grotesque abuse raises the question of society's commitment to the rights and well-being of children.

HOW CAN CHILD SLAVERY BE STOPPED?

- Campaigns to raise public awareness and label products have been successful.
- Leaders of industry and government can work cooperatively to stop child slavery.
- Slavery survivors have mobilized to address root causes.

There are over 300 legal instruments abolishing slavery.⁹⁷ However, what has been lacking is effective law enforcement. There are many historical examples of the limitations of relying on legal measures as the sole weapon against slavery. Article 1 of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery calls for the end to “any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years, is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person...with the view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labor.”⁹⁸ This is the best international instrument on the issue, but it has not been adequate in truly ending child slavery as there is evidence of child slavery around the world.

In India, the Anti-Slavery Act of 1843 abolished slavery but did not make any stipulations for debt bondage. This allowed the debt bondage system to survive on legal technicalities, providing a breeding ground for modern slavery.⁹⁹ Haiti was the home to the first successful slave rebellion in 1791. However, hundreds of thousands of children are enslaved in homes under the restavec system. In 1865, slaves were emancipated in the United States. While a triumphant moment in U.S. history, the Emancipation Proclamation did not establish any measures to facilitate the integration of African Americans into the existing socioeconomic system. The result has been years of racial discrimination and economic exclusion.¹⁰⁰

These cases illustrate that laws abolishing slavery are not enough. Similarly, redemption, or the practice of buying and freeing slaves, is only one possible response to stopping slavery. While securing freedom for slaves is very important, the historical examples showed that more has to be done to rehabilitate the slaves and condition the larger society for effective reintegration. Therefore, any plan to combat modern slavery must involve the former slaves and the larger community and society. While top-down legal approaches to resolving the issue are valid, movement must also happen from the opposite direction in order to bring about real change.

Consumer action

The RUGMARK Foundation

Making consumers aware of products made by child slaves is one method of tackling the issue. An example of a successful campaign to end industrial slavery has been spearheaded by the RUGMARK Foundation, which targets illegal child labor in the hand-knotted carpet industry. Founded in 1994 in India, RUGMARK now functions as an international NGO with monitoring programs in India, Pakistan and Nepal and marketing campaigns in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom.

RUGMARK's primary goals are to organize individuals and companies in the carpet industry to eliminate illegal child labor, to establish an independent and credible monitoring and certification system to ensure carpets are produced without child labor, to rehabilitate and educate former child carpet slaves, and to create a market demand for child labor-free goods.¹⁰¹

In 1995, RUGMARK created a trademark label that is placed on carpets as an indicator that no illegal child labor was used in the production of that rug. Each label has a serial number that can be traced back to the exporter and loom. The foundation has a licensing system for the exporters and importers, in which each side must pay a certain percentage of the value of the carpet bearing the RUGMARK label. The fees that the licensed importers pay are placed into a common fund that is used for education programs for rescued child laborers. The licensed exporters also pay a fee that is used to offset costs involved with inspection and monitoring and issuance

of the label.¹⁰² More than 2.5 million carpets sold in Europe and North America have had the RUGMARK label since its creation—proof that consumers can be educated about their purchasing decisions.¹⁰³

RUGMARK inspectors rescue three children per week, and, as of October 2002, had liberated a total of 1,424 children in India since 1995 and 475 children in Nepal since 1996.¹⁰⁴ In addition to rescuing and labeling, RUGMARK sets up schools for children freed from the looms and those in carpet producing communities. Since RUGMARK believes that educating children helps to address the root cause of child labor, these schools give the children a chance to realize life dreams.

Education and advocacy

Anti-Slavery International

Founded in London in 1839, Anti-Slavery International (ASI) is the oldest human rights organization. ASI has not only been committed to the abolition of slavery but also to promoting practical and sustainable measures to keep slavery from resurfacing in different guises. The organization pressures governments to recognize and address slavery in their respective nations. ASI was instrumental in getting the Nepalese government to take action against the kamaiya system of bonded labor, leading to the ban of the practice in 2000.¹⁰⁵ As the oldest organization campaigning against slavery, ASI has the most published works on the topic. In addition, Anti-Slavery has resources for teachers to introduce the topic of modern slavery in the classroom in order to raise awareness and create the next generation of anti-slavery advocates.

Free the Slaves

Free the Slaves is the sister organization of ASI and is based in Washington, DC. Free the Slaves operates according to five core objectives: provide support for grassroots organizations working against slavery; raise public awareness of the reality of modern slavery; promote the slave-free trade of goods; pressure governments to create and enforce anti-slavery and anti-trafficking laws and research the nature and extent of slavery and how best to fight it.¹⁰⁶ Recently, Free the Slaves released an educational pack to give teach-

ers a model for teaching children about modern slavery. The idea behind this effort is that ending slavery rests on helping people see the faces of modern slavery and understand why it exists. The curriculum is available on the internet and the organization is working to integrate it into the mainstream educational curriculum. In its campaign for slave-free trade, Free the Slaves identifies products in American stores that are made by slaves and works with the companies and the government to eliminate slave labor from their supply lines.

Cooperative ventures

International Cocoa Initiative

Cote d'Ivoire produces close to half of the world's cocoa. In 2000, the U.S. State Department reported 15,000 children between the ages of 9 and 12 were sold into forced labor on cotton, cocoa and coffee plantations in Cote d'Ivoire in recent years.¹⁰⁷ Figures have not been clear as to how many children on cocoa farms are salaried child workers and how many are victims of slavery. Some children have been bought for \$140,¹⁰⁸ and must labor long days in extreme heat splitting open cocoa pods and packing the beans into sacks that are then sold worldwide. The children, mostly young boys, are beaten for being slow or for trying to escape.

Recently, the chocolate industry has taken the unprecedented step of acknowledging the problem and working with NGOs, including Free the Slaves, labor unions and government agencies, to investigate the scope of the problem and to develop programs to end forced labor in cocoa production. The International Cocoa Initiative is one of the results of a protocol facilitated by U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and Representative Eliot Engel.¹⁰⁹ The Initiative, created in the summer of 2002, is a Geneva-based foundation—comprised of representatives from the industry, labor, and NGOs—which will fund programs to address these problems in Cote d'Ivoire and other cocoa-producing areas. These programs will stem from research investigating abusive child labor, including slavery, in West Africa.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture conducted research in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria and released its survey findings in August 2002. The report did not outright iden-

tify slavery, but it did conclude that 2,100 children had been trafficked into cocoa production in Cote d'Ivoire.¹¹⁰ Though the findings raise some doubt about the practice of slavery in that region, it is the first time that an industry has committed itself to investigate slavery and find ways to eliminate slavery from its supply line. This creates a standard and model for other industries to combat slavery and serious labor issues, while promoting cooperation among industry, labor and NGOs.

Prevention

Restavec Foundation

Jean-Robert Cadet, a former child slave, created the Restavec Foundation in 2000 to combat child slavery in Haiti. Cadet attributes the extreme poverty and sense of desperation as factors that sustain the restavec system. Yet, Cadet believes that the Haitian government presents the largest obstacle to tackling this issue, pointing out that officials have restavec children themselves and therefore only offer lip service in terms of combating the problem.¹¹¹ The organization has three main goals: provide real homes for restavec children and put them in school; educate the general population about the severity of the restavec system; and assist rural families with food and education. In the summer of 2002, Cadet began a pilot program to sensitize elementary school children in Haiti who have restavecs in their homes. Cadet feels that the adults are set in their ways and accustomed to having restavecs, but reaching children and educating them about the injustice of the restavec system will prevent them from perpetuating the practice of child slavery in the future.¹¹²

Survivor-generated strategies

Some projects to combat child slavery are a collaboration of the very communities affected and local and international NGOs. Senegalese child domestics mobilized to form a group and they collectively challenged the issues of pay, physical abuse and health insurance. They succeeded in setting up their own health care fund and making time to attend school and work.¹¹³ Other approaches provide the parents with income-generating alternatives so they will not sell their children into slavery. In India and Benin, local organi-

zations have been able to establish micro-credit programs that make education more affordable. In Guatemala, the International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour (IPEC) supported a stone quarry project that used a revolving credit fund to assist families to build their own businesses. Parents promised to withdraw the children from work and send them to school as part of the loan agreement.¹¹⁴

Some initiatives center on technological innovation because it is believed that these types of improvements in the production process will replace the need for human labor and decrease the demand for child slaves. This type of effort is relatively new and still being developed, but there has been some success. In Peruvian mining communities, IPEC introduced a new electric winch that could replace the labor children were forced to provide.¹¹⁵ This class of strategies demonstrate that efforts to eradicate slavery will have to happen simultaneously on different levels and be meaningful to the population affected.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary manifestations of slavery are the result of the evolution of slavery from practices in ancient empires through the 400-year African slave trade and into the present realities of a global economy. Although most of the world's citizens would like to believe that this fundamental abuse of human rights—and particularly the heinous use of children for slave labor—had been relegated to the past, it haunts us still.

The enslavement of children has been addressed through numerous legal measures. Now, ending child slavery is a matter of political will and advocacy. Opportunities to stop the enslavement of millions of children abound on every level—local, national, international, governmental and nongovernmental. Until all members of global society actively participate in combatting slavery, it will continue to resurface and destroy the lives of millions of children.

