



GLOBAL
FREEDOM
NETWORK

A UNITED FAITH AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

THE JOINT DECLARATION
OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS
AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

FRONT COVER PHOTO

by Grace Forrest

A victim of #ForcedChildMarriage in India bravely shares her story with Walk Free:

“Please don’t photograph my face, my in-laws cannot see me like this.

“I am a victim of child marriage. I was 14 years old when I was married. Since I belong to a traditional family, I am not allowed to talk to any men in the community and I must wear a veil. When I came to my in-laws house, I was forced to work as their servant every day... When I used to live at my in-laws house I saw an NGO working for the children and I asked my Father-In-Law if I could meet with them, and he said ‘women cannot come outside of the house, and how dare you ask me about this’.

“I faced many hurdles at my in-laws house. I told my Father-In-Law that I wanted to teach the children who are very poor and vulnerable, that I would still do my work but I wanted also to do this. Finally he allowed me to leave for one hour at a time. I started to work in the community, especially with the very traditional families with some of the most vulnerable girls. I told them ‘if you are not ready to send your girls outside the home, it’s fine, we’ll come and we’ll teach your daughter.’ That way each and every daughter can live their life by their own wishes. Now I have built up trust with all families, if I recommend them something, they listen.”



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"EVERY PERSON AND ALL PEOPLE ARE EQUAL AND THEIR FREEDOM AND DIGNITY MUST BE RECOGNIZED. ANY DISCRIMINATING RELATIONSHIP THAT DOES NOT RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTAL CONVICTION THAT THE "OTHER IS LIKE ME MYSELF" CONSTITUTES A CRIME, AND VERY OFTEN AN ABHORRENT CRIME."

Pope Francis



CONTENTS

Preface	4
Modern Slavery	6
The Dream	7
About the Global Freedom Network	12
Founding Parties	14
Religion and Slavery	21
Fatwa Against Slavery	22
The Book of Signatories and Declarations	24
Affiliated Modern Slavery Initiatives	28
Global Freedom Network	32
Launch: Casina Pio IV Vatican City, 2 December 2014	34
Signatories to the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery	38
News Throughout the World	40
In Support of the Joint Declaration	42
Inspiring Words	45
With Thanks	56
Indian Freedom Network	58
The Vision & Journey	60
Launch: India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 3 December 2015	62
News Throughout the World	68
Slavery in India & Government Response	70
Founding Members & The Future	75
Inspiring Words	78
Roundtable Discussion	84
Australian Freedom Network	90
The Vision & Journey	92
Launch: Parliament House Canberra, Australia, 2 December 2015	94
News Throughout the World	98
Slavery in Australia & Government Response	100
Founding Members & The Future	103
Inspiring Words	106
Continuing the Journey	108
Full Speech Transcripts	110
The Vatican Event, 2 December 2014	110
The New Delhi Event, India, 3 December 2015	128
The Roundtable Discussion, India, 3 December 2015	140
The Parliament House Event, Australia 2 December 2015	156

PREFACE

In a progressive world, more globally interconnected and technologically advanced than ever before, it is difficult to comprehend that up to 40.3 million* human beings are trapped in modern slavery. It is the greatest number of slaves in history.

Slavery, taking many tragic forms, is a blight on modern civilisation that has been described as a crime against humanity. Its ugly tentacles stretch through almost every country in the world, not discriminating between religion, nationality or age. Modern slavery involves the ancient forms of slavery itself, human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, organ trafficking, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of girls, boys, women and men.

Over hundreds of years, many have battled the seemingly impossible task of ending slavery. In modern times, organisations have applied their brightest brains, backed by significant resources and the best intentions, to the issue. Yet, on a global scale, only small dents have been made in the armoury of the evil creature that is slavery.

It is a problem that continues to grow, largely uncensored, and particularly in places where poverty and greed are different sides of the same coin. The moral, political and economic outcomes of modern slavery are pervading and harming countless societies and people.

Change is long overdue, and that change has begun.

On Tuesday, 2 December 2014, the inaugural signing of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery took place at Casina Pio IV, Vatican City. Faith leaders from across the world breached cultural, religious and political divides to come together to pledge an end to modern slavery and human trafficking by 2020. They were joined by leaders from many countries of the world, representing the business, political and civil sectors.

In a watershed event, global leaders from the Christian Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox religions, as well as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths, signed the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*. Initiated and coordinated by the Global Freedom Network, the 2 December event

was historic not only for its definitive commitment to work across religions to eradicate modern slavery, but also because it was possibly the first time ever that these faith leaders had met as a group, unified in a common cause, signing their names on the same document. It was the first time since the establishment of the Catholic Church that the Pope had met with a Grand Ayatollah in person. In addition, it was the first time post the Reformation that the Catholic Church and Anglican Communion had reached an agreement on a global initiative. Furthermore, it was a rare joint initiative between Sunni and Shia Muslim leaders.

On Wednesday, 2 December 2015, the second signing of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery took place at Parliament House, Canberra, precisely one year after the inaugural signing in Vatican City.

On this occasion, it was Australian faith leaders who were pledging to do all that they could to take spiritual practical action to end slavery. This initiative was led by the Salvation Army with the support and endorsement of the Global Freedom Network. Christian Evangelical, Baptist, Salvation Army, Presbyterian, Coptic


Orthodox, Anglican, Catholic, Muslim Sunni and Shai, Lutheran, Jewish, Hindu, Quakers, Uniting Church and Buddhist leaders took part in the event.

On Thursday, 3 December 2015, the third signing of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery took place at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India. Before an

audience of 300 people Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Baha'i and Jewish leaders made the pledge to unite on the vision of eradicating modern slavery. Unlike the events in Vatican City and Australia, the Indian event was followed by a Roundtable Discussion on 'Eradication of bonded and forced labour in India'. There were seven speakers including Chief Guest and Key Note Speaker, Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and survivor advocate, Susheela.

This book describes the journey towards a world free of slavery. It contains details of historic events in Vatican City, Australia and India and the impact they are having on a changed world.

The momentum continues.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, wearing a red and white striped shirt, holding a small cluster of bright orange marigold flowers. The hand is positioned over a large, out-of-focus pile of similar orange flowers. The lighting is warm, creating a golden-orange hue across the entire scene.

"AT ITS CORE, DIVINE RELIGION IS ONE THING, BUT
FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND RELIGION HAS
DIVIDED HUMAN BEINGS AND CREATED
BARRIERS BETWEEN US.
WE MUST EXERT EXTRA EFFORT TO
TEAR DOWN THOSE BARRIERS
AND JOIN RELIGIONS UNDER THE UMBRELLA
OF A COMMON TERM."

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi

MODERN SLAVERY

"MODERN SLAVERY INVOLVES ONE PERSON POSSESSING OR CONTROLLING ANOTHER PERSON IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SIGNIFICANTLY DEPRIVE THAT PERSON OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, WITH THE INTENTION OF EXPLOITING THAT PERSON THROUGH THEIR USE, MANAGEMENT, PROFIT, TRANSFER OR DISPOSAL."

Global Slavery Index

Nearly 40.3 million* people around the world are trapped in modern slavery, more than at any time in our history and in spite of the fact that slavery is illegal in almost every country. Those enslaved have had their rights and freedom stolen from them in horrendous circumstances. They are often subjected to abuse, both physical and mental, and are treated as commodities to be bought, sold and traded.

Slaves can be found in factories, fields and brothels, on fishing boats, within private residences and a multitude of other places where greed and corruption have overridden human values. People trapped in slavery live brutal existences in cities and villages, slums and rural areas.

From Thai fisherman trawling fish, to the Congolese boy mining diamonds, from the Uzbek child picking cotton to the Indian girl stitching footballs - modern slavery is big business. Acknowledging the problem, and advocating against it is our responsibility.

A range of international conventions contend that slavery and human trafficking is punishable by national law. In 2000, the United Nations adopted a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women

and Children - the *Palermo Protocol*, which now has 169 countries as parties. The *Palermo Protocol* supplemented the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000).

However, legislation in some countries does not always comply with international requirements. The number of convictions has been low in comparison to the estimated number of actual victims. In 2014, governments reported to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime that they had identified victims of 152 citizenships in 124 countries with at least 510 trafficking flows detected. Of those victims identified, 49 per cent were women, followed by girls (21 per cent), men (18 per cent) and boys (12 per cent). Forms of exploitation of those identified included sexual exploitation (53 per cent), forced labour (40 per cent), other (7 per cent) and organ removal (0.3 per cent). In 2013, fewer than 45,000 victims were identified, 10,000 prosecutions occurred, and only 6,000 convictions were enforced.

Modern slavery is, sadly, big business for the criminals making a profit from human misery. It is estimated that total profits from the use of forced labour in the private economy is of the order of an estimated USD150 billion per year.

Business supply chains that navigate numerous borders and involve various organisations and subcontractors can prove difficult to trace. Forced labour can exist in both the services industry and in the production of goods. Consumers all over the world, in developing countries and wealthy nations, regularly buy, eat or use products that result from forced labour - either in full knowledge of their provenance or unknowingly.

"The crime of trafficking in persons affects virtually every country in every region of the world." (UNODC, 2014)

World leaders from all walks of life agree that all forms of modern slavery constitute an abuse of human rights.

MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery is an umbrella term that encompasses key definitions found in three major international treaties: the Slavery Convention (as amended in 1956), the Forced Labour Convention, and the United Nations Protocol on Trafficking in Women and Children.

Modern slavery includes slavery, slavery-like practices (such as debt bondage, forced marriage, and sale or exploitation of children), human trafficking, forced labour, and other practices described in the key international treaties listed above.

The significant characteristic of all forms of modern slavery is that it involves one person depriving another person of their freedom for profit: their freedom to leave one job for another, their freedom to leave one workplace for another, their freedom to control their own body.

THE DREAM

It has long been recognised that there can be no single way to end slavery; it is a crime that must be tackled at all levels, through all networks and with a broad range of resources. It must be challenged at its roots as well as dissolved in its myriad of branches and channels.

Modern slavery in all of its guises – such as human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation and organ trafficking – is endemic in many countries. It often preys on society's most vulnerable people, stripping them of their rights to freedom and dignity. It usually involves money, corruption and widespread abuses of power.

But how to reach into the many countries and communities that harbour modern slavery and put an end to it? And how

to spread the message far and wide that modern slavery is a corrupt and evil abuse of core human values?

The answers may well lie in the coming together of religions in a united front against slavery. If the teachings and application of various faiths reach up to 90 per cent of the world's population, then there can be no greater way to influence the vast majority of the world's population. For it will be through the shifting of cultural norms and behaviours, complementing judicial, supply chain and international protocol enforcements, that sustained change will occur.

This was the dream of Australian businessman and philanthropist Andrew Forrest: to gain the commitment of the major faith leaders, working on behalf of

their communities, towards eradicating modern slavery and signing the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*.

It was the first step in a vision that embraces gaining the commitment of other world leaders, including sovereign, corporate and civil leaders, and other faith leaders, in the declaration that each and every person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity.

"THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THIS IS NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY. RIGHT NOW, ACROSS THE GLOBE, VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ARE DARING TO IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE, THE CHANCE FOR A LIFE WITHOUT FEAR, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A LIVING WAGE."

John F. Kerry, US Secretary of State



TURNING THE DREAM INTO REALITY: A JOURNEY OF GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE

"FORREST THEN EMBARKED ON A STRENUOUS JOURNEY TO BRING THE WORLD'S HIGHEST RANKING RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOGETHER TO CONDEMN SLAVERY. MOST RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS ARE, BY DEFINITION, RIDDLED WITH PROTOCOL AND GRUELING FORMALITIES, AND ASSEMBLING SENIOR FIGURES OF DIFFERENT FAITHS IS A GARGANTUAN TASK. WITH TIRELESS EFFORTS SPANNING OVER A YEAR, THE GFN AND THE WALK FREE FOUNDATION WORKED WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS, FINALLY ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE, AND THE SUPREME CLERGYMEN AND WOMEN CONVENED ON 2ND DECEMBER, 2014."

Sayed Mahdi al-Modarresi

The defeat of modern slavery is not a goal for the faint hearted, nor is it a road to be travelled alone. The journey towards the *Joint Declaration* was as important as the signing events themselves, requiring enormous levels of energy, courage and generosity from many individuals and organisations, and a collaborative mind-set.

A renewed determination that something both practical and spiritual had to be done to address modern slavery had been gathering momentum around the world in the years immediately preceding the 2 December 2014 event in Vatican City.

The journey began back in 2012 in Australia when Andrew and Nicola Forrest launched the Walk Free Foundation, with a powerfully simple mission of 'a world without slavery'.



Nicola and Andrew Forrest, founders of the Walk Free Foundation

Sayed Mahdi Modarresi is a distinguished faith leader, author and lecturer, covering Islamic history, theology and spirituality. He has led prayers at the United States House of Representatives and lectures at forums around the world. Sayed Modarresi advises senior religious leaders on human rights and major faith initiatives. He provides a unique perspective on Islam in a cosmopolitan context, and is the author of *The Lost Testament, What Christians Don't Know About Jesus*, published in 2015.

"HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY. WE MUST UNITE OUR EFFORTS TO FREE THE VICTIMS AND STOP THIS INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE CRIME WHICH THREATENS NOT ONLY INDIVIDUALS BUT THE BASIC VALUES OF SOCIETY..."

Pope Francis

Grace Forrest first visited Nepal as a student when she was 15, and returned in 2011 to live and work at a rehabilitation and rescue home for women and girls who been subjected to various forms of exploitation. Dismayed by what she had witnessed, on her return she sat at her family's kitchen table in Perth to discuss what the Forrests could do to alleviate, or play a role in ending, modern slavery. This kitchen table meeting led to the founding of the Walk Free Foundation. Not long after, Fortescue Metals Group, of which Andrew Forrest is Chairman, conducted a thorough audit of its supply chains. The company discovered that a contractor serving it and hundreds of other companies around the world used forced and bonded labour as a key part of its supply chains. Andrew determined to form a business-like global strategy to end modern slavery, and envisaged massive campaigns to emerge sequentially but rapidly embrace the entire world. This included social media, business, direct intervention, global analysis and research on an unprecedented scale, and a worldwide government initiative. One of the keys to all of these initiatives was to affect the heart of man, and resolve to turn to religions and join their battle against modern slavery with a coordinated strategic business-like initiative.

On 13 March 2013, the world witnessed Pope Francis begin a new papacy as head of the Catholic Church, and on 21 March 2013, Archbishop Justin Welby begin as Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Anglican Communion.

A new era of Christian leadership began, and the leaders shared a unity of encouraging a movement to arise against modern slavery.

The new Pope ensured that many of his speeches were sprinkled with his abhorrence of modern slavery, calling it a crime against humanity.

In May 2013, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, spoke about the challenge of human trafficking and its significance to the Churches of the World with Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican. The Anglican Communion was keen to work with the Catholic Church in new and progressive ways, and regarded modern slavery as a challenge on which they could work together.

In September 2013, Andrew Forrest participated in a "Vatican Day of Reflection" in Rome, organised by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to encourage mining companies to discuss better ways to operate in synchronicity with communities and the environment.

"THERE ARE ALREADY CLOSE AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN US AS FAITH LEADERS. OUR TASK NOW IS TO MAKE THOSE RELATIONSHIPS WORK EFFECTIVELY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL PEOPLE. THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION HAS GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS TASK."

Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

It was here that Andrew enjoyed a long and fruitful meeting with Cardinal Peter Turkson, and the two of them began to plan out a strategy to bring all of the religions together. Cardinal Turkson was the religious leader who gave Andrew the belief that while it would be extraordinarily difficult, all the great faiths could be persuaded to come together in unity and love to defeat this common scourge affecting them all.

Andrew grew increasingly interested in the stance and role of religion in slavery, and recognised that, while some religions were working on interventions in various pockets of the world, these were specific projects that didn't necessarily have geographic or



Cardinal Turkson

global reach or sustainability. He knew that faith-based interventions were going to be required, and saw that faith leaders would need to come together as a united force if modern slavery was to be eradicated. Underpinning this was a need to clarify the meaning and intent of slavery in religious texts.

Andrew decided to tackle the concept head-on, flying into countries such as Egypt, Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, England and Italy in 2013 and 2014 to hold discussions with faith leaders and gain their commitment towards a collaborative approach. He enlisted the assistance of an old friend, Raza Jafar, a leading global businessman and philanthropist and Advisor Amal Nouredin.

Not long after Andrew arranged a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury who provided exactly the same level of strong encouragement as Cardinal Turkson had done. It was those two men alone who convinced Andrew to devote much of his life and capital at the risk of much of this failing.



Amal Nouredin and Raza Jafar

In Rome, Andrew was persuaded by the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, John McCarthy, to work with Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor of PAS/PASS, as opposed to Cardinal Turkson. Andrew's only comment when asked about the veracity of this advice was that it made the process of achieving 2 December immensely more difficult.

Critically, Andrew and a team of advisors that included Raza Jafar and Amal Noureldin were able to facilitate the declaration of a Muslim Fatwa against modern slavery, in 2013. The team had held many discussions with Imams and scholars at the Al Azhar University in Cairo and Alexandria. In December 2013 Andrew set a deadline for the Alexandria University to deliver the Fatwa, and as promised, travelled to Alexandria on the due date to personally receive it to the great delight of many, particularly the Imams. They had unselfishly worked for many months to produce the first ever Fatwa against slavery. Andrew took the Fatwa and personally delivered it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who when holding it in his hands, commented that this was the first Fatwa he had ever seen, and therefore the most important. Later, Andrew also gave a copy to Pope Francis, and was further encouraged to continue drawing the great faiths together, as now Islam and Christianity had been drawn into agreement.

A good friend and advisor to Andrew and the Global Freedom Network team was Jaaved Jaaferi, popular Bollywood actor, who played a critical role in faith leader negotiations in both Iraq and India. He also attended the 2 December 2014 event accompanying the Iraq faith leaders to the Vatican.

By the end of 2013, the seeds of a global network to end slavery, and the pursuit of a formal commitment from major faith leaders, had been firmly sown. Between the Vatican workshop in November 2013 and February 2014, numerous discussions took place with the idea of creating a worldwide organisation to represent the urgent and united fight against slavery.



On 15 January 2014, Archbishop Sir David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See flew into Perth and introduced Andrew to Antonia Stampalija, who had considerable experience as an executive working with major faiths throughout Australia and abroad. Together, and with agreement in principle from Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby, they formed the genesis of a new body to propel their commitment and Andrew's dream of uniting major faith leaders for the first time in history to end modern slavery. They called this new body the **Global Freedom Network** and resolved to meet with the Vatican.

On 6 February 2014, a *Memorandum of Agreement* to establish the Global Freedom Network was signed in Vatican City by religious representatives Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Archbishop Sir David Moxon, and Andrew Forrest, Chairman of the Walk Free Foundation.

Almost six weeks later, on 17 March 2014 at a press conference in Italy, an announcement was made to the world that the Global Freedom Network had been established. During the press conference, the *Memorandum of Agreement* was signed by Bishop Sánchez (for the PAS/PASS), Archbishop Moxon (for the Archbishop of Canterbury), Andrew Forrest (for the Walk Free Foundation) and Dr Mahmoud Azab (for the Grand Imam of Al Azhar). The inclusion of the Grand Imam, which had come about following the building of relationships through Andrew Forrest and Raza Jafar, was a critical milestone.

"WE WENT DELIBERATELY TO THE HEART OF MAN, WITH THE AIM TO CALL UPON RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO REACH AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE COULD. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT WHEN RELIGIONS USE TEXTS TO JUSTIFY SLAVERY.

"WE WANTED TO REMOVE THE AMBIGUITY IN ALL RELIGIOUS TEXTS BY HAVING FAITH LEADERS DECLARE THAT THERE IS NOW NO ROOM FOR SLAVERY IN ANY TEXT, OR IN ANY FAITH. LONG JOURNEYS START WITH A SINGLE STEP, AND I FELT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO PERSONALLY GO AND VISIT FAITH LEADERS IN THEIR COUNTRIES TO START THE DISCUSSIONS."

Andrew Forrest, Chairman Walk Free



"IT'S ONE THING TO KNOW ABOUT A TERRIBLE PROBLEM
AND NOT BE ABLE TO FIX IT;
IT IS ANOTHER TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROBLEM
AND HAVE THE MEANS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT."

Andrew Forrest

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK

On 1 April 2014, the office of the Global Freedom Network opened and the inaugural Chief Executive Officer, Ms Antonia Stampalija from Perth, Western Australia, commenced in her role. The Global Freedom Network's office was initially located within the walls of the Holy See in the beautiful and historic Casina Pio IV. Board Manager, Ms Gabriella Marino from Rome, was also appointed to the small start up team.

"AS A FIRST PRIORITY AND COMMITMENT OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK'S MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, IT WAS AGREED THAT A JOINT FAITH LEADERS' DECLARATION AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY BE PURSUED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY."

Antonia Stampalija

Discussions were held with major faith leaders around the world, including Christian Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox as well as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. Gaining the support of both the Sunni and Shia Muslim faiths was considered critical. This process involved travelling to countries in the Middle East, for example Iraq, in which the personal safety of

Andrew Forrest and his team was dangerously compromised. The team also travelled to Russia to commence the process of relationship-building with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Krill. While the Patriarch did not attend the Vatican City event, there is an ongoing commitment to work with the Orthodox Church.

The Global Freedom Network is the critical part of the Walk Free Foundation multi-tiered strategy to end modern slavery. While most of Walk Free's work has been "boots on the ground" with direct intervention into slave communities by The Freedom Fund, there has been unprecedented and detailed research and measurement by the Global Slavery Index and massive on-the-ground support with the world's largest anti-slavery social movement, all leading to the Global Fund to End Slavery.

THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK'S ROLE IS TO COLLECTIFY GLOBAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE BOOK OF JOINT DECLARATION'S HISTORICAL SIGNATURES TO ENSURE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT AT ALL LEVELS.



Pope Francis and Andrew Forrest



Casina Pio IV, Vatican City



Faith leader engagement in Iraq



The GFN offices, part of the Walk Free Foundation established to end slavery worldwide, is nestled on the banks of the beautiful Swan River in Perth, Western Australia.

GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The inaugural **Executive Board** comprised of representatives from the Holy See, Anglican Communion, Walk Free Foundation, Australian Embassy at the Holy See, and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar al-Sharif Ahmed El-Tayeb.

The inaugural **Council** comprised:

- **The Rev. Rachel Carnegie**, Joint Executive Director of the Anglican Alliance
- **Mr Andrew Forrest**, Chairman Walk Free Foundation
- **Ambassador Mahmoud Abdel Gawad**, Chief Diplomatic Advisor to *Grand Imam of Al Azhar*
- **Raza Jafar**, Vice-Chair Walk Free Foundation, Middle East and North Africa
- **H.Em. Cardinal Kurt Koch**, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- **H.Em. Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga**, President of Caritas International and Coordinator of the Councils of Cardinals

- **H.Em. Cardinal Reinhard Marx**, Member of the Council of Cardinals
- **H.E. Ambassador John McCarthy**, Australian Embassy, The Holy See
- **H.E. Ambassador Pierre Morel**, Director of Pharos Observatory on Cultural and Religious Pluralism
- **Archbishop Sir David Moxon**, the *Archbishop of Canterbury's* representative to the Holy See
- **H.Em. Cardinal George Pell**, Prefect of the Secretariat of the Economy and Member of the Council of Cardinals
- **H.E. Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo**, Chancellor of PAS/PASS (Inaugural Council Chair)
- **H.Em. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran**, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
- **H.Em. Cardinal Peter Turkson**, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

(Executive Staff)

Antonia Stampalija, Chief Executive Officer; **Gabriella C. Marino**, Board Manager

(Honorary Council Members)

H.Em. Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Vice-Dean of the College of Cardinals; **H.Em. Cardinal Georges Marie Martin Cottier**, O.P., Pro-Theologian Emeritus of the Prefecture of the Papal Household and PAS Academician

"THE DEEPEST DESIRE OF OUR TEACHER IS THAT ALL RELIGIOUS LEADERS JOIN AND BUILD A TRUE FRATERNITY THROUGH DEEP MUTUAL LISTENING TO SUFFERINGS AND JOYS, SO THAT WE CAN TOUCH THE HUMANITY SHARED BY ALL AND DEEPLY UNDERSTAND OUR INTERCONNECTEDNESS."

Bhikkuni Venerable Sister Chan Khong

In March 2015, Monsignor Sánchez Sorondo, withdrew as the Catholic party to the Global Freedom Network. The withdrawal took place simultaneous to the election of the new Chair, as contemplated under the provisions of the *Memorandum of Agreement*. Each faith will continue to work out its own particular commitment to the declaration, within or outside the network. As at December 2015 the Global Freedom Network is operating under the governance of the Minderoo Foundation.

A group of women, likely from India, are seated outdoors under a large tree. They are wearing vibrant, patterned saris in shades of green, red, and yellow. The women are looking towards the left of the frame with serious expressions. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people and the tree's trunk.

THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK: FOUNDING PARTIES

Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; Dr Mahmoud Azab; Archbishop Sir David Moxon, representing Archbishop Justin Welby; Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences; and Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman of the Walk Free Foundation were the founders and architects of the Global Freedom Network.

CARDINAL PETER TURKSON

Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson is the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, first appointed to the role on 24 October 2009. Born in Western Ghana as the fourth of 10 children in 1948, Cardinal Turkson has served as the Archbishop of Cape Coast, and was elevated to the cardinalate by Pope John Paul II in 2003.



Cardinal Turkson played an instrumental role in the development of the *Joint Declaration*, through his encouragement and support for the work of Andrew Forrest in the goal to eradicate modern slavery and garner faith leaders' engagement.

"Cardinal Turkson gave me belief. He knew that what we planned to undertake would be incredibly difficult, because it was without precedent. However he felt that the great faiths could be persuaded

to come together in unity and love on this urgent issue," Andrew said. "We both knew that failure was the most likely outcome, but the prize of eradicating slavery as an excuse in religions, and having on board the world's faith leaders - covering most of the world's population - was worth taking the risk, even if it was 1000 to one."

Cardinal Turkson is a humanitarian who has spoken passionately about the environment, agriculture, sustainable development and the values of humanity. He was a major contributor to the Pope's World Day of Peace on 1 January 2015, which had the theme "Slaves no More, but Brothers and Sisters". On the day, Cardinal Turkson explained: "Starting from the Epistle of Paul to Philemon and other passages from the Bible, 'The Holy Father shows that God's plan for humanity does not have any place for the enslavement of others, since God calls to all of his sons and daughters to renew their interpersonal relationships, respecting in each person the image and semblance

of God along with the intangible dignity of every person, confident in the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is capable of renewing the heart of man, where sin is most abundant".

"However, despite the great efforts of many people, modern slavery continues to be an atrocious scourge that is present on a large scale throughout the world, even as tourism. This 'crime of injured humanity' is masked by apparently accepted habits, but in reality it creates victims in prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour, slave labour, mutilation, the sale of organs, drug abuse and child labour. They are concealed behind closed doors, in special places, on the streets, in cars, in factories, in the country, in fishing boats and in many other places. And this happens in both cities and villages, in the reception centres of the richest and poorest countries in the world. And the worst thing is that this situation unfortunately worsens every day".

DR MAHMOUD AZAB

Dr Mahmoud Azab, the most senior advisor to the Grand Imam of al-Azhar and globally recognised figure in interfaith dialogue, played an important role in the journey towards 2 December 2014. Sadly, he passed away in Cairo, Egypt, in June 2014.

Dr Azab, a former Professor of Semitic languages at the Islamic University of Al Azhar in Cairo and Associate Professor of classic Arabic and Islamic studies at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations in Paris, strongly advocated for interfaith conversations. He was regularly described as an emblem for tolerance.

Dr Azab represented the Grand Imam of al-Azhar at meetings of the Global Freedom Network. He told interfaith peers that Islam was 100 per cent against all forms of modern slavery,

and that for 14 centuries Islam had proclaimed the truth that all humankind – every single human being, Muslims and non-Muslims, believers or none – was a creature of God and it was the dignity of the creature of God, the human being, that must prevail.

He described the great eagerness and interest with which the al-Azhar University in Egypt responded to the initial invitation from the Walk Free Foundation to meet, with the understanding that it underpinned the school of Islam's beliefs on justice and reason.

Dr Azab was particularly forthright in views about why relationships between the al-Azhar and Vatican had fallen to a low ebb after comments made by Pope Benedict XVI during the Regensburg Lecture in September 2006. In that address, titled "Faith, Reason and the University – Memories and Reflections",

the Pope quoted an unfavorable remark about Islam made at the end of the 14th Century by a Byzantine emperor. The quote was translated, and widely taken out of context, resulting in protests in many countries.

The *Joint Declaration* proved to be a remarkable way to build bridges between the Muslim faith and the Vatican, with Dr Azab's gentle and thoughtful presence an instrumental part of the journey.



Andrew Forrest and Dr Mahmoud Azab



ARCHBISHOP SIR DAVID MOXON

Archbishop Sir David Moxon is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. He is a New Zealand born Anglican bishop whose own journey in fighting modern slavery was sparked at the November 2013 conference in the Vatican.

At the 2 December 2014 event he said:

"I believe we have hope today which you can turn into reality through cleansing business supply chains, through toughening up legislations and prosecutions, through faith based communities mobilising themselves all over the world, because they know their communities better than almost anybody else. I am hopeful!

"I do think we need to say that the conscience of business people needs to be steered by faith communities, and we'll ask business leaders who have already cleansed their supply chains to lead that cause.

"If you look around today, you've got countries, faiths, ethnic groups from all over the world and all socio-economic conditions, so the genius of today is that people from all conditions and all economic strata and all economic dispositions have to see if they will fight this together."

Archbishop Moxon said the Anglican Communion sought collaboration with other faiths." (Before) we had not worked interdependently globally on the issue of modern slavery. We have activities in local places, but were not part of a collaborative joined-up network. In particular, this is the biggest global project to date of an ongoing kind in Anglican-Catholic cooperation."



ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN WELBY

The Most Rev'd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, was an early and engaged supporter of the journey towards 2 December 2014. Together with Archbishop Sir David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury committed to joining in the strongest possible collaborations between national governments, the business sector, police forces, civil society, faith communities and all those who long to see all humanity live in freedom. He was a particular pillar of strength to Andrew Forrest in the earliest discussions about gaining the commitment of major faith leaders towards eradicating modern slavery.

BISHOP MARCELO SÁNCHEZ SORONDO

Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo is Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences at the Vatican. He reflected on the Catholic Church's stance on slavery after the signing of the Joint Declaration, saying that the Second Vatican Council stated "slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons" were "infamies which poison human society, debase their perpetrators and constitute a supreme dishonour to the Creator."

"In one of the few documents of the Magisterium of the Popes on the issue of slavery, St John Paul II added that 'such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person.' Moreover, he affirmed that the problem is a central one for the social sciences and natural sciences, in particular in the context of globalisation.

"No less important is Pope Benedict XVI's 2011 address to the new German ambassador to the Holy See, when, after expressing his gratitude to the German government, he expressed his grave concern about the sexual discrimination of women, because 'every person, whether man or woman, is destined to exist for others. A relationship that fails to respect the fact that men and women have the same dignity constitutes a grave crime against humanity.'"

"Pope Francis has made eradicating modern slavery a central programme of his pontificate."

Of the *Joint Declaration*, Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo commented:

"In a powerful demonstration of solidarity, perhaps this was the first time that religious leaders had come together, adding to their ongoing inter-religious dialogue, to make a common statement to affirm that the other is a free person like you and must be recognised as such, and that you must treat others as you would treat yourself. You must love your neighbour as yourself. This means upholding and defending the true identity of human beings which is

compromised by the globalisation of indifference whose gravest consequences can be seen in modern forms of slavery and human trafficking – the systematic deprivation of a person's liberty, and abuse of his or her body, for example through mutilation or organ removal, for the purposes of commercial exploitation.

"UNODC estimates that the vast majority of the trafficking victims detected globally are females; either adult young women or underage girls. Each year, about two million people are victims of sexual trafficking, 60 per cent of whom are girls. Organ trafficking affects 0.3 per cent of trafficking victims who are forced or deceived into giving up an organ (liver, kidney, pancreas, cornea, lung, even the heart), not without the complicity of doctors, nurses and other medical staff who have pledged to follow Hippocrates' oath *Primum non nocere*. But these chilling figures 'are only the tip of the iceberg', as criminals generally go to great lengths to prevent the detection of their activities. Some observers speculate that, within 10 years, human trafficking will surpass drugs and weapons trafficking to become the most profitable criminal activity in the world. Recent trends, however, indicate that

human trafficking already occupies first place, so that far from being a declining social crime, it is becoming ever more threatening."

Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo said gratitude was owed to Pope Francis for identifying one of the most important social tragedies of our times and for establishing, for the first time, on 8 February 2014, an International Day of Prayer for the Victims of Human Trafficking, on the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita, herself a Sudanese woman who was a victim of slavery in the first half of the 20th century.



GRACE FORREST

Grace Forrest, the co-founder of Walk Free Foundation, had just turned 15 when she went to Nepal to help out in an orphanage, in an initiative organised by her school. She had no way of knowing it when she arrived in Nepal, but she was to work with children who had been trafficked or rescued from slavery. Her experiences there ignited a passion to do more to stop modern slavery. On a visit to the country two years later, this passion firmed into a strong commitment once she realised that the patterns of trafficking were repeating themselves, and that some of the young girls, whose physical and emotional scars she had witnessed in stark reality, had probably been returned to slavery.

"I first discovered slavery when I was only a child myself. I was working with children who had been rescued and were going through rehabilitation. Despite the fact we were all just girls spending time together, their physical and emotional scars – from the torture they had endured – fundamentally changed my view of the world and my place in it."

Following this experience, Grace lived and worked in Nepal for five months during 2011 at a rehabilitation and rescue home run by Maiti Nepal. Established in 1993, Maiti Nepal worked with women and children who had been subjected to various forms of exploitation, including many forms of slavery.

Driven to do whatever she could to help those most vulnerable, Grace spoke with her family about how they could help, initially setting her sights just on Nepal and on rescuing girls and helping them to gain an education. Andrew, however, wanted her to see the bigger picture and tackle global slavery. Grace started working with her parents to establish the Walk Free Foundation, as well as developing a scholarship program to enable children to access education in Nepal.

Grace, now a social justice and international relations university graduate, is adamant that there needs to be exposure to this issue and ongoing education of those who are 'willfully

ignorant'; those who choose to ignore or deny the harsh reality of a criminal activity that thrives in hundreds of countries throughout the world.

"We knew we wanted to start an international organisation – a collaborative body to empower people who are working in one small area to connect them with others; to work on supply chains and in big business; to work with governments in ways that push them; to work with religious leaders who inspire community change, and in some instances national dialogue and law, in a very different way to politicians."



"EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW THAT SLAVERY STILL EXISTS. AND ON THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, WE AS CONSUMERS MIGHT ALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS CONTINUATION. THERE ARE MORE SLAVES TODAY THAN HAVE EVER EXISTED IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANKIND. ARGUABLY, THESE PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING WORSE CONDITIONS THAN EVER BEFORE, PRIMARILY DUE TO THE DISPOSABLE NATURE OF THIS TRADE. HOWEVER, THE WORLD IS ALSO THE MOST EQUIPPED IT HAS EVER BEEN TO COMBAT THIS MONUMENTAL ISSUE. LEGALLY, SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY WE ARE ARMED. NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. WE MUST BAND TOGETHER AND FIGHT TO END THIS CRIME."

Grace Forrest

MR ANDREW FORREST

Andrew Forrest is a leading businessman and philanthropist, with global business interests spanning the resources sector (he founded the world's fourth largest iron ore exporter, Fortescue Metals Group), agriculture and property. He is a devoted philanthropist who is committed to working to end Indigenous disparity in Australia through training and employment initiatives, supporting broader education outcomes, and ending modern slavery.

"SLAVERY HAS NO PLACE IN THE MODERN WORLD. TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A WORLD WITHOUT IT. A WORLD WHERE IT IS UNTHINKABLE TO BE TREATED LIKE SOMEONE ELSE'S PROPERTY. A WORLD WHERE THOSE WHO STEAL OTHER PEOPLE'S FREEDOMS ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE CAN WALK FREE."

Walk Free Foundation

Andrew's personal journey against modern slavery began when he saw slavery and trafficking through the eyes of his eldest daughter, Grace. As a teenager in 2008, Grace had worked in a Nepalese orphanage, helping to care for young girls who had been subjected to slavery and trafficking. When she returned to the orphanage with Andrew and his wife, Nicola, two years later, she

was aghast to find that most of the girls were no longer there, and their change in circumstances were unknown. This experience was just a peep-hole into the world of modern slavery, but it spurred Andrew and his family to examine the issue on a global scale and prompted their resolve to do something about the atrocities being committed against human beings. They founded the Walk Free Foundation in 2012.

Andrew recognised the role of business in stamping out slavery, and introduced to Fortescue Metals Group an audit of its supply chain, going on to require all

suppliers to sign an affidavit that no forms of modern slavery existed in their businesses or those of their suppliers. Those companies that were not able to provide assurances had their contracts terminated.

On 14 March 2012, Andrew spoke at Westminster Abbey in London at the Commonwealth Day Observance, an

annual multi-faith service. The only Australian invited to provide a formal address, Andrew spoke about connecting cultures through employment and careers, and used the opportunity to call for action by all Commonwealth nations to do more to end slavery. "Human slavery and trafficking – to the shock of most – is alive and well in practically every nation on earth," he told the forum. "Only when we can truly connect our cultures and participate in a global initiative to address this blight on the very nature of humanity will we adequately address it."

The Walk Free Foundation believes that eradicating modern slavery will take the work of many, with a collaborative approach needed to complement individual interventions. It aims to work with the significant number of groups around the world that are fighting slavery. To do this, Walk Free has amassed a global membership, uses social media and technologies, and organises campaigns and communities in many countries.

Andrew's dedication to ending slavery saw him flying around the world many times to enlist the commitment of the world's highest ranked faith leaders, at times travelling to regions in which personal safety was compromised. From Egypt to Turkey, Russia to Iraq, and London to Rome, he was dogged in his

pursuit of engagement, overcoming the particular formalities and conventions associated with different faiths as he achieved the improbable feat of gaining the commitment of almost all leaders to meet in the Vatican on 2 December 2014. This was achieved in the space of less than a year.

In 2016, Andrew was invited to be Australia's Business Champion for the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. This 45-country intergovernmental initiative will from 2017 be expanded to include the private sector, and the Bali Process Business Forum will become an institutionalised track of the Bali Process to combat the crimes against humanity that modern slavery involves.



RELIGION AND SLAVERY

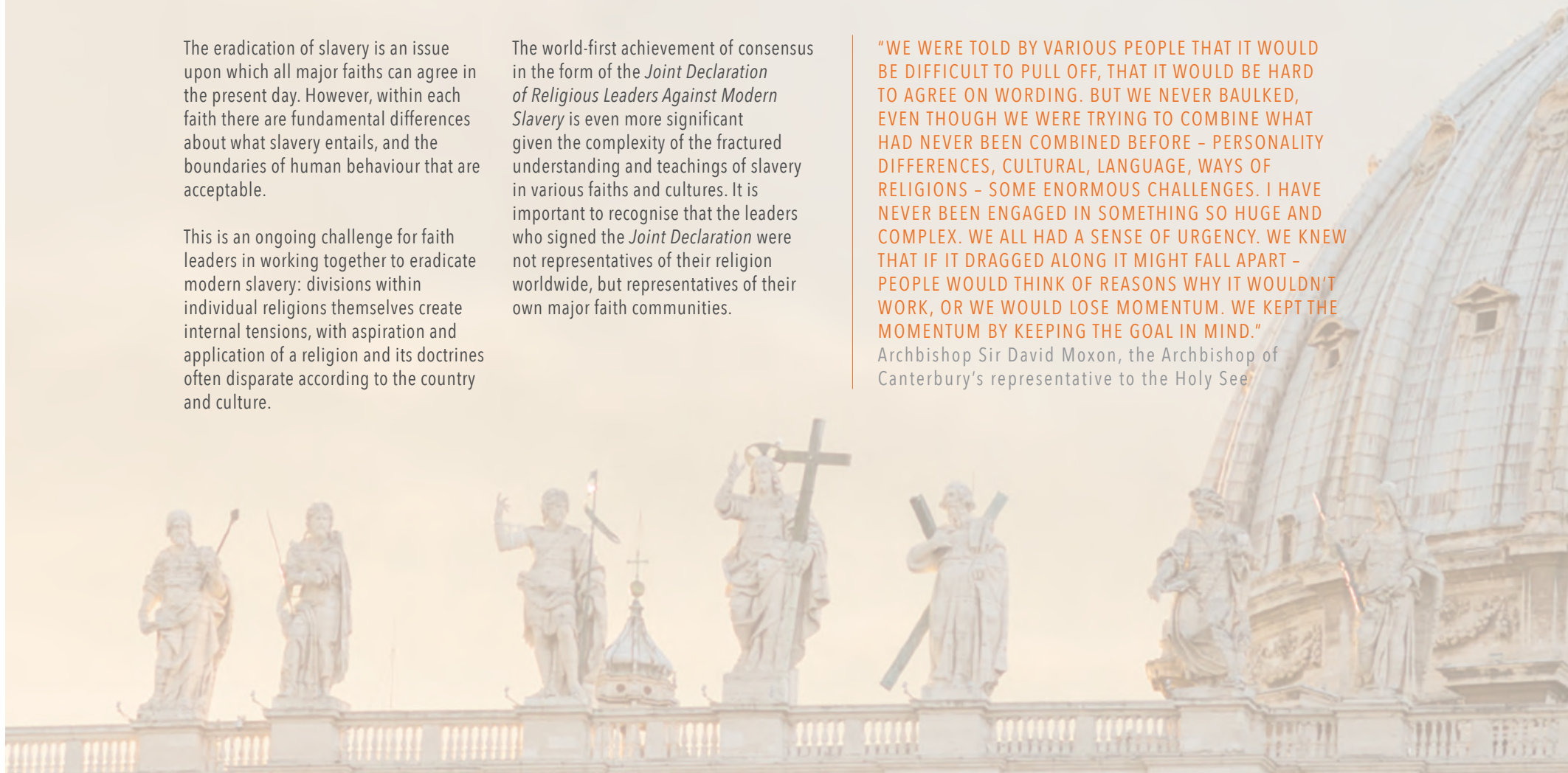
The eradication of slavery is an issue upon which all major faiths can agree in the present day. However, within each faith there are fundamental differences about what slavery entails, and the boundaries of human behaviour that are acceptable.

This is an ongoing challenge for faith leaders in working together to eradicate modern slavery: divisions within individual religions themselves create internal tensions, with aspiration and application of a religion and its doctrines often disparate according to the country and culture.

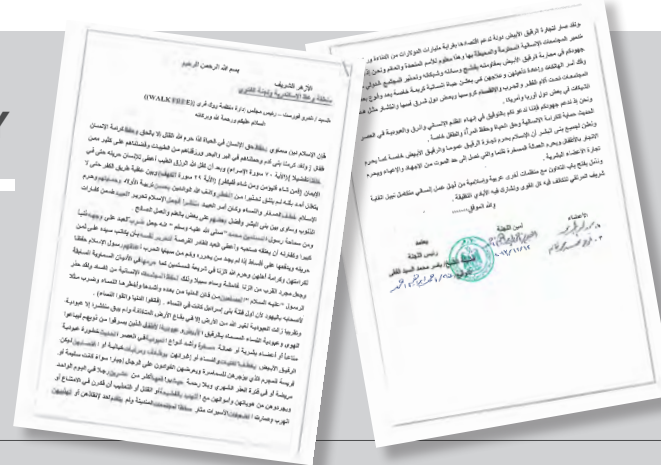
The world-first achievement of consensus in the form of the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* is even more significant given the complexity of the fractured understanding and teachings of slavery in various faiths and cultures. It is important to recognise that the leaders who signed the *Joint Declaration* were not representatives of their religion worldwide, but representatives of their own major faith communities.

"WE WERE TOLD BY VARIOUS PEOPLE THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PULL OFF, THAT IT WOULD BE HARD TO AGREE ON WORDING. BUT WE NEVER BAULKED, EVEN THOUGH WE WERE TRYING TO COMBINE WHAT HAD NEVER BEEN COMBINED BEFORE – PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES, CULTURAL, LANGUAGE, WAYS OF RELIGIONS – SOME ENORMOUS CHALLENGES. I HAVE NEVER BEEN ENGAGED IN SOMETHING SO HUGE AND COMPLEX. WE ALL HAD A SENSE OF URGENCY. WE KNEW THAT IF IT DRAGGED ALONG IT MIGHT FALL APART – PEOPLE WOULD THINK OF REASONS WHY IT WOULDN'T WORK, OR WE WOULD LOSE MOMENTUM. WE KEPT THE MOMENTUM BY KEEPING THE GOAL IN MIND."

Archbishop Sir David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Holy See



FATWA AGAINST SLAVERY



A Fatwa was issued by the Al Azhar Al Sharif, Preaching and Opinion Committee in Alexandria, Egypt, on 12 December 2013. The Fatwa was unilaterally declared against modern slavery and human trafficking, from a Muslim perspective based on the teachings on the Quran.

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful Al Azhar Al Sharif Preaching and opinion committee in Alexandria
To: Mr. Andrew Forrest - Chairman of the Walk Free Foundation, May ALLAH peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

As Islam is a divine religion that preserves the human right to live, Allah in his mercy prohibited unrighteous killing, and preserved human dignity, as stated in the Holy Quran in what translates to : {and indeed we have honored the children of Adam, and we have carried them on land and

sea, and have provided them with At-Taiyibat (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom we have created with a marked preference} (Verse 70, Sourat Al Isra'). And after guaranteeing good livelihood, Allah granted humans their freedom, including the freedom to believe or disbelieve, as stated in the Holy Quran in what translates to: {then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve} (Verse 29, Sourat Alkahf). Allah in his mercy clarified the consequences of disbelief, so that no one can have an excuse of not being informed. Allah assigned parents as guardians to protect their children and raise them on virtue. Islam prohibited kidnapping women and children, and as slavery was spreading at that age, Islam made freeing a slave equal to erasing sins, and made all humans equal in front of Allah, with only knowledge and good deeds to elevate one over another.

The Muslim prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a merciful prophet,

as he made hitting slaves on the face a great sin, expiated only by setting the assaulted slave free. He also gave slaves the option to free themselves by buying their freedom for an amount of money to be paid in instalments; that is in case they don't find anyone to release them. The prophet (peace be upon him) was a role model in freeing many female war captures (sic), thus preserving their dignity and the dignity of their families. Allah prohibited adultery in Muslim's Shaira (sic) as it was prohibited in previous heavenly religion, and made just approaching adultery a huge sin punished by bad destiny. By that, Islam aimed at preserving human societies from corruption. The prophet (peace be upon him) warned Muslims of life's temptations, women seduction on top of these temptations, giving his companions an example of the Jews, whose first temptation was caused by a woman. The prophet says in the context: [beware of life's temptations and beware of women].

Today, slavery to other than Allah has almost ended everywhere but in rare underdeveloped areas, leaving only traces of slavery to personal urges, human trafficking including children trafficking who are (sic) sometimes kidnapped from their parents or guardians and sold as property, their organs sold without their consent, or they become forced labour. The worst type of human trafficking in the modern world remains the kidnapping of women and girls, tempting them with imaginary jobs and high salaries, or raping them to fall as prey to criminals who hire them to brokers and pimps, where they are subjected to dreadful conditions, raped at all times, including when sick or in the period of menstrual (sic) and by over 20 men in a single day. These women are usually stripped of their money and identification documents, and left threatened by scandal, murder, or torture in case they attempt escape or refusal. These poor women become hostage of this condition, resented by religious societies, and helped by no one.

"WHEN THE FIRST EVER FATWA (AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY) WAS ISSUED, THERE WAS AN UNBELIEVABLE LEVEL OF WARMTH AND WELCOME FROM PEOPLE AND RELIGIOUS IMAMS. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE STARTED TO GET REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS. GETTING THE FATWA WAS REALLY THE TURNING POINT.

"(AT FIRST) NO-ONE BELIEVED WE HAD A FATWA. THE FATWA DID NOT ONLY HELP IN LEADING UP TO THE 2ND DECEMBER EVENT, IT HELPED IN A BIG WAY WITH THE BOKO HARAM ISSUE IN NIGERIA - WHILE THAT WAS HAPPENING WE WERE ABLE TO ISSUE THE FATWA ALL OVER THE WORLD AND CAMPAIGN AGAINST (THE BOKO HARAM)."

Raza Jafar, global philanthropist and businessman

Human trafficking is now as powerful as a state, with almost billions of dollars in annual revenue. This tainted money comes from acts that are destructive to dignified human societies, a fact well known to the United Nation and the world.

We salute your efforts in combating white slavery and human trafficking by exposing its means and networks, and warning the international community of the dangers associated with this crime, as well as identifying and rehabilitating victims, so that they lead dignified honest lives. This becomes of high urgency today, especially with many societies falling under war, poverty, and division, such as Russia and some East Asian countries, and the wide spread of human trafficking networks in some European and American countries.

As we support your efforts, we wish you success to what is good for humanity, and ending injustice and modern age slavery, thus saving human dignity and

right to live, especially with regards to women and children.

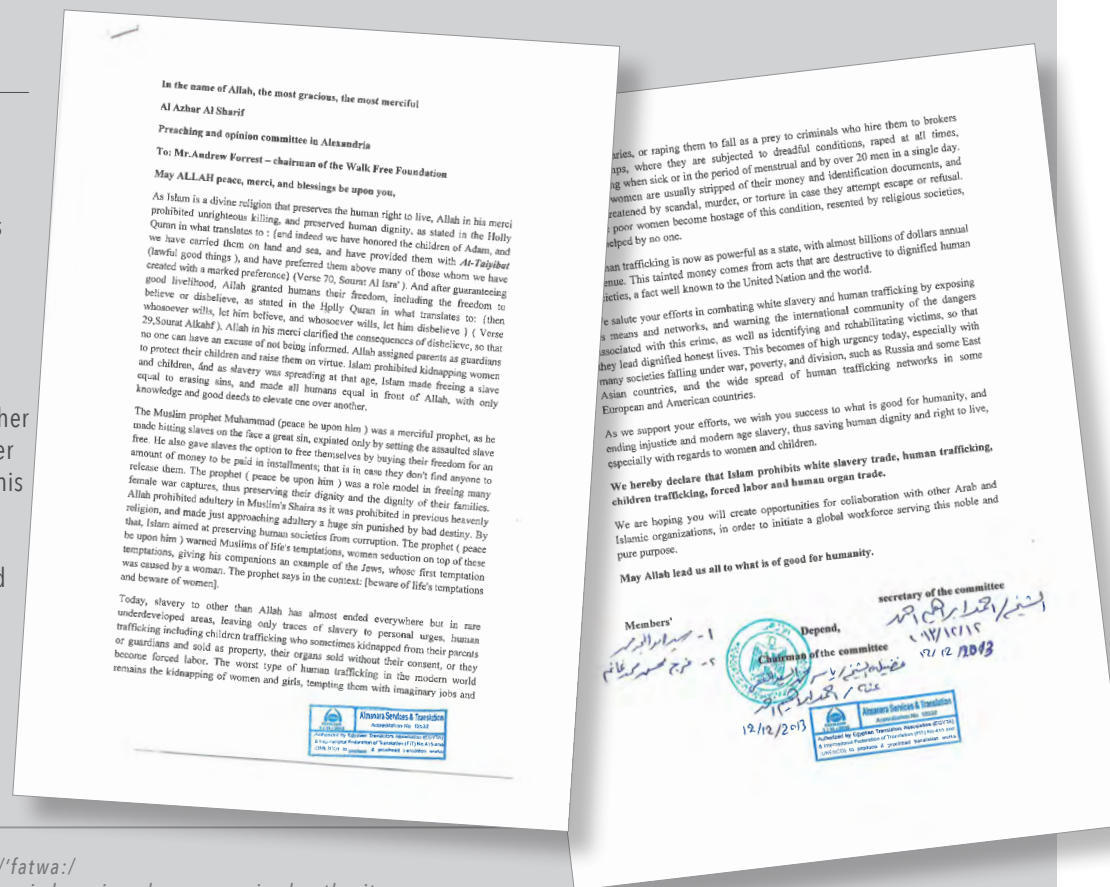
We hereby declare that Islam prohibits white slavery trade, human trafficking, children trafficking, forced labour and human organ trade.

We are hoping you will create opportunities for collaboration with other Arab and Islamic organisations, in order to initiate a global workforce serving this noble and pure purpose.

May Allah lead us all to what is of good for humanity.

Definition of "FATWA" /'fatwa:/
a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognised authority.

A Fatwa is the highest authority of the Islamic world, considered by most academic and political leaders in the study of the Qur'an.



THE BOOK OF SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS





It is December the second, 2014. Modern slavery, including human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of girls, boys, women and men still flourishes amongst us. The leaders of the world's great global faiths have just come together in Vatican City, to clarify any perceived ambiguity in holy texts and achieve a public proclamation condemning slavery for all time. They have expressed love for each other and agreed on an essential truth: that all people are valued equally by God. There was no precedent in history for this meeting or for the public agreements they reached.

Modern slavery, while illegal throughout the world, burgeons as strongly now as at any time in history. More than 35 million people are possessed or controlled by another person in ways that completely deprive them of their freedom and dignity¹. Profits from slavery are derived from both the exploitation and abuse of human beings for sexual and labour purposes. Unethically sourced labour unfairly displaces competitive honest businesses from the normal marketplace.

Modern slavery is hidden in places of prostitution, in factories and farms, on fishing boats, illegal sweatshops, private homes behind locked doors and in a myriad of other places. It exists in cities, villages and communities in every country in the world, rich or poor. This complex criminal activity crosses borders and challenges society at every level, cunningly evading judicial and civil controls. In order for it to end, urgent and coordinated global action is needed.

The moral, political and economic impacts of modern slavery pervade and harm our societies and peoples. Eradication of this evil requires the united effort, coordination and resources of all sovereign, corporate, faith and civil leaders.

This book brings together leaders who have made a joint declaration against modern slavery, committed to take practical action to end it, and pledged to do all they can to eradicate slavery for all time. They share a fundamental belief that each person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity.

We free people of the world are proud and grateful to acknowledge those who signed the declarations contained in this book. We thank you deeply for your leadership, compassion and united action to end modern slavery for all time.

'The soul that is within me no man can degrade.'
FREDERICK DOUGLASS - FORMER SLAVE - ABOLITIONIST LEADER - 1818 - 1895

¹ GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX, WALK FREE, NOVEMBER 2014.

INTRODUCTION to the Joint Declarations



We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historical initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time.

In the eyes of God each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative.

Signatures and names of religious leaders, including Andrew Forrest for the Global Freedom Network, and The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS Joint Declaration

We, the undersigned, believe each person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man. Each are valued equally by governments to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in the form of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, and any other relationship that fails to respect the fundamental truth that all people are of equal value and have the right to share the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We, the undersigned, commit to inspire practical action by civil, corporate, faith and sovereign leaders, and people of goodwill of every nation, to eradicate modern slavery across the world for all time.

We pledge ourselves to do everything in our power, within our communities and globally, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked, so that their future may be restored. Together, we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human moral imperative.

CIVIL LEADERS Joint Declaration

We, the undersigned, believe each person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man. Each are valued equally by governments to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in the form of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, and any other relationship that fails to respect the fundamental truth that all people are of equal value and have the right to share the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We, the undersigned, commit to inspire practical action by corporate, sovereign, faith and civil leaders, and people of goodwill of every nation, to eradicate modern slavery across the world for all time. In particular, we agree to:

- (i) *Hold ourselves and fellow corporate leaders responsible for identifying and eradicating modern slavery that may exist anywhere in our supply chains; and*
- (ii) *Where slave like practices exist in our supply chains, refuse to do business with that entity until those practices cease; and according to our conscience, either press a supplier to cease its practice, and/or bring to the immediate attention of the appropriate regulatory authorities.*

We pledge ourselves to do everything in our power, within our corporate communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked, so that their future may be restored. Together, we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human moral imperative.

CORPORATE LEADERS Joint Declaration



We, the undersigned, believe each person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man. Each are valued equally by governments to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in the form of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, and any other relationship that fails to respect the fundamental truth that all people are of equal value and have the right to share the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We commit to practical action by sovereign, corporate, faith and civil leaders, and people of goodwill of every nation, to eradicate modern slavery across the world for all time. We commit to:

- (i) Enforcing local, national and international laws including but not limited to human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of human beings for commercial or personal gain; and*
- (ii) Bringing into existence any other relevant law or covenant to eradicate all forms of modern slavery from our society.*

We pledge ourselves to do everything in our power, within our governments, judicial systems, communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked, so that their future may be restored. Together, we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human moral imperative.

SOVEREIGN LEADERS *Joint Declaration*



We, the undersigned, believe each person is a free human being, whether girl, boy, woman or man. Each are valued equally by governments to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in the form of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, and any other relationship that fails to respect the fundamental truth that all people are of equal value and have the right to share the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We, the undersigned, commit to inspire practical action by influencers of society, corporate, faith and sovereign leaders, and people of goodwill of every nation, to eradicate modern slavery across the world for all time.

We pledge ourselves to do everything in our power, within our communities and globally, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked, so that their future may be restored. Together, we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human moral imperative.

GLOBAL INFLUENCERS *Joint Declaration*

THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK & AFFILIATED MODERN SLAVERY INITIATIVES

The Global Freedom Network works in tandem with other initiatives to ensure a synergistic effort to end slavery. This includes measurement and monitoring programmes, and funders such as the Global Fund to End Slavery and the Freedom Fund, which recognise that to date funding has not been nearly enough to solve a problem as complex as modern slavery. Further, funds must be coordinated and properly managed in order to achieve the most effective outcomes.

A problem as deep and as vast as modern slavery needs to be properly understood. Those working on solutions to this pressing challenge need to understand the size and scale of it, as well as responses and contributing factors.

The Global Slavery Index is the first index of its kind, providing estimates, country by country, of the number of people trapped in modern slavery. The annual ranking, published by the Walk Free Foundation, is a tool used by governments, businesses and non-government organisations to assist in developing and implementing policies and programmes to help end modern slavery.

The 2016 Global Slavery Index (GSI) was the third index published. It relates data across three dimensions: the size of the problem, according to the estimated prevalence of modern slavery country by country and the absolute number by population; government responses to modern slavery; and vulnerability – the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery.

THE GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX

Some key facts from the 2016 GSI:

- 167 countries were ranked, based on the percentage of a country's population estimated to be in modern slavery. These countries were also rated on their government's response to ending modern slavery.
- More than 58 percent of people living in modern slavery are from five countries: India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Uzbekistan.
- North Korea, with four percent of its population in modern slavery, ranked number one on the table, by number of slaves as a proportion of country population. Other countries in the top 10 were: Uzbekistan (3.97 percent), Cambodia (1.6 percent), India (1.4 percent), Qatar (1.36 percent), Pakistan (1.13 percent), Democratic Republic of Congo (1.13 per cent), Sudan (1.13 percent), Syria (1.13 percent) and Central African Republic (1.13 percent).
- In terms of absolute numbers of people enslaved, India, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh represented the countries where modern slavery is most prevalent.
- The top five ranked countries for

the strength of the government response to modern slavery were: The Netherlands, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Australia.

- The five countries with governments taking the least action to end modern slavery were: Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, Hong Kong, and North Korea.

"WITHOUT A DOUBT, HUMAN SUFFERING FROM MODERN SLAVERY IS UNJUST AND UNJUSTLY RIGHT TAKING, A MATTER THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT AT THE DOCTRINE AND LEGISLATION LEVELS."

His Eminence the Grand Ayatollah Sheik Basheer Hussein Al-Najafy

THE
GLOBAL
SLAVERY
INDEX

THE WALK FREE MOVEMENT

The Movement is the largest online anti-slavery community in the world. It provides everyday people with the opportunity to ensure their calls to end modern slavery are heard and acted upon. By working with partner organisations around the world, coordinating the voices of millions of members globally, the Walk Free Movement secures change in government policy, business practice and social attitudes, to help end slavery.

The Movement has established strong roots as a global organisation, with campaigners working remotely in-country alongside partner organisations. It has activated new members, and now communicate in English, Arabic, Indonesian, Spanish and Portuguese.

SINCE THE WALK FREE MOVEMENT WAS LAUNCHED, IT HAS GROWN TO BECOME THE LARGEST ONLINE MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD DEDICATED TO ENDING MODERN SLAVERY.



29 CAMPAIGN WINS BY WALK FREE

- Stop trafficking of women in Argentina
- Protect children in Scotland from trafficking
- Slavery and the sustainable development goals
- Help end domestic slavery in Belgium
- Ghana Police: Protect children from slavery
- US: Survivor voices
- EU: Tackle the trade in conflict minerals
- End child slavery in India
- Transparency in UK supply chains
- Ensure Harry Potter chocolates are slavery free
- Protect EU laws to fight trafficking
- End slavery in the Thai fishing industry
- Missing in Qatar
- Governor Brown: Protect trafficking victims
- New Zealand: End slavery at sea
- Strong global law to fight forced labour
- US child welfare bill
- Recruitment agencies in the Philippines
- Forced child marriage in Iraq
- End child trafficking in the UK
- New anti-trafficking laws in Scotland
- FIFA: Help end modern slavery in Qatar
- Protection for trafficking victims in the US
- New anti-slavery laws in Australia
- Protect US military contractors from slavery
- Myanmar Government: Pledge to fight slavery
- Zero tolerance
- Zara: Pledge to use slavery free cotton
- Domestic worker rights in the Philippines

THE FREEDOM FUND

The Freedom Fund is the world's first private donor fund dedicated to identifying and investing in the most effective front-line efforts to end slavery, and demonstrating the viability of scaling interventions. It aims to raise and deploy USD100 million in private capital.

The Freedom Fund focuses on measurably reducing modern slavery and trafficking in those parts of the world where it is at its worst, targeting areas using a 'hotspot' funding model. It was founded by the Walk Free Foundation, Humanity United and Legatum Foundation in mid-2013, and officially announced by President Bill Clinton at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York on 26th September 2013. To date, the Freedom Fund has worked on hotspot initiatives in northern and southern India, south-eastern and central Nepal, Thailand, Ethiopia and Brazil.

"OUR VISION IS A WORLD FREE OF SLAVERY.
OUR MISSION IS TO MOBILISE THE CAPITAL
AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO END SLAVERY."



INDIA & NEPAL HOTSPOT HIGHLIGHTS



207,383
lives impacted



24,079
at-risk children in school



8,923
people liberated from slavery



\$43
cost per person

JUNE 2016

THE GLOBAL FUND TO END SLAVERY

The Walk Free Foundation is collaborating with the Global Fund to End Slavery in recognition of the need for government developed and driven, fully budgeted, strategies to end modern slavery. The Fund's goal is to eliminate modern slavery and that mission anticipates the economic, political and social dislocation associated with its intended success. Just as important as liberation, is ensuring local economies can absorb those coming out of slavery. The sustainable eradication of slavery requires interventions that do not simply transfer the crime elsewhere.

The Fund aspires to build a unique public-private partnership to leverage unprecedented levels of resources to dismantle the systems of slavery. These funds will be invested to address major structural gaps through a globally coordinated response. The Fund is working with other anti-slavery organisations to develop a Global Data Platform to inform anti-slavery interventions. The ability to measure changes will be key to the Fund's success. To achieve this it is developing standardised impact and effectiveness measures including leading indicator metrics.

In recognition of the critical role of business in ending slavery, the Fund is also integrating a business engagement component. This includes supply chain risk assessment tools and training and authentication processes. Development of these and other elements of the Global Fund to End Slavery will continue in the coming year, along with ongoing engagement with governments, non-government organisations and nations to understand how effective anti-slavery strategies can be sustainably supported.



"THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY HAS BEEN MY LIFE'S PASSION FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS AND WILL REMAIN SO UNTIL WE END IT." Dr Jean Baderschneider, CEO

GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK

CASINA PIO IV

VATICAN CITY



"THIS WAS A HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOUR THAT INVOLVED COMMITTED TEAMS FROM ITALY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY AND AUSTRALIA. THEY WORKED TOGETHER ON MANY COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING ISSUES OVER A PERIOD OF MANY MONTHS. THE TEAMS WORKED AGAINST ALL ODDS TO OVERCOME LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES; THE RESULTS WERE OUTSTANDING."

Antonia Stampalija, CEO,
Global Freedom Network



"WE ALL CAME TOGETHER TO MAKE IT WORK ... THE AUSTRALIAN TEAM INTEGRATED WITH THE LOCAL TEAM IN ROME TO PUT TOGETHER THIS HISTORIC FEAT."

Felicity Gooding, COO,
Minderoo and Walk Free
Foundation



Signatories at the faith leaders event, 2 December 2014 in Vatican City

THE VATICAN CITY EVENT

2 DECEMBER 2014

After intensive discourse among global leaders in numerous countries over many months, the time had come to draw a line in the sand on modern slavery.

On Tuesday 2 December 2014, the world's leading faith figures gathered together with representatives from public and private organisations, and other influential individuals, at the Casina Pio IV in Vatican City. It was the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery*, the 29th year that this annual event was celebrated on this day.

The excitement inside the 16th Century Casina was palpable; history was about to be made. People entering the building felt the solemn weight of significance of the occasion, and a hush descended on

the room as the faith luminaries entered.

Facilitated by British-Iranian journalist and television host, Christiane Amanpour of CNN, the event was at once celebratory and sombre, reflecting the joy and satisfaction of achieving the seemingly unachievable in establishing a united faith front, and the seriousness of the common cause. One by one, leaders made their way to the front to share their views and commitment to ending modern slavery, based on the ideals of his or her own religious beliefs. Each articulated the shared thread that every girl and boy, woman and man, has the same dignity and freedom of people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

*The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (resolution 317(IV) of 2 December 1949). The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.



Father Federico Lombardi holds up the signed Declaration; history is made.



The Official Party



Grace Forrest meets Pope Francis



The audience



Andrew Forrest signs the Declaration on behalf of the Global Freedom Network



Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma) signs the Declaration



Joy shared between Andrew Forrest and The Most Ven Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana on the signing of the Declaration



The Official Party



Dr. Abbas Shuman Soliman signs the Declaration on behalf of the Grand Imam of Al Azhar



Survivor Advocate James Kofi Annan reads the Declaration in English



Pope Francis receives a gift



Archbishop Justin Welby signs the Declaration alongside the Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi

Pope Francis commenced proceedings, stating the following:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I thank all the religious leaders gathered here for their commitment in favour of the survivors of human trafficking, and all those present for their intense participation in this act of brotherhood, especially toward the most suffering of our brothers and sisters. Inspired by our confessions of faith, today we are gathered for an historic initiative and concrete action: to declare that we will work together to eradicate the terrible scourge of modern slavery in all its forms. The physical, economic, sexual and psychological exploitation of men and women, boys and girls, currently holds tens of millions in inhumane and humiliating bondage. Every human being – man, woman, boy and girl – is the image of God; God, who is love and freedom, gives himself through interpersonal relations; therefore every human being is a free person, destined to live for the good of others in equality and brotherhood. Every person and all people are equal and their freedom and dignity must be recognised. Any discriminating relationship that does not respect the fundamental conviction that the 'other is like me myself' constitutes a crime, and very often an abhorrent crime. That is why we declare in the name of all people and of everyone of our own Creed that modern slavery – in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution

or the trafficking of organs – is a crime 'against humanity'. The victims of this are from every walk of life, but most are found among the poorest and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. We declare on behalf of those who are calling our communities to action, that every systematic deprivation of individual freedom for the purpose of personal and commercial exploitation be rejected entirely and without exception.

"Despite the great efforts of many, modern slavery continues to be an atrocious scourge that is present throughout the world on a broad scale, even as tourism. This crime of 'lèse-humanity' masquerades behind seemingly acceptable customs, but in reality claims its victims through prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour, slave labour, mutilation, the sale of organs, the consumption of drugs and child labour. It hides behind closed doors, in particular places, in the streets, automobiles, factories, the countryside, in fishing boats and many other places. And this happens both in towns and villages, in the reception centres of the wealthiest nations as well as in those of the poorest. And the worst thing is that this situation, unfortunately, grows more serious every day.

"We call to action all people of faith, leaders, governments, businesses, all men and women of good will, to give their strong support and join in

the action against modern slavery in all its forms. Sustained by the ideals of our confessions of faith and by our shared human values, we all can and must raise the standard of spiritual values, common effort and the vision of freedom to eradicate slavery from our planet.

"I ask the Lord to grant us today the face to convert ourselves in the proximity of every person, without exception, offering active and constant help to those we encounter on our path – whether it be an elderly person who has been abandoned by everyone, a worker unjustly enslaved or unappreciated, a refugee caught in the snares of the underworld, a young man or woman who walks the streets of the world, as a victim of the sex trade, a man or a woman driven to prostitution by the deception of people have no fear of God, a boy or a girl mutilated for their organs – and who call to our conscience, echoing the voice of the Lord: I say to you whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me.

"Dear friends, thank you for this meeting. Thank you for this transverse commitment, which involves us all. We are all reflections of the image of God and we are convinced that we cannot tolerate that the image of the living God be subject to abhorrent treatment. Many thanks!"

POPE FRANCIS

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, from Argentina, is the first Pope from the Americas. He was elected Supreme Pontiff on 13th March 2013. As the Jesuit Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis was a highly respected pastor who travelled throughout his continent on the metro and by bus. "My people are poor and I am one of them," was his common refrain, one that explained his decision to live in a flat and cook his own meals. Born on 17 December 1936, he was the son of Italian immigrants who graduated as a chemical technician before choosing the path of priesthood. Deeply committed to issues including poverty, peace and social justice, he was the first Pope to call for the eradication of modern forms of slavery in the globalised world.



SURVIVORS OF MODERN SLAVERY

Of special poignancy at the *Joint Declaration* signing on 2 December 2014 were the stories of two survivors of modern slavery, James Kofi Annan and Claudia, whose heartfelt commitment to ending slavery reflected their determination that future generations would not have to suffer as they had.

JAMES KOFI ANNAN

James Kofi Annan is the founder of Challenging Heights, a non-government organisation in Ghana that protects the rights of children and particularly focuses its anti-trafficking efforts on the fishing and cocoa industries. James is a survivor of child trafficking and child labour who was forced to work in villages along Lake Volta from the age of six, before he escaped at age 13. He became educated and worked in a bank before establishing Challenging Heights in 2003. He told the 2 December event:

"One of the main reasons why people are enslaved is poverty, but at the core of it, it is people who take advantage of the vulnerability of others to enslave them and sell them. During the last nine years, my organisation, Challenging Heights, in Ghana, has rescued over one thousand children from modern-day slavery; 90 per cent of them come from the churches. Both those who abuse and those who are abused happen to come from the Christian community.

"What that tells me, is that addressing Christian faith is very crucial in order to solve this problem. Lake Volta is an area where the ILO (International Labor Organisation) estimates that over 48 per cent of all the children are enslaved.

So we are talking about an enormous figure, but it's not insurmountable.

"We can achieve the goal of ending modern-day slavery within the target of six years. To do that, I believe all of us, joined together, can push to get the last one per cent of children to go to school. If every child is in school, then there will be no child who is enslaved, and that is what I believe the Global Freedom Network is all about, and I'm happy to be part of it. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity."



CLAUDIA

Claudia (not her real name) was born into a poor family in Mexico, where she was a victim of child prostitution for four years. She survived to become one of the first successful people to go through Mexico's reintegration processes. Claudia is now married and the mother of two daughters. She told the 2 December event:

"I was a victim of human trafficking; I was taken to a shelter where I recovered. After recovering, what struck me more were the psychologists. The psychologists, during therapy, told me that they understood me that they knew what I was going through. I asked them: How can you know what I'm going through, if you didn't suffer it? That's when I realised that we must help the survivors the way they need it.

"To truly help, one must understand what the survivors feel. And that is how I realised I just wanted to help other people that had suffered the same circumstances. I'm optimistic, and I have been so for quite a long time. I know we can put an end to human trafficking. Today's event was amazing. I would never have imagined witnessing this day. These people support us by committing themselves to help us put an end to human trafficking. And that's very moving, because it gives us strength to move forward, to help and understand the survivors better."

"TO TRULY HELP, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT THE SURVIVORS FEEL."

Claudia



"ONE OF THE ISSUES AT THE GRASSROOTS IS POVERTY ... BUT AT THE CORE OF IT IS PEOPLE WHO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VULNERABILITY OF OTHERS TO ENSLAVE THEM AND TO SELL THEM."

James Kofi Annan, Founder Challenging Heights

SIGNATORIES TO THE JOINT DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

Following presentations by nine other leaders, the *Joint Declaration* was read out in English and Spanish by two former victims of slavery who are now committed to ending it – James Kofi Annan, from Ghana, and Claudia, from Mexico. The 13 signatories then proceeded to sign the *Joint Declaration*, committing themselves and their faiths to fighting for the dignity and freedom from slavery of all human beings.

The 13 signatories to the *Joint Declaration* in 2014 were:

ANGLICAN:

Most Rev'd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

BUDDHIST:

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chân Không, representing Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh
The Most Ven. Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest of Malaysia

CATHOLIC:

Pope Francis

HINDU:

Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi ('Amma')

JEWISH:

Rabbi Dr Abraham Skorka
Rabbi Dr David Rosen

MUSLIM SUNNI:

Dr Abbas Abdalla Abbas Soliman, Undersecretary of State of Al Azhar Alsharif, representing Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar

MUSLIM SHIA:

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi
Sheikh Naziyah Razzaq Jaafar, representing Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Hussain al Najafi

ORTHODOX:

His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis of France, Church of Constantinople, representing
His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople

LAY-CHRISTIAN:

Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman Walk Free Foundation and Chair Global Freedom Network

THE JOINT DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

"We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historic initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of goodwill everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time.

In the eyes of God*, each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative."

*The Grand Imam of Al Azhar uses the word 'religions'.



NEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

"THE 2 DECEMBER 2014 EVENT WAS A HISTORIC JOINT SPIRITUAL AND PRACTICAL DECLARATION THAT AFFIRMED EVERYONE'S COMMITMENT TO A COMMON CAUSE. THE MEDIA PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN SPREADING THE NEWS GLOBALLY, AND WE WERE THANKFUL TO THEM."

Ms Antonia Stampalija, CEO Global Freedom Network



Pope Francis @Pontifex (2 Dec):

Slaves no more.
We are all brothers and sisters. [#EndSlavery](#)

The 2 December event generated thousands of media articles and commentaries in newspapers and online forums around the world, and was featured on numerous radio and television stations. Social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook were buzzing with information and news. Through these platforms, the message of ending slavery reached an estimated more than one billion people. Key statistics included:

- More than 100 print articles, with total readership of more than 20 million.
- More than 100 newswire reports from over 30 global and regional news agencies.
- 69 television/radio reports, with estimated viewership of 50 million
- More than 1000 websites reported on the event.
- 19,000 mentions on social media
- At its peak, #EndSlavery reached fourth spot in trending hashtags on Twitter worldwide.
- More than 19,000 tweets containing the #EndSlavery hashtag between 1 and 3 December 2014.

Examples of media coverage and commentary included the following excerpts:

THE FINANCIAL TIMES

(3 December 2014)

Religious leaders in rare union with pledge to fight slavery.

"The leaders of the world's main religions set aside their differences and in an unprecedented joint declaration on Tuesday committed to the elimination of modern slavery by 2020 ... The accord represents a rare joint initiative between Sunni and Shia Muslim leaders and the first agreement on social issues between the Anglican and Catholic churches since the Reformation ... Commenting on the resolution, Melissa Rogers, US President Barack Obama's main adviser on faith-related issues, said it was 'a symbol of the power of collective moral vision'."

THE GUARDIAN UK

(3 December 2014)

Faith leaders unite to combat modern slavery.

"It began with a 17-year-old Australian schoolgirl's horrified discovery. And yesterday it brought together in the Vatican Jewish rabbis, turbaned Sunni imams and Shia ayatollahs, Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, a Hindu

guru and the orange-robed Buddhist chief high priest of Malaysia, among others.

For a couple of hours, they found something on which they could agree: that slavery in its many forms is an unmitigated evil, "a disgrace to God, a dishonour to humankind", as the Orthodox ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew called it."

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

(3 December 2014)

Mata Amritanandamayi meets Pope Francis in Vatican

"Mata Amritanandamayi joined hands with other world religious leaders in Rome on Tuesday and declared her commitment towards eradication of modern slavery by 2020. She was in the Vatican on an invitation by Pope Francis. Her visit coincided with the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Mata Amritanandamayi, who sat next to the Pope in the front row, signed the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*. The declaration underlined that modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, is a crime against humanity and must be recognised as such by everyone and by all nations."



Catholic News Svc @CatholicNewsSvc (2 Dec):

#PopeFrancis: everyone is called to action, deplore everything depriving ppl of their God-given dignity #EndSlavery

THE HUFFINGTON POST

(9 December 2014)

When the Pope Met the Grand Ayatollah, History was Made.

By Sayed Mahdi al-Modarresi, faith leader, lecturer and author.

"Last week, with little fanfare and under heavy security, an historic meeting took place in Rome which marked a turning point in interfaith relations. Inside the 16th century Casina Pio IV villa, home to the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, seven clerics representing over five billion people overcame lingering traditions of suspicion to commit to the eradication of modern day slavery by the year 2020. The summit concluded with the signing of a declaration that condemns slavery as a crime against humanity.

The Global Freedom Network, the organisation behind the initiative, was hoping to bring to light the abhorrent evil that affects nearly 36 million* people, but the meeting went above and beyond its intended purpose and literally made history. For the first time since the establishment of the Catholic church, the Pope met face to face with a Grand Ayatollah representing the Shia faith. Not only did the two become co-signatories of an important document, but they shook hands, and chatted informally

before and after the event at one of the Vatican's beautifully decorated garden pavilions. Recognising the significance of hosting a Shia leader at the heart of the Catholic church for the first time, the Pope followed the Ayatollah into the pavilion to shake his hands. "How are you?" said Grand Ayatollah al-Modarresi, a moderate but powerful scholar with a big following in the Shia world. "Fine, thank you" replied the Holy Father, who looked a little weary having just arrived from a trip to Turkey. "It is important you would be fine" said al-Modarresi, surprising the Pontiff with his English. "Because if you are fine, many people around the world will be fine." Most notable is how both leaders showed humility and set aside protocol and engaged with one another on a personal level.

"Andrew Forrest, the Australian philanthropist businessman who is on the Executive Board of the GFN and has financed its work told me he opted to involve religious leaders because 'politicians can enact laws banning certain practices, but only faith leaders can change the deep-seated values which influence people's behaviours'."

"TODAY'S EVENT OF THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK IS A PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT MOMENT. WE HAVE JOINED TOGETHER FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR WORLD.

"AS WE MAKE THIS SOLEMN COMMITMENT TODAY, MY PRAYER IS THAT WE SHALL BY GOD'S GRACE PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ENDING THE INHUMAN PRACTICE OF MODERN SLAVERY – A PRACTICE THAT DISFIGURES OUR WORLD AND OBSCURES THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. WE HAVE THE WILL, WE HAVE THE COMMON PURPOSE, IT CAN BE DONE; MAY GOD BLESS OUR ACTION TOGETHER."

Most Rev'd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury



Sayed M. Modarresi @SayedModarresi (2 Dec):

For the first time in 2000 years. A Pope and a Shia Grand Ayatollah meet. #EndSlavery



Mira Sorvino @MiraSorvin (2 Dec):

I've signed my name won't you join me? #EndSlavery @gfn2020 together we can!



Lambeth Palace @lambethpalace (2 Dec):

World faith leaders speak out to #EndSlavery

*This figure has been updated in the 2018 Global Slavery Index to be 40.3m.

IN SUPPORT OF THE JOINT DECLARATION:

In addition to the formal speeches given on 2 December 2014, global leaders and influencers gave their written and verbal support. Letters were provided by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and Rabbi Dr David Rosen of the Heilbrunn Institute:



The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon

Ban Ki-moon is eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, after succeeding Kofi Annan in 2007. Born in 1944, Ban was a career diplomat in South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the United Nations before accepting his present role. He was Foreign Minister of South Korea from 2004 to 2006.

"Modern day slavery and trafficking are serious violations of human dignity and rights. These crimes often affect people who are already vulnerable because of discrimination, conflict or economic and social disempowerment. Violations of human rights – including violence against women, gender stereotypes, discrimination, exclusion and failure to respect labour standards regarding

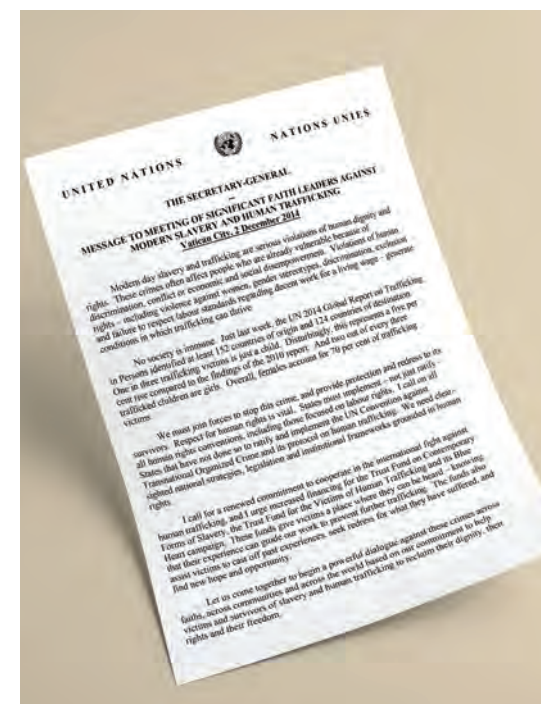
decent work for a living wage – generate conditions in which trafficking can thrive.

"No society is immune. Just last week, the UN 2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons identified at least 152 countries of origin and 124 countries of destination. One in three trafficking victims is just a child. Disturbingly, this represents a five per cent rise compared to the findings of the 2010 report. And two out of every three trafficked children are girls. Overall, females account for 70 per cent of trafficking victims.

"We must join forces to stop this crime, and provide protection and redress to its survivors. Respect for human rights is vital. States must implement – not just ratify – all human rights conventions, including those focused on labour rights. I call on all States that have not done so to ratify and implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocol on human trafficking. We need clear-sighted national strategies, legislation and institutional frameworks grounded in human rights.

"I call for a renewed commitment to cooperate in the international fight against human trafficking, and I urge increased financing for the Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, the Trust Fund for the Victims of Human Trafficking and its Blue Heart campaign. These funds give victims a place where they can be heard – knowing that their experience can guide our work to prevent further trafficking. The funds also assist victims to cast off past experiences, seek redress for what they have suffered, and find new hope and opportunity.

"Let us come together to begin a powerful dialogue against these crimes across faiths, across communities and across the world based on our commitment to help victims and survivors of slavery and human trafficking to reclaim their dignity, their rights and their freedom."



Rabbi Dr David Rosen, KSG, CBE, Director of International Interreligious Affairs and Director of the Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding

Rabbi David Rosen is the American Jewish Committee's Jerusalem-based International Director of Interreligious Affairs and directs the AJC's Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding. He is the honorary advisor on interfaith relations to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, an International President of Religions for Peace, an Honorary President of the International Council of Christians and Jews, and the Jewish representative on the Board of Directors of the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious Dialogue. In 2005 the Pope made Rabbi Rosen a Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great, in recognition of his contribution to Jewish-Catholic reconciliation, and in 2010 he was made a Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II.

"Jewish tradition understands the affirmation in the Book of Genesis that the human person is created in the Divine Image, to not only refer to the human being's unique human intellectual and spiritual capacities, but also that every human being has the sacred right to life, dignity and freedom.

"Moreover as a modern Orthodox Jewish scholar confirms, "the recognition of the right to freedom is not limited to personal liberty. It ensures all against any form of slavery and subjugation" (Samuel Belkin, "In His Image" p. 112).

"Furthermore, the ancient Jewish sages declare that any act of disrespect towards another person, let alone bloodshed or the denial of freedom and dignity, is an act of disrespect to God Himself, for "in the image of God He made (the human person)" (Sifra 4:12).

"The Global Freedom Network (GFN) is therefore precisely the struggle to ensure the affirmation of the Divine Image in all people – in particular those whose dignity and freedom are denied by enslavement and subjugation that desecrate the Divine Name.

"It is therefore a not only a privilege for me, but a religious duty to support the GFN's sacred work. It was a special joy to participate in the unique gathering hosted by Pope Francis in the Vatican last December, bringing together leaders and representatives from the five world religious traditions to pledge common commitment to the task of combating the horrors of contemporary enslavement and human trafficking. The event served as a testimony of the fundamental human values that the world's great religions share and of the obligation of interreligious cooperation to work together to deliver human dignity from those who deny it; to "turn (our world) from evil and do goodness, seek peace and pursue it (Psalm 34:15)."





The Most Ven. Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest of Malaysia

Venerable Dhammaratana is best known for establishing the Ti-Ratana Welfare Society, and has led many charities in Indonesia, China and Thailand. The Chief was born and studied in Sri Lanka before being co-opted to assist the late Ven. Dr K Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera, former Chief High Priest of the Buddhist Maha Vihara in Malaysia. Since his appointment as Chief High Priest of Malaysia, he has worked in the Buddhist and non-Buddhist communities in Malaysia and other parts of the world. The King of Malaysia appointed him as 'Panglima Jasa Negara', entitling him to be addressed as 'Datuk', a title that is only conferred on those who have shown meritorious service to the country.

"We are still witnessing all the barbaric and horrifying acts of humans which should have been abandoned a long time ago. Humans have certainly advanced in technology but not spiritually. We would have thought that given the marvel of the widespread education of globalisation and the great establishments of organisations that come forth to protect human rights - there will be more assurance for all to live a decent life. It is so torturous to those victims to even think if they will be able to live through the night; life is lived in fear and constant worry for them."

"Religious leaders play an important role to work together with the government parties to put a stop to these negative activities. I believe that together, we must be united with the effort to increase investigations and prosecutions of labour trafficking offences and slavery. We must ensure that there are equal human rights for all and that everyone can live the life that they deserve."



INSPIRING WORDS

Faith leaders at the 2 December 2014 event were invited to speak about their motivation for joining the *Joint Declaration*, and their values and beliefs about ending modern slavery. There was widespread agreement about the fundamental human platform of treating others as you would wish to be treated, and the pressing need for solidarity in ensuring the current generation is the last one to have to make a commitment such as the *Joint Declaration*.

The speeches are included in full on page 110.



Dr Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb

Dr Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, was appointed to his role in 2012. He holds a Ph.D. in Islamic Philosophy from Paris Sorbonne University and has been director of Al-Azhar University since 2003. Dr El-Tayeb served as the Grand Mufti of Egypt in 2002-2003. He took a lead role in condemning the kidnappings and enslavement of girls by Boko Haram in 2014, leading the Islamic world with his statement the abductions 'completely contradict Islam and its principles of tolerance.' Dr El-Tayeb was represented at the 2 December 2014 event by Dr Abbas Abdalla Abbas Solian, the Undersecretary of State of Al Azhar Alsharif, whose speech included the following extract:

"I send peace and blessings upon the best of God's creation (peace and blessings be upon him) who said 'An Arab has no superiority over except by piety. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous.'

"Slavery was one of the major problems that plagued pre-Islamic Arabia. It was so pervasive that a person could lose his freedom and be enslaved by his creditor simply by failing to settle his debt, turning from the light of freedom to the darkness of execrable slavery. At no point did Islam condone slavery between the people whom it deems as being equal from the same father, Adam, and the same mother, Eve. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'All people are from Adam and Adam was created from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors or they will be of less account with God than the beetle (which rolls dung with its nose).'

"Despite the ratification of the abolition of slavery by tolerant Islamic law and the laws of other Heavenly revealed faiths, today we continue to battle slavery as it is still extant in some countries. Contemporary institutions of slavery include human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, child slavery, women oppression and depriving women of holding appropriate positions, discrimination on the basis of gender, race or belief and forced migrant labour. All of these and other forms of slavery are deemed reprehensible in Islamic law, and religious and human rights institutions, authorities and organisations must all work to abolish them and push countries to enact laws and legislations that deter the deprivation of freedoms."



Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi is considered the leader of the Islamic Action Organisation in Iraq. He has established religious seminaries in many countries, the most distinguished being the Al-Qaem circle, with students from more than 35 countries carrying out missionary duties. The Grand Ayatollah was born in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq, where he was the pupil of great scholars and received his degree in Islamic jurisprudence, the highest certificate in the religious seminaries, at the age of 20. His speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"We, the leaders of the world's religions and scholars of the faiths, carry a tremendous burden and a great responsibility: to deliver to humankind the injunction that they must revert back to their conscience and safeguard their dignity, for doing so will allow us to uproot all the causes of evil and corruption. We must also remind them of God's words and revelations that guide us towards connecting with Him to rid ourselves of aberration, darkness and delusion.

"No one must take others as slaves, nor to transgress on their rights, be it in part of in whole, big or small. Humankind is the creation of God, and so is every living being.

"Distinguished convenors; we must work in unison to salvage humans from the darkness of bondage, from poverty and disease, from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and from the egregious inequality among the classes of human society and the destruction of the environment, precisely because religion is linked to the Lord who is dominant over all things.

"I urge you in this historic summit to open up to this ocean of morality, one without an end to its depth nor a limit to its breadth."



Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi ('Amma')

Best known as Amma (Mother), Mata Amritanandamayi is a spiritual leader and humanitarian from Kerala, India. Of the Hindu faith, Amma spends her days receiving the more than 34 million people who have come to unburden their sorrows and share their problems. Amma is the Founder of the global humanitarian network, 'Embracing the World', that works to alleviate the burden of the poor by helping meet the basic needs of food, shelter, healthcare, education and livelihood. She is also

the Founder and Chancellor of Amrita University, a five-campus institution with a strong research focus. Her speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"Human trafficking is one of the worst curses that plagues society, not only for this century, but since the beginning of time. The more we try to eradicate slavery and forced labour, it seems to rebound with double the strength. It is like an evil ghost that keeps haunting us.

"We have been granted the blessing of life through God's compassion. This life is to be spent performing good deeds as an offering to God. To destroy another person's life is a misuse of God's gift. All living beings are instruments in the hands of the Divine. The law of God's court is righteousness, or Dharma. Let us all strive to respect and follow this law.

"The human mind has created many divisions in the form of religion, caste, language and national boundaries. Let us try to create a bridge of all-encompassing

pure love to break down these self-created walls. Any hardened heart will soften in love. Love can spread light through even the densest darkness. Selfless love transforms the mind from a demon that enslaves us into our own liberator. Those who traffic and enslave others have fallen prey to a negative mind. Religious leaders should, without ulterior motives, formulate an action plan of rehabilitation based on selfless love and spirituality, the essence of all faiths. Remaining silent in the face of unrighteousness is unrighteous.

"In order to heal the mental and emotional wounds inflicted upon the victims of human trafficking, we need to care for them with selfless love. This will bring them into the light of a free life, away from the darkness forcefully imposed upon them in the past. We need to create a large task force of social servants to carry out this sacred mission. Only religious and spiritual leaders can bring together such a task force."

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nu Chân Không

Sister Chân Không is the first fully-ordained monastic disciple of Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh, and the director of his humanitarian projects since the early 1960s. Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, scholar, poet, artist, peace activist and author who was described by Martin Luther King as 'an apostle of peace and non-violence'. Sister Chân Không has led Buddhist Peace Delegations in peace talks and emergency humanitarian efforts, established a monastery in France, and is the Elder nun of the International Plum Village Sangha of more than 800 monastics. She was born in 1938 in Ben Tre in Southern Vietnam. Her speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"In our work of service, we must have time to come back to ourselves, and generate peace in our body and mind. When we can recognise and embrace our own suffering, the energy of compassion will be born in our hearts, and we will know what to do and what not to do to relieve the suffering of our beloved ones, and of the world. We need to be able to embrace our own anger, fear, discrimination and despair; and we need to look deeply in order to generate the clarity, courage and compassion we need."

"When we have peace in ourselves, and clarity in our mind, we will be able to have compassion even for the traffickers themselves. We will be able to help wake them up, and touch the seed of compassion in their hearts. Our compassion can help them abandon their exploitation, and transform them into our friends and allies of our cause."





His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has served in his role as Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome since 1991. He is the 270th Archbishop of the 2,000-year-old Church, and his vision is to promote reconciliation among Christian churches, advance human rights, religious tolerance, international peace and environmental protection. The Ecumenical Patriarch has organised conferences centered on religious tolerance and published influential declarations against extremism, violence and war. In 1997 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the United States Congress. His speech on

2 December 2014 (provided via video) included the following extract:

"We would like to assure you that we stand with you in solidarity and commitment to eradicate modern expressions of slavery, which are a disgrace to God, a dishonour to humankind, and a degradation of all its innocent victims fashioned in the image and likeness of our heavenly Creator. There are three observations that we would like to bring to your attention about the moral imperative to abolish human trafficking and forced labour.

"First, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that in the 21st century we are still responding to the moral challenge of slavery! Indeed, the slavery that we witness and confront is more inhumane and more malevolent than similar phenomena in the early Christian centuries or even in more recent centuries.

"Second, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that once again the most profoundly and negatively affected are the vulnerable and poor of our world! It is foolish and arrogant for people with power and wealth to imagine that they can seize possession or acquire ownership of other people's labour for purposes of greed and profit.

"Third, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that – while we strive to establish thresholds and deadlines to protect the natural environment as God's gift to the world – we nevertheless remain unaware and indifferent to the oppressive abuse of human beings bearing the very seal of divine grace."



Most Rev'd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Rev'd and Right Hon Justin Welby was announced as the 105th Archbishop of the See of Canterbury in late 2012, and was enthroned at Canterbury Cathedral in London on 21st March 2013. Archbishop Welby studied history and law at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge and then worked as an executive in the oil industry. He left the industry in 1989 after sensing a call from God, and undertook a theology degree at St John's College, Durham. Archbishop Welby was ordained a deacon in 1992, made a Canon of Coventry Cathedral in 2002 and Dean of Liverpool in 2007. He was born in 1956 in London. His speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"At a time when faiths are seen wrongly as a cause of conflict it is a sign of real hope that today global faith leaders have together committed themselves publicly

to the battle to end modern slavery. The challenge is acute and growing, facilitated by a globalised economy that is too easily without moral or conscience. We gather to affirm a deep shared commitment for the liberation of those humiliated, abused and enslaved by their fellow human beings. It is a challenge which must be undertaken in global partnership with others.

"The evils we seek to combat will not yield without struggle. The complex global environment is why we need the strongest possible collaboration between national governments everywhere, with the business sector, police forces, civil society, faith communities and all those who long to see all humanity live in freedom. There are already close and trusting relationships between us as faith leaders. Our task now is to make those relationships work effectively for the well-being of all people.

"The Anglican Communion has given a high priority to this task, and I want to

affirm my own personal commitment to it. But what can we do? We can make sure that every worshipping community, of every faith, knows about modern slavery and is ready to work to prevent and put an end to these abuses.

"We can look to our own actions and choices as consumers and users of financial services whose managers can put great pressure on companies in which they invest. We can make sure that those who have been enslaved and trafficked are supported, respected and welcomed into the community. We can continue to press governments to implement more effective laws to root out these evils. We can work with the business sector across the globe to ensure robust systems for slave-free supply chains. And we can reinforce the ties of friendship and trust among ourselves, and with all those who profess faith and those who do not, who share our commitment to end slavery."



Rabbi Dr Abraham Skorka

Rabbi Skorka was ordained a Rabbi at the Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary in 1973 and achieved a Ph.D. in Chemistry in his home town of Buenos Aires in 1979. He became Emeritus Professor of Jewish Law at the University of Salvador (Buenos Aires) in 2002, Doctor Honoris Causa at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2011, at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina in 2012 and the University of the Sacred Heart in 2013. Since 1976 Rabbi Skorka has been the Rabbi of the Benei Tikva Community, and since 2010 (and from 1996-1998) has been the Rector of the Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary. He was born on 5 July 1950 in Buenos Aires. His speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"The people of Israel came to Mount Sinai through an experience of enslavement and liberation, which is still abided by all Jewish people as of this date, every day of their lives. The heroic coming out of slavery from Egypt is one of the essential parts of the Pentateuch, and one of its central messages is the courage and profound meaning inherent in being a free person.

"In the biblical conception, enslaving an individual hurts the image of God lying inside every human – and only those individuals who can fully and profoundly be free can dignify the human condition for themselves and in God's eyes.

"Aside from the view each particular creed may have, which all together represent the faith we all share in the course of our human experience on Earth, I understand that there is only one possible way we can

view one another – as equals, having all the same rights and obligations to each other. This is what the Bible essentially says, and this is what will help us create a reality that is more just, more balanced, and more sane than the one we are witnessing today.

"We see in our day many of our fellow men and women being subjected to degradation. We witness the many crimes and abuses committed by those who break and enslave their brothers and sisters in multiple ways. This is why I join you here today, as a Jew who raises his voice against this with all his strength, to ask that all forms of slavery be condemned in the harshest terms and with the harshest penalties."



Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman Walk Free Foundation and Chair Global Freedom Network

Mr Forrest is an international philanthropist and business leader who founded the world's fourth largest iron ore exporter, Fortescue Metals Group, of which he is Chairman. He is the Chairman of the Walk Free Foundation and a Director of the Global Freedom Network, and is involved in a broad range of philanthropic and business ventures throughout the world. He was born in Australia in 1961. Mr Forrest's speech on 2 December 2014 included the following extract:

"Faith leaders, you have created history. There has never been such a journey as yours trodden before. This is an unprecedented demonstration of faith leaders of the world coming together to draw a line in the sand to end the scourge of slavery. To utilise new and modern institutions upon which a world without slavery may shortly stand."

"We know that it is the beliefs and values that reside in the hearts of mankind that drive evil or good intentions and behaviour. Yet it is not until now, with this show of ethical responsibility by faith leaders, political will by government leaders, conscientious objection to slavery by business leaders, and with the unparalleled ease of global communications, that we have this great initiative and these institutions to truly end slavery."

"This is the day on which we have drawn the line in the sand against evil, the day on which we declare that we will end slavery and the day on which the peace, love and respect among the world's great religions will be our most powerful weapons against the evil of slavery."

Witnesses to the *Joint Declaration* included a range of influential people from various sectors and countries. Their affirmations of personal commitment included:

Mr Jeffrey Sachs

Jeffrey David Sachs is an American economist and Director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University. He is special adviser to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on the Millennium Development Goals, having held the same position under former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Sachs became known for his role as an adviser to Eastern European and developing national governments during the transition from communism to a market system during periods of economic crisis.

"This scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery affects the whole world economy. It's fundamentally against everything we stand for in sustainable development, which is for a just, inclusive and environmentally sustainable society. Religious leaders coming together is a huge call to action and I think it will find its place in the Sustainable Development Goals that will be adopted by the world in 2015. It is a moral call, reminding us that we need a worldwide economy that functions according to basic human values. This is the central principle; it's core to addressing the issues of trafficking and slavery, and more generally it's core to the whole hope for truly sustainable development.

"Saying that crime or poverty will always be with us isn't correct. We can never put the guard down completely and say that we have solved the problem of slavery or human trafficking or mass pollution or extreme poverty once and for all, but I do believe these are a matter of human choice and human will. Human values are constantly in need of being addressed, regenerated and strengthened. Every generation needs to recommit to them again and again. So in this sense, we are not saying there is a magic cure that is going to end this scourge once and for all, but what religious leaders, business leaders, labour experts and economic experts are saying is that we can address this crisis, we can bring it under control and then keep it under control. But it is going to take a lot of effort and a lot of focus. People end up in this kind of situation out of various kinds of despair – parents who are so poor they can't look after their kids, people who have no economic alternative or who are in a kind of debt bondage. There are many roots into this. From a moral point of view, it starts with the lack of the dignity and ability necessary to meet basic needs. But what we need to do is not only clamp down on the corruption and the lawlessness, but also address the needs of extremely poor people in the world and help them

lift themselves out of extreme poverty. So there are many fronts on which this battle will be fought.

"I'm optimistic, because I know slavery is a horrible anachronism and it has no place here in the 21st century. The same is true with extreme poverty. This is a scourge that has been with humanity seemingly forever, but it does not mean it is a permanent one. It is one we can and must solve."

Dr Jean Baderschneider

Dr Jean Baderschneider is the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the Global Fund to End Slavery. In 2013 she retired from ExxonMobil, where she was Vice President, Global Procurement.

"Whenever we talk about the involvement of governments and businesses, we always talk about the challenges and what it is going to take. But today, it was all about hope. We had all these religious leaders here, representing 90 per cent of the world, and the message today was hope and a vision of a world free from slavery.

"There are huge challenges in front of us, but I am optimistic, and today has given us the framework for that kind of

optimism. There are 36 million* slaves in the world, there is profit of at least 190 billion, and right now governments and NGOs spend in the millions. Billions versus millions, it is not a fair fight. So businesses have to play a role. I think their role is two-pronged: it's cleaning up their supply chains and being a partner, on the ground, with governments to gain compliance. I run a business that operates in 150 countries, and there are wide variations in corruption, we have to deal with that, and that requires the world as a whole to participate; it requires religions, it requires faith-based communities, it requires NGOs, it requires civil society to really take action, and consumers, businesses ... At some point, we need to bring it all together around those corrupting complicit governments."

Mr Nick Grono

Nick Grono is the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the Freedom Fund. He was previously the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the Walk Free Foundation.

"With the leadership and the commitment of faith leaders we can have a huge measurable impact on slavery by 2020 – that should be our

*This figure has been updated in the 2018 Global Slavery Index to be 40.3m.

goal and it's an eminently achievable one. The involvement of the faith leaders is hugely important because slavery is illegal everywhere, yet 36 million* people are enslaved, so what we have to do is to transform attitudes so that the prohibition of slavery is truly enforced. And I believe the leadership of the faiths will be key to achieving that.

"The cause of slavery is not just poverty, it's vulnerability, it's marginalisation, it's discrimination on a basis of caste, religion or ethnicity that makes people vulnerable and therefore easier to exploit. So we do have to address poverty, but it's a much broader issue than just poverty alone. It's about attitudes of enforcing the law against slavery. That's why this Declaration is so critically important – because it will help change attitudes, and it will make sure slavery is regarded as utterly unacceptable.

"It is not something that will end in a couple of years, but this is a huge step forward in the fight against slavery, and it will make a very big difference."

Mr Gilbert Hounbo

Gilbert Hounbo is the Deputy Director General for Field Operations and Partnerships at the International Labour Organization, a position he has held since 2013. Previously, he was the Prime Minister of Togo.

"The goal of eradicating modern slavery

by 2020 is very ambitious. But if we all put our heads together, if we all put our political will together, it's not completely out of reach. I am very happy to see this event happening today, it's an unprecedented moment in history. It also shows that all of us, as most of the religious leaders have said, are sons of Abraham, sons of Adam and Eve. So there is a way, if there is a political and spiritual will, that we can come together, put our small differences aside and fight for good causes.

"To me, it's not a matter of who takes the lead in this fight - all of us have to be on the front line. Obviously the religious leaders have a major opportunity by talking to their congregations and addressing their audience – as one of the speakers said, that will help us reach 90 percent. But that doesn't take away, or shouldn't take away, the importance of political leaders, around the globe, to do their part as well."

Mr Gary Haugen

Gary is the President and Chief Executive Officer of International Justice Mission, an international human rights agency that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression worldwide.

"It's a matter of a crime against humanity, as Pope Francis has said. Realising there are more people enslaved today than in any other time in human history makes this a horrific

moment indeed. So it's a matter of great moral responsibility, as was affirmed by all the religious leaders of the world in this very important day for the fight against slavery. Twenty years ago, very few people were talking about the reality of modern day slavery. Recently, it has been confirmed this is a massive plague upon the world, and now we have this unity of voices that have come together to say it still exists, it's a moral outrage and it is therefore incumbent upon us all to do our part in fighting it.

"The overwhelming reason why there is still so much slavery in the world today, is simply because the laws against slavery are not being enforced. The primary reason there are so many slaves in the world today is simply impunity. I am optimistic that this fight will be won. This is the ugliest but most preventable man-made disaster on the globe today, and we can fight this successfully. We have seen this over and over again in our projects around the world. We've seen it's actually a winnable fight because these countries have already expressed – in their laws – the moral outrage against slavery, they have already said this is wrong under their own moral code.

"Corruption is certainly a significant problem, but I believe we can work towards those laws finally being enforced."

Ms Mira Sorvino

Mira Sorvino is an American actress who has been affiliated with Amnesty International since 2004. In 2006, she was honoured with Amnesty International's Artist of Conscience Award, given to those who have displayed longstanding philanthropic and humanist efforts. She was a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador to Combat Human Trafficking from 2009 to 2012 and has lobbied US Congress to abolish human trafficking in Darfur.

"The idea that all of these major leaders of world faiths could come together, setting aside any differences between them and celebrate the dignity and honour of each human soul on the planet and work towards eradicating modern slavery, makes this an unprecedented day in human history. Religious groups don't often come together on any subject and now all major faiths are coming together against slavery, which has been with us for all time, stating 'we will not tolerate it any more and we are going to eradicate it.' And they are going to mobilise billions of faithfuls around the world to take action. This is exactly the sort of moral and spiritual wake-up call we all need so we can really put our teeth into the paper tigers of the laws that have been passed.

"We have to stand together and say it is intolerable in our time that one person should own another, should use another, should exploit another, that children

should suffer horrendous fates and that any human being should be enslaved by another person. To see Claudia today, so strong, and so moving, reading the *Joint Declaration*, was such a beautiful moment for me. I'm so proud of her: she is the example of someone who has come out of slavery and fully taken advantage of this beautiful life that her Creator meant her to live. She is now an advocate for millions of people, she's happy, she's married, she's thriving.

"There are so many things the faith-based communities can do with their own resources, as well as exerting a great deal of pressure on government bodies to actually do the work they are supposed to do now with the laws that have been created and with the Palermo Protocol that most countries are signatory to on human trafficking. This is truly an incredible moment."



Mr Jeffrey Sachs



Dr Jean Baderschneider



Mr Nick Grono



Mr Gilbert HOUNGBO



Mr Gary Haugen



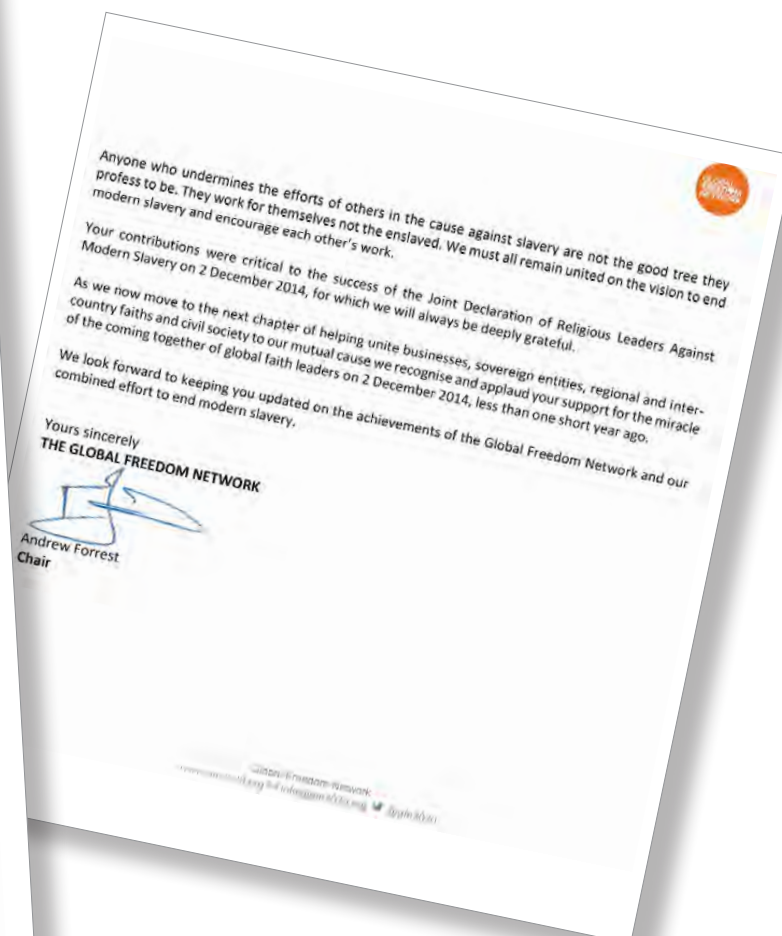
Ms Mira Sorvino


WITH THANKS

The Global Freedom Network is appreciative of all those involved in the creation of the 2 December 2014 initiative. Since that time, the Board has resolved that the Global Freedom Network work will continue strongly, but no longer requires the deep and broad governance of strong Christian persuasions which previously existed.

On the election of a non-Catholic Chairman, as contemplated under the Global Freedom Network *Memorandum of Agreement*, Bishop Sánchez Sorondo chose to withdraw from the Global Freedom Network. This discussion was understood, and gratitude for his role in the founding of the Global Freedom Network and the creation of the 2 December event was warmly expressed.

Further, the Global Freedom Network, as envisaged under its charter, is now moving to sovereign and regional religious jurisdictions, as well as into larger global business, political, civil and influencing communities. The governance structure required to assist the creation of the 2 December initiative was retired. The following letter was received by 24 faith leaders and Global Freedom Network Council members and supporters, in gratitude for their service and role in creating 2 December. In each case, Andrew Forrest expressed his heartfelt and lifelong gratitude to each faith leader for his or her role – however big or small – in creating the miracle that was the December 2 event.





**"EMPATHY, LOVE, RESPECT AND EQUALITY ARE THE COMMON
DENOMINATORS WHICH BRING US ALL TOGETHER ..."**

Mohammad Taqi Al-Modarresi

INDIAN FREEDOM NETWORK

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

NEW DELHI



"I LOOK NOW TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS OF INDIA, TO DECLARE THAT IN THEIR HOLY TEXTS, IN THE HEARTS OF THEIR FOLLOWERS, WHICH TRANSCEND ALL OF INDIA, THAT THERE CAN BE NO ROOM FOR THE DOMINATION OF ONE OVER ANOTHER. THERE CAN BE NO ROOM FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN, WOMEN OR MEN - THAT WE ARE ALL EQUALLY LOVED BY GOD AND WE ACCEPT THAT SLAVERY CANNOT EXIST IN INDIA"

Mr Andrew Forrest



"WHILE SERVICE IS THE BEST FORM OF WORSHIP, SLAVERY IS THE WORST INSULT YOU CAN EVER GIVE TO GOD. SO, ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN THE EXISTENCE OF A HIGHER POWER SHOULD WAKE UP AND SAY NO TO SLAVERY, NO TO ENSLAVING HUMAN BEINGS. FOR DIVINE DWELLS IN EVERY HEART, IN EVERY ONE."

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



The Official Party at the Indian faith leaders event, 3 December 2015, New Delhi, India

THE INDIAN VISION

India is one of the world's largest countries with one of the world's fastest growing economies, but it is deeply affected by the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking. With a population over 1.2 billion people, there is an inordinate challenge on government to manage precious resources so that its people can live with food, shelter, health care, education and employment opportunities, as well as being able to practice their religious and spiritual beliefs.

It is estimated that 18.3 million people in India are in some form of modern slavery. The Global Freedom Network believes it has a shared responsibility to free those enslaved regardless of where in the world they might be; *all are equal and should have the same freedom and dignity.*

The Chairman of the Global Freedom Network, Mr Andrew Forrest and his family came to learn about the extent of human and sex trafficking through their daughter Grace while she was working at an orphanage in Nepal some years ago. Greatly disturbed by this reality, the

Forrest family pledged to do all that they could to bring an end to modern slavery, for all times. Andrew believed that where government and the law could not change society, religious and spiritual leaders could.

This is the backdrop that inspired Andrew to invite the most eminent religious and spiritual leaders of the world to unite in the vision of ending modern slavery.

India was an obvious opportunity to create change.

THERE IS NOTHING QUITE AS POWERFUL AS BELIEVERS KNOWING THAT THEIR LEADERS DO NOT AND WILL NEVER TOLERATE ANY FORM OF SLAVERY UNDER THE EYES OF THEIR GOD. THIS ENCOURAGES ME AND STRENGTHENS MY FAITH IN GOD.

Mr Andrew Forrest



Andrew Forrest with daughter Grace Forrest

THE JOURNEY



L-R: Antonia Stampalija, Bishop Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy, Alwan Masih and Christine Nicolau at the Diocesan Office of the Church of North India

The Global Freedom Network sought to engage faith leaders of the highest levels in India and harness their willingness to unite on the vision of ending slavery. In October 2015, Ms Antonia Stampalija, CEO of the Global Freedom Network, and Christine Nicolau from Chairman Andrew Forrest's office, travelled to New Delhi, India. They engaged Professor Dr Madan Verma, President of Interfaith Foundation India as the Global Freedom Network's Interfaith Advisor, in recognition of the need for local faith expertise and knowledge. Professor Verma provided an understanding about India's faith leaders, the hierarchies within different religions, and the interfaith landscape.



L-R: Antonia Stampalija, Dr Mufti Mukkeram and Professor Verma at the Fatehpuri Mosque

Australia's High Commissioner to India, His Excellency Patrick Suckling, provided the team with a clear understanding of the burgeoning new opportunities and initiatives being led by India's Prime Minister, The Honourable Narendra Modi and his government. Information was also discussed and shared regarding the work of many civil society organisations and the positive outcomes being yielded as a grassroots community level.

It was evident that momentum was building in India, and people were wanting change.

Conversations with faith leaders included the story of the Global Freedom Network and the faith leaders event in Vatican City on 2 December 2014, as well as the global nature of slavery, its different forms and its prevalence. The Global Slavery Index was a useful in demonstrating the global spread of modern slavery and its insidious operations across borders in almost every country in the world. Faith leaders shared with the Global Freedom Network their concerns about national borders being ineffective in dealing with human trafficking, criminal networks and corruption, and the low prosecution rates that are due to a lack of law enforcement.

After just 10 days in India, Antonia and Christine determined that faith leaders were eager to unite on the vision to eradicate modern slavery in their country. A shared intent was forming, with leaders disturbed by modern slavery and willing to make a public declaration against it.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other faith leaders were not able to attend the formal ceremony on 3 December due to prior commitments, however they expressed their full support. His Holiness the Dalai Lama personally gave Andrew

Forrest his commitment to supporting India's faith leaders in ensuring slavery in any form is not acceptable.

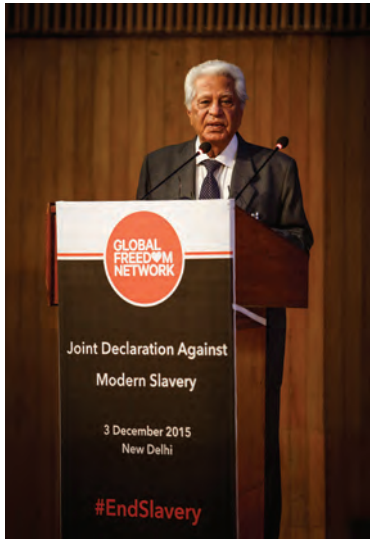


His Holiness, the Dalai Lama

The Global Freedom Network recognises the enormity of the challenges ahead in the eradication of slavery in India, but is greatly encouraged by the commitment of faith leaders.

THE INDIAN FAITH LEADERS EVENT

3 DECEMBER 2015 – INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, NEW DELHI



Professor Dr Madan Verma,
Master of Ceremonies

On 3 December 2015, eight Indian faith and spiritual leaders signed a *Joint Declaration* to end modern slavery at the Global Freedom Network gathering in New Delhi. This landmark declaration was signed by faith and spiritual leaders from the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Baha'i and Jewish faiths, who together represent more than 95% of the Indian population of 1.2 billion people.

The Master of Ceremonies was Professor Dr Madan Verma, the Religious Harmony Chair and Faculty Member at IASE University, Rajasthan and President of Interfaith Foundation India.

The event was held over two sessions, the first being the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* and the second, the *Roundtable Discussion: Eradication of bonded and forced labour in India*.

The following Roundtable special guests were instrumental in driving the dialogue:

- Chief Guest and Key Note Speaker, Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi
- Survivor Advocate, Susheela
- Master of Ceremonies and speaker, The Hon. Swati Maliwal, Delhi Commission for Women
- Speakers Dr Lakshmidhar Mishra; Mr Ravi Kant; Dr Sunitha Krishnan; and Mr Andrew Forrest.







The *Joint Declaration* ceremony began with the faith leaders gathered on stage for the lighting of the candle, followed by the formal introductions of each faith leader. The Global Freedom Network Chairman, Mr Andrew Forrest then officially opened the proceedings. Andrew explained why they were all gathered on that special day, 3 December 2015, in the Stein Auditorium. He stated in Hindi, "human life is sacred" and gave personal testimony of his learnings about modern slavery through his daughter's experience in Nepal some years ago. Andrew made a passionate plea to the faith leaders with his concluding remarks and said, "What I heard was when one person, one boy, one girl, one man and one woman is freed from slavery, you free the hearts of mankind all over the world. You set the example. I ask our great faith leaders, our great spiritual leaders to free the hearts of India, and so lead the world."



After the Chairman's address , each faith leader expressed their commitment, according to their faith, to the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*. It was clear, while each faith leader's Gods might be different, the group was in harmony. Slavery is not acceptable according to all Holy Texts and has no place in their beloved country.

Powerfully and passionately delivered, each faith leader revealed their humility, love and compassion through the outpouring of their words.





The act of faith leaders signing the *Joint Declaration* was a symbolic and ground-breaking moment, setting the example of India to the world, that only by working together, will it be possible to eradicate all forms of modern slavery.

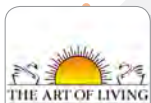
The Global Freedom Network believes that the actions and testimony of the faith leaders will inspire other leaders and their communities around the world to also unite in this vision of ending modern slavery, for all times.





India, a country of 1.2 billion people.
It is estimated that 18.3 million people are trapped in modern slavery.

NEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



ArtofLivingABC
@ArtofLivingABC (3 Dec):

Indian religious leaders along with @SriSri vow to use their influence to #EndSlavery



Sri Sri @Guddujudd
(3 Dec):

#EndSlavery
(Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji and other Faith Leaders lead the campaign)
@BangaloreAshram



The 3 December event generated international interest in articles and commentaries in print media and online forums, from the *Daily Mail UK* to the *Punjabi Express*. It also featured widely in television and radio broadcasts. Twitter, Facebook and Social Media were abuzz with information and news with the hashtag #EndSlavery trending on Twitter worldwide.

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT & REACH

- Trending on no. 2 position on Twitter during event, only behind the Cricket Test Match
- No. of retweets: 2308

EDITORIAL IMPACT & REACH

- 87 news articles in print media in 7 different languages
- 57 articles in India, 10 in international press in Asia & Europe
- Top five Hindi media titles that have a combined daily circulation of 1.52 million
- 22 photos in print media reports
- Strong Point-of-View in Australia; messaging tied slavery to trade/ India-Australia FTA
- Five reports - *The West Australian*, *PerthNow*, *News.com.au*, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane)

BUSINESS NEWS

- ABC News – Online and 7.25 mins interview with ABC News Radio
- 20 online reports
- Six Indian TV news channels covered the event, incl. Aaj Tak (leading Hindi News Channel with average of 45.6 million viewers per week)
- Two high-impact long format reports in India & Australia
- Mint, leading financial publication and part of English daily *Hindustan Times* (daily circulation of 1.32 million)
- *Weekend Australian* on 12 December

DAILY MAIL UK

(4 December 2015)

Religious leaders in India - home to half world's slaves - vow to end slavery

"Indian religious leaders vowed on Thursday to use their influence to end modern slavery, saying the exploitation, abuse and confinement of millions of men, women and children around the world was a "crime against God". Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Jain and Baha'i leaders and representatives signed a declaration, organised by the Australia-based Global Freedom Network, pledging to help eradicate slavery and human trafficking by 2020.

The ceremony was the third initiative by the Global Freedom Network to get religious leaders around the world to throw their weight behind the fight against human trafficking and slavery... 11 spiritual and religious leaders in India pledged to do all within their power to work "for the freedom of all who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored."

NEWS BANGALORE

(3 December 2015)

India joins fight against slavery

"Today's event marks a major milestone in the rollout of the Global Freedom Network internationally.

The declaration against slavery assumes significance as India tops the 2014 Global Slavery Index with as many as 14.7m people estimated to be trapped in bondage, the highest number of modern slavery in absolute terms. In terms of prevalence (the percentage of the population in modern slavery) India is ranked fourth globally of 162 countries, after Mauritania, Haiti and Pakistan.

The Global Slavery Index 2014 released by the Walk Free Foundation last year estimated that throughout the world, almost 36 million* people are estimated to be living as modern slaves – trafficked



[Uniting Church@UnitingChurchAU](mailto:UnitingChurch@UnitingChurchAU) (3 Dec) :
Have you signed our freedom declaration?
Make a stand to [#EndSlavery](#) in Australia... afn.org.au

into brothels, forced into manual labour, victims of debt bondage or born into servitude. Modern slavery is defined as: child labour; forced labour; forced marriage; forced prostitution; child prostitution; children in armed conflict; human trafficking; debt bondage, and being born into servitude."

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

(3 December 2015)

Forrest links slavery, India trade deal

Andrew Forrest wants Australia's looming free trade agreement with India to include a commitment to tackling modern slavery within the world's seventh largest economy. He's confident it can be done, saying momentum for change is building under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. While slavery is against the law in India, it is widespread in the caste system-divided nation because it has been considered culturally acceptable. Domestic servitude, textile sweatshops and sex slavery are all rampant.

But a major step towards reform was taken on Thursday, Mr Forrest said, when ten Indian faith and spiritual leaders met for the first time to discuss slavery and signed a declaration vowing to end it within a generation.

"People are believing in Modi, people are believing that it can happen. "The free trade agreement, I think, ties in well with a growing India, which leads to a growing economy - a tide that will lift all people."

Mr Forrest, who founded the Walk Free Foundation, which is dedicated to ending modern slavery, said there was support from all sides of Australian politics, including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, for "all we stand for".

"I don't believe that we will be signing a free trade agreement with India which will in any way encourage the old practices which the faith leaders of India are so keen ... to stamp out."

Trade Minister Andrew Robb said last month that Australia and India were on track to ink a deal by the end of the year.



[Shakti Vahini @SHAKTIVAHINI](#) (3 Dec) :

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar [@SriSri](#) (3 Dec) While service is the true form of worship, slavery is the worst insult to God. [#EndSlavery](#)



[Walk Free @walkfree](#) (3 Dec) :

Walk free supporters join world leaders in their pledge to [#EndSlavery](#)



SLAVERY IN INDIA

"HERE IN INDIA 18.3 MILLION INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE HELD AS SLAVES. IT IS INTOLERABLE TO ME THAT THEIR TEARS ARE FLOODING THE SACRED SOILS OF MOTHER INDIA. THEIR GREAT PAIN THREATENS TO TEAR APART THE FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY'S GLORIOUS ANCIENT CULTURE AND HERITAGE. THEY COULD BE UNSUSPECTING YOUNG WOMEN HIRED AS MAIDS OR COOKS IN DISTANT LANDS OR FIND THEMSELVES FORCED INTO PROSTITUTION. THEY COULD BE UNWANTED LITTLE GIRLS."

His Holiness Pujya Swami
Chidanand Saraswatiji

Measurement of the scale of a crime as complex and hidden as modern slavery is notoriously difficult. According to the best currently available estimates, some 1.4% of the Indian population is in some form of modern slavery, representing approximately 18,354,700 people. To ensure these estimates are as robust as possible, the Walk Free Foundation is currently undertaking a survey program in India to generate an even sharper picture of the situation in India.

As noted in the Global Slavery Index, across India's population of over 1.2 billion people, all forms of modern slavery, including inter-generational bonded labour, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and forced marriage, exist. Evidence suggests that members of lower castes and tribes, religious minorities, and migrant workers are disproportionately affected by modern slavery. Modern slavery occurs in brick kilns, carpet weaving, embroidery and other textile manufacturing, prostitution, agriculture, domestic service, mining, and organized begging rings. Bonded labour is particularly prevalent throughout India, with families enslaved for generations.



"THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD IS THE SAVIOUR OF HUMANITY. HE WAS VERY KIND TO ALL THE POOR, ORPHANS, GIRLS, WIDOWS, SLAVES AND HELPLESS PEOPLE. EVERY HUMAN BEING SHOULD BE RESPECTED BECAUSE HE IS CREATED BY THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH AND ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE LIKE BROTHERS AND SISTERS. SO, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR HATE IN ISLAM. THERE IS NO ROOM FOR VIOLENCE IN ISLAM."

Dr Mufti M Mukarram Ahmed

There are reports of women and children from India and neighbouring countries being recruited with promises of non-existent jobs and later sold for sexual exploitation, or forced into sham marriages. In some religious groups, pre-pubescent girls are sold for sexual servitude in temples. Recent reports suggest that one child goes missing every eight minutes; it is feared that some are sold into forced begging, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Bangladeshis and Nepalese, particularly women and children, migrate to India in search of work. Young Nepali women banned from traveling to the Gulf for domestic work also pass through India as an alternative route. Other migrants are fraudulently sent by recruiters to India to be transported to jobs in the Gulf, only to remain in India in positions of forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation.

India has national laws that criminalise various forms of modern slavery, including human trafficking and bonded labour. At the national level, the government has taken many steps to ensure these laws are enforced; and some, but not all, state governments have also taken corresponding action. At both the national and state level, thousands of civil society organisations are involved in helping to ensure these laws are implemented.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR INDIAN NATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO MODERN SLAVERY

LAW	PURPOSE
The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006	Prohibits child marriages (if a male is under 21 or female is under 18); voids existing child marriages under certain circumstances, including force and trafficking.
The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976	Abolishes bonded labour; relieves bonded labourers of any obligation to repay their debt; provides for identifying, releasing and rehabilitating bonded labourers; specifies penalties in relation to bonded labour.
The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1976	Prohibits employment of children (those under 14) in specific occupations and requires certain conditions of work; specifies penalties.
The Transplantation of Human Organ Act, 1994	Regulates organ transplants, prevents commercial dealings in human organs.
The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000	Provides measures for children in need of care & protection.
The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012	Specifies penalties for sexual assault of children; provides measures for supporting children through court proceedings.
The Indian Penal Code 1860	Includes many sections specifying penalties for related crimes, e.g. trafficking (note the Criminal Law Ordinance 2013 which clarified this crime); wrongful confinement; kidnapping; procurement of a minor girl; buying or disposing of a person as a slave; habitual dealing in slaves; selling or buying a minor for commercial sexual exploitation; rape.
Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (as amended in 2016)	This law makes it an offence to amongst other things, compel a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to: do "begar" or other forms of forced or bonded labour; dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or dig graves; or do manual scavenging. The 2016 amendments also make it an offence to promote dedicating a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe woman to a deity, idol, object of worship, temple, or other religious institution as a devadasi or any other similar practice.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE IN INDIA

"IN INDIA, WE ALREADY HAVE A LOT OF LEGISLATION ON THIS AND IN MANY PLACES IT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED WELL AND THERE ARE MANY POCKETS IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH NEED ENFORCEMENT OF THESE LAWS. AGAIN, HERE THE FAITH LEADERS CAN TAKE A LEAD AND INSIST ON ENFORCEMENT OF THESE LEGISLATIONS WHICH ARE ALREADY IN EXISTENCE."

His Holiness, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Governments have a critical role to play in eradicating modern slavery through establishing the right legal and policy framework. Commendably, the Government of India has been very active on this issue. India has national laws that criminalize various forms of modern slavery, including human trafficking and bonded labour. At the national level, the Government has taken many steps to ensure these laws are enforced; and some, but not all, State Governments have also taken corresponding action. At both the national and state levels, thousands of civil society organisations are involved in helping to ensure these laws are implemented. However, the persistence of this crime points to the many challenges involved in implementation, and the necessity to look beyond laws and policies to the systemic factors that enable modern slavery to occur.

Implementation of anti-trafficking laws is the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which provides information about cross-government efforts on its anti-trafficking portal, a website which includes criminal justice statistics, details of anti-trafficking police units, information on government and law enforcement training, and information on the anti-trafficking legislation and

reporting mechanisms, including the ChildLine hotline number.

The Indian National Government has undertaken an ambitious programme to establish specialist anti-trafficking police units throughout the country. In 2014, the Government continued to expand the number of units across the country, reaching 215 units early in the year, with the aim to establish an anti-human trafficking unit in each of the 650 districts. Both the judiciary and law enforcement have received training; over 20,000 police personnel have been trained on victim identification, the implementation of the new legal framework, and victim-centered investigations.

The Government victim compensation scheme also extends to victims of human trafficking, however, the amount and efficiency of dispersal is largely dependent on the state administration, and is not available country-wide.

"SLAVERY WILL ONLY BE TACKLED THROUGH COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY, INCLUDING TRADE UNIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAVE GATHERED ON ONE PLATFORM TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF SPIRITUAL VALUES, OUR JOINT EFFORTS, OUR LIBRATORY VISION, TO ERADICATE SLAVERY FROM OUR PLANET. LET US TOGETHER GIVE THE MESSAGE TO THE HUMANITY TO END ALL KINDS OF PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, SEXUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN."

His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni

"THEREFORE ALL RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS
SHOULD RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

(1) TO RATIFY AND IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION OF THE
WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR AND THE DOMESTIC
WORKER'S CONVENTION

(2) REQUIRE ALL STATES TO FOLLOW UP ON THE
SUPREME COURT'S JUDGEMENT OF 15TH OCTOBER,
2012 TO IDENTIFY AND RELEASE THOSE BONDED
LABOURERS

(3) UPDATE REGULATIONS AND PROCESSES FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BONDED LABOUR ACT AND
REPORT ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION

(4) IMPLEMENT A NEW NATIONAL ACTION PLAN THAT
TARGETS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF MODERN SLAVERY

(5) CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS FOR
VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY AND ENSURE THAT THEY
ARE NOT CRIMINALIZED

(6) VICTIMS MUST BE PROTECTED (INCLUDING
PROTECTING THEIR IDENTITIES) THROUGH THE
DURATION OF THEIR COURT CASES."

Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar



All forms of slavery are believed to exist in India.



"90% OF INDIA'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS INTERNAL, WITH LOWER CASTES AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES THE MOST VULNERABLE, AND OFFICIAL COMPLICITY IN SUCH CASES REMAINS A SERIOUS CONCERN."

Mr Alwan Masih

Bonded labour has long been criminalized under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976. It is still a significant issue in many parts of India. The response to bonded labour is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, and the district and sub-divisional level Vigilance Committees provide advice to the courts on bonded labour. The National Human Rights Commission monitors the government response, regularly reviews existing government policies and practices from a human rights perspective, and provides training to district Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners and other government officials.

Reports suggest that most states are yet to implement the Supreme Court order which required District Vigilance committees to undertake surveys to identify and release those in bonded labour.

"SIKHISM RESPECTS THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS AND IS TOTALLY AGAINST ALL KINDS OF SLAVERY, INCLUDING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF MODERN SLAVERY."

Jathedar Avtar Singh

While victim support services are available, efforts need to be directed toward expanding and improving current services. The Ujjawala project is one of the primary victim support programs, providing rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for victims of commercial sexual exploitation, as well as trafficking prevention initiatives. The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission is tasked with evaluating the Ujjawala program. In addition, the SWADHAR GREH scheme provides temporary accommodation and rehabilitation services for women and girls, including survivors of trafficking. This was evaluated in 2007 and found to be effective. While government shelters are required to register, standards vary as there are no standards attached to registration, and no inspections or follow-up. Further, they have limited facilities and resources to provide holistic support, while specific government trafficking shelters are currently only for women and girls. Of particular concern are reports of women being re-recruited into trafficking from the shelters by exploiters pretending to be family.

"THE MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS, CHRIST, OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS: IT INSPIRED A WHOLE CIVILIZATION. HIS HOLINESS CHRIST WAS A CARPENTER HE WASN'T A SCIENTIST. YET IT WAS HIS BASIC LOVE AND BASIC MESSAGE THAT WE ARE ALL ONE PEOPLE AND THAT'S HOW RELIGIOUS MANIFESTATIONS HAVE INSPIRED CIVILIZATIONS."

Mr Shatrughan Jiwnani



THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN FREEDOM NETWORK

1. **His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** (Hindu)
2. **His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji** (Hindu)
3. **His Holiness Morari Bapu** (Hindu) – His Holiness was not able to attend the *Joint Declaration* signing event, however provided a statement of commitment, see section, 'Full Speech Transcripts' on page 137
4. **Jathedar Avtar Singh** (Sikh)
5. **Dr Mufti Mukarram Ahmed** (Muslim Sunni)
6. **His Holiness Acharya Dr Lokesh Muni** (Jain)
7. **Mr Alwan Masih** (Christian)
8. **Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar** (Jewish)
9. **Mr Shatrughan Jiwnani** (representing **Ms Nazneen Rowhani**, Secretary-General of National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is)



THE FUTURE

WHAT THE INDIAN FREEDOM NETWORK WILL DO

Following the successful 3 December 2015 event, a follow-up visit was held with many of the faith leaders on 17-21 December 2015. Meetings built upon the momentum generated from the faith leaders' event and strengthened the call to action amongst their followers.

There is a deep desire to tackle what has until now been an unmentionable social issue that is deeply embedded within the cultural fabric of India. Faith leaders have called for action and are committing their time, energy and resources to support the Global Freedom Network and sister organisations to eliminate modern slavery within our lifetimes.

In 2016, the Indian Freedom Network will focus on:

- Engaging in direct dialogue with Government and seeking their support to develop and implement a country plan to end slavery;
- Widening the network of faith and spiritual leaders in the fight against modern slavery;
- Piloting a number of grassroots initiatives that have the potential to be scaled up throughout India; and
- Inviting corporate and civil society leaders and global influences to sign the *Joint Declaration* and work collaboratively across sectors, borders, faiths and political persuasions.





An India free from slavery is the goal
of the Indian Freedom Network

INSPIRING WORDS

Faith leaders at the 3 December 2015 event were invited to speak about their commitment to ending modern slavery, with all speakers united in the belief that collaboration and solidarity, through the *Joint Declaration*, would make a difference.

The following are extracts of addresses given on the day. The speeches are included in full on page 128.



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a humanitarian leader, spiritual teacher and an ambassador for peace. Born in 1956 in Southern India, he has founded a number of organisations, including The Art of Living Foundation and the International Association for Human Values. The power of his messages has resonated around the world and he plays roles in global conflict resolution – he is credited with bringing together hostile parties in Iraq, the Ivory Coast, Kashmir and Bihar.

"I think today when we look at the freedom from slavery in the world there are three things that come to my mind. First of all we have to empower people who are enslaved and we have to bring transformation to the minds and the hearts of those people who are enslaving the people. If you can transform the mind of one such person then many is over in one stroke.

"The second thing is the weak and meek

need to know that the world is with them, God is with them. There are a lot of good people on this planet who would stand by them. So they have to wake up and stand on their feet, they have to have their self-dignity. We need to implant self-esteem in people. It's usually people with low self-esteem or no self-esteem who are the victims. They succumb to slavery. In order to bring a change in these people we need again the Faith Leaders with spiritual wisdom to help these people to wake up and stand up on their feet and air their opinion.

"The third thing is to bring strict legislation. In India we already have a lot of legislation on this and in many places it has been implemented well and there are many pockets in this country which need enforcement of these laws. Again here the Faith Leaders can take a lead and insist on enforcement of these legislations which are already in existence.

"Let's aim at within five years, a decade is a long time. All of us are here, if we all put our hearts and minds together, even put a little attention I think in the next five years we can see a much brighter, much stronger society free from all types of slavery."



Dr Mufti M. Mukarram Ahmed

Dr Mufti M. Mukarram Ahmed is an Indian Muslim religious and literary scholar who is the resident cleric of India's second largest mosque, Fatehpuri Mosque. A subscriber to Sunni ideology, Dr Mukarram Ahmed is a scholar of Arabic, Urdu, Persian, English and Hindi cultures. He has written several books on Islamic teachings.

"Today we are gathered here in this prestigious conference for a noble cause. Though the various faiths differ from one another, I believe there are mutual friendly feelings among them. Criminal feelings should have no place whatsoever. It is a fact that the coming together of religious leaders on the same platform to advocate in one voice for peace and against modern slavery will inspire their followers to feel the one-ness and not divide. No doubt

unity is our strength and joined declaration will be more effective. Basic human values such as compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, justice and self-discipline need to be promoted among the people.

"The 21st century is envisioned as a very civilised century where education is respected more than physical strength but discrimination against women and the poor is a clear sign of backwardness. We all should help the poorest and downtrodden people. With the change of time certain practices and rituals have become obsolete in all cultures and spiritual traditions. These customs and rituals need to be protected and reassessed."



His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji

His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji is the President and spiritual head of the Parmath Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, India. He is also the founder and spiritual head of the Hindu Jain Temple in Pittsburgh, USA. Swami Chidanand Saraswati founded several humanitarian and environmental organisations that undertake conservation, education, health, youth welfare and vocational training initiatives. He sits on the Board of the World Religious Leaders for the Elijah Interfaith Institute.

"Here in India 14 million innocent people are held as slaves. It is intolerable to me that their tears are flooding the sacred soils of Mother India. Their great pain threatens to tear apart the fabric of our society's glorious ancient culture and heritage.

"To me, just one instance, any instance of forced bondage is a blight on our planet. It is a disease that must be totally eradicated and it is our duty as Faith Leaders to raise

our voices, to keep them strong, to light the way forward so that we may realise the day in which everyone: all women, little girls, men and boys may walk freely on this earth without fear or deprivation, today.

"Today, I urge that we not only sign the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery but that we become this declaration. Today, let us begin with our pens. Tomorrow, let us carry forth with our actions the declaration. Let us bless together, let us work together and let us together bring about a world in which every man, woman and child may live in peace forever free. From this day forward let us bless to stand firm in this sacred commitment. Let this be our dharma, let this be our duty. I think to end slavery is to ensure salvation."



His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni

His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni is a social reformer, writer and poet who is dedicated to establishing communal harmony, peace and mutual cooperation in society. Born in 1961, Dr Lokesh Ji has studied Jain, Buddhist, Vedic and other Indian and international philosophies. He is a master in the fields of meditation, yoga and peace education, has written numerous books and spoken at events around the world. His work has been translated and published in languages including Hindi, English, Gujarati, Tamil, Bengali, Kannares and German. In 2010 he was awarded the National Communal Harmony Award by the Government of India.

"Today, I am signing the Joint Declaration

of Religious Leaders against Modern Slavery because every human being is a free person destined to live for the good of others in equality and fraternity. Every person, and all people, are equal and must be accorded the same freedom and the same dignity. We have to work together for peaceful coexistence in the society for that no one should be enslaved. We should respect others freedom and thoughts along with respecting our own freedom and thoughts.

"The practice of slavery still continues today in one form or another in every country in the world. Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, gender and races. Modern slavery exists in form of bonded labour, child slavery, early and forced marriage, women forced into

prostitution, forced labour, descent-based slavery, trafficking, the sale of organs, drug abuse etc.

"To achieve the eradication of slavery throughout the world, and to avoid the danger of its resurgence, people of all beliefs should begin by uniting in humble apology for the pain and sorrow inflicted on generations of coerced and humiliated human beings. As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against physical slavery."



Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman Global Freedom Network

Mr Andrew Forrest is an international philanthropist and business leader who founded the world's fourth largest iron ore exporter, Fortescue Metals Group, of which he is Chairman. He is the Chairman of the Walk Free Foundation and the Global Freedom Network, and is involved in a broad range of philanthropic and business ventures throughout the world.

"It was only a few short decades ago that I discovered that slavery existed in the world but it was only a few short years ago that slavery was introduced to my family through my daughter Grace. She was working in orphanages, when she had just turned 16, in Nepal and we sadly discovered that much of the orphanage sector in Nepal was part of the human or children sex trafficking industry up into other parts of the world in particular, the

Middle East. When we came to know some of these children, most never survived their ordeals, but some who returned to Nepal and returned to India shared their stories with us. It was then that our hearts were forever changed.

"So, I look now to the spiritual leaders of India to lead us. To declare that in their Holy Text, in the hearts of their followers which transcend all of India that there can be no room for the denomination of one over the other. There can be no room for the exploitation of children, women or men, that we are all equally loved by God, and we accept that and we accept that slavery cannot exist in India.

"My loved spiritual leaders, I ask you to lead us. I ask you to lead India and so doing, give hope to the world because the world knows that if India makes the move against slavery, when India's people believe that slavery can come to an end, then the

children of the world and the enslaved of the world believe nothing is impossible, and that they too can be free because the children of India were freed through the hearts of these great spiritual leaders in front of us today.

"When one person, one boy, one girl, one man and one woman is freed from slavery, you free the hearts of mankind all over the world. You set the example. I ask our great faith leaders, our great spiritual leaders to free the hearts of India, and so lead the world."



Mr Shatrughan Jiwnani, Director Public Relations, BAHAI Lotus Temple

Mr Shatrughan Jiwnani represented Ms Nazneen Rowhani, Secretary-General of National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is.

"The very interesting title here says join the declaration against modern slavery. Modern generally implies progress and that's interesting because there's an anomaly here that on one hand we are modern, we are advanced, we are a great civilization, we are a long way from where we were cavemen. We became communities, nations today we are heading towards globalization. We have made all kinds of advances in science, we have discovered DNA, we have been to the moon. And yet let's look at the affairs of the world whether social, economic or religious.

"There is a text ... in the BAHAI writings where Bahá'u'lláh the founder of the BAHAI faith, it says "Noble have I created thee yet thou have abased thyself, rise then unto that for which thou was created". But this is the message of all faiths. Essentially man is both, he is material and spiritual and that has got to be recognised. Materially we have advanced as I said, but spiritually I think we are dwarves and if man can recognise he is both, if he can recognise the purpose of his life, if he can be taught where he is going next he could look at life differently. At the moment the satisfaction lies in the cravings of the modern trappings that we have. It is the spiritual element that is missing and the spiritual messages come from God. Whichever way you look at it the source of all good is God. Just remember and then it takes root."



Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar

Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar is the head of the Jewish community in New Delhi, India. He is the Honorary Secretary of the Judah Hyam Synagogue, an important centre for Jewish services and rituals that has hosted many world leaders. Rabbi Malekar is a human rights activist and Deputy Registrar (Law) with the National Human Rights Commission in India, and is actively involved in inter-faith activities between the Jewish, Hindu and Sikh communities. He is a recipient of the Mahavir mahatma Award for preserving Jewish heritage and culture in India, and the Ambassador of Peace Award instituted by the Federation for Religious harmony and brotherhood.

"Child labour, I would like to share with you my own experience while working in the National Human Rights Commission. All Government servants, especially bureaucrats, have small girls and boys working at their residences and the way they are being treated is pathetic and pitiable conditions in those places. In one case we found in Hyderabad one of the bureaucrats girls, a seven year old girl

from the villages, she dared to open the fridge in order to see what coca cola looked like, she wanted to taste it because her madam went to the market. She opened the fridge and she took the coca cola and what happened? When madam came back she removed the little girls frock and burned her on her chest 120 times with a cigarette butt. After the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission we succeeded and we convinced the Government of India to amend the CCS conduct rules that it is a crime to employ boys and girls under the age of 15 years.

"I have seen in a number of hotels, restaurants, factories, in Bombay a butcher house, a lock factory in Aligarh, carpet weaving industry in Kashmir, Shivakashi for fire crackers etc. you will find they all use child labour. There is a big begging racket in India, you find so many small children in gangs and they have become criminals. They come and "tik-tak" on your car, you open the window and they run away with your laptop so begging is also a big problem in India.

"We have to see and consider all this and not only human trafficking and bonded labour but child labour, working in the mines. I visited Bihar with the NHRC and there are people there from generation to generation, grandparents, parents and their little children...and they do not know the outer world. So this is a very pathetic and pitiable condition, so all religious and spiritual leaders as well as all members and brothers and sisters in this auditorium, we should join hands for a common cause to eradicate modern day slavery, child labour and human trafficking in India. This evil is man made and can be overcome by faith inspired by human will and human efforts."



Mr Alwan Masih - Christian General Secretary, Synod of the Church of North

Mr Alwan Masih is the General Secretary of the Synod of the Church of North India, a role he took on in 2010 after 23 years with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (Ministry of Youth, Affairs & Sport - Government of India).

"This morning I was reading Indian Express and the first story I opened was, there was a 12 year old girl and there was an uncle of hers, that girl is from Orissa, that uncle of hers knows of people in Delhi. She is twelve years and her uncle is 50 years old and brings the girl to Delhi to get a good job. When the girl is here for around three

to four months he exploits her and then proposes her to marry. When she refuses she is sold for 50,000 rupees to two people, not to one. These two people take the girl to their village and they rape her one after the other. This girl runs away, is caught again and brought back to those people who rape her again. This is the front news of Indian Express today. And friends when we are gathering here and when we are sitting here as representatives of all Faith communities and religious communities I believe if we can take a step we can make a difference in the lives of so many people.

"I represent here the church of North India and I was trying to find what is the message of Jesus Christ which I should share with all of you. When he stood up and started

preaching and talking to all of the people delivering salvation he underlined the purpose and he underlined the purpose saying "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly". This is what he declared and when he said they he meant the whole of humanity. Christ came that all of us, including this girl from Orissa, that we should have life and he says we should have abundant life."

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: ERADICATION OF BONDED AND FORCED LABOUR IN INDIA



Following the *Joint Declaration* signing, the Global Freedom Network facilitated a Roundtable discussion. This occurred in New Delhi on the afternoon of the signing. Subject experts in modern slavery, a survivor, influencers and Global Freedom Network team members convened to better understand and discuss more deeply the eradication of bonded and forced labour in India.

The Moderator, **Ms Swati Maliwal**, Chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Women, opened proceedings by reflecting with sadness on the number of young girls who were missing or being sold for “absolute pennies” in Delhi. “Sexual slavery I really feel is one of the very worst forms of slavery and if we just look at the figures from Delhi it is extremely startling. We have 18 kids who go missing in Delhi every day. We have over five rapes in the national capital of Delhi ... there are girls who are being bought and sold for as little as 5,000 rupees and then they’ll be made victims of slavery for years to come,” she said.

Ms Maliwal introduced keynote speaker, Nobel Laureate **Mr Kailash Satyarthi**, founder of Bachpan Bachao Andolan – Save the Children Movement, as someone who had been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitative child labour since 1980. As a member of several groups on child

labour and education, Mr Satyarthi has addressed the UN General Assembly, ILO conference, UN Human Rights Commission and UNESCO and has been invited to parliamentary hearings and committees in USA, Germany and UK.

Mr Satyarthi started by congratulating Andrew and Grace Forrest for their compassion, commitment and conviction in fighting slavery. “History will remember both of you because you are not people who are just clapping and talking and preaching and teaching and sitting on the fence, but you are the people who have jumped in the ring. I am a person who for the last 35 years never believed in pessimism and passivity. Those who jump in the ring, they write the history,” he said.

Mr Satyarthi recalled his own experiences and said that when he started working on the issue of child slavery in 1981, after giving up a career as an electrical engineer, no-one was interested. “People sat and tried to convince me that if you really want to help children – why don’t you open an orphanage, why don’t you open a school, why don’t you do something good for the children? But ‘good for children’ (in that context) means very traditional thinking of charity for children,” he said. He recalled a father knocking on his door, telling him that his 14-year-old daughter was about to be sold to a brothel. A victim of slave labour himself, the father was desperate



Mr Kailash Satyarthi

for help. Mr Satyarthi, who at the time had little resources, managed to gather his wife and friends and hire a truck to attempt to rescue the daughter and others. They were beaten up by the brothel organizers and failed in their attempt – an event that cemented Mr Satyarthi's resolve to do something to free slaves. Encouraged by a lawyer, he used the habeas corpus provision (a means by which detainees can seek relief from unlawful imprisonment) to go to court. As a result, 36 people were liberated in 1981 in the first documented incident of freeing slaves in India in modern times.

"Since then, we did not look back. We had to see how laws could be implemented, how we can mobilize communities and society as a whole, how to build awareness in society as a preventative measure, how to manage different sections of society, how to engage businesses, because I strongly believe that all businesses are not evil. There are good people in the businesses who have good hearts and good souls. So we started working with them and tried to find some solutions."

He said it was important to realise that no child asked or wanted to beg, or work in factories or in prostitution. "These children who are begging on the streets are not begging on their own, all of us know that there are mafias, there are traffickers and there are organised criminals behind it," Mr Satyarthi said. He gave examples of young girls being sold for sexual slavery for

less than the price of a packet of cigarettes, and young boys being trafficked and brainwashed into becoming suicide bombers or terrorists. "Whose children are they? They are all our children," he said.

"A large number of enslaved people live in India. We are a great nation. We have great heritage, great cultures, but sometimes these things are ignored. We have strong constitutional provisions as well, but we have to build a strong social momentum. We have to ensure that these laws are implemented. If the laws are weak we have to fight for stronger laws ...". He made a strong case for a commitment to better education. "We cannot make a strong, a prosperous, a digital India if all of our children are not able to get a good quality education ... Lifelong learning and good quality, equitable, inclusive education is not possible if we allow any form of modern slavery, any form of trafficking. It cannot work."

Mr Satyarthi called for greater collaboration in fighting slavery.

"WE ALL TOGETHER CAN MAKE AND WILL MAKE SLAVERY HISTORY. WE ARE NOT GOING TO PASS IT ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION. THIS IS THE GENERATION, TODAY IS THE DAY, THIS IS THE TIME. WE HAVE TO PLEDGE THAT WE ARE GOING TO MAKE SLAVERY HISTORY."

"If the laws there are not good we will fight for it, if the laws are there we will fight for their implementation. We will go and talk to the business houses. We have to build strong coalitions within and between NGOs, within and between businesses, within and between villages and faith institutions, between and within corporate sectors and the Governments; because we feel that today, slavery cannot be abolished without building such strong coalitions and partnerships."

Following Mr Satyarthi's address, **Dr Lakshmidhar Mishra**, a Special Rapporteur of the National Human Rights Commission India, shared with the forum his views. Dr Mishra has authored more than 20 books, with his last work *"Human Bondage - chasing it through to India"* a telling account of forms of modern slavery which has received international acclaim.

Dr Mishra said now was "a decisive moment in our history". "The second time the collective conscience and wisdom of mankind represented through various faiths has pledged its total solidarity and support to a cause, which is very dear to all of us, but which is often lost sight of - eradication of all forms of modern slavery, lock stock and barrel," he said. "The Global Freedom Network and its very energetic and deeply committed president Mr Andrew Forrest, who has made this conference of creative, sensitive and human forces possible, deserves to be congratulated from the core of our hearts.



Dr. Lakshmidhar Mishra

A very timely, appropriate and splendid initiative."

Dr Mishra hoped the initiative would "send shockwaves down the spine of millions of captors and oppressors and exploiters who represent the most callous and insensitive elements of society who thrive and prosper at the cost of the blood, sweat and tears of those who derive a sadistic pleasure in dispossessing the poor, deprived and disadvantaged of the real and vital."

He said human life was the finest gift of the creator to humanity and was sacrosanct and invaluable. "Once that is mutilated and destroyed, it cannot be restored to its original form. Human life therefore deserves to be continually promoted, protected, nurtured and preserved so that human beings live and let others live in a climate of peace, love, goodwill, understanding, freedom, dignity and self-esteem as opposed to distrust, dominance, ill will, intolerance, hatred and mindless violence," he said.

The signing of the *Joint Declaration* was a critical milestone. "We have signed a

momentous declaration by representatives of all distinguished faiths. We have similar declarations like *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Philadelphia Declaration* and the declaration adopted at the end of the *American War of Independence* way back in 1775. I don't think in terms of content or quintessence that there is any such difference between the two, I think they speak the same language, the same idiom, and convey the same sense."

He summed up the discussions held on 3 December in the following way:

"THERE IS A BASIC ONENESS OF ALL RELIGIONS, ONENESS IN FORM, AND ONENESS IN ESSENCE. THAT ONENESS LIES IN THE UNITY OF MANKIND DESPITE DIFFERENCES IN CAST, CLAN, SECT, CREED, COLOUR, GENDER, FAITH AND BELIEF, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL ORIGIN."

All the distinguished representatives of the faiths were unanimous in their voice of protest against force, fraud, intolerance of recent hatred and mindless violence. They are also unanimous on the following; humanity is one and indivisible, God is one and indivisible, God dwells in the hearts of all beings, all human beings are endowed with reason, rationality and conscience, and God can be realised by imbibing and assimilating certain qualities of the heart."

"If we really want to put an end to all these perverse forms of inequality, inequity, tyranny, injustice and oppression we have to be sensitive, we have to possess sensitive hearts. A heart which can

receive messages, which can observe and assimilate the messages, which are beneficial to mankind and repulse the messages which are not so beneficial to mankind, a sensitive heart."

Mr Ravi Kant then addressed proceedings. An advocate for the Supreme Court of India, Mr Kant founded Shakti Vahini, a leading non-profit organisation, and has led the fight against human trafficking, gender violence, child abuse and HIV.

He said that while the Indian government was giving the issue greater attention, organised crime in trafficking continued to grow and the scale of the problem required a massive change in mindset. "People say that the rescues we (Shakti Vahini) do is like mopping the floor when the tap is on. We can do a small amount of rescues ... I think people are right when they say that. That is where the importance of faith-based leaders is - you have a reach of millions and millions of people and you can change their mindset. Faith leaders have a huge responsibility and involving them in this human rights issue is going to be very helpful in the fight against trafficking."

He said that despite the running tap analogy, rescues and law enforcement responses needed to be strengthened. "Every day, interventions need to be improved. What we are seeing in India is that investigations are very minimal, they don't happen properly and traffickers know that they can go out and just get away with the cases. Once there is fear of the law among the traffickers, we will see that the crimes diminish."

Criminal conviction rates of just two to



Mr Ravi Kant

three per cent in human trafficking cases, as well as in violence against women and children cases, pointed to weak investigations and law enforcement responses.

Dr Sunitha Krishnan followed Mr Kant, reminding the forum of the real, human face of trafficking. Dr Krishnan is an anti-trafficking activist and founder of Prajwala, a non-profit organisation that rescues, rehabilitates and reintegrates sex trafficked survivors into society. Through her organisation, she provides ongoing international consultancy to authorities in India, the United Nations and the United States Government. Dr Krishnan and her organisation have rescued more than 15,000 women and children in India.

She told a story in which a 10-year-old girl in Hyderabad was married off via a phone arrangement. She was taken to Mumbai on the pretence of getting paperwork completed, however once there the girl was sold into prostitution. A rescue team found her in horrific circumstances, and the event was compounded by a reunion with



Dr Sunitha Krishnan

"I DEMAND FROM EACH ONE OF YOU ALL, PLEASE BECOME THE AGENTS OF BREAKING THE SILENCE. WE NEED TO BREAK OUR SILENCE IN OUR HOUSES, IN OUR SCHOOLS, IN OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, IN OUR COLLEGES, AMONG OUR FOLLOWERS, AMONG EVERY HUMAN BEING THAT WE KNOW."

Dr Sunitha Krishnan

her family that saw her rejected because of the shame of her ordeal. After an apparent change of heart by the family and community, the girl was handed back to her family, however the girl then vanished and has not been seen since. "The whole connivance of the community, of people who are important leaders including religious leaders who connived with a whole lot of criminal syndicates to actually ensure that the victim is completely wiped out. I still today don't know where this child is. We have been searching for her; we don't know where she is," Dr Krishnan said.

"It (human trafficking) thrives on human weaknesses, which come from religious practices, tradition, culture, harmful practices. How many thousands of girls from southern regions are sold, auctioned off?"

"The organised crime of human trafficking has a real human face, which is of you and me, which we are a part of. This is not a community which is on planet Mars or something else. This is a community that each one of us comes from. Therefore, when we talk about a response, when we talk about how do we counter this thing, start from each one of us. We have to start questioning our silence. How many of us have the guts to break our silence when one from our own community, one from our own fraternity commits the crime? When in our ashrams, when in our mosques, when in our churches? When reports of sex scandal happens how many of us faith leaders have the courage to stand up and say 'this crime is not done, this is not done and I condemn it!'"

Dr Krishnan said repercussions would act as a deterrent, and society needed the courage to boycott sex offenders or sex traffickers. "Each trafficker in this world whether that is in the United States of America, or in Australia, or in India lives with the courage that 'even if I'm caught, all my community members will treat me with dignity. Maybe even be honoured and given awards too'. That is the courage we have given them, that is the validation we have given them and we need to break that."

"We are not well organised, we are not connected with each other, we have our egos, we have our turfs, we have our domains and we all operate in silos. If we truly believe in fighting slavery, in fighting trafficking which is another form of modern day slavery, we need to actually strategise ourselves and look at ways and means that we can really unite, that we can network."

Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman of the Global Freedom Network, opened his address by acknowledging the commitment, strength and passion of the people in the room, as well as the despair faced by millions. He said the Joint Declaration signing earlier that day had demonstrated the commitment of faith leaders to reach Indian communities, particularly those where legislation and political decisions failed to penetrate.

Mr Forrest, whose business interests span the globe, said the corporate sector had a real role to play in eradicating slavery, and executives with global influence needed to understand and be transparent about their supply chains. "We've got great companies like Tesco and Nestle and others they

are volunteering to step up - household names. You've got companies like mine (Fortescue Metals Group) that, when we looked into our 3,000-odd suppliers, who supply around 65 per cent of the world's economy ... we found at least 10 cases of suspected slavery," he said. While Mr Forrest moved quickly to eject those organisations from the supply chain, he said other companies were often unaware their suppliers used slave labour. "We need to understand that while consumerism is wonderful for standards of living, if it comes at a social morality cost it is not worth it. There is no way that we can ever deny a child an education anywhere in this world, with a clear conscience."



Mr Andrew Forrest

"INDIA WILL NOT TOLERATE BEING THE LARGEST SLAVERY SUFFERER ON EARTH. INDIA CAN LEAD THE WORLD OUT OF SLAVERY."

Andrew Forrest



Mr Forrest said those who believe slavery was too embedded in India and couldn't be eradicated needed to recognise that change was afoot. "In India there is a search, a thirst for change, there is an understanding of absolute injustice, and there is a knowledge by the slave masters of this country that their time is limited," he said.

Survivor advocate, **Susheela**, a 26-year-old woman from the Karnataka state in south west India, told delegates about being forced into an arranged marriage at the age of 15. Miserable, she escaped the marriage and moved home, however she was scared she would be found and forced back into the union so she ran away to Bangalore. There, Susheela was drugged and taken to Mumbai, where she was left in a brothel and again drugged before being raped. It was the start of a hideous year in which she was forced to have sex with up to 40 men each day and have an abortion when she fell pregnant.

She was finally rescued when a client called the police on her behalf. The brothel was raided and Susheela was taken to a shelter, where she stayed for two years and where she discovered she was pregnant again. "I didn't want that baby as it reminded me of the bad things that happened in the brothel.... I was so unhappy and wanted to die. I tried to commit suicide by hanging myself but God had other plans for me" Susheela said.

Finally she returned to Bangalore and was reunited with her family. Susheela now

works for an NGO, training in cooking and tailoring, and has found peace through her faith in God.

Following Susheela's harrowing account, Mr Forrest introduced **Ms Swati Maliwal**, Chair of the Delhi Commission for Women, telling the audience how his daughter Grace had provided her with immense inspiration during her time working in India.



Susheela shares a moment with Dr Krishnan

Ms Maliwal described Delhi as the 'rape capital of the world' that had witnessed brutal rapes of three minors in the month preceding the Roundtable alone. Gang rapes of very young girls were happening too often. She noted that only nine convictions occurred in Delhi for crimes against women in 2014, despite thousands of complaints. Analysis of data revealed that police had not been filing charge sheets effectively or in a timely manner;

the sole forensic science laboratory in Delhi reported that 1,500 samples had expired; and court systems were slow and cumbersome. "So now as the Delhi Commission for Women we are trying to work on all three of these issues in order to ensure that Delhi has some convictions," she said.

Ms Maliwal said the issue of rape should not be political, and the Commission had proposed a collaborative forum for the issue of violence against women. She said people tried to turn a blind eye to the stories of child prostitution occurring in the heart of Delhi, but it was important to continue to press for women's safety and rehabilitation measures. Improving the conditions of shelters for women who have been abused are on Ms Maliwal's agenda. One night she visited, with her team, a shelter where 60 per cent of the women were suffering from mental illness but not receiving any care, little food and no training or employment opportunities.

Women who were the victims of acid attacks after denying the advances of men were another group that required critical attention, as well as women and children made homeless through trafficking.



Swati Maliwal
Chair, Delhi Commission for Women







AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM NETWORK PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA



"IT'S IMPORTANT THAT ALL CORNERS
OF THE COMMUNITY JOIN TOGETHER
TO WORK TOWARDS THE NOBLE GOAL
OF ERADICATING SLAVERY AND HUMAN
TRAFFICKING ACROSS THE WORLD..."
The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP,
Prime Minister of Australia



"THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A
REMARKABLE JOURNEY. TOGETHER
WE CAN COMBAT HUMAN
TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY."
The Hon Julie Bishop MP,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Australia



The Official Party at the Australian faith leaders event, 2 December 2015, Parliament House, Canberra

THE AUSTRALIAN VISION

In early 2015, Salvation Army Commissioners James Condon and Floyd Tidd, had a vision, inspired by the Global Freedom Network's 2 December 2014 event hosted in Vatican City. They appreciated the unique point of difference that the Global Freedom Network was founded upon, whereby religious faith can be a powerful motivating force to inspire individual and community action, both spiritually and practically, in the fight against modern slavery. Based on this, the Commissioners sought to create a similar initiative for faith leaders of Australia.

Before this, the Salvation Army was active in the anti-slavery movement through its 'Freedom Partnership – to End Modern Slavery'. The Freedom Partnership was mobilizing community, business and government to eradicate slavery while also independently operating Australia's only Trafficking and Slavery Safe House

since 2008. The Freedom Partnership championed collaborative, inclusive and networked strategies to address modern slavery, and had an existing interfaith network throughout Australia. It was obvious that parallels existed with the Freedom Partnership and the Global Freedom Network in terms of vision and strategic approach. It was at this point, Commissioners Condon and Tidd conceptualised the notion of the Australian Freedom Network. Their next step was to turn that vision into a reality.



Commissioner James Condon,
Australia Eastern Territory



Commissioner Floyd Tidd,
Australia Southern Territory

THE JOURNEY

During 2015, the Salvation Army implemented a comprehensive consultation, engagement and planning program in preparation for the historic faith leaders event. The process was led by Ms Jenny Stanger, the founder of Australia's first refuge for trafficked women, facilitated by the Salvation Army, and assisted by the Global Freedom Network Chairman Andrew Forrest and CEO Antonia Stampalija.

During the engagement process, it was apparent there was great excitement about the proposed event and commitment, with overwhelming support given from Australia's leading faith leaders.

Some leaders were unable to personally attend the signing of the *Joint Declaration* on 2 December 2015, however they were prepared to put their names to the document, and a concerted effort was made to involve them. Minderoo Foundation team members Matt O'Sullivan and Bec Thompson carefully transported the *Joint Declaration* books to faith leaders, travelling from Perth to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra in the 48-hour period that preceded the official launch.



Parliament House in Canberra, Australia

THE AUSTRALIAN FAITH LEADERS EVENT

2 DECEMBER 2015 – PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA

On 2 December 2015, one year on from the historic event in Rome, Commissioner James Condon and Floyd Tidd hosted 12 faith leaders, six faith leader representatives and Mr Andrew Forrest to mark the formation of the Australian Freedom Network.

The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Acting Leader of the Opposition and Mrs Louise Markus MP were special guests at the Parliament House event.

The faiths represented included: Christian Evangelical, Baptist, Salvation Army, Presbyterian, Coptic Orthodox, Anglican, Catholic, Muslim Sunni and Shai, Lutheran, Jewish, Hindu, Quakers, Uniting Church and Buddhist. The vision of ending slavery had captured the heart and will of Australian faith leaders to take action. History was being made.





The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister of Australia

"I THANK THE SALVATION ARMY
AND THE FREEDOM PARTNERSHIP
FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO THIS
IMPORTANT CAUSE. BY EDUCATING
AUSTRALIANS ABOUT SLAVERY
AND PROVIDING WAYS IN WHICH
THEY CAN TAKE ACTION, YOU ARE
EMPOWERING EVERYONE TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE."

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP,
Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Prime Minister of Australia, was not able to attend 2 December launch, however his message of solidarity was a powerful reminder of why the Australian Freedom Network is so important in the fight against slavery in Australia.

The presence of high ranking political, religious and business leaders at the Australian Freedom launch was a positive indication of their commitment and support. We are grateful to them for their leadership.





Sandra, Salvation Army Freedom Advocate

SURVIVOR OF MODERN SLAVERY

The audience was visibly moved by the words of Sandra, who came to Australia as a domestic worker but soon found herself trapped in slavery in Western Sydney. She had been promised a salary and permanent residency, but after three years without pay and increasingly abusive conditions, Sandra escaped. She said,

"I HAVE SHARED MY STORY TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA. I HAVE SHARED MY STORY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO ARE IN SLAVERY TO SEEK HELP. AS A PERSON OF FAITH, I KNOW THAT FAITH IN ACTION CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD IN OUR WORLD."

On speaking about modern slavery, Commissioner Condon said, "The cases that we know about represent only the tip of an iceberg. We must do more to close the gap between the victims we know about and the thousands still enslaved in Australia. Faith communities can play a critical role in this and be part of a global movement that prevents slavery in the first place. All of the world's

major faiths share universal values of dignity, freedom and social justice."

Chairman of the Global Freedom Network, Andrew Forrest, spoke about the role of faiths in ending slavery at the event and said, "On this day last year, for the first time in history, the leaders of the Catholic and Anglican churches, his Holiness Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby, as well as leaders from the Orthodox, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths jointly committed to one common endeavour against slavery.

"Today, we are repeating that in Australia. I applaud the commitment today of Australia's faith leaders to embed action against slavery in the very fabric of their advocacy. The Global Freedom Network is founded on the premise that religion can be a powerful motivating force to inspire individual and community action both spiritually and practically. By signing the *Joint Declaration*, Australian faith leaders have made a commitment to measureable actions towards ending slavery in Australia in the next five years."

The official signing ceremony took place and history was made in Australia as one-by-one the faith leaders signed the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*. This was now the beginning of something unique in Australia; joined up action being led at the highest level of the faith community, for the people. The vision was coming to life.





NEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Social media was active during the event with the **#endslavery** leading the commentary.



Freedom Partnership
[@partner4freedom](https://twitter.com/partner4freedom) (2 Dec)

Join the Anglican Church & Archbp Philip Freier & SIGN the Declaration to **#EndSlavery** at afn.org.au



Art of Living
[@ArtofLivingNow](https://twitter.com/ArtofLivingNow) (2 Dec):

At Global Freedom Network meet **#FaithLeaders** unite to **#EndSlavery**. Sign the petition [here](#)

ABC NEWS 24, TELEVISION BROADCAST, SYDNEY, NEWS AFTERNOONS, SCOTT BEVAN AND KUMI TAGUCHI

(2 December 2015)

Interview with Jenny Stanger, National Manager, Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery and Sandra, former victim of modern day slavery.

Taguchi says slavery is not a practice most of us would consider part of modern Australia, but around 3,000 people are believed to be enslaved in Australia. She says today a group of Australian religious leaders launched the Australian Freedom Network. Stanger says over the past 10 years the Australian Government has officially uncovered around 500 victims of slavery and human trafficking. She says if you think about all we have learned in the past year about exploitation in industries as broad as agriculture and construction and hospitality, she believes it is naive of us to think it is as low as 3,000. Stanger says people are often held in a prison without walls. Stanger says Sandra was

lucky to be referred to the Salvation Army. She says we operate the only safe house for victims of human trafficking and slavery in Australia and we were lucky to get that referral and have that kind of partnership with the Department of Immigration.

AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM NETWORK WEBSITE

(2 December 2015)

Audience: 46,000 people
Faiths United to End Slavery

"To mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Australian Freedom Network was launched today at Parliament House in Canberra. The Australian Freedom Network brings together faith communities making a firm commitment to practical actions to tackle modern slavery in Australia. Having been inspired by global faith leaders, Australian faith leaders signed the same Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery signed last year in Vatican City at the launch of the Global Freedom Network.

Mrs. Louise Markus MP sponsored the gathering. The Hon Julie Bishop Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Acting Leader of the Opposition and Chairman of the Global Freedom Network, Andrew Forrest,

spoke at the event, which was led by Commissioner James Condon of The Salvation Army Eastern Territory. Former CNN breakfast presenter and host of SBS Dateline, Anjali Rao, was Mistress of Ceremonies.

The Global Slavery Index estimates 35.8 million people are enslaved globally with 3,000 people thought to be enslaved in Australia. In 2015 shocking abuses of people in Australian agriculture, food production and retail franchises were exposed on an unprecedented scale.

Commissioner Condon said, "The cases that we know about represent only the tip of an iceberg. We must do more to close the gap between the victims we know about and the thousands still enslaved in Australia. Faith communities can play a critical role in this and be part of a global movement that prevents slavery in the first place. All of the world's major faiths share universal values of dignity, freedom and social justice."

THE AUSTRALIAN

(14 December 2015)

Andrew Forrest Launches Australian Freedom Network to clamp down on slavery

"Launching the Australian Freedom Network at Parliament House in

Canberra, Mr Forrest and leaders from the Hillsong church through to a Shia mosque in Sydney will commit to taking "measurable actions" towards ending slavery until at least 2020.

One year after the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery was signed in Vatican City, Mr Forrest, chairman of the Global Freedom Network, said it was "incredibly important" that religions called out slavery as a "major problem in the world".

"It is in fact the distortion of the definition found in the holy text and distortion of the integrity of those religions which has led to the suffering," he told *The Australian*.

"Where distortion exists it can only be laid to blame at the feet of the teachers and leaders of religion, which must become active across the world that they no longer can tolerate distortions of their texts which allow slavery and violence against the innocent.

"There should be no slavery measured in Australia after five years".

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and Labor's foreign affairs spokeswoman Tanya Plibersek are expected to attend the launch of the network.

Faith leaders who will be at the event include chair of the National Council of Australian Baptists, Reverend Bill Brown, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Right Reverend David Cook, director of Al Sadiq Foundation, Sheikh Ali Jaber and Sheikh Youssef Nabha, an imam at the Masjed Al Rahman mosque in Kingsgrove, Sydney.

Today marks the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

ABC LOCAL RADIO

(8 December 2015)

AFN Members speak to John Cleary

"This week amidst the turbulence of Canberra's last sitting week, you may have caught another event in the media from the national capital.

Mining magnate Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest launched the Australian arm of his Global Freedom Network to combat human trafficking.

One year after the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery was signed in Vatican City, Mr Forrest, chairman of the Global Freedom Network, joined with more than a dozen Australian religious leaders calling for a clamp down on slavery across the country, declaring no one should be enslaved in Australia after five years. Slavery is a strange and almost alien term to associate with a democratic country like Australia, but as recent

exposes from agriculture to retail have shown, exploitation merely requires opportunity.

According to the Global Slavery Index, in 2015 some 35.8 million people are still living in conditions akin to slavery. Even here in Australia, the number is estimated to be close to 3,000. They may not be wearing chains or manacles, but according to Commissioner James Condon of the Salvation Army they can be found across the economy.

