

Human Trafficking Overview

God reveals himself throughout the Bible as a God of justice who sees and hears the suffering of the oppressed: "he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted" (Psalm 9:12b).

Today, millions of lives around the world are in the grip of injustice.

An estimated 27 million children, women and men are enslaved, toiling in bondage--their work and even their bodies the property of an owner. In fact, the number of victims of human trafficking is so high that more people are currently held in slavery than over the course of the entire trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Trafficking in humans generates profits in excess of 12 billion dollars a year for those who, by force and deception, sell human lives into slavery and sexual bondage. Given its current growth rate, human trafficking is expected pass drug trafficking as the second largest criminal industry in the world within the next decades.

For those in bonded slavery, victims are held in conditions of continual forced labor under which they are unable to pay back a debt that increases at exorbitant interest rates. Powerful oppressors threaten, intimidate, beat, and abuse victims when they do not meet expectations and as means of restraint.

Human trafficking is inextricably linked to the oppression of women and girls: 80 percent of victims are female. The victims of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are almost exclusively women and children, in which traffickers transport or detain their victims in order to profit off of acts of sexual violence.

There is a strong connection between sex trafficking and global health pandemics. A 2007 study documented what child protection advocates have long expected – that children and women trafficked for sex are extremely vulnerable to violent transmission of HIV, and children are uniquely vulnerable. Girls trafficked prior to age 15 were at significantly increased risk for HIV, compared to those trafficked at 18 years or older.

Contrary to a common assumption, human trafficking is not just a problem in other countries. Thousands of people are also trafficked to and within the United States and Canada each year for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. Victims can be children or adults, U.S. and Canadian citizens or foreign nationals, male or female. Those who have been trafficked across international borders are particularly vulnerable, because they have no legal status in the destination country.

In many cases it the poor around the world who bear the burden of these abuses, because they lack access to the justice system and are unable to protect themselves or their families from those more powerful.

God commands his people to "seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17-18), calling us to be his agents, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to demonstrate Christ's love for the entire world. Please join us in advocating for the least of these!

Partner Organizations

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

International Justice Mission

Hagar International