

Forced Labour Slavery

Forced labour slavery is the use of deception or violent coercion to compel someone to labour without pay or for no pay beyond the substance necessary to continue the labour. Modern-day slaves face brutal conditions in rock quarries, rice mills, brick kilns, fisheries, garment factories and many other industries around the world. Victims of slavery are often deprived of the freedom of movement, unable to leave the facility where they are forced to work and unable to seek employment elsewhere. Forced labourers are also often victims of violent physical and sexual abuse.

Debt bondage is a common method used to entrap victims of slavery. In this illegal scheme, an employer offers a small loan (often as low as \$25) to a labourer, with the understanding that the loan will be repaid through work at the owner's facility. The perpetrator ensures this repayment is impossible by inflating the loan through exorbitant interest rates, false charges and denying requests for information on the status of the loan. The labourer is forbidden to leave the work facility until the loan is repaid in full. The employer becomes the labourer's owner – and the loan's conditions are often extended to relatives of the victim, including children, who are forced to work off a false and ever-growing debt.

THE FACTS

- There are an estimated 27 million slaves in the world today—more than any other time in history. (Bales, *Disposable People*)
- Children below the age of 18 years represent between 40 to 50% of all forced labour victims. (ILO)
- In a recent, wide-reaching survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 40% of countries had not registered a single conviction against perpetrators of trafficking and slavery, which is crucial for deterrence. (UNODC)

IJM'S RESPONSE

IJM investigates cases of slavery and partners with local authorities to release slaves and their families from the facilities where they are held. IJM lawyers work to pursue perpetrator accountability, so that slave-owners are prosecuted with sentences commensurate with their crimes – a rarity in most of the world. IJM staff ensure that victims of forced labour slavery are provided the full spectrum of government rehabilitation services to which they are entitled, including financial compensation. Former slaves are provided with aftercare services, including counselling, assistance securing employment and enrolling children in school, facilitation of community groups and assistance opening a bank account. IJM's casework on forced labour slavery is conducted primarily in India, where IJM has secured the freedom of more than 2,000 forced labour slaves and provided long-term aftercare for them and their families.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

International Justice Mission Canada is a human rights organization that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression, in partnership with U.S.-based International Justice Mission (IJM). IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to ensure that public justice systems – police, courts and laws – effectively protect the poor.



KUMAR'S STORY - INDIA

Orphaned at age five, Kumar became a slave in a brick kiln at age seven. He was forced to carry heavy loads of bricks on his head and work through illness and injury. While his peers were in school, he struggled daily with the physical stress of hard labour.

After several years at the kiln, Kumar was released from slavery through IJM intervention in collaboration with local authorities. Kumar is now free to pursue his dream for the future: "I want to become a police officer so I can help and protect the good people of our village," he recently told staff. He has excelled in school and has recently begun an internship with one of IJM's India field offices.

