

Forced Labor Slavery

Forced labor slavery is the use of deception, threats or violence to compel someone to labor without pay or for no pay beyond the substance necessary to continue the labor. It is called by many names, including debt bondage and forced labor, and is a form of modern slavery.

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 laborers 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 laborer, with the understanding that the loan will be repaid through work at the owner's facility. The owner then ensures this repayment is impossible by refusing to pay the employee and inflating the loan through exorbitant interest rates, false charges, and denying requests for information on the status of the loan. The laborer is forbidden to leave the work facility until the loan is "repaid" in full—despite the fact that the work already completed by the laborer should have fulfilled any obligation to the owner long ago. The employer becomes the laborer'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.¹
- Children below the age of 18 years represent an estimated 26% of all forced labor victims.²
- In a wide-reaching survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately 40% of countries had not registered a single conviction against perpetrators of trafficking and slavery, which is crucial for deterrence.³

IJM'S RESPONSE

IJM investigates cases of slavery and partners with local authorities to free slaves and their families. IJM lawyers work to ensure that slave owners are held accountable in court under their countries' own laws against slavery. IJM staff ensure that survivors of forced labor slavery are provided the full spectrum of government rehabilitation services to which they are entitled, including financial compensation. IJM also provides former slaves with aftercare services, including counseling, assistance securing employment and enrolling children in school, and facilitation of community groups. IJM's casework on forced labor slavery is conducted primarily in India, where IJM has secured the freedom of more than 4,000 forced labor slaves and provided long-term aftercare for them and their families.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to secure 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 labor.

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.



¹ Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*

² International Labour Organisation, "ILO 2012 Global estimate of forced labour: Executive Summary." http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_181953.pdf

³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons." http://www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf