

Forum: Social Humanitarian & Cultural Committee
Issue: Combatting Present Day Slavery
Student Officer: Jannis Giavridis
Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jannis Giavridis and it will be an honour for me to serve as this year's PSMUN Co-Chair of the Social Humanitarian & Cultural Committee. This will be my 2nd PSMUN conference after having served my first one as the Delegate of Israel in the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. Overall this will be my 12th MUN conference and my 5th time as a Student Officer.

I am a student of the 11th grade at the German School of Athens (DSA) and since my very first conference I have been very interested in politics and the big issues of the world that are still to be addressed or solved. Apart from politics there are also lots of other things that have waked my interest. Here are some of them so you can have an idea of my person: Physics, Cosmology, Philosophy, and Poetry. So looking at my interests, it's that one of my highest priorities is logic. Personally, I believe that there is nothing more important than staying in the area of logic and rationality when trying to find solutions for everything ranging from a minor problem to a global issue.

As your Expert Chair on this issue I'm not only trying to widen your knowledge on this issue but also to do this in a comprehensive and in the least possible boring way. Just like in a math equation I'll be giving you the different Factors, the starting situation as well as the desired Product, the best possible situation, our goal, the complete and global eradication of slavery. It'll be up to you to decide upon what needs to be done to turn our factors into the desired product or which actions are necessary to achieve our goal and solve the issue. Keep in mind, that there is no such thing as the perfect solution. It is comparable to a fibbonachi spiral. You won't reach the center point, your goal, you won't find the perfect solution that is going to fully eradicate slavery. But the more work, thought and effort you put into this issue, the closer you'll get to it to the perfect solution. I'll be there to help you and answer any questions. You can reach me at any time under my e-mail: jannis.g@me.com. I'm looking forward to working with you.

Best Regards,

Jannis Giavridis

INTRODUCING TOPIC

Slavery. When most people nowadays hear this word, their thoughts go to the past. In our minds, slavery is an issue that has been overcome decades, if not a whole century ago with its abolition. Therefore it is of utmost importance for you to realize that the issue of slavery is and never ever in the history of mankind was fully solved. Slavery lives on until the present day and it is now your job to do whatever is needed to completely eradicate it.

Before getting into the issue, it should be cleared up that there are many different forms of slavery, enforced through various ways, perpetrated by divergent groups, organizations or criminals in diverse countries and places. Thus, to avoid confusion it is advised to read carefully through the precise definition of slavery to better understand this very broad term.

According to estimates, today there are still 21 million victims, more than there were during the Atlantic slave trade that fall under the definition of slavery. Whether the Yazidis in Syria that are being enslaved by ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) militants, North Koreans working under harmful conditions in the preparations for the World Cup in Qatar or the trafficking and forcing of kids into prostitution in China, it is clear that slavery in whichever possible form is a clear violation of human rights and needs to be stopped.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Slave or Enslaved Person

A slave is somebody who is owned by another individual and forced to work for nothing and dehumanized into being treated like the owner's property. This is the classical definition of a slave. Firstly it should be mentioned that the term «enslaved person» is to be preferred since it better highlights that the person was forced into being a slave and it is a good way to avoid dehumanizing language. The modern definition of an enslaved person is one of the 4 following conditions:

- Forced to work by being physically or mentally threatened
- Controlled or owned by an «employer» through the threat of or active physical or mental abuse
- Dehumanized, treated as a product, bought and sold as someone's property
- Physically constrained and no or restricted freedom of movement

For someone to fall under the category of an enslaved person one of the above mentioned points is enough, however there are many people that suffer under all 4 of them.

Chattel Slave

A Chattel slave is usually enslaved for life and is treated like complete property. Such an individual is sold and bought like any other product and therefore completely dehumanized. A Chattel slave's children and grandchildren are also automatically enslaved most often without any hope of escaping slavery (Decent-based Slavery).

This kind of slavery was mostly prevalent legally in the US before the civil war and back in ancient Rome and Greece, however it still exists today in Eastern African countries like Mauritania and Sudan where dark-skinned people are kidnapped from their villages and sold to Arabs. Those slaves are often branded with hot metal, exploited, abused or traded for weapons.

Today's most common forms of slavery

- **Bonded Labour**

This is the most common form of present day slavery and probably one of the least known in the world. People are usually tricked into bonded labour after being lended money by someone and then are asked to work for this person to make up for their debts. However, their pay is so little that it is almost impossible for them to get out of their debt. In addition to that, sometimes their debts have also very high interest rates and interest on the interest, making it after a certain amount of time impossible for the bonded laborers to pay back their ever rising debt. The debt and therefore also the state of being enslaved is often passed on to the children of the labourers.

The labourer's work usually surpasses the value of the money they were originally lended, but the «creditors» find their ways to keep them bonded, either through threatening them, abusing them or simply stating that they still have money left to repay. Some are under surveillance others even under lock and key.

In South Asia this form of slavery is mostly used on the lowest cast, the Dalits, also known as «The Untouchables». Their loan is barely enough for survival and medical costs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that in the Asia Pacific region there are around 11.7 million people in suffering under bonded labour, particularly debt bondage.

This kind of slavery exploits the desperation of the poor. In the demand to cover their basic daily needs and the search for money these people sell their labour for a miniscule amount of money. Despite being illegal, bonded labour often remains unpunished by the governments since the victims of this crime are usually discriminated against minority which leaves them with very little hope for justice, education and a way to get out of poverty.

- **Child Slavery**

The general definition of child slavery is the act of exploitation of a child for someone else's gain. The children used by the ones who profit from them are forced through violence, abuse, or threats into different areas of «work» such as:

- o Prostitution or Pornography
- o Unlawful activities such as begging, theft or drug trade
- o Work in agriculture, mines, construction sites, factories, restaurants or bars
- o Armed conflict
- o Forced marriage
- o Domestic work

According to the ILO there are up to 115 million children in the worst forms of child labour not all of these cases fall under the category of slavery, since many of the children are brought into this kind of labour by their parents due to poverty or the belief of having no other hope for a better life, therefore it cannot clearly be said that these children are working involuntarily. 8.4 million of these 115 million fall under the category of slavery or forced work in the above-mentioned areas.

Especially in the area of children a clear barrier needs to be created between involuntary work and work to make a living, real exploitation and a low pay. In first world countries some children even feel forced by parents to go to school, while in developing countries children working under the worst conditions can feel like it's their daily routine and their only way to make enough money for their family to cover their basic needs. It should be highlighted that there are also forms of child work that positively contribute to a child's development. Child labour is not necessarily slavery, but still it can inhibit children from receiving an education and burden their development.

The issue is that children are very easily manipulated. This manipulation is the strongest when children are forced to fight in armed conflict. The groups that commit these atrocities often find their recruits in little villages. They storm the villages and randomly start killing people. When they take the people under their control, the children are desensitized by having their parents murdered in front of their eyes or by being forced to kill them. They are trained into becoming ruthless killers and at the same time preached the propaganda of the rebel, terrorist or militant group that kidnapped them up to the point where they fully believe in it and are ready to murder anyone without hesitation who is opposed to it. It is safe to say that this is the worst possible and most inhumane form of child slavery that exists.

- **Forced Marriage**

The definition seems pretty clear: When somebody is forced into marriage. However, forced marriage is not always necessarily a form of slavery. In fact it is a culturally widely accepted practice in many countries. To fall under the category of slavery the following three elements need to be present:

- o If the person has not given its informed and free consent on the marriage
- o If there is a sense of «ownership» in the marriage, the victim remains under control of the partner through violence, abuse or threats and is forced to complete housework or to engage in non-consensual sex relations
- o If the person has no realistic option of leaving this marriage leading to a form of lifelong enslavement

Now staying pragmatic it should be quickly noticed that the cases where the above mentioned points affect a man are very low to non-existent. The ones strongly affected by forced marriage in a form of slavery are women and children, so the ones hit the worst are girls.

Usually the perpetrators enjoy full impunity, since many of the victims fear the consequences of refusing to enter the marriage or to try to take a divorce. Often there is immense pressure by the families of the victim so that it does appear to agree with the marriage or not show any outer signs of refusal. In addition to that, there is also the fear of the reaction of society. In many conservative societies, up until today women that leave their marriage are excluded from their communities and families, while finding a job and standing on their own feet can be a major challenge.

