



INTERNATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY LEADERS CALL ON CANADIANS TO END MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

IJM Canada's Jamie McIntosh, Free the Slaves' Kevin Bales to speak at launch of The Alliance Against Modern Slavery

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LONDON, ONTARIO – IJM Canada executive director Jamie McIntosh and other national and international anti-trafficking leaders are calling on Canadians to take up their role in the battle for justice. Says McIntosh: “Canadians once fought slavery through the “underground railroad” and won; now is our time as a nation to lay fresh tracks to freedom.”

The urgency of this call was underscored yesterday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as Richard Danzinger of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), affirmed that human trafficking is among the leading sources of profit for criminal activity today. In fact, this illicit trade generates approximately 32 Billion USD in *annual* revenues. Indeed, in recent years there has been a mounting, credible body of evidence that tens of millions of people worldwide are held illegally enslaved for sex or labour. And yet despite occasional flashes of attention, the issue of modern slavery has languished at the sidelines of the global agenda.

In view of these disturbing realities, International Justice Mission (IJM) Canada urgently calls for the prioritization of global and Canadian efforts to combat human trafficking, and today embraces a key development in the announcement of a strategic alliance committed to slavery's eradication.

“Concerted and sustained effort is required to counter the near-ominous grip of today's slavers, who violently control the lives and extort the labour of countless individuals and families” says IJM Canada's executive director, Jamie McIntosh.

Canadians are getting engaged in this fight. On January 28 – 29, 2011, newly-established Canadian NGO The Alliance Against Modern Slavery will celebrate its official launch with a Freedom Concert and conference. The events will bring international experts, government officials, law enforcement personnel, survivors of slavery and more to York University. The Alliance Against Modern Slavery (AAMS) will seek to engage Canadians in today's abolition movement, pursuing a future in which “every person has the opportunity for sustainable freedom.”

Among notable experts such as Kevin Bales, President of Free the Slaves and a leading authority on modern slavery, and Marty vanDooren, RCMP Human Trafficking Awareness Coordinator for Ontario, Jamie McIntosh will intersperse firsthand accounts of IJM's anti-trafficking work in brick kilns and brothels in Asia, with insights from his academic research into historic human rights movements.

Still, McIntosh urges that any academic reflection lead to action on this burning human rights issue: “We’re drawn to this conference to ensure that slavery becomes history once again”.

“The shackles of modern slavery exert their hold on more victims now than at any other moment in history. Yet through the skilful application of modern investigative techniques, alongside the vigilant enforcement of national laws against slavery in all its forms,” McIntosh says, “IJM has seen the chains begin to fall.” In the past year alone, International Justice Mission has partnered with local authorities to rescue more than 800 victims of forced labour slavery and sex trafficking.

“With millions of lives hanging in the balance, it is imperative that we speedily scale proven initiatives to reverse the resurgence of slavery. We must act together to end this onslaught against our common humanity. Canadians once fought slavery through the “underground railroad” and won; now is our time as a nation to lay fresh tracks to freedom.”

For more information on the AAMS, or to schedule an interview, contact Karlee Sapoznik at (647) 637-6350 or karlee@allianceagainstmernslavery.org or visit the website at <http://www.allianceagainstmernslavery.org/>

For more information about the work of IJM Canada, or to arrange an interview with Jamie McIntosh, please contact IJM Canada at (519) 679-5030 x. 229 or by email at pbosma@ijm.ca. Alternately, please visit the website at www.ijm.ca

MEDIA CONTACT:

Name: Petra Bosma

Email: pbosma@ijm.ca

Phone: 519-679-5030 x. 229

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International Justice Mission Canada is a human rights organization that brings immediate relief to victims of sexual exploitation, slavery and violent oppression, in partnership with U.S.-based International Justice Mission (IJM). A multi-national team of lawyers and law enforcement professionals conduct criminal investigations and collect evidence to relieve victims and bring perpetrators to justice, and IJM social workers secure appropriate aftercare for victims of abuse. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide. IJM’s multi-national staff works in 13 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to ensure that the global poor are protected from violent forms of oppression by their countries’ own laws. IJM Canada was founded by Jamie McIntosh in 2002 and is located in London, Ont.

EVENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

FREEDOM CONCERT

When: January 28, 7:00-10:00pm

Where: Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre,
Accolade East Building, York University

Cost: \$19 or \$14 for students

Tickets can be picked up at the York University Box Office

Box Office Information: <http://www.yorku.ca/perform/boxoffice.htm>

Box Office Phone Number: 416-736-5888

Online Ticket Purchase: <https://secure1.tixhub.com/yorku/procurement>

SLAVERY IN THE 21st CENTURY CONFERENCE

When: January 29, 9:00am-5:30pm

Where: Founders Assembly Hall, Founders College,

York University

Register: <http://allianceagainstmodernslavery.org/confreg>