GUESTS IN THIS HOUR

- Jenny Stanger, Salvation Army
- Sr Noelene Simmons, ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious against Trafficking in Humans)
- Sheikh Ahmed Abdo, NSW Muslim Police Chaplain
- Fuzz Kitto, National Coordinator, Stop the Traffik"

Also broadcast from the following 10 stations:

ABC News 24 (Melbourne), ABC News 24 (Regional NSW), ABC News 24 (Brisbane), ABC News 24 (Adelaide), ABC News 24 (Perth), ABC News 24 (Regional Queensland), ABC News 24 (Hobart), ABC News 24 (Canberra), ABC News 24 (Regional Victoria), ABC News 24 (Regional West Australia)



GlobalFreedomNetwork
@gfn2020 (2 Dec):

To join the fight to
#EndSlavery pledge your
support now...



Joel A'Bell @joelabell (2 Dec):

An honour to sign the declaration
to end modern slavery with
@gfn2020 #EndSlavery

SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA

"I AM ... LIVING PROOF THAT SLAVERY HAPPENS IN AUSTRALIA. ONE DAY I HAD THE CHANCE TO ASK SOMEONE FOR HELP, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION FREED ME FROM THE HOUSE. THEY TOOK ME TO THE SALVATION ARMY SAFE HOUSE, AND FROM THERE I BEGAN TO HAVE CHOICES AND FREEDOM AGAIN."

Sandra, survivor of modern slavery in Australia

The Global Slavery Index (2016) estimates 4,300 children, women and men are enslaved in Australia. Slaveholders are using people against their will for their own advantage. Sometimes this is hidden behind closed doors; other times it is hidden in plain sight.

Victims of slavery and human trafficking might be the person who picks the apples on your table, attaches the rain gutters to your house, cares for your neighbour's children, cleans your car, makes the clothes you are wearing or serves your food. Some people are sold as objects, forced to work for little or no pay and are at the complete mercy of their employers. Slavery in Australia can look like someone who is:

- Forced to work through psychological or physical threat
- Owned or controlled by their employer usually through psychological or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
- Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as property
- Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom of movement
- Forced to marry without consent

Slavery in Australia is a crime and most victims are from outside Australia. Many enter legally and are then subjected to severe forms of exploitation and possible forms of slavery by their employers. There are approximately 1.2 million temporary migrants in Australia, including international students, working holiday makers, skilled visa holders and New Zealand citizens. While reforms have recently been adopted to address some vulnerabilities, restricted working hours for those on student visas, the temporary nature of many visas, and reliance on workplace sponsorship leaves many migrants at risk of exploitation.

Concerns have been raised about the Australian inter-country adoption scheme presenting risks for child trafficking, with reports of children kidnapped in India then being adopted in Australia. Dutch NGO Against Child Trafficking, raised concerns of child trafficking with the Australian Government about children from India, China, Ethiopia and Colombia being trafficked for adoption in Australia. In light of such trafficking concerns, Australia has suspended the inter-country adoption programmes.

"SLAVERY NO LONGER LOOKS LIKE WHAT IT ONCE DID. IT'S NOT LIKE '12 YEARS A SLAVE' ANY MORE. HERE IN AUSTRALIA IT IS THE YOUNG GIRL FORCED IN TO MARRIAGE AT THE AGE OF 12. IT'S THE HOSPITALITY WORKER WHO'S HAD THEIR PASSPORT TAKEN - WHO'S TOLD THAT THEY HAVE TO WORK 15 HOURS A DAY TO REPAY THEIR DEBT."

Richard Di Natale

EXAMPLES OF SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA

"WHEN I FIRST HEARD THEIR
STORIES, I THOUGHT - SURELY
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING IN
AUSTRALIA. AND YET IT IS."
Commissioner James Condon

- 2011 - A Sydney woman suffering from a kidney condition was suspected to have trafficked a young woman from the Philippines with the intention of harvesting an organ. Due to this case, Australia has now made it a criminal offence to address organ trafficking under the Commonwealth Code.¹
- 2013 - A martial arts fighter faced court on two charges of human trafficking and two charges of debt bondage. He is accused of operating a labour hire company that lured men to Australia, where they were kept in bondage. Abuse included taking control over their bank accounts, confiscating their passports, demanding money from them and threatening them with violence if they did not comply.²
- 2013 - A Brisbane woman was jailed for nine years for trafficking her nine year old daughter to work in her Brisbane sex work business. The mother sent for her daughter from Thailand to be brought to Australia for a six week holiday in 2004 and the girl was kept in a situation of slavery.³
- 2013 - The Australian Federal Police arrested three Australians for recruiting Filipino boxers to Australia, promising them riches and success. When the boxers arrived in Sydney they had their passports taken and they were used as unpaid domestic workers.⁴
- 2014 - An Australian Institute of Criminology study revealed the exploitation of women coming to Australia as spouses and being used as slaves. In one case, a Thai woman was subjected to labouring in her husband's market garden for \$40-\$50 per month. In another case a woman was put to work as a domestic worker for her husband's family.⁵
- 2015 - A 12 year old girl was forced into marriage with a twenty-seven year old man in New South Wales.⁶

¹ <http://bit.ly/organtrafficking>

² <http://bit.ly/westaustrialiacase>

³ <http://bit.ly/brisbaneslaverycase>

⁴ <http://bit.ly/filipinoboxers>

⁵ <http://bit.ly/slavelikemarriage>

⁶ <http://bit.ly/forcedmarriagesw>

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE IN AUSTRALIA

The Government of Australia sustains a strong stance against modern slavery, with continued criminal justice efforts, financial support for NGOs offering victim support, and regional leadership and collaboration. In 2013, the passing of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Act 2013 strengthened Australia's ability to prosecute offenders by introducing new offences of forced marriage and harbouring a victim, and amending definitions to capture subtle forms of coercion such as psychological oppression. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Law Enforcement Integrity, Vulnerable Witness Protection and Other Measures) Act 2013 was also passed to improve protection of victims and increase their participation in prosecutions, including by allowing victims and witnesses to testify via video link and have a support person with them.

Australia continued to show regional leadership in tackling modern slavery by dedicating \$USD50 million to the five year Australia-Asia Program to Combat

Trafficking in Persons. In 2013, the Government also committed to ensuring that public supply chains are free of modern slavery through amendments to government procurement policies. However, concrete steps are yet to be taken to implement the policies.

On 1 December 2014 the Government released the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19. The initiatives contained in the Plan were founded on the following principles: to prevent and deter human trafficking and slavery; to detect, investigate and prosecute offenders; and to provide support to trafficked people, including by protecting their human rights.

The role of Government and its ability to work with other Governments, international agencies and civil society organisations is considered vital in the fight against human trafficking and slavery.



The Australian Government's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19

THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM NETWORK

"WE CONDEMN SLAVERY IN
ALL ITS FORMS, AND ARE
COMMITTED TO ACTIVELY ENSURE
THAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS
ERADICATED IN OUR WORLD."

Pastor Wayne Alcorn

1. **Pastor Wayne Alcorn**, National President, Australian Christian Churches, represented by Pastor Sean Stanton
2. **Reverend Dr Bill Brown**, Chair, National Council of Australian Baptists in Australia
3. **Commissioner James Condon**, The Salvation Army Eastern Territory
4. **Right Reverend David Cook**, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Australia
5. **His Grace Bishop Daniel**, Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia, Sydney and Affiliated Regions
6. **Archbishop Dr Philip Freier**, Primate, Anglican Church of Australia represented by, Right Reverend Dr Matthew Brain
7. **Archbishop Denis Hart**, President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, represented by, Reverend Brian Lucas, General Secretary
8. **Sheikh Ali Jaber**, Director, Al Sadiq Foundation, Melbourne (photo unavailable)
9. **Bishop John Henderson**, Lutheran Church of Australia, represented by, Bishop Mark Lieschke
10. **Pastor Brian Houston**, Global Senior Pastor & Founder, Hillsong Church, represented by, Joel A'Bell Lead Pastor, Hillsong Church Australia
11. **Rabbi Alon Meltzer**, Rabbinic Council of Australia and New Zealand & Executive Council of Australian Jewry
12. **Pandit Narendra Dave**, President, Australian Council of Hindu Clergy
13. **His Eminence Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed**, Grand Mufti of Australia, represented by Shaykh Ahmed Abdo, Office of the Grand Mufti of Australia, Australian National Imams Council
14. **Sheikh Youssef Nabha**, Imam, Masjed Al Rahman, Kingsgrove Sydney (photo unavailable)
15. **Julian Robertson**, Presiding Clerk of Australian Quakers, represented by, Mrs. Rae Litting
16. **Venerable Ban Ruo Shi**, Senior Abbott, Prajna Monastery Australia
17. **Stuart McMillan**, President, Uniting Church in Australia, represented by, Dr. Mark Zirnsak, Director, Justice and Mission, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania
18. **Commissioner Floyd Tidd**, The Salvation Army Southern Territory



THE FUTURE

WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM NETWORK WILL DO



Plans are underway for the Australian Freedom Network to progress its strategic direction. It will engage in individual consultation sessions led by The Salvation Army's Freedom Partnership. The Global Freedom Network will participate in these initiatives and continue to provide ongoing support, strategic alliances and identify opportunities for joined up practical and spiritual action.



"WITH EDUCATION, RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR EVERY HUMAN PERSON, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

Catholic Archbishop Denis Hart


Below are examples of the initiatives the Australian Freedom Network will undertake in 2016:

- Raise awareness about slavery in Australia amongst faith communities
- Unify faith-based organisations to collaborate on ending slavery in Australia
- Inspire people to engage with the issue of modern slavery as an extension of their faith in Australia
- Encourage faith communities to take meaningful actions to end slavery in Australia
- Support and amplify existing anti-slavery work in Australia

"IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE ALL TAKE A STAND TO ELIMINATE THIS GREAT EVIL, AND WE JOIN TOGETHER TO RECOGNISE THE GOD-GIVEN DIGNITY OF EACH HUMAN PERSON: TO KNOW FREEDOM; TO LIVE WITHOUT THEIR LIVES BEING OWNED BY OTHERS AND TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES TO THE FULLEST OF THE POTENTIAL THAT GOD HAS GIVEN THEM."

Anglican Archbishop Dr Philip Freier





"ON BEHALF OF THE MUSLIMS OF AUSTRALIA, I AM
HONOURED TO SIGN THIS DECLARATION THAT LIFTS
THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN BEING, RESTORING HIS
OR HER DIGNITY AND FREEDOM."

His Eminence Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed

INSPIRING WORDS

Faith leaders at the 2 December 2015 event were invited to speak about their commitment to ending modern slavery, with all speakers united in the belief that collaboration and solidarity, through the *Joint Declaration*, would make a difference.

The following are extracts of addresses given on the day. The speeches are included in full on page 156.



Commissioner James Condon
The Salvation Army Eastern Territory

"The Salvation Army is opposed to the corrupt abuse of power against other human beings. We have a responsibility, both individually and collectively to work for the liberation of those who have been enslaved."



His Grace Bishop Daniel
Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia, Sydney and Affiliated Regions

"We believe that we will work in solidarity to eliminate slavery of all kind for the benefit of mankind."



Archbishop Dr Philip Freier
Primate Anglican Church of Australia

"It's important that we all take a stand to eliminate this great evil."



Archbishop Denis Hart
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

"When we no longer regard our neighbours as being of equal dignity, sharing a common humanity with our brothers and sisters, but rather as objects, slavery can often take root in our society."



Pastor Brian Houston
Hillsong Church

"As a local church in Australia we are opposed to slavery in all its forms and are passionate about eradicating human trafficking across the globe."



Pandit Narendra Dave
President, Australian Council of Hindu Clergy

"The human birth is thus an extremely precious attainment and we deplore all forms of trafficking, slavery or any form of degradation, exploitation or coercion of other human beings for commercial gain."



His Eminence Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed
Grand Mufti of Australia

"Today, I am signing an important *Declaration* calling for the freedom from slavery, liberating people from the fear of creation and worrying about their livelihood.

On behalf of the Muslims of Australia I am honoured to sign this *Declaration* that lifts the status of the human being, restoring his or her dignity and freedom."

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

The Global Freedom Network is continuing to build on the momentum achieved through the *Joint Declaration* and historic events in Vatican City, Canberra and New Delhi in 2014 and 2015.

Engagement is ongoing with other world faiths that share the aspiration for a world without modern slavery. In addition, sovereign leaders and global influencers from the political and business communities, as well as civil society, are being invited to become signatories to the Joint Declaration.

The Global Freedom Network, along with the newly-formed Indian Freedom Network and Australian Freedom Network, knows that success will come when individuals and private, public

and community organisations work collaboratively, across sectors, borders, faiths and political persuasions.

The milestone events in Vatican City, Canberra and New Delhi will be replicated in various ways in ceremonies across the world in coming years.

The Global Freedom Network invites every person and organisation that share the vision for a world in which every man, woman and child has freedom and dignity, to join the cause.



www.globalfreedomnetwork.org





FULL SPEECH TRANSCRIPTS THE VATICAN CITY EVENT

The full speeches of all leaders who spoke at Casina Pio IV, the Vatican, at the signing of the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* on 2 December 2014, are provided.



Address of His Holiness Pope Francis

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank all the religious leaders gathered here for their commitment in favour of the survivors of human trafficking, and all those present for their intense participation in this act of brotherhood, especially toward the most suffering of our brothers and sisters. Inspired by our confessions of faith, today we are gathered for an historic initiative and concrete action: to declare that we will work together to eradicate the terrible scourge of modern slavery in all its forms.

The physical, economic, sexual and psychological exploitation of men and women, boys and girls, currently holds tens of millions in inhumane and humiliating bondage. Every human being – man, woman, boy and girl – is the image of God; God, who is love and freedom, gives himself through interpersonal relations; therefore every human being is a free person, destined to live for the good of others in equality and brotherhood.

Every person and all people are equal and their freedom and dignity must be recognised. Any discriminating relationship that does not respect the fundamental conviction that the “other is like me myself” constitutes a crime, and very often an abhorrent crime.

That is why we declare in the name of all people and of everyone of our own Creed that modern slavery – in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or the trafficking of organs – is a crime “against humanity”. The victims of this are from every walk of life, but most are found among the poorest and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

We declare on behalf of those who are calling our communities to action, that every systematic deprivation of individual freedom for the purpose of personal and commercial exploitation be rejected entirely and without exception.

Despite the great efforts of many, modern slavery continues to be an atrocious scourge that is present throughout the world on a broad scale, even as tourism. This crime of “lèse-humanity” masquerades behind seemingly acceptable customs, but in reality claims its victims through

prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour, slave labour, mutilation, the sale of organs, the consumption of drugs and child labour. It hides behind closed doors, in particular places, in the streets, automobiles, factories, the countryside, in fishing boats and many other places. And this happens both in towns and villages, in the reception centres of the wealthiest nations as well as in those of the poorest. And the worst thing is that this situation, unfortunately, grows more serious every day.

We call to action all people of faith, leaders, governments, businesses, all men and women of good will, to give their strong support and join in the action against modern slavery in all its forms.

Sustained by the ideals of our confessions of faith and by our shared human values, we all can and must raise the standard of spiritual values, common effort and the vision of freedom to eradicate slavery from our planet.

I ask the Lord to grant us today the grace to convert ourselves in the proximity of every person, without exception, offering active and constant help to those we encounter on our path – whether it be an

elderly person who has been abandoned by everyone, a worker unjustly enslaved or unappreciated, a refugee caught in the snares of the underworld, a young man or woman who walks the streets of the world, as a victim of the sex trade, a man or a woman driven to prostitution by the deception of people who have no fear of God, a boy or a girl mutilated for their organs – and who call to our conscience, echoing the voice of the Lord: I say to you whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me.

Dear friends, thank you for this meeting. Thank you for this transverse commitment, which involves us all.

We are all reflections of the image of God and we are convinced that we cannot tolerate that the image of the living God be subject to abhorrent treatment.

Many thanks!



**Address of Mohamed
Ahmed El-Tayeb,
Grand Imam of
Al-Azhar**

In the name of God,
the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful,

All praise is due to God
Who created the people,
males and females, made them into
nations and tribes and set the balance
to judge who is most righteous by virtue
of piety regardless of color, ethnicity, or
social status. God the Almighty says: "O
man kind! We have created you from
a male and a female, and made you
into nations and tribes that you may
know one another. And God has full
knowledge and is well acquainted [with
all things]." Surat Al-Hujurat (Verse 13).

I send peace and blessings upon the best
of God's creation (peace and blessings
be upon him) who said: "An Arab has no
superiority over except by piety. Verily,
the most honoured of you in the sight
of God is he who is the most righteous."
Our Trustworthy Prophet was saying
about Salman Al Farsi, who lived the
darkness of slavery: "Salman is one of
the People of the House", and introduced
him many times before Notables of
Quraish. The Prophet's Companions and
those who came after them (may God
be pleased with all of them) followed
the teachings contained in God's Book
and the Sunnah of His noble Prophet.
The words of our master Umar Ibn

Al-Khattab to Amr Ibn Al Aas (God Bless
Them), dissatisfied with the son of Al Aas
who had beaten a man from the Copts,
allowing the Copt man to punish the
son: "Since when have you enslaved the
people when their mothers have borne
them free" ring a familiar bell with all
people.

Slavery was one of the major problems
that plagued pre-Islamic Arabia. It was
so pervasive that a person could lose his
freedom and be enslaved by his creditor
simply by failing to settle his debt,
turning from the light of freedom to the
darkness of execrable slavery.

At no point did Islam condone slavery
between the people whom it deems as
being equal from the same father, Adam,
and the same mother, Eve. The Prophet
(peace and blessings be upon him) said:
"All people are from Adam and Adam was
created from dust. Let the people cease
to boast about their ancestors or they
will be of less account with God than the
beetle [which rolls dung with its nose]."

In spite of Islam's position, it was not
conducive to the affairs of the people
to abolish the institution of slavery
altogether. The reason for this was
because it constituted a source of
wealth which would have been difficult
for the people to abandon at once,
as money is dear to the soul. Islam
therefore took a gradual approach to
remedy this problem. It exhorted slave
owners to treat their slaves well and not
burden them beyond their capacity. It

then narrowed the sources of slavery
and deemed that the only method for
gaining captives is during warfare. Not
every prisoner can be taken as a slave.
It is an option of four: with the option
of keeping prisoner as a slave being the
least preferable one. Prisoners of war
could be freed, and Islam further made
the emancipation of slaves as expiation
for involuntary killing, for breaking the
fast in Ramadan and for equating wife
with mother. Islam also considered the
emancipation of slaves as one of the
greatest acts of worship which please
God.

Through this wise policy pursued by
Islam to limit the sources of slavery and
expand the means of emancipation,
the practice of slavery came to end
only a short while after the advent of
Islam. It is not right what is claimed
by those researchers who lack deep
understanding of Islamic Sharia that
Islam has paved the way for sustainable
slavery as it instructed treating slaves
with kindness and care, which those
researchers considered as a legitimacy
of slavery. The truth is that Islam took
this approach as a temporary solution to
an intractable problem, until Islam was
able, later, to find a radical solution to
eradicate slavery.

Despite the ratification of the abolition
of slavery by tolerant Islamic law and the
laws of other Heavenly revealed faiths,
today we continue to battle slavery
as it is still extant in some countries.

Contemporary institutions of slavery
include human trafficking, forced
labour, debt bondage, forced marriage,
child slavery, women oppression
and depriving women from holding
appropriate positions, discrimination
on the basis of gender, race or belief,
and forced migrant labour. All of these
and other forms of slavery are deemed
reprehensible in Islamic law and
religious and human rights institutions,
authorities and organisations must all
work to abolish them and push countries
to enact laws and legislations that deter
the deprivation of freedoms. To achieve
this goal, Al Azhar Al Sharif is working
in collaboration with other concerned
institutions, and therefore Grand Imam
of Muslims Sheikh Al Azhar (May Allah
Protect Him) has delegated me. I join
hands with you and convey Grand
Imam's best wishes to you in your efforts,
as Al Azhar Al Sharif is working to serve
all humanity.

Thank you.

*(Presented by Dr. Abbas
Shuman,
Deputy of Al-Azhar)*





**Address of The
Most Rev'd and
Right Hon Justin
Welby, Archbishop of
Canterbury**

At a time when faiths are seen wrongly as a cause of conflict, it is a sign of real hope that today global faith leaders have together committed themselves publicly to the battle to end modern slavery. We live in a world where over 30 million people are oppressed in some form of slavery – trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, the trade in human organs and many more outrages. The suffering is unimaginable. The challenge is acute and growing, facilitated by a globalised economy that is too easily without moral or conscience.

We gather to affirm a deep shared commitment for the liberation of those humiliated, abused and enslaved by their fellow-human beings. It is a challenge which must be undertaken in global partnership with others.

For Christians, commitment grows out of two fundamental convictions. First, God has made humanity in the divine image. No-one should be enslaved or denied the

dignity of sharing actively and freely in the common life in which liberty is a part of creation.

The second conviction goes even further. Christians believe that the divine life was lived fully and uniquely in the flesh and blood of a human being, Jesus Christ, born through the willing co-operation of his mother Mary. And so we are bound to see every human being as part of the divine plan. This means that no human body can, in any circumstance, be simply an object to be traded, trafficked or enslaved. In Christ we find our liberation restored. God treated humanity with such loving respect by choosing to take human form among us – so we must share that love and respect for all human beings.

The evils we seek to combat will not yield without struggle. The complex global environment is why we need the strongest possible collaboration between national governments everywhere, with the business sector, police forces, civil society, faith communities and all those who long to see all humanity live in freedom.

There are already close and trusting relationships between us as faith leaders. Our task now is to make those relationships

work effectively for the well-being of all people. The Anglican Communion has given a high priority to this task, and I want to affirm my own personal commitment to it.

But what can we do? We can make sure that every worshipping community, of every faith, knows about modern slavery and is ready to work to prevent and put an end to these abuses. We can look to our own actions and choices as consumers and users of financial services whose managers can put great pressure on companies in which they invest. We can make sure that those who have been enslaved and trafficked are supported, respected and welcomed into community. We can continue to press governments to implement more effective laws to root out these evils. In the United Kingdom the Modern Slavery Bill is currently going through Parliament and is a very good model. We can work with the business sector across the globe to ensure robust systems for slave-free supply chains. And we can reinforce the ties of friendship and trust among ourselves, and with all those who profess faith and those who do not, who share our commitment to end slavery.

Today's event of the Global Freedom Network is a profoundly significant moment. We have joined together for the liberation of the most vulnerable in our world. We owe thanks to Bishop Sánchez Sorondo, to Archbishop Sir David Moxon, and above all Andrew Forrest, Director of the Global Freedom Network.

As we make this solemn commitment today, my prayer is that we shall by God's grace play a key role in ending the inhuman practice of modern slavery – a practice that disfigures our world and obscures the image of God in men, women and children. We have the will, we have the common purpose, it can be done; may God bless our action together.



Address of Mr Andrew Forrest, Chairman Walk Free Foundation and Chair Global Freedom Network

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are witnessing history here today with these brave leaders from all faiths from around the world. Let us collectively give them a very big hand.

Faith leaders, you have created history. There has never been such a journey as yours trodden before.

Today we will have the first meeting with the senior Grand Ayatollah from Iran and Iraq with the Holy Father the Pope.

We have almost unprecedented collaboration between Sunni and Shia, Christianity and Islam, in a worldwide effort to end slavery.

I applaud, in particular, the Sunni and Shia who have showed to me their love and support for each other. This was so essential in making this miraculous day happen. My own faith has not fared so well. There has not been a significant public agreement between the Vatican and Lambeth Palace since prior to the Reformation many hundreds of years ago.

I salute the representatives of Christianity and Islam, be you Sunni or Shia, Orthodox, Anglican, Catholic, sons and daughters of Abraham, and all of the other faiths.

My heart, I must admit now, drifts in an ocean of gratitude that also my Hindu, my Buddhist, Hebrew, Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters have made this historical journey of forgiveness and love and for each other. In each faith leader's obedience of their ancient and holy texts, representing faithfully their prophets of all time who taught the peace and love of humanity.

This is an unprecedented demonstration of faith leaders of the world coming together to draw a line in the sand to end the scourge of slavery. To draw the line in the sand to start the world on its journey to end slavery. To utilise the new and modern institutions upon which a world without slavery may shortly stand, free of slavery.

I thank, from the bottom of my heart, all the faith leaders gathered here today and their fellow global faith leaders not able to be with us in this beautiful Vatican room. I thank you for your commitment to rally the collective billions of believers in our world to join together in a common love of humanity. I am thankful that our mission is so ably represented and championed by Pope Francis, to end the suffering of the poorest and most unrepresented in our world, those who suffer slavery in forced labour, sexual exploitation and other forms of unconscionable removal of freedom.

On this day, on this glorious day, when we all celebrate the unprecedented

demonstration of global love and peace for and between faith leaders of the world, we ask each of you leaders who have spoken here today in this room, and to all faith leaders witnessing this around the world, to share their common conviction that systematic removal of liberty to exploit another must no longer be part of this world. We draw together to end this crime against humanity.

We know that it is the beliefs and values that reside in the hearts of mankind that drive evil or good intentions and behaviour. Yet it is not until now, with this show of ethical responsibility by faith leaders, political will by government leaders, conscientious objection to slavery by business leaders, and with the unparalleled ease of global communications, that we have this great initiative and these institutions to truly end slavery.

The Pope has requested that by the year 2020 slavery will be ended.

We are all also aware ladies and gentleman, that it is the dimensions of power familiar to us – political and hard power, soft power, diplomacy, propaganda, economic and commercial power, intelligence, counter intelligence and the like – that will be used by all these leaders. David Young tells us that it is the third dimension of power that is strongest of them all and the least understood. It

drives hard and soft powers; it guides and moulds the hard power; it is not tangible, neither hard nor soft; neither intellectual nor planned or strategic. It leads to, and is often victorious in the wars of the spirit between good and evil.

It is this power, the power to change the hearts of humankind to set right our values and beliefs that will free those in bondage. My daughter Grace, who led me into this journey with all of you to end slavery, described to me with childlike clarity the evil of the exploitation of one human being over another in the form of modern slavery. She awakened me to its ugly dimensions, forced labour and exploitation, and it was Grace who also spoke the truth to me: slavery is not a human condition, it is a human choice.

This third spiritual power embodies the beliefs and values that shape the goodness of humanity and it is that guiding power in these faith leaders gathered here today that I welcome.

So it is up to you, brave leaders here today, to challenge all believers, all your congregations, everywhere. You can reach up to 90 per cent of the world's population. I ask you to appeal to each one of us, be we humble or proud, least or great, girl or boy, woman or man, to recognise modern slavery as the evil that it is.

For we know that good and evil do not occur on their own. They occur from within

our heart, our heart of mankind. It is not some supernatural or ominous force external to any of us but rather it is evil that can be managed and minimised from within our own hearts. I must admit that I am reminded here of the words of the prophet Mohammad, may he be forever blessed, who shares this message of love, spoken so many times by Jesus and lead by God and shown here today, in the peaceful and loving Hindu, Hebrew and Buddhist faith leaders. That to love the least is the greatest mercy, and for any of us to free a slave perhaps the greatest forgiveness of sin.

And salute you, Pope Francis, for globally championing the cause to end trafficking and slavery; for always bravely stepping out to elevate the least represented girl or boy, woman or man, and rallying us all to end the dreadful scourge of slavery that denies all fundamental rights to the victims; to address the denial of their dignity, their human rights as described in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I deeply thank you all, my brothers and sisters.

I deeply thank Sheik Omar Abboud of the Muslim Sunni faith; Sheik Naziyah Razzaq Jaafar, The Shia representing the Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Hussain al Najafi of the Shia faith; the Grand Ayatollah Sayed Al Modarressi, who left

Tehran in Iran only yesterday to be with us in person today; Dr Abbas Abdallah Abbas Solimam representing the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar of the Muslim faith; Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi of the Hindu faith; The Venerable Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chan Khong representing Zen Rabbi Rosen of the Hebrew faith; The Most Venerable Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest of Malaysia of the Buddhist faith; His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France representing his Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of the Orthodox faith; and finally, my inspiration and guide in this great journey, the leader of the Anglican faith, the Right and most Honourable Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. His selfless humble dedication to the cause of peace in the world has inspired us all. It is also impossible for me to go past this moment without also showing my enormous gratitude to his Excellency Cardinal Peter Turkson, who first encouraged me to pursue the idea of the Global Freedom Network and its ambition goals. It is you Cardinal Turkson, who less than two years ago encouraged me, with my daughter Grace, on this journey, from right here in the heart of the Vatican.

I acknowledge the tremendous work of my team, working around the clock and around the world, and enduring sleepless nights, one ending and leading into another. I acknowledge the Global Freedom Network executives and the members of the Walk

Free team everywhere. For your love and support and for your absolute dedication to the cause of ending modern slavery, I thank you. We rest on your powerful wings in now closing this wonderful event. This is the day on which we have drawn the line in the sand against evil, the day on which we declare that we will end slavery and the day on which the peace, love and respect among the world's great religions will be our most powerful weapons against the evil of slavery.

I acknowledge his Excellency Bishop Sánchez Sorondo, and his mentorship shared in humility, determination, and wisdom, who, with my fellow wonderful partner Archbishop Sir David Moxon, has guided me. I thank you both.

I thank the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, loved by all Sunnis around the world, for the great wisdom and courage he showed through his warm encouragement to the Shia faith leaders to also attend today.

I deeply thank the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Christian, the Hebrew and the Islamic faith leaders all that have drawn us together today. That have created history today. On behalf of us all gathered here and watching around the world, and most importantly, the enslaved, I salute you.

Thank you.



**Address of Grand
Ayatollah
Mohammad Taqi
al-Modarresi**

*In the name of
God, the Gracious,
the Merciful,*

"O mankind! Lo!
We have created you
from male and female,
and have made you nations
and tribes that ye may know one another.
Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of God,
is the best in conduct. Lo! God is Knower,
Aware."

Peace be upon Adam and Noah. Peace be
upon Abraham and Ishmael. Peace be upon
Isaac and Jacob. Peace be upon Moses and
Jesus. Peace be upon Mohammad; God's
Messenger, and upon his immaculate
progeny. Peace be upon the Prophets of
God and His righteous servants.

Dear religious leaders and heads of
denominations, I greet you with the
salutation of Islam; Salam!

God created creatures and embedded
within their conscience the intellect,
inscribed with His glorious names and
blessed words, thus providing them with a
roadmap to their perfection and happiness.
For God is the Beneficent and Merciful.
He, therefore, planted the seeds of mercy
within our souls. God is the Invulnerable
and the Honourable, so there exists a
yearning for honour in all of us. God is

Great and Lofty, and every human seeks
greatness and perfection.

But perhaps the greatest of all divine
blessings upon us is dignity, for He was the
one who dignified the children of Adam.
From dignity emerges freedom, and from
freedom originates every virtue.

God, then placed the burden of carrying
His words and his names upon righteous
men and women, who are appointed
as messengers and godly preachers, to
remind humankind of the names reflected
within them.

We, the leaders of the world's religions and
scholars of the faiths, carry a tremendous
burden and a great responsibly; to deliver
to humankind the injunction that they
must revert back to their conscience and
safeguard their dignity, for doing so will
allow us to uproot all the causes of evil
and corruption. We must also remind
them of God's words and revelations that
guide us towards connecting with Him to
rid ourselves of aberration, darkness, and
delusion.

No one must take others as slaves, nor
to transgress on their rights, be it in part
or in whole, big or small. Humankind is
the creation of God, and so is every living
being. So even corrupting the environment
or any living organisms is cause for being
distanced from our Lord, thus isolating us
from our happiness.

It is, therefore, the perverted
understanding of religion which is the

greatest evil. Caused by ignorance, it
has led to division and discord as well as
the creation of barriers between those
who genuinely strive to seek divine
guidance. It is these very barriers that have
contributed to religion being undermined
and weakened in the public sphere.
Today we must exert additional efforts to
tear down those walls and destroy those
barriers so that religions can be united
under the umbrella of a united word.
This must be followed by joint action in
order to establish the glorious names of
God on earth and preach a better future
and a more fulfilling life for humanity,
a life of love and peace, a life of mutual
perfection and cooperation. God says:
"Say, O people of the Book! Come to a
common word between us and you, that
we do not worship but God". Therefore,
every servitude towards other than Him is
utter humiliation, as well as a perversion of
our very nature which God has made as a
lantern of guidance for all human beings.

Distinguished conveners; we must work
in unison to salvage humans from the
darkness of bondage, from poverty
and disease, from the proliferation of
weapons of mass destruction, and from the
egregious inequality among the classes of
human society, and the destruction of the
environment, precisely because religion is
linked to the Lord who is dominant over all
things. So if religious leaders and scholars,
with the backing of believers, carried
out their duties, God's hand will be with
them and help them achieve their lofty

objectives, allowing them to contribute
towards creating a better life for all people.
God says: O you who believe! If you help
God, He will help you and will make your
foothold firm." [47:7]

The legacy of our Prophet, the prophet
of mercy, and that of his immaculate
Household, embodied these noble ideals.
The the reformation movement carried
out by his grandson Imam Hussein – the
greatest martyr in history who was slain
in Karbala – was for emancipation from
slavery in all its forms and manifestations.
In his darkest moments Hussein equated
between a slave and the dearest of his
sons, by placing his cheek on Salem – a
Turkish slave – as he did with the fruit of
his eye Ali Akbar. It was the Prophet and
his Holy Household who asserted time and
again that as far as humanity is concerned,
the Lord is One, and the Father is One,
any deviation from this principle is a
declaration of war against humanity and its
conscience.

I invite you with determination,
confidence, and insistence to discover
these personalities, for they are symbols
of good and the epitome of virtue and
purity. Connecting to them is to connect
to true liberation from shackles and from
bondage. I urge you in this historic summit
to open up to this ocean of morality, one
without an end to its depth nor a limit to
its breadth.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a set of recommendations:

Let us unite around the axis of divine religion for the salvation of humanity, to rid it of partisanship and war by inviting all towards the Lord, not to ourselves.

To break through the barriers and walls erected between the spectra of the singular divine religion of God.

Let us not call for a mere dialogue of civilisations, but also to the integration of civilisations and all peoples on the basis of love and renunciation of hatred.

I call for the heads of divine religions to take courageous initiatives to save humanity from the agony of poverty and deprivation, the suffering of preventable and treatable diseases, the horrid global arms race, environmental damage, as well as slavery in all its forms.