- **Forced Labour**

Forced labour is the easiest slave practice to define: When somebody is made to work against his own will. The element of forced labour is included in most other slave practices such as bonded labour or trafficking. It mostly takes place in industries that either require hard physical work or are very under-regulated such as mining, quarrying, manufacturing etc. On average if we'd sum up the world's population to a thousand people, 3 of them would be affected by forced labour and half of them would be from South East Asia. Most of them work for big corporations, powerful criminal organisations or just rich individuals that are exploiting them. However, 10% of them are actually forced into labour by their state or its military, most notably in Uzbekistan, Burma, North Korea and China. Once again the victims of it are often discriminated and marginalized minorities.

- **Human trafficking**

Human trafficking can be described as the act of moving an individual to a different place where any of the above mentioned forms of slavery are practiced upon it. In spite of most attention being drawn to trafficking for sexual exploitation, most of trafficking actually results in labour exploitation. And as in almost every other form of

slavery the victim is brought into a situation of exploitation through violence, abuse or threats.

Trafficking is often confused with smuggling. In human trafficking the people do not have to necessarily cross a border, it can also happen on a national or even a communal level. The difference is that most people smuggled, pay their smugglers to be moved to a different country. The act of smuggling is majorly used by immigrants to illegally cross a country's border in order to get into a more developed country in the hope of a better job, a higher income or a safer and happier life. Upon arrival, the smuggled people are free. In trafficking, the people are as well seeking a better life, a way to escape poverty and discrimination and send money to their families. The traffickers offer them a well-paying job abroad or in another region but as soon as they arrive, they realize that what they were promised doesn't exist. They are then straightaway forced to work under conditions that were not agreed with the trafficker.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

International Legal Instruments

Here are some treaties, conventions, protocols or agreements that played a major role in the Abolition of slavery spreading worldwide from the early 20th century until today.

1. The International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade
Adoption: 18 May 1904, Paris, France
Entry into force: 18 July 1905
More information: This treaty is one of the series of treaties that addresses the issues of human trafficking and slavery.
2. International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children
Adoption: 30 September 1921, Geneva, Switzerland
Entry into force: 15 June 1922
This multilateral treaty came into creation under the auspices of the League of Nations focusing on the trafficking of children and women.
3. The Slavery Convention
Adoption: 25 September 1926, Geneva, Switzerland
Entry into force: 9 March 1927

More information: It was an international treaty created by the League of Nations in order to strengthen the suppression of worldwide slave trade and slavery.

4. The Forced Labor Convention (US, China, Afghanistan)

Adoption: 10 June 1930, Geneva, Switzerland

Entry in force: 1 May 1932

More information: This convention is one of the fundamental legal documents of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in its fight against compulsory or forced labor.

5. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adoption: 10 December 1948, Pallait de Chaillot, Paris, France

Entry into force: 16 December 1949

More information: This declaration arose from the UN General Assembly (GA) as a response to crimes and severe human rights atrocities that took place in WWII, making the first move towards giving all citizens of the world basic human rights. Article 4 states: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”

6. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (US, Western World)

Adoption: 30 November 1973

Entry into force: 1976

More information: Adopted by the UN GA, the Convention declares apartheid to be a crime against humanity and has its focus on preventing a new apartheid the way it happened in South Africa. All inhuman acts for establishing domination of one ethnic, racial, cultural or religious group over another are outlawed, as well as the exploitation of members of such groups by submitting them to forced labor.

7. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adoption: 20 November 1989, New York, US

Entry into force: 2 September 1990

More information: The Convention on the Rights of the Child seeks to protect the young from neglect, exploitation or abuse, at work, at home, and in armed

conflicts. It also emphasizes the importance for the youth to receive a proper health care and education. Every country in the world has ratified the convention except Somalia (non-functional government), South Sudan and the United States of America. Both Somalia and South Sudan have committed themselves to ratify the convention and have started domestic changes.

8. The Convention against the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Adoption: 17 June 1999

Entry into force: 19 November 2000

The ILO passes this convention with the goal of establishing widely recognized international standards protecting children against child prostitution or pornography, forced or indentured labor, use of children in drug trafficking, and other work harmful to the safety, health, and morals of children. The six non-signatory members include India, Eritrea and Cuba.

9. The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted: 25 May 2000

Entry into force: 12 February 2002

The UN GA adopts this convention in order to establish eighteen as the minimum age for compulsory recruitment into armed groups or engagement in armed conflict.

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT INCIDENTS

Year	Country	Description of incident
1940-1945	Japan	Thousands of Korean and Chinese women are forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during WWII as “military comfort women” for Japanese soldiers.
1939-1945	Germany	The Nazis forced some 9 million people to work in industry and farming throughout WWII until they were completely depleted of energy at which point they were sent to concentration camps.
1954	China	China passes the State Regulation on Reform through Labor allowing prisoners to be used for labor in the laogai prison camps
1989	Sudan	The National Islamic Front overthrows the Sudanese government and arms the tribe of Baggara to fight the opposing southern tribes, the Dinka and Nuer. These new “militias” storm through villages, killing or capturing and enslaving the inhabitants
2003	Pakistan	Upon heavy pressure by the international community and the UN, Pakistan assures that in their country “all bonded labor will stop”. It does not.
2011	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Research by Free the Slaves reveals that seven distinctly identifiable forms of modern slavery are still found in the mining zones of eastern DRC, including forced labor enforced by armed groups, debt bondage, peonage, sexual slavery, forced marriage, the use of children by armed groups, and other forms of child slavery. Slavery continues in the Congo.

MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

North Korea- DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

North Korea, with its economy crippled by the worldwide sanctions imposed by the UN's Security Council, attempts to rebuild it by sending North Koreans to countries all over the world as labourers, working under slavery-like conditions. This is nothing new and has been done by the tyrannic government for decades, but since Kim Jong-un has risen to power the number of these workers has tripled to 65.000. They work around 12 hours a day in jobs that require heavy physical work under extremely harsh conditions like for example in Siberian forests, mines in Mongolia or in construction sites in Qatar for the coming World Cup 2022. They allegedly have a monthly income of about 650 Euros, nevertheless they only receive about 10% of the money, barely enough for survival. The workers claim that the rest of the money will be given to their families or that it will be given to them upon their return to North Korea. However it is widely known that in reality the chain of North Korean state-run bodies are the ones that profit from the exploitation of their people. These bodies are controlled by «Office 39», a department that covers the expenditures of Kim Jong-un's lifestyle. But the truly horrifying fact is, that in North Korea it is seen as a privilege to be sent to another country as a labourer since the conditions as a labourer in North Korea are even worse! But since the DPRK has shut its doors to the world it is hard to get accurate information on the exact working conditions there, but it is safe to say that they are very harsh, maybe even inhumanely slavery like.

Qatar

Notorious for its 2022 World Cup facilities under construction, with the labourers estimated to be dying at a rate of 1 a day due to the inhumane working conditions. These are the statistics of 2014. In 2013 Qatar promised to improve working conditions following news reports that revealed how harsh conditions were. The labourers are providing heavy physical work in mandatory long shifts with very high temperatures leading to the labourers suffering cardiac arrests. The migrant workers' passports are taken away or they are tricked into signing contracts bounding into 5 years of commitment to their employers. The element of bounded and forced labour cannot be overseen in Qatar. It has even been accused of being «A 21st century slave state». With its population being the richest per person in the world, there shouldn't be any lack of money to facilitate better conditions for its migrant workers. Amongst the migrant workers there are as mentioned above also workers from the DPRK. Through this, Qatar is indirectly funding the totalitarian Government in Pyongyang.

Mauritania

Statistically seen Mauritania is doing the worst globally in terms of slavery. According to estimates by NGOs such as SOS slavery, the percentage of the country's citizens that are enslaved ranges from 5%-20%. It was the last country in the world to legally abolish slavery. Slavery is deeply enrooted in Mauritania's structure of society. While in other

Western African countries «only» slavery-like conditions persist, in Mauritania the situation is being described by experts as worryingly severe.