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TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MODERN CHILD SLAVERY

Information, Book and Video List

New Slavery: A Reference Handbook
Kevin Bales, (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc.) © 2000.

Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy
Kevin Bales, (Berkeley: University of Los Angeles Press) © 1999.

Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American
Jean-Robert Cadet, (Austin: University of Texas Press) © 1998.

Publications available from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Child Labor Study: 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S-5307, Washington, DC 20010 USA, Tel: (1) 202 693 4843, Fax: (1) 202 693 4830.

"By the Sweat and Toil of Children, Volumes I-VI," © 1994-2000.

"The Department of Labor's 2001 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Trade and Development Act of 2000," © 2002.

"A Future Without Child Labour," © 2002.
Report available from International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour: 4, Route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, Tel: (41) 22 799 8181, Fax: (41) 22 799 8771.

Slavery: A Global Investigation (video documentary)
Kate Blewitt and Brian Woods, A True Vision Production for Channel 4, © 2001.
Available from Free the Slaves, 1326 14th St, NW, Washington, DC 20005, Tel: (1) 202 588 1865, Fax: (1) 202 588 1514. Order by emailing info@freetheslaves.net.

RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

Free the Slaves

1326 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005 USA
Tel: (toll free) (1) 866 324 FREE
Tel: (1) 202 588 1865
Fax: (1) 202 588 1514
Email: info@freetheslaves.net
Website: www.freetheslaves.net

Free the Slaves is the U.S.-based affiliate organization of Anti-Slavery International. Dedicated to the abolition of modern slavery, they offer educational resources, grassroots action materials and online publications.

Anti-Slavery International

Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard
Broomgrove Road
London SW9 9TL United Kingdom
Tel: (44) 0 20 7501 8920
Fax: (44) 0 20 7738 4110
Email: info@antislavery.org
Website: www.antislavery.org

Anti-Slavery International is a human rights organization that works toward ending slavery and trafficking internationally. They have a searchable online database and other resource lists.

International Labour Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

4, Route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22 Switzerland
Tel: (41) 22 799 8181
Fax: (41) 22 799 8771
Email: ipec@ilo.org

Website: www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/index.htm

IPEC, a branch of the International Labour Organization, is a 90-country alliance against child labor. They provide nation-specific information and a searchable database on their website.

Global March Against Child Labour

L-6, Kalkaji, New Delhi - 19 India.
Tel: (91) 11 622 4899
Fax: (91) 11 623 6818
Email: childhood@globalmarch.org
Website: www.globalmarch.org

Global March Against Child Labour is a worldwide movement to put an end to child labor, slavery and trafficking. Their online site offers country data, a resource center and reports on global child labor issues.

RUGMARK Foundation

733 15th Street, NW, Suite 912
Washington, D.C. 20005 USA
Phone: (1) 202 347 4205
Fax: (1) 202 347 4885
Email: info@RUGMARK.org
Website: www.rugmark.org

RUGMARK is a global nonprofit organization working to end illegal child labor in the carpet industry in India, Nepal and Pakistan. It does this through monitoring factories, consumer labeling and running schools for former child workers.

American Anti-Slavery Group

198 Tremont Street, #421
Boston, MA 02116 USA
Tel: (toll free) (1) 800 884 0719
Tel: (1) 617 426 8161
Email: info@iabolish.com
Website: www.iabolish.com

The American Anti-Slavery Group is a nonprofit grassroots organization that encourages community activism to help abolish slavery through its interactive website.

Restavec Foundation

P.O. Box 43156
Cincinnati, OH 45243 USA
Email: jnrcadet@aol.com
Website: www.restavec.org

The Restavec Foundation educates communities about Haiti's restavec system and rehabilitates enslaved children.

Child Labor Coalition

1701 K Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006 USA
Tel: (1) 202 835 3323
Fax: (1) 202 835 0747
Email: childlabor@stopchildlabor.org
Website: www.stopchildlabor.org

The Child Labor Coalition is a U.S.-based coalition of over 70 nonprofit organizations that serves as a national network for the exchange of information about child labor.

South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS)

74 Aravali Apartment
DDA Kalkaji
New Delhi 19 India
Tel: (91) 11 621 0807
Fax: (91) 11 642 0029
Email: yatra@del2.vsnl.net.in
Website: www.saccsweb.org

SACCS is a nonprofit organization in India that specializes in child slavery and labor issues in South Asia. They liberate and rehabilitate children who have been bound in servitude.



"WHEN A CHILD ENTERS INTO SLAVERY,
ANOTHER BLOT IS PUT ON THE FACE OF
HUMANKIND, ANOTHER HEINOUS CRIME
AGAINST THE FUTURE IS COMMITTED."

—KAILASH SATYARTHI
FOUNDER AND CHAIRPERSON
GLOBAL MARCH
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