The formation of a permanent body recognised internationally (akin to UNICEF) to uproot the evil of slavery on a cultural level, and see criminals prosecuted and punished for forced labour and slavery.

Thank you and may God bless you.



Address of Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Hussain al Najafi

Praise be to Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

I send from Holy Najaf, the land of holiness, purity and knowledge, a salute to this crowd who is seeking to serve humanity and I hope that their efforts be crowned with success. I say: Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings on the best of creation Muhammad and his blessed Family and a permanent curse to all their enemies.

God Almighty said: "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted".

God Almighty has spoken the truth.

Human beings in accordance with the nature and purpose of procreation are equal, no one has honour over the other except by piety (Taqwa) that God made it the way of comparison among them and it remains within fairness and equitability and quitting it is contrary to piety.

However, humans went too far and exceeded the justice system. Some of them went off to enslave and use others for their psychological objectives, therefore slavery spread across and that became part of the social entity.

Civilisations and royalty were formed and the slavery system became part of the public system and an essential component

of the economic and service side.

It was difficult to get rid of it at once and Islam, the religion of humanity, has sought to narrow the circle with a system which ensures the spread of freedom and a sense of dignity for all.

Today, it is unfortunate that the enslavement of human beings has become a moral burden because it includes the strong preying on the weak and the rich on the poor and this work became out of justice and fairness.

Contemporary slavery as it is unjust and unfair, it is considered a corrupted social phenomenon and a means to spread terror among the people, and what follows it of prostitution and trafficking in human organs is illegal and must be eliminated.

Some of the existing systems are responsible for these social evils because of their failure to safeguard the rights of peoples and distancing themselves from the correct instruction under God's Justice.

Those who can strive to remove this corrupted phenomenon have to spare no effort in this.

Peace be upon you.

(Represented by Sheikh Naziyah Razzaq Jaafar, and this address was by way of video on the day).





Address of Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayai (Amma)

Om Amriteshwaryai Namah

Your Holiness and honoured guests...

I would like to start by expressing my heartfelt appreciation for being able to participate in such an historic gathering. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the determination and social commitment of His Holiness and to Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, respected Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, who has worked very hard to make this assembly a reality.

Human trafficking is one of the worst curses that plagues society, not only for this century, but since the beginning of time. The more we try to eradicate slavery and forced labour, it seems to rebound with double the strength. It is like an evil ghost that keeps haunting us. As His Holiness has stated, "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society. It is a crime against humanity."

It is the duty of each country to implement laws that address and work to eradicate this extremely cruel and immoral crime and to liberate and protect victims from such a fate. It is also the moral

responsibility of every citizen who is committed to justice and social welfare. However, we are all aware of the bitter truth that this problem cannot easily be solved, for the wound of human trafficking is centuries old and extremely deep-rooted.

Human trafficking rips apart the lives of innocent and helpless children, who embrace life with a heart full of sweet dreams for the future, but are left, in the end, destroyed and discarded.

We have been granted the blessing of life through God's compassion. This life is to be spent performing good deeds as an offering to God. To destroy another person's life is a misuse of God's gift. All living beings are instruments in the hands of the Divine.

The law of God's court is righteousness, or Dharma. Let us all strive to respect and follow this law. Human trafficking is unrighteous.

All religious leaders have the ability to help both the perpetrators – those who trap their fellow human beings in the net of human enslavement – as well as the victims who get caught in this net. They both need to be guided to the right path. Religious leaders should be prepared to fight this battle and uphold righteousness. This is not a war meant to kill. We need to be ready to fight a war to save the helpless from the grip of demonic minds. We don't want a response borne out of revenge due to perceived differences in caste, creed, religion, etc.

Instead, we need to develop empathy, realising the divinity within each person.

The human mind has created many divisions in the form of religion, caste, language and national boundaries. Let us try to create a bridge of all-encompassing pure love to break down these self-created walls. Any hardened heart will soften in love. Love can spread light through even the densest darkness. Selfless love transforms the mind from a demon that enslaves us into our own liberator. Those who traffic and enslave others have fallen prey to a negative mind. Religious leaders should, without ulterior motives, formulate an action plan of rehabilitation based on selfless love and spirituality, the essence of all faiths.

Remaining silent in the face of unrighteousness is unrighteous. Governments and political leaders have to establish laws without loopholes, so the guilty cannot escape, and these laws must be strictly enforced. In many countries, the government and various NGOs are fighting against human trafficking, but we see no reduction in the power and massive financial gain of those who make a business out of treating living beings as mere objects to be used and eventually discarded. The number of victims of this business is rapidly increasing. Like the roots of an enormous tree, the roots of this tragedy are pervading deeper and deeper into society. If we fail to do something effective against this injustice happening

right in front of our eyes, it will constitute a travesty against future generations.

Victims of human trafficking lose their self-respect and fall into a pit of despair. They are often used by terrorists as drug mules, suicide bombers and for many other illegal activities. Some foods that we eat on a daily basis are produced by children who are forced to work day and night. Victim's kidneys and other body parts become commodities sold in the marketplace. When these victims are no longer useful and have developed psychological problems as a result of abuse or have contracted incurable diseases such as AIDS, they are finally thrown out onto the streets.

I have personally seen and listened to thousands upon thousands of examples of human trafficking. Once, a woman came to me and burst into tears. She said, "Amma, I have AIDS. My only desire is to see my child before I die. Please help me." When Amma asked what had happened, she said, "When I was nine years old, I was working as a domestic servant for a family. There I met an elderly man. He said he could give me a better salary and promised me many other benefits. Because my family had so many financial problems, I left with him. When we reached the new place, I saw that there were many other girls there. I wasn't allowed to speak to any of them. Finally, I realised it was a brothel. Men started to rape me regularly. At first, I felt angry as well as guilty for what I was being made to do. But, as time went by, I lost all sense of

dignity and even started to find pleasure in my work. After 5 years, I gave birth to a girl. They let me breast feed my baby for the first month, then suddenly took her away from me. After a few more years, I was diagnosed with HIV. They stopped allowing me to see my child. When I became really sick, they said they were going to take me to a hospital but, instead, they abandoned me. I begged them to let me see my child just one more time, but they never agreed. They didn't even take me back to the brothel. Everyone I approached for help treated me with disgust and loathing. The only thing they didn't do is throw stones at me. All doors close in my face. I cannot live in this world anymore. I just want to see my child once more before I die. Will they inject her with hormones to make her look older, use her like they used me and eventually throw her out?" Hearing her pathetic story, I sent some people to go and try to find her daughter. It was a difficult task.

Some other women also narrated their horrifying story to Amma, "A man used to visit us regularly. He would help out with whatever was needed, and we became very comfortable with him. After a while, he offered to take our children abroad to work in his friend's company. He promised to send back large amounts of money each month. He gave each of us an advance payment of Rs. 1000. He took our children with him. We have not seen him or our children since. We are not sure where our

children are, but we heard that they were taken to a brothel. When people went to search the brothel, they were told that the children had already been trafficked from there." Saying this, they burst into tears.

Today the value of everything has increased. Men sell their sperm and women their ova for a great deal of money. But ironically, in many countries, a child can be purchased for prostitution or forced labour for a pathetic sum of ten to twenty dollars.

Human trafficking is a complex problem. The solution needs to be multifaceted. We must address the aspect of dharma (or doing the right thing), the compelling aspect of poverty, legal aspects, etc. Social service and awareness campaigns also have a huge role to play in this process. Considering all aspects, we will only be able to improve this situation with a collaborative approach.

In spite of taking regular medications, if a diabetic continues to eat sweet food, their blood sugar level will increase. Diet control and lifestyle modification are more important than medication. In the case of impoverished children who lack access to proper education because schools are scarce, resulting in many children only going to fourth or eight grade, money alone will not improve the situation. We need to provide the new generation as well as victims of human trafficking with a practical education that will help create a

greater awareness within them. We need to awaken their latent courage and self-confidence, to help them arise. They need to realise that they are not helpless and vulnerable like kittens; they are mighty and courageous lions. We have to help them elevate their minds.

There are two types of education: education for a living and education for life. When we study in college, striving to become a doctor, lawyer, or engineer – this is education for a living. On the other hand, education for life requires an understanding of the essential principles of spirituality. The real goal of education is not to create people who can understand only the language of machines. The main purpose of education should be to impart a culture of the heart – a culture based on enduring values.

When Amma's devotees go to villages to give vocational training, women are also given sex education and life enrichment education. As a result, many young women have been able to save themselves from people trying to sell them for prostitution, sometimes even their own parents. Amma has been able to help 80% of the women who were forced into prostitution and came to her for help. But, the other 20% are continuing the same way of life. They do not want to change and Amma has also not tried to force them to do anything.

Lust is a kind of hunger. Even if we feel hungry, we don't devour everything

we can get our hands on. If we go to a restaurant and order food, the people around us may have ordered a variety of different dishes. We may think, "I wish I had ordered that dish instead," but even if we feel this way, we will exercise a certain amount of restraint. In this manner, we need to exercise restraint for everything in life, especially lust. Spiritual values need to be inculcated at a young age. When Amma was a child, her mother would say, "Never urinate in the river. The river is the Divine Mother." When we swam in the backwaters, even though the water was cold, remembering our mother's words, we could restrain ourselves. When we develop a reverential attitude towards a river, we will never defile it. Our respect towards the river helped to keep it clean, and a clean river ultimately benefits everyone who uses it. It's not important to debate whether God exists or not. What is important is that devotion and faith in God help to sustain good values and righteousness in society. These values are what bring balance to society and the entire creation.

Roads are meant for vehicles to drive on, but if we say "I can drive however I wish," we may get into an accident. Just as there are traffic rules, there are similar rules for everything in life. Spiritual values help us to live according to these rules.

Many people are working hard to put a stop to child labour. But just by banning it, we will not be able to solve the problem. Once, a man brought a 10 year old boy to Amma.

He wanted Amma to raise the boy in the ashram, and told her the story of how he became an orphan. His father had died two years before, so his mother and sister went to work in a matchbox factory near their home. His mother was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease and was unable to work as she was bedridden. Even though his sister was paid very little, it was just enough to make ends meet. After a while, laws were established that banned child labour. The owner of the matchbox factory was arrested, and his company was shut down. All the children working there were let go. Distraught at the loss of their only source of income, the mother sent her son to school in the morning and then she poisoned her daughter and herself.

It is justifiable to shut down such factories, but we often forget the families of the young children who depend on these factories in order to live. In our attempt to resolve a problem, if we only see one aspect and fail to see the other, the repercussions are experienced by people who have no one to turn to. Before we push drastically to stop child labour and human trafficking, first we need to build a foundation to help these families become self-sufficient and ensure their future.

Spirituality begins and culminates in compassion. If we could transform compassion from a mere word into a path of action, we would be able to solve 90% of the world's humanitarian problems. There are two types of poverty in the world.

The first type is due to the lack of food, clothing and shelter. The second type is the poverty of love and compassion. We need to tackle the second type of poverty first. If we have love and compassion, we will wholeheartedly serve and help those who lack food, clothing and shelter.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, the Creator and creation are one, just as waves and the ocean are one and the same. Though we may see a thousand suns reflected in a thousand pots of water, there is only one sun. Likewise, the consciousness within all of us is the same. Just as one hand spontaneously reaches out to soothe the other hand when it is in pain, may we all console and support others as we would ourself.

People from all nations and religions become victims to the ravaging effects of human enslavement and experience extreme abuse and suffering. Their physical and mental pain does not differentiate between language, race or skin colour. These victims are just a single group of humans, struggling against the clutches of endless sorrow and emotional suppression.

There are antibiotic ointments that aid in the healing of external wounds. Similarly, there are many different kinds of medication available to treat diseases of our internal organs. But there is only one medicine that can heal the wounds of our mind. This medicine is pure Love. In order to heal the mental and emotional

wounds inflicted upon the victims of human trafficking, we need to care for them with selfless love. This will bring them into the light of a free life, away from the darkness forcefully imposed upon them in the past. We need to create a large task force of social servants to carry out this sacred mission. Only religious and spiritual leaders can bring together such a task force.

May the inherent compassion within all living beings awaken. May we all develop the discernment to love and respect life and those living around us. We are not isolated islands but interconnected links on the chain of God's creation. May we realise this great truth. May we see others' pain as our pain and their happiness as our happiness. May we forget all the pain and the suffering of the past, and forgive all the hurt we have experienced. May we bow down in reverence to all that is good in the world, and find eternal happiness.



**Address of Zen Master
Thich Nhat Hanh
(Thay)**

*Your Holinesses,
Your Excellencies, Your
Eminencies, dear Most
Venerables, Distinguished
Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. Please
allow me to read the words that our
Beloved Teacher, Zen Master Thich Nhat
Hanh, wished to deliver here today.*

In our age of global material and economic growth, there also needs to be a growth in our spiritual life. Even with the greatest good will, if we are swept away by our daily concerns for material needs or emotional comforts, we will be too busy to realise our common aspiration.

Contemplation must go together with action. Without a spiritual practice we will abandon our dream very soon.

Each of us, according to the teaching of our own tradition, must practice to be deeply in touch with the wonders of Nature, with the wonders of life in each of us, the Kingdom of God in each of us, the Pure Land, Nirvana in each of us, so that we can get the healing, the nourishment, the joy and the happiness born from the insight that the Kingdom of God is already

available in the here and now. The feeling of love and admiration for nature that we all share, has the power to nourish us, and unite us, and remove all separation and discrimination.

By being in touch with everything that is refreshing and healing, we will be able to free ourselves from our daily concerns for material comforts and we will have a lot of time to realise our ideal of bringing freedom and compassion to all human beings. As it says in the Gospel, "Do not worry about what you will eat or drink or wear. Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be given to you. Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will care of itself."

In our work of service, we must have time to come back to ourselves, and generate peace in our body and mind. When we can recognise and embrace our own suffering, the energy of compassion will be born in our hearts, and we will know what to do and what not to do to relieve the suffering of our beloved ones, and of the world. We need to be able to embrace our own anger, fear, discrimination and despair; and we need to look deeply in order to generate the clarity, courage and compassion we need. When we have peace in ourselves, and clarity in our mind, we

will be able to have compassion even for the traffickers themselves. We will be able to help wake them up, and touch the seed of compassion in their hearts. Our compassion can help them abandon their exploitation, and transform them into our friends and allies of our cause. But when we can take care ourselves in the present moment, our actions of service will have spiritual depth.

Without a spiritual practice we will abandon our dream very soon. And without a spiritual community we will not be able to succeed in our work of compassion. We should not go as cavaliers seuls, as lone warriors. We need to learn the art of building a thriving community, where there is brotherhood and sisterhood, love and understanding.

If we can cultivate a spiritual dimension to our life and work today, tomorrow will take care of itself. With a spiritual community to support us, we will be able to realise our dream.

*(Represented by Venerable
Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chan
Khong, his eldest monastic
student).*





**Address of His
All-Holiness
Ecumenical
Patriarch
Bartholomew**

Dear friends,

It is a special privilege and a sincere pleasure to respond to the invitation of our beloved brothers, His Holiness Pope Francis and His Grace Archbishop Justin of Canterbury as co-founders of the Global Freedom Network, to address your assembly and to support your universal declaration against modern slavery.

We would like to assure you that we stand with you in solidarity and commitment to eradicate modern expressions of slavery, which are a disgrace to God, a dishonour to humankind, and a degradation of all its innocent victims fashioned in the image and likeness of our heavenly Creator.

There are three observations that we would like to bring to your attention about the moral imperative to abolish human trafficking and forced labour

First, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that in the twenty-first century, we are still responding to the moral challenge of slavery! Indeed, the slavery that we witness and confront is more inhumane and more malevolent than similar phenomena in the early Christian centuries or even in

more recent centuries. For today we are addressing and responding to an invisible, clandestine and underground reality – one that shamelessly exploits and mercilessly undermines both men and women of all ages, race and religion through such criminal and abusive measures as human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution and organ trafficking.

Second, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that once again the most profoundly and negatively affected are the vulnerable and poor of our world! It is foolish and arrogant for people with power and wealth to imagine that they can seize possession or acquire ownership of other people's labour for purposes of greed and profit. It is sinful and immoral for people to capitalise on and exploit the body or physical organs of others as if these were somehow distinct or disconnected from their soul and spirit. And it is certainly blasphemous and hubris to reduce any one of our brothers and sisters – irrespective of gender, race and age – to a single aspect of the mystery and destiny for which they were created by the living God. The body and productivity of others are not ours to own; they are only ours to respect and treat with dignity.

Third, how ironic and, moreover, how tragic that – while we strive to establish thresholds and deadlines to protect the natural environment as God's gift to the world – we nevertheless remain unaware

and indifferent to the oppressive abuse of human beings bearing the very seal of divine grace. We have not yet understood that ecological pollution and destruction on the one hand and human slavery and exploitation on the other hand are two sides of the same coin. It is our human and divine vocation to remember and recognise that the way that we treat our neighbour is directly related to the way that we care for our environment. And by the same token, the way that we respond to our environment is immediately reflected in the way that we behave toward other human beings.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us always hold before our eyes and our hearts that “the earth is the Lord's; and all that is within it” (Psalm 24.1) – including every human being, as well as every bodily organ. God alone is the Lord of all humanity and the landlord of all creation. To Him belong all glory, honour and worship. Amen.

(Represented by His Eminence Emmanuel Adamakis of France, and this address was by way of video on the day).





Address of Rabbi Abraham Skorka, M.T. Meyer Latin American Rabbinical Seminary

All Forms of Slavery are Crimes against Humanity.

This paper provides a brief overview of what Hebrew Law[1] says about all forms of slavery, including forced labour and prostitution.

Even though slavery was accepted under biblical regulations, a Hebrew would only be subjugated to slavery if he or she had stolen a thing which they failed to return, or if they became so impoverished that they had to sell their services to be able to survive[2]. However, a Hebrew slave was considered to be like a hired servant under Leviticus 25:40.

A Gentile slave does not have the same status as a Hebrew slave, and is considered to be just one more asset of his master. This biblical position requires further analysis, as it is seemingly inconsistent with the overall view of the Scriptures, whereunder all mankind is considered to originate from the same first human being—therefore sharing his same rights and obligations. In Genesis 9:25 we read that slavery is established by men. Noah curses Canaan, his grandson, saying that the lowest of slaves shall be to his brothers. This seems to be the beginning of slavery—a result of human action. God's subsequent laws only came to regulate

what had already been done by men. There is extensive bibliography on this subject[3].

There are two very significant laws in the Scriptures regarding slavery, which was an institution accepted by all civilisations until as recent times as the 18th century. The Torah, for instance, according to Exodus 21:16 and Deuteronomy 24:7, sets forth that a kidnapper, whether he sells his victim or still has him or her when caught, shall be put to death. This definitely establishes that biblical rules firmly reject the subjugation of people—the form of slavery most often encountered in history.

The laws of the children of Noah, which are the rabbinic version[4] of the Roman *jus gentium*[5], set forth that any Gentile who steals the freedom of any other person will be punished with death, as codified by Maimonides in *Hilkhot Melakhim* 9:9, based on *Sanhedrin* 57a.

The wise understood that Exodus 21:20, ruling that the death of a slave shall be punished with death, applies to both Hebrew and Gentile servants. If any of their visible organs were hurt, they should be let go free immediately in compensation.

On the other hand, Deuteronomy 23:16–17 holds that a slave who has escaped from his master will not be handed over back to him, instead he or she shall be let live in the community of his or her choosing. The verse ends with this warning, “Do not molest him.” Rabbis have understood that this verse is about Gentile slaves, who must be accepted into society, provided that they adhere to no pagan cult[6]. This law

is completely against the codification of Hammurabi (15–19).

Maimonides emphasizes in *Hilkhot Melakhim* 9:8 that we must give merciful care to slaves. This is further elaborated in the *Guide for the Perplexed* III, Chapter XXXIX.

Rabbi Abraham Itzhak HaKohen Kook, one of the most preeminent rabbinic authorities from the 20th century, reviewed biblical and rabbinic laws referring to slavery in a letter he sent in response to Moshe Seidl in 1904[7]. He understands that, given the qualities that naturally distinguish one human being from another, there will always be someone who will in one way or the other work for others, with these others making use of their services. The Torah, Kook says, provides a set of rules governing this relationship for workers to be taken care of and protected by the work giver. Rabbi Kook strongly criticizes the owners of carbon mines of his time, who would force their workers to work under unhealthy and unsafe conditions.

There is one paragraph in the first two chapters of the book of prophet Amos (1:2–15; 2:1–6) which could be read as a precedent of the crime against humanity concept. The prophet describes actions of cruelty and devastation which will be punished by God, as their magnitude sets aside any possibility of forgiveness or absolution. These are crimes committed by different peoples—from Damascus, Gaza, Tzor, Edom, Bnei Ammon, Moab—ending

with those committed in Judah and Israel. Among the hideous crimes perpetrated by Judah's and Israel's neighbouring peoples, two of them (those committed by the inhabitants of Gaza and Tzor) refer to individuals being taken captive and sold as slaves. In the prophet's view, such attitude must be considered a serious offense against morality and any sense of human justice.

Also, the exploitation of women and children has been condemned since biblical times by Judaism[8]. The views of Abrahamic peoples have shaped the conscience of Western civilisation and, to a great extent, of the Eastern world. It is not surprising, then, that many of the documents drafted in the 20th century, which constitute the basis for the crime against humanity concept and scope, expressly refer to forced labour and prostitution as part of its definition.

In Article 7(c) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court[9], slavery is considered a crime against humanity. In Article 7(g), same status is given to rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity.

Article 7 of the International Criminal Court defines “enslavement” as “the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children.”

Both in the letter to the Nuremberg International Military Court (Article 6), in Law No. 10 of the Allied Control Council of Germany (Article 2), in the Tokyo Statute (Article 5(c)), and in the multiple documents drafted by United Nations relevant agencies, slavery is consistently classified as a crime against humanity[10].

As a result, adherence by all States to these principles, by incorporating them into their constitutions and substantive legislation, is supported by Hebrew Law in all its forms and essence.

The Statute of Limitations Applicable to Crimes and the Crime against Humanity Concept under Hebrew Law

A brief discussion now follows on the statute of limitations applicable to crimes and the crime against humanity under Hebrew Law.

Upon review the statute of limitations applicable to criminal felonies, a distinction is to be drawn between

limitations rules affecting *res judicata*, and those barring the action.

Based on the Maimonidean codification, and to have in mind the basic codified rules applicable to the statutes of limitation concept, reference is made to *Hilkhot Sanhedrin* (13: 7–8), in the Book of Judges (Shoftim) of *Yad HaJazakah*:

"If one fled after having been convicted at a court and again comes up before the same court, the first judgment is not set aside. Wherever two witnesses stand up and

declare, 'we testify that so and so was tried and convicted at a certain court and that so and so were the witnesses,' the accused is executed[11]. When is this law applied? In the case of a murderer[12]; but in any other cases where the death penalty is applied, such penalty cannot be executed without the presence of the witnesses who attested to the crime committed and testified at the trial which resulted in the death penalty being imposed, which shall be by themselves executed. Such testimony shall be given before a tribunal of 23 judges[13].

A sentence imposed by a Diaspora Court on a person who has fled and has appeared before a court of the land of Israel, is always cancelled[14]. If the court in Israel is the same as the Diaspora court, then the sentence is not revoked, even though it was issued in the Diaspora and they are now in Israel."

It is clear, therefore, that sentences issued by a competent court (*res judicata*) are not time-barred under Hebrew Law. Furthermore, as per Rabbi Akiva[15], once a death sentence has been issued, no contrition or repentance of the accused shall lift the death sentence.

Concerning the limitation applicable to the action and its resulting punishment, there is one paragraph in *Tractate Makkot* (7a) which should be also considered:

"A Sanhedrin (court of 23 members authorised to hear criminal cases; also called Sanhedrin Ketanah) that puts to death one person every seven years is

called murderous; Rabbi Eliezer ben Azaria says: Even once in seventy years. Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva say: Had we sat in the Sanhedrin, no person would ever have been put to death (rabbinic courts authorised to impose death sentences were no longer in existence in their time, as they were eliminated forty years before the destruction of the second Temple, as referred to in *Sanhedrin* 41a). Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel remarked: They would also multiply (with this attitude) the shedders of blood (murderers) in Israel."

The Gemara *ad locum* explains that what Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva did was to examine the witnesses with such a level of detail that their testimonies would eventually become distorted.

Maimonides summarises this as follows (*Yad, Hilkhot Sanhedrin*, 10: 10):

"A thorough analysis must be performed by the court (before sentencing) in the case of criminal felonies, and nothing should be rushed. A Sanhedrin that puts a man to death once in seven years is a murderous one. However, if the situation requires them to sentence and execute wrongdoers even on a daily basis, they shall do so as required."

This means that even though the Torah sets the principle of application of a death sentence in all cases of premeditated crimes committed in front of witnesses who warn the murderer of the crime he is about to commit, such application may be limited or expanded subject to the criterion of the wise men, based on the rules and

procedures such wise men dictate. This principle as set forth by the wise men in the Talmud is applicable in all areas of the Halakhah[16].

Based on the above, it can be concluded that there is no time limitation for the criminal action under Hebrew Law; however, capital cases may be reviewed by rabbinic courts using all of the above juridical principles to lessen the sentence.

Finally, a famous Talmudic passage (*Sanhedrin* 37a) also deals with the crime against humanity concept: whoever destroys a single soul is as though he had destroyed a complete world, and whoever preserves a single soul is as though he had preserved a complete world. Thus, any premeditated criminal action should be, based on Noahide laws, reviewed and punished by Hebrew *jus gentium*, aside from whether it is against a single individual or an entire people. It is not the number of victims harmed, or the cruelty involved in the crime which substantially aggravates the crime, but in the conception of the Halakhah, the crime of a single person should be weighted in the same manner as those committed against all mankind.

Article 7 of the International Criminal Court Statute provides the following (descriptive, not restrictive) definition of crimes against humanity: any crime when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack. As precedents for this

definition, Article 6 of the Nuremberg Court Statute, the Nuremberg sentences, resolutions 3(I) and 95(I) of the United Nations General Assembly, and the legal principles underlying such documents (summarised by the ICC in 1950 under the title of “Nuremberg Principles”) can be mentioned.

Article 6(c) of the London Statute defines crimes against humanity as follows: (c) CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

Marcelo Ferreyra, in *Derechos Humanos* (GORDILLO, Agustín, 6th Edition, Buenos Aires, Fundación Derecho Administrativo, 2007, Chapter XIII, “Crimes against humanity: Grounds and Scope of Validity”) notes that it is striking that rape is not expressly included, which is also the case in the 1948 Convention on Genocide. But sexual violence against women and sexual crimes in general have never been seriously contemplated in humanitarian international law, at least until the promulgation of the International Criminal Court Statute. Indeed, rape was not included in the London Statute which created the Nuremberg Military Court, there is only one reference to “family

honour” in the Hague Conventions (Article 46 of the 4th Convention), and the Geneva Conventions only have one article forbidding sexual violence and forced prostitution (Article 27 of the 4th Convention).

The wide, descriptive scope of Article 7 of the International Criminal Court Statute adds the following as crimes against humanity: (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; (f) Torture; (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; (i) Enforced disappearance of persons, and (j) The crime of apartheid.

Both the Nuremberg Statute and the International Criminal Court Statute add the generic phrase “other inhuman acts”, allowing the incorporation of other crimes not expressly contemplated therein. It is hereby suggested that human trafficking be expressly included in Article 7 of the International Criminal Court Statute.

Also, both Statutes include persecution based on political, racial, national, cultural or religious grounds, albeit in connection with other crimes – not as independent crimes. Based on Hebrew Law precepts, persecution should be considered an independent, separate crime against humanity[17].

End Notes

- [1] On the definition of the concept of Hebrew Law, see: *Introducción al Derecho Hebreo*, Abraham Skorka, Compiler, EUDEBA, Buenos Aires, 2001.
- [2] Mishneh Torah, Sefer Kinian, Hilkhot Avadim 1:1, based on Exodus 22:2 and Leviticus 25:29.
- [3] לאדשי תורוא תללכמ, ג ררכ, זסשת תורוא יללט, ארקמב סדאה דובכו סייענכה תוחפשהו מידבעה תויגוס, ביבר הקבר.
- [4] Sanhedrin 56a-60a; Tosefta Avodah Zarah 8:4. In Midrashim they are found in: Bereshit Raba Chapters 16, 26, 34; Shemot Raba Chapter 30; Bemidbar Raba Chapter 14; Devarim Raba Chapters 1, 2; Shir HaShirim Raba Chapter 1; Kohelet Raba Chapter 2; Tanjuma, Yitro, etc.
- Although the seven Noahide laws are not expressly mentioned in Talmud Yerushalmi, reference is made to them in different passages, such as: Yevamot Chapter 11, page 14, column 1; Kidushin Chapter 1, page 58, column 3, etc.
- [5] The close resemblance of the laws of the children of Noah and *jus gentium* has been long known. In *jure Naturali et gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum*, published in 1640, John Selden notes this close resemblance in multiple aspects of both codifications.
- [6] Sh”uT, Mishpat Cohen 63
- [7] *Igrot HaRe’iyah*, Mossad Harav Kook, 1961, Jerusalem, No. 89, letter from 21 of Av, 5664.
- [8] The Bible stresses the respect to be paid to women and children, noting the special care to be afforded to them given their state of helplessness, upon becoming widows and orphans, for further reference see: Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:17; 27:19; Jeremiah 22:3; Zacharias 7:10; Psalms 146:9; etc.
- [9] Text of the Rome Statute circulated as document A/CONF.183/9 of 17 July 1998 and corrected by process-verbaux of 10 November 1998, 12 July 1999, 30 November 1999, 8 May 2000, 17 January 2001 and 16 January 2002. The Statute entered into force on 1 July 2002.
- [10] See: Martín Lozada, *Crímenes contra la humanidad. Su abordaje de acuerdo al desarrollo actual de la doctrina and la jurisprudencia. Nuestra Memoria*, Year XX, No. 38, August 2014. Museo del Holocausto, Buenos Aires, pages 29-60.
- [11] Makkot 7a.
- [12] Sanhedrin 45b explains the meaning of this verse (35: 21): “He that smote him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer”, it must be understood that “he shall be put to death in all cases”, i.e. even if other than by the original witnesses.
- [13] As it must be done in all cases where a person is on trial subject to a penalty of death (Mishnah Sanhedrin 1: 4).
- [14] Even if the witnesses who testified to the commission of the crime appear, based on whose testimony sentence was issued (Makkot 7a), as in this case, the blessing of the land of Israel could help the judges to find some form of exculpation for them (as per the exegesis of *Rashi ad locum* D”H: MiPenei Zejutah Shel Eretz Israel).
- [15] Makkot 13b.
- [16] See: Shlomo Grinberg, HaYesh Koaj BeYad Jakhamim LaAkor Davar Min HaTora, in: Hagut Ivrit BeAmerika, Tel Aviv, 5732, pages 329-336.

I would like to thank lawyers Déborah Lichtmann and Tomás Jacobo Lichtmann for their kind help in the drafting of this paper.



**Address of The Most
Ven. Datuk K Sri
Dhammaratana,
Chief High Priest of
Malaysia**

*Put a Stop to Modern
Slavery and Human
Trafficking!*

The truth of life is
everything changes, we grow
with time and embrace the changes.

In the 20th century today we have made so many advancements in science and technology, exploring space travel, developing communication points at our finger tips and reaching every corner of the globe in a touch. It is amazing to see how changes have brought so much advancement to life.

However, the truth hurts – the advancement that we grow with sadly did not reflect in humanity. We are still witnessing all the barbaric and horrifying acts of humans which should have been abandoned a long time ago. Humans have certainly advanced in technology but not spiritually. On social media, there is a broadcast of a gruesome beheading of humans, this is a current example and live evidence of what is happening right before our eyes.

From this episode, it is evident how cruel and how low the morality and humanity is that after you perform such act, one can follow up to publicise it for the world to see, as though it is an episode of success. Females and children, the more vulnerable parties are seen to be the bulk of the victims, families are broken apart, parents going all out to protect their kids only to face the fact that at certain times nothing can be done. Kids not being able to live a normal life and enjoy their childhood like they should. There is no fairness, everyone has a right to live the life that they have been blessed with.

We would have thought that given the marvel of the widespread education of globalisation and the great establishments of organisations that come forth to protect human rights – there will be more assurance for all to live a decent life. It is so torturous to those victims to even think if they will be able to live through the night, life is lived in fear and constant worry for them.

Human trafficking and slavery is so widespread that it is practiced in every part of the world at varying levels of intensity. Even in Malaysia – where we are a multi-cultural and multi-religious country this issue still takes place. There

are some that take advantage of the country's economic growth that creates opportunities to attract innocent people to come here in search of jobs, lured by agents who promise them security, shelter and guaranteed pay. Sacrifices are made, just to know upon arrival or thereafter that they are either abandoned to fend for themselves or become slaves of employers in domestic households or plantations and factories all over the country. Besides labour related human trafficking, prostitution and the sale of women and babies is a big area that also needs to be addressed.

Religious leaders play an important role to work together with the government parties to put a stop to these negative activities. I believe that together, we must be united with the effort to increase investigations and prosecutions of labour trafficking offences and slavery. We must ensure that there are equal human rights for all and that everyone can live the life that they deserve.

*(This address was not made on the day of
2 December 2014 - his words were provided
to support the vision of ending modern slavery.)*



"THE ISSUE OF TODAY IS THAT WHENEVER WE TALK ABOUT INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSES, WE ALWAYS TALK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AND WHAT IT IS GOING TO TAKE, AND TODAY IT WAS ABOUT HOPE. TODAY IT WAS REALLY ABOUT HOPE BECAUSE YOU HAD ALL THESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS HERE REPRESENTING 90% OF THE WORLD, AND THE MESSAGE TODAY WAS HOPE AND A VISION OF A WORLD REALLY FREE OF SLAVERY AS A HUMAN VALUE."

Jean Baderschneider, CEO Global Fund to End Slavery

FULL SPEECH TRANSCRIPTS

THE NEW DELHI EVENT, INDIA

The full speeches of all leaders who spoke at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, at the signing of the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* on 3 December 2015, are provided.



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Relevant religious leaders, faith leaders on the desk and Mr Andrew Forrest, Chair Freedom Network; I am so

moved by your speech that it's more than the content the feeling behind your mission, what you are talking, what you are saying, that says it for itself. The passion with which you have taken up this most needed mission today on the planet is truly appreciation.

I think today when we look at the freedom from slavery in the world there are three things that come to my mind.