Union of Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar is known for in spite of being a country very rich in resources, due to its regime's mismanagement the population especially in the rural areas suffers poverty and hunger. In hope of better economic opportunities lots of Burmese people are being trafficked to Thailand, China, Bangladesh, India, South Korea or Pakistan where they become subject of sexual exploitation and forced labour.

The People's Republic of China

According to estimates, in China we can find around 10% of the world's enslaved people: 3 million. China is especially notorious for its child slavery. Children under the age of 16 are allowed to work under «Educational Labour». This is often abused by school officials that are making the children work under heavy labour. Also, every year in China around 70 000 children are kidnapped and sold to companies for child labour or to households for domestic slavery.

India and Pakistan

Labelled as «The World's Slave Capitals», India and Pakistan are home to 45% of the entire world's slaves. Most heavily prevalent, are forced labour, trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Often entire families are being enslaved by construction, agricultural, brick making and manufacturing companies and factories. In India the ones affected the strongest are the Dalits, the people of the lowest cast.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

With most countries having made slavery an illegal practice already over 100 years ago, and still having around 30 million slaves worldwide, many people believe that the fight against slavery in the past century didn't have any significant effect. However it should be kept in mind that even if the number of slaves worldwide rises, the proportion of the world's population that is enslaved has reached an all-time low. Furthermore contrary to a century or more ago, nowadays there are almost no countries anymore that have a significant part of their economy based on slavery. Slavery generates around 150 billion dollars in profit, which is, compared to the global economy, just a tiny drop into the ocean.

Awareness raising is one of the most important actions in order to stop slavery. The people need to be well-informed on the impact of slavery and the grade of exploitation that enslaved people are living through. Educational programs, promotion of literacy amongst women and information on prostitution and pornography are very important in raising awareness on this problem. Communities, local officials, the media, universities or other kinds of associations could do a great job in this.

There are two aspects of making the law that prohibits slavery in a country effective. The country's judicature and its executive. The country needs to have a well working executive police force that takes care of arresting people committing this crime. Then the judicature must do its job properly. The offenders must be taken to court and sentenced by an unbiased judge to a fair punishment. The issue in many countries is that corrupt officials often close their eyes in front of the slavery-like crimes that are being committed. Especially big and powerful criminal organizations that have a wide network of infiltration, bribe high positioned officials. This makes it particularly hard to end slavery. In addition to a not functioning execution of the countries law by the police force, the judges are also likely to be bribed, granting the perpetrators full impunity for their actions. Moreover, many countries don't even have a police force that focuses on slavery-like practices. In addition to that the governments of the affected countries make a lot of promises, but in the end don't impose any measures or actions against this issue. Another possible solution would be to push the governments to really act against slavery.

The imposition of sanctions on the countries, that do not comply with minimum standards of the measures proposed against slavery or the countries that are affected by slavery and are making no significant efforts to end it, could be suggested. But keep in mind that as being in the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee we do not have the power of the Security Council and therefore cannot directly impose sanctions, what we can however is to suggest, encourage or promote the imposition of sanctions.

A country that makes real attempts will also have good results. As an example for this we have Brazil. The president of Brazil set up a commission to end slavery. Brazil invested into anti-slavery squads and managed to rescue 10 000 enslaved people within 2 years. The victims were given a total of 3 million US-dollars for support.

Every government could reach such results if it united all of its organs, established a well-functioning national plan and followed this plan by action and reports on its progress. Since many Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) are affected, the developed ones could offer their support to the countries ready to eradicate this problem from the entire area within their borders.

Another solution to end forms of forced labour, child work, bonded labour etc. could be by tracing back the products sold in big numbers in the developed world and checking whether the companies are producing these products without entertaining any forms of forced, bonded or child labour. If the developed world decides to stop using and investing into these companies' products, so in a way by sanctioning them, these companies will go bankrupt. The Fair Trade organization has already done good work in this area.

In a nutshell, slavery is a gruesome practice that can be eradicated with some creativity. Your resolutions and combined efforts could bring the world one step closer

to the eradication of slavery, freedom and all human beings living under their Universal Human Rights.

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