First of all, we have to empower people who are enslaved and we have to bring transformation to the minds and the hearts of those people who are enslaving the people. If you can transform the mind of one such person then many is over in one stroke.

On the 3rd front we have to bring strict laws and legislation which punish people who are trying to enslave others so we need a stricter legislation. We need change of mind and hearts in the victims of slavery, empower them, make them understand the world is with them they don't need to sell themselves to some aunt/uncle you know....and then to transform those who are enslaving people. Make them realise that what they are doing is a crime against God.

While service is the best form of worship, slavery is the worst insult you can ever give to God so anyone who believes in the existence of a higher power should wake up and say no to slavery, no to enslaving human beings. For divine dwells in every heart, in every one.

When you walk around and move around this country all over South East Asia, Africa; one thing you will find is people who are enslaving others are insensitive. They are not even aware what they are doing is wrong. Because they have seen this in the past they grown up in an atmosphere where a section of society has been slaves and they are not sensitive at all about their behaviour towards those people. For example now you go to those people who have many slaves they have a different kind of food for them, they will be served in a different place, they will not be allowed to sit with them, you know the treatment you give to them is worse than the treatment they give to their pet animals at home. This is unpardonable and I tell you they are not bad people, they are not simply aware of what they are doing. Period. That's it.

They are simply not aware. We need to sensitise them, make them aware "look into the eyes of those people whom you are holding in your homes as slaves, look into their eyes". This is where Faith Leaders and spiritual people can make a big impact to bring the transformation in the hearts and minds of people and make them realise the servant they have should be treated with dignity and respect. Their opinion counts.

Usually people think if someone is serving you and you give them a few bucks that's it, they have no mind of their own their opinion doesn't count, all that speaks is money. This attitude must change. I'm sure Faith Leaders, a word from them can definitely make an impact. Number One.

The second thing is the weak and meek need to know that the world is with them, God is with them. There are a lot of good people on this planet who would stand by them. So they have to wake up and stand on their feet, they have to have their self-dignity. We need to implant self-esteem in people. Its usually people with low self-esteem or no self-esteem who are they victims. They succumb to slavery. In order to bring a change in these people we need again the Faith Leaders with spiritual wisdom to help these people to wake up and stand up on their feet and air their opinion.

The third thing is to bring strict legislation. In India we already have a lot of legislation on this and in many places it has been implemented well and there are many pockets in this country which need enforcement of these laws. Again here the Faith Leaders can take a lead and insist on enforcement of these legislations which are already in existence.

Finally, I would like to add that the global community today has to realise that slavery has no borders, no religion, no language and no continent even. And so we need to work across the continent as we always believed in this country the whole world

is one family, Vasudhaiv Kutumbikam, whole world is one family. So removing all those things which obstruct this feeling of unity, feeling of oneness with people. In our scriptures God is called Dasa. It means the servant of the servants. God is a servant of servants, a lord of lords and servant of servants. This is the highest principle - human dignity must be held high. To uphold human dignity, all aspects and all the pillars of our society should come together. The politicians, the media, business and industry and the Faith Leaders. If these different four pillars of our society come together, work together, there is no way this slavery will continue for I would say even to the next decade.

Let's aim at within five years, a decade is a long time. All of us are here, if we all put our hearts and minds together, even put a little attention I think in the next five years we can see a much brighter, much stronger society free from all types of slavery. We already had many other movements in this country we have seen to eliminate bonded labour and there are strict legislation on it too yet I should say honestly we all have to admit that there are many rural areas, even pockets in urban society still have slavery. Though it is much much less but still it is there. We should recognise and we will have to work to eliminate it.

With these few words I once again thank Mr Forrest for bringing up this noble mission and taking it around the world. We are all with you Mr Andrew Forrest, good luck to you for your project and we will work with you on this. Thank you.



His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji

Most Revered, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji, all the revered spiritual leaders on the dais, a man who has a dream, a man of action, my dear Andrew Forrest, and other dear Australian ambassador, very graceful grace and many distinguished scholars and leaders of the community at the dais my dear sisters and brothers today I am very happy to be here. It is a very very important issue, but I'll share with you one story. I am not used to giving written speeches but they said you have to be on the timelines so I will just read a few things and start with one very small and very true story. It's a very powerful story and that story portrays the whole scene of our community, of our humanity.

Today we are gathered and together for the historic signing of the joint declaration of religious leaders against modern slavery. Let me paint a picture for you, a true picture. A little cute girl I will call her Prity. She lived in Africa, she was six years old and her parents loved her. Each morning she walked to the school with red ribbons in her hair and each morning she walked to learn something new. She dreamed of

a beautiful future. Her dreams were taken away one morning on her way to school. War had been going on near her African home for some time but it had never impacted or affected her small village but one morning had changed everything. On her way to school she was grabbed by large hands that took her breath away. She was brought to the bush where for many years she was forced to perform menial duties and manual labour for a group of soldiers. By day she was their servant, by night she was their sex slave. Night after night, year after year. Prity grew and had her own children in the African bush. She lost her will to live. Will anyone even remember her she wondered. Can she ever be saved?

Worldwide there are up to 36 million* men, women and children who like Prity have been deprived of their basic human rights and instead they are forced into human bondage as modern day slaves. They could be labourers forced to slave in fields or farms to pay off unpayable loans. They could be unsuspecting young women hired as maids or cooks in distant lands or find themselves forced into prostitution. They could be unwanted little girls. They could be living right next door.

Here in India 14 million innocent people are held as slaves. It is intolerable to me that their tears are flooding the sacred soils

of Mother India. Their great pain threatens to tear apart the fabric of our society's glorious ancient culture and heritage.

To me, just one instance, any instance of forced bondage is a blight on our planet. It is a disease that must be totally eradicated and it is our duty as Faith Leaders to raise our voices, to keep them strong, to light the way forward so that we may realise the day in which everyone: all women, little girls, men and boys may walk freely on this earth without fear or deprivation, today.

One more thing I want to share because last year I came to know when the declaration was signed at the Vatican in the holy presence of honourable Pope and many spiritual leaders. I always say he is the Pope of hope. I am confident with his blessing and other leaders blessing and leadership the declaration will truly mean the end of the tragic, this disease of slavery and this crime of slavery.

This is a great sign of togetherness, this is very important to me and today having you all here especially you see the galaxy our imminent leaders are here, I can understand they have come all the way. It is very important. I was just in the parliament of religion and one guy was doing his MBA in Harvard. He said a very important thing, his name was Josef. Josef said "You know, first time in my life I have

seen such a gathering. It impacted my life and its very rare today. Not being seen and being together is a message to all those who are on the path of making these heinous crimes."

I think I admire your presence today here. You are the ones who can show the path, you are the real power. You are the real power and people when you being as a power, feel the power and fill the power in our communities things can be changed.

Today, I urge that we not only sign the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* but that we become this declaration. Today, let us begin with our pens. Tomorrow, let us carry forth with our actions the declaration. Let us bless together, let us work together and let us together bring about a world in which every man, woman and child may live in peace forever free. From this day forward let us bless to stand firm in this sacred commitment. Let this be our dharma, let this be our duty. I think to end slavery is to ensure salvation.

Thank you.



Jathedar Avtar Singh

Today, I am signing the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* because Sikh belief in human rights and freedom

is very profound. Sikhism respects the human dignity and rights and is totally against all kinds of slavery, including the various types of modern slavery. The Sikh tenets are based on core human principles like dignity, fairness, equality, respect, righteousness, freedom and justice for all.

The history of Sikhism is the saga of struggle for human rights. What Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, felt on the violation of basic human rights of the people is well recorded in his writings, all of which are a part of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The corrupt rulers and the dishonest people, who violate the rights of the other people, have been condemned in very harsh words. They have been called dogs, butchers, mischief-mongers, hypocrites and ungratefals. The other nine Sikh Gurus followed the master plan in every aspect of life as prepared by the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Sri Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Master preferred martyrdom to the forced conversion to Islam and became

the first martyr to teach a lesson to the rulers of the time against the violation basic human rights. Sri Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Master, made his sacrifice to defend the human rights of those who were even not the followers of the Guru.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, totally transformed the Sikh religion by creating the Khalsa in 1699A.D and gave a new look to the followers and infused an unyielding spirit in them so that they may play their role in defending human rights as per the spirit and teachings of Sikhism. It was a revolution with the slogan: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, based on the unity of humanity. The Sikh history of 239 years of the Guru Period is unique in the history of the world as it has given such a sacrificial and persistent fight in the cause of human rights.

Thus, the wisdom enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib can transform the mankind from ordinary to extra-ordinary, propounding a complete life-style and demolishing away the walls of falsehood, ignorance, exploitation and ego which give birth to all the ailments like bonded or forced labour, forced sexual exploitation and every kind of human trafficking. It preaches a message of love, devotion, truthful living, liberty, equality, fraternity

and remembrance (Simran) of God at all times which will lead us to respect the human being as a free human being.

Let us realise and feel that man's salvation lies not only in his faith, but also in his character and his eagerness to do active good because life without virtue runs to waste. We are expected to replace lust, anger, greed, undue worldly attachment and pride with their virtuous counterparts like self-control, forgiveness, contentment; love of God and humility before deciding to go to the next step of doing active good. It is like sweeping the floor. As a rule; where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish off itself. "The new thing will fill the vessel only if the existing one is wiped out," says the Guru.



**Dr Mufti M.
Mukarram Ahmed**

In the name of Allah most beneficent, the merciful: Respected spiritual leaders, the organisers, Honourable Mr Chairman, brothers and sisters; I

extend my greetings to all the dignitaries, to all the religious leaders and friends. May Allah the Almighty grant us his mercy, good health, knowledge and success.

Today we are gathered here in this prestigious conference for a noble cause. Though the various faiths differ from one another, but I believe there are mutual friendly feelings among them. Criminal feelings should have no place whatsoever. It is a fact that the coming together of religious leaders on the same platform to advocate in one voice for peace and against modern slavery will inspire their followers to feel the one-ness and not divide. No doubt unity is our strength and joined declaration will be more effective. Basic human values such as compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, justice and self-discipline need to be promoted among the people.

The 21st century is envisioned as a very civilised century where education is respected more than physical strength but

discrimination against women and the poor is a clear sign of backwardness. We all should help the poorest and downtrodden people. With the change of time certain practices and rituals have become obsolete in all cultures and spiritual traditions. These customs and rituals need to be protected and reassessed.

By the grace of Allah I am a Muslim and I am a religious person. I can say that I never felt any hate against anyone. According to Islamic teachings and according to the Prophet Mohammad's teachings, peace be upon him, and in the light of Holy Koran every human being should be respected because he is created by the Almighty Allah and all human beings are like brothers and sisters. So, there is no room for hate in Islam. There is no room for violence in Islam. There is no room for fighting in Islam. There is a very guiding verse in the Holy Koran which means peace and compromise is the best. So according to Islam religion peace is the greatest good. Why? Because where there is peace there are healthy activities. There is development, there is progress. All kinds of progress and achievements can be carried out only in a peaceful atmosphere.

Indeed Allah the Almighty is the most beneficent and merciful to all. No doubt his last messenger Prophet Mohammad,

peace be upon him, was very kind to all human beings and not with mercy for only Muslims. The prophet Mohammad is the saviour of humanity. He was very kind to all the poor, orphans, girls, widows, slaves and helpless people. His last sermon is the best example of the same. His life is an ideal life for all Muslims in the world and his message is full of wisdom which is for all human beings. We are gathered here to resist and condemn murder and slavery in any shape and it should not exist in any form within the world's religion and within the world's society.

In the last I would like to express my thanks and blessings to all, to Doctor Verma and especially to the organisers of this conference, Global Freedom Network, and I feel really honoured to participate in this esteemed and prestigious conference and I hope that this conference will get remarkable success and my sincere blessings are with the Global Freedom Network.

Thanking you all, may Allah bless all of us. Thanks.



**His Holiness Acharya
Dr. Lokesh Muni**

His Holiness
Honourable Sri Sri Ravi
Shankar Ji, His Holiness
Honourable Pujya Swami
Chidanand Saraswati Ji,
Respected Jethadar Avtar Singh,
Respected Shi Imam Ji, Respected Malekar
Ji, Respected and my dear Chairman of
Global Freedom Network, Mr Forrest and
Dr Verma.

Today, I am signing the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* because every human being is a free person destined to live for the good of others in equality and fraternity. Every person, and all people, are equal and must be accorded the same freedom and the same dignity. We have to work together for peaceful coexistence in the society for that no one should be enslaved. We should respect others freedom and thoughts along with respecting our own freedom and thoughts.

24th Tirthankar of Jain religion Bhagwan Mahavir had given 12 Anuvrat Principals for healthy society. These principals are very relevant and useful for establishment of healthy society and developed world. The eight Anuvrat principal states that

'Going against human rights and freedom of living beings you should not enslave anyone.' He said that not only human beings but also other living creatures like animals and birds should not be burdened with extra load they should not be caged.

The practice of slavery still continues today in one form or another in every country in the world. Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, gender and races. Modern slavery exists in form of bonded labour, child slavery, early and forced marriage, women forced into prostitution, Forced labour, descent-based slavery, trafficking, the sale of organs, drug abuse etc.

To achieve the eradication of slavery throughout the world, and to avoid the danger of its resurgence, people of all beliefs should begin by uniting in humble apology for the pain and sorrow inflicted on generations of coerced and humiliated human beings. As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against physical slavery.

We can create awareness in the society to develop different ways by which modern slavery can be stopped. Like create awareness for education. Ethical

businesses can play a double role in combating slavery. By following ethical labour practices especially in developing countries, businesses can create more jobs that pay living wages, which in turn reduces poverty rates. Countries need national action plans and referral mechanisms to support survivors of slavery and help them move through the proper channels to receive assistance. Service providers need to focus on vocational training and work closely with communities to ensure successful rehabilitation when a survivor is ready. Social media has a key role to play in combating slavery, especially when resources and funding for other types of campaigns are scarce. Slavery will only be tackled through collaborations between governments, business, and civil society, including trade unions and development agencies.

World religious leaders have gathered on one platform to raise the standard of spiritual values, our joint efforts, our libratory vision, to eradicate slavery from our planet. Let us together give the message to the humanity to end all kinds of physical, economic, sexual and psychological exploitation of men, women and children.



Mr Alwan Masih

(General Secretary, Synod of the Church of North India)

Honourable gathering on the dais, honourable Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji, Chairman

of Global Freedom Network Mr Andrew Forrest, other dignitaries, my brothers and sisters.

I find that this is a God given opportunity to all of us. To come for an initiative which probably will deliver all of humanity. This morning I was reading Indian Express and the first story I opened was, there was a 12-year-old girl and there was an uncle of hers, that girl is from Orissa, that uncle of hers knows of people in Delhi. She is twelve years and her uncle is 50 years old and brings the girl to Delhi to get a good job. When the girl is here for around three to four months he exploits her and then proposes her to marry. When she refuses she is sold for 50,000 rupees to two people, not to one. These two people take the girl to their village and they rape her one after the other. This girl runs away, is caught again and brought back to those people who rape her again. This is the front news of Indian Express today. And

friends when we are gathering here and when we are sitting here as representatives of all Faith communities and religious communities I believe if we can take a step we can make a difference in the lives of so many people.

I represent here the church of North India and I was trying to find what is the message of Jesus Christ which I should share with all of you. When he stood up and started preaching and talking to all of the people delivering salvation he underlined the purpose and he underlined the purpose saying "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly". This is what he declared and when he said they he meant the whole of humanity. Christ came that all of us, including this girl from Orissa, that we should have life and he says we should have abundant life.

Declaring his manifesto further and what he wants to do, Christ says the Spirit of the lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor and he has sent me for the release of the captives. Friend, these are the captives who need to be released. I am so happy Mr Bulah is sitting over there. Yesterday evening, we were all standing around the inner circle and giving this message of deliverance from modern slavery. Facts are already given, 36 million* victims. Each year two

thirds of them and then in India 14 million such slaves, 14 million such trafficked people and who is the victim? The victim is women and Mr Forrest I want to make a request of you. When I was sitting here I was thinking this is an opportunity for the leadership to lead this movement but one thing I found could be really added, I will not say lacking, but when I looked at all of us from this side I found that we were all men.

The representative of the victim is not there. Please don't take it as my criticism but when Christ promised life in abundance he included all. I am really thankful to God for the words of Sri Sri Ravi Ji when he said one, two, three what is to be done and already the honourable speakers have said what is to be done. But these laws need to be thought and people need to be made aware of them. Where do we need to start? We don't need to start just in suburbs and conferences, we need to start within our families. I was talking to a gathering of young people and afterwards I asked the young people what is the biggest problem because you all have a lot of luxury; big cars, big houses, a lot to eat. And the Pastor told me that the biggest problem is teenage pregnancies and these are because within the families these girls are kept as captives and slaves. We had talked about a girl in Orissa, I have

shared this incident and we need to now start within the families. Within my own family I am aware that this is happening in the neighbourhood so we have to start there.

We control a number of hundreds of schools, colleges and other institutions and there is a need that the young people need to be taught about it and I wish that next time there are more young people because this type of modern slavery it pertains more to the young children and the young adults. Let's bring more young people and make them aware.

Next is specifically the women and we need to take care of them. I am really thankful especially to Antonia, the CEO who came first to the church of North India and I feel that standing here I can commit on behalf of the Church of North India that we are part of this and we will certainly - as we are already doing - we will certainly accelerate this movement of abolishing modern slavery especially through this new Network.

Thank you so much.



**Rabbi Ezekiel
Isaac Malekar**

Respected
religious and
spiritual leaders on
the Dais and brothers
and sisters Psalm 133

"how beautiful and pleasant
it is to see all our brothers and sisters dwell
in unity."

I would like to clarify at the outset that I am not here to represent only Judaism, I am here to represent all Indians because Jews have been living in India for the last 2,000 years without facing anti-Semitism and persecution. So I always say that I am an Indian first and Jew second.

Since there is a time constraint I will not explain what modern slavery is besides human trafficking, bonded labour etc. You know now that modern slavery means we are addicted to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and even mobiles. My son when he sleeps at night he has to sleep with his mobile phone below his pillow. That is also addiction, modern technology, and what is the population of India? 1.3 billion with 20% of the population in the cities and 80% in the rural areas. What happens in rural areas; poverty, illiteracy,

unemployment and until we eradicate these three things we can't eradicate modern slavery.

Child labour, I would like to share with you my own experience while working in the National Human Rights Commission. All Government servants, especially bureaucrats, have small girls and boys working at their residences and the way they are being treated is pathetic and pitiable conditions in those places. In one case we found in Hyderabad one of the bureaucrat's girls, a seven-year-old girl from the villages, she dared to open the fridge in order to see what coca cola looked like, she wanted to taste it because her madam went to the market. She opened the fridge and she took the coca cola and what happened? When madam came back she removed the little girl's frock and burned her on her chest 120 times with a cigarette butt. After the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission we succeeded and we convinced the Government of India to amend the CCS conduct rules that it is a crime to employ boys and girls under the age of 15 years.

Another example of human trafficking; 247 children from various parts of India were taken to Makka Madina. According to Islam if somebody goes to Makka Madina for

haji, they think it is a very noble cause to give something in charity because charity saves you from death. 247 children from various parts of India they will become lame, blind by applying amrutanjan balm and they were taken on the roads to Makka Madina. After the invention of the National Human Rights Commission those 247 children were rescued and brought to India.

Another case where small kids between the age group of one to three they were sold by parents in Hyderabad where they were taken to Saudi Arabia for camel racing. Little boys and girls just a year old, they tie them to the stomach of the camel and when the child cries the camel gives a fit and that is something we also observed.

Also there is the sale of organs. I'm working in two hospitals and I found the sale of organs that is also a part of modern slavery. Another thing in India we are neglecting our elderly parents and we are not taking care of them. It is not slavery but I am asking everyone, it is our moral duty to look after our parents and take care of them because it is also a form of slavery. Recently I read in the newspaper that there is a racket in Kerala and they succeeded in smuggling a few girls to Gulf countries for sexual exploitation.

I have seen in a number of hotels, restaurants, factories, in Bombay a butcher house, a lock factory in Aligarh, carpet weaving industry in Kashmir, Shivakashi for fire crackers etc. you will find they all use child labour. There is a big begging racket in India, you find so many small children in gangs and they have become criminals. They come and "tik-tak" on your car, you open the window and they run away with your laptop so begging is also a big problem in India.

We have to see and consider all this and not only human trafficking and bonded labour but child labour, working in the mines. I visited Bihar with the NHRC and there are people there from generation to generation, grandparents, parents and their little children...and they do not know the outer world. So this is a very pathetic and pitiable condition, so all religious and spiritual leaders as well as all members and brothers and sisters in this auditorium, we should join hands for a common cause to eradicate modern day slavery, child labour and human trafficking in India. This evil is man made and can be overcome by faith inspired by human will and human efforts.



Mr Shatrughan Jiwnani

Director Public Relations, BAHAI Lotus Temple; Representing Ms Nazneen Rowhani,

Secretary-General at National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is

Friends thank you very much. I'd like to thank the Global Freedom Network to have invited a representative from the BAHAI community of India. It's an honour to be here amongst you, amongst the luminaries from different faiths and I ask myself listening to all the speakers that there was a common thread. A common thread that I noted in spite of the graphic images that were just pointed to (in the previous speech by Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar), very depressing, very pathetic the state of the world. But the common thread was that in essence we are all equal and in essence man is essentially good. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar mentioned that people are not sensitised, essentially they are not bad. This is a thought that actually resonates with all the faiths and because I'm from BAHAI I can only draw on the teachings I see there that man is essentially noble, he is a noble creature.

The very interesting title here says join the declaration against modern slavery. 'Modern' generally implies progress and that's interesting because there's

an anomaly here that on one hand we are modern, we are advanced, we are a great civilization, we are a long way from where we were cavemen. We became communities, nations today we are heading towards globalization. We have made all kinds of advances in science, we have discovered DNA, we have been to the moon. And yet let's look at the affairs of the world whether social, economic or religious.

We also as a community want to address this issues and I think, and it's a pleasure to see these young students here, we think the solution may lie in starting education at a younger stage. The state of the world is not new it's been going on for a quite a while. It's us at this age trying to solve a problem. But what will happen to this young child when they grow? They will be us and they have not been able to solve the problem. The cause might be that we instil in these young people the idea that each human being is born equal, as Mr Forrest said, each one is born equal, we are all born free as Dr. Verma said. If we instil in the young people, rather in ourselves and start off with the young, that each one of us learns to treat ourselves as being born as a trust of the whole, beginning to recognise that we are essentially one human being, one human race, one man kind. Then the way when these young people grow to and become part of the life around them and they engage with society they become the decision makers of tomorrow; they will be

a more evolved race than probably we are today.

They have got to start somewhere; corrective measures can only help so much. The root lies in an education and I also wondered at one point why did Mr Forrest choose to call all the religious leaders or representatives and I think it's because as Faith Leaders, I am not a Faith Leader, as Faith Leaders we have a captive audience who listen to us, who are open to good thoughts and perhaps we owe it to humanity that we use those means, those platforms to address the community at large. Make them conscience of the social concerns around us.

There is a text and that's where I wanted to go, in the BAHAI writings where Bahá'u'lláh the founder of the BAHAI faith, it says "Noble have I created thee yet thou have abased thyself, rise then unto that for which thou was created". But this is the message of all faiths. Essentially man is both, he is material and spiritual and that has got to be recognised. Materially we have advanced as I said but spiritually I think we are dwarves and if man can recognise he is both, if he can recognise the purpose of his life, if he can be taught where he is going next he could look at life differently. At the moment the satisfaction lies in the cravings of the modern trappings that we have. It is the spiritual element that is missing and the spiritual messages come from God.

Whichever way you look at it the source of all good is God. Just remember and then it takes root. The message of his Holiness, Christ, of love and forgiveness: it inspired a whole civilization. His Holiness Christ was a carpenter he wasn't a scientist. Yet it was his basic love and basic message that we are all one people and that's how religious manifestations have inspired civilizations.

So friends with that I'd like to leave two thoughts with you: that the world of God alone, this is my belief, that the world of God alone can claim the distinction of being endured with the capacity required for so great and far reaching a change that this new initiative has introduced to us. It has to be something more than mere just material solutions, laws etc., our hearts have to change I'm ending with that. Mr Forrest said "our hearts have to change" who can do that? It's only the spiritual message and it's all in us, that's within us, the goodness is within us as was mentioned to us but we have to bring it out. Man is a mindful of gems. The kids here, the goodness of compassion, forgiveness, trustworthiness, honesty, having a kindly tongue, not backbiting it's all there. It's not something we have to give them it's all there, we have to bring it out. So if we can bring it out a little bit earlier it will be wonderful.

Thank you very much for listening, thank you.



His Holiness, Morari Bapu

RAMA

My travels all over the world in connection with Rama Kathas, have convinced me that for a

Universe Man, there is no option but to adopt the trinity of Truth, Love and Compassion. Truth for one's own self, Love for others and Compassion for the entire Universe. In the absence of this Trinity, it is impossible to get a Universal mind and a world free from inequality and exploitation that leads to human slavery.

I feel we should begin with establishing feelings of brotherhood. If we succeed in doing this, dialogue and discussions would be easy and smooth. A dialogue can be a step towards feelings of equality and love for all.

The feeling of brotherhood inevitably leads to Truth. Dialogue leads to Love. The next stage would be Compassion for all.

I have a deep faith that the trinity of Truth, Love and Compassion would necessarily lead to peaceful relationship among all human beings, irrespective of petty differences.

I feel intense pain that unavoidable circumstances have prevented me to be in your midst. I offer my heartfelt apology to all the celebrities in the Event. I bow down to them all.

However, whatever activities are undertaken at any level, anywhere in the world for the progress and welfare of mankind, will always have my best wishes and total support. Whatever is decided by all of you, the great celebrities, will be acceptable to me and I should always be ready to be associated with it by putting

my signature on such documents or declaration.

I deeply appreciate your love. I bow down once again to the august assembly and end with my pranam (to bow in respect) to all of you.

Thank you.

His Holiness was not able to attend, however provided the above statement of commitment.



Mr Andrew Forrest

Official Opening Speech

Thank you for the attendance of such revered and loved faith leaders from all the great faiths of India here, that to promote this we could have filled many football stadiums with hundreds and thousands of people who both love and follow the great leaders here today. For security reasons we elected to keep the program reasonably unknown but to have this event from this moment forward become extremely public. Of course, we did that to protect the people here, and most importantly, our wonderful religious leaders.

If I could just say to you, *Atma Param Bramha* (human life is sacred).

We are here because human life is sacred. If I could share with you our own journey, the realisation that when the formal structure of government, of legislation of law cannot reach where it must, which is the hearts of our fellow women and

men, then it must be left to the spiritual and faith leaders. Only they can touch the hearts of people all over the world; not law makers, not anyone else. The hearts of the spark of God is with us all. Those who can reach out to the hearts of people are the faith leaders here today. So, it is with enormous gratitude from me personally, from my family, from everyone in the Global Freedom Network around the world, and most importantly for the 35 million people who are enslaved today, that I pass on my deepest gratitude to the faith leaders who so bravely represent their tens of millions, hundreds of millions of followers. We thank them very much today.

It was only a few short decades ago that I discovered that slavery existed in the world but it was only a few short years ago that slavery was introduced to my family through my daughter Grace. She was working in orphanages, when she had just turned 16, in Nepal and we sadly discovered that much of the orphanage sector in Nepal was part of the human or children sex trafficking industry up into other parts of the world in particular, the

Middle East. When we came to know some of these children, most never survived their ordeals, but some who returned to Nepal and returned to India shared their stories with us. It was then that our hearts were forever changed.

So, I look now to the spiritual leaders of India to lead us. To declare that in their Holy Text, in the hearts of their followers which transcend all of India that there can be no room for the denomination of one over the other. There can be no room for the exploitation of children, women or men, that we are all equally loved by God, and we accept that and we accept that slavery cannot exist in India.


To close, my loved spiritual leaders, I ask you to lead us. I ask you to lead India and so doing, give hope to the world because the world knows that if India makes the move against slavery, when India's people believe that slavery can come to an end, then the children of the world and the enslaved of the world believe nothing is impossible, and that they too can be free because the children of India were freed through the hearts of these great spiritual

leaders in front of us today.

As I have travelled throughout India for the past three decades with my daughter Grace, I have never seen such hope. I have never seen the spark not only of God in the heart of people but in the sparkle in their eyes. When I spoke to the enslaved and when I spoke to those most recently freed from slavery, and I asked them what they thought of their country, from an 80-year-old man to an 8-year-old girl, they spoke to me with a passion. They believed that they were not farm animals. They were not owned by someone else. They were free people. They were citizens of India.

What I heard was when one person, one boy, one girl, one man and one woman is freed from slavery, you free the hearts of mankind all over the world. You set the example. I ask our great faith leaders, our great spiritual leaders to free the hearts of India, and so lead the world.

I thank you.



I URGE THAT WE NOT ONLY **SIGN**
THE *JOINT DECLARATION OF*
RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST
MODERN SLAVERY BUT THAT WE
BECOME THIS DECLARATION.

His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji

FULL SPEECH TRANSCRIPTS

THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION, INDIA

The full speeches of all leaders who spoke at the Roundtable Discussions at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 3 December 2015, are provided.

Joint Declaration Against
Modern Slavery

3 December 2015
New Delhi

on Against Modern Slavery

December 2015, New Delhi

ndSlavery



**Nobel Laureate Mr
Kailash Satyarthi**

**Founder: Bachpan
Bachao Andolan -
Save the Childhood
Movement**

Dear Swati Ji, dear Andrew, Misha Ji, Sunitha Ji, Ravi Kant, Swami Ji who is sitting in front of us, Grace and so many other friends whom I know. Let me begin with congratulating Andrew and primarily Grace for your compassion, for your commitment, for your conviction, for your clarity and for the great initiatives you have undertaken to fight child slavery and slavery as a whole in the world. I also sincerely feel that this fight is also the fight of hundreds or perhaps thousands of years old mindset. It is a political issue, it's a social issue, it's an economic issue, it's a cultural issue and it cannot be fought without not only the involvement, but also without the leadership of the Faith Leaders and their spiritual voices. That's why this initiative, when I was told by some friends Andrew that this is not the first time you are organising it in India, but you have gone to several cities and organised such kind of events, very very timely.

I came when some of the Faith Leaders were speaking and I was sitting in the green room for a few minutes. Needless to say that slavery and civilisation cannot go hand in hand. Needless to say, that you cannot do justice to your businesses and your growth and your development with children bought and sold like animals and sometimes for lesser prices than animals.

There are constitutional provisions and guarantees, there are international treaties and bindings and conventions: the UN human rights convention to slavery and forced labour, trafficking protocols and conventions and treaties but it still goes on.

I was born in a family where the young girls were worshipped like Gods, the virgin girls. I was born in a culture where the three powers are worshipped as women as goddesses. Lakshmi the goddess of wealth, Saraswati the goddess of wisdom and knowledge and Durga the goddess of goddess of power, strength and vigour. We were taught that on the faces of children there exists a glimpse of God. Later on I saw in other cultures and religions, Jesus says let the children come to me, do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to them. In the Holy Koran, there are many things against slavery but when it comes to the children, it says, "Do not kill your children because of poverty". There is no excuse that people are put to slavery. It's against culture and all religions.

I could recall the very first incident when I gave up my career as an electrical engineer and started working on this issue back in 1981, there were no takers. My own family and friends laughed at me and even my own mother she was a widow and she cried and said "what are you doing, you are talking about child slavery and human slavery" and these phrases were never heard in India at that time in 1981 people thought that slavery had been abolished. People sat and tried to convince me that if you really want to help children why don't

you open an orphanage, why don't you open a school, why don't you do something good for the children. But good for children means very traditional thinking of charity for children. But I could see an element of force, an element of slavery, a compulsion behind it. No child would like to sell himself or herself as a prostitute or as a slave labourer. No child would love to beg on the street if we are able to give him or her better opportunities or a better future.

These children who are begging on the streets are not begging on their own, all of us know that there are mafias, there are traffickers and there are organised criminals behind it.

I recall the first incident when I was publishing a magazine in Hindi, which is called "Struggles shall continue" in English and that was an experiment to publish only those issues 100% concerned with children and the most deprived women in the country. At the time human rights journalism was not born in our nation. Even the humanitarian journalism was not there in 1980 and 1981.

A desperate father knocked my door. His daughter was about to be sold to a brothel. I was shocked when he told his story that 17 years ago he was lured away from his native village, to work at a brick kiln in Punjab and in those 17 years, they were never allowed to leave that place. All their children were born and grew up there and the eldest one, 14 or 15 year old Sabo, was about to be sold. The name of that person was Vassal Khan. I was listening to this story Andrew and I thought that if she was my daughter what would I do. If she was

my sister what would I do? I gave up my pencil and I started thinking how could I liberate her as soon as possible.

We did not have enough money because I left my job, was living in Delhi in poor conditions. So I asked my wife can you give your ornaments or something that we can hire a truck. I spoke to some of my friends and we went finally to rescue those people, especially this girl. We were beaten up, we were thrown from there, we had to come away with empty hands because these people were very powerful people and the local police were with them.

I came with empty hands but I did not come away with an empty heart. I was angry but my anger was not to disturb and destruct or become violent. I wanted to use that anger - Swami Ji knows what we call (a prayer to harness negative anger into a force of good) and we pray, "Oh God you are full of positive anger and grant us that". So we went to some lawyer friends and they suggested that we could go to the court and use the habeas corpus provision. So we did and in mid 1981 we were able to liberate 36 children, girls, boys their mothers and fathers. That was the first recorded or documented incident of freeing child slaves or adult slaves in India in the modern times in 1981.

Since then we did not look back. We had to see that how Laws could be implemented, how we can mobilise communities and society as a whole, how to build awareness in society as a preventative measure, how to manage different sections of society, how to engage to businesses, because I strongly believe that all businesses are

not evil. There are good people in the businesses who have good hearts and good souls so we started working with them and tried to find some solutions.

There were good officials also, one of them is sitting here and I am so privileged to sit with Dr. Misha. He could recall that he travelled with me and my colleagues in the remotest areas of stone mining when he was appointed as the Commissioner by the Supreme Court of India in one of our cases. I had approached him several times and got orders and directions to the district magistrates when he was the Chief Labour Commissioner, he was the director of labour in Government of India.

So, there are good people everywhere but dear friends I would come back again that today when young children in Syria are caught by terrorist groups, ISIS, according to some reports have confined four to five thousand young girls. Some of them are sold for sexual slavery for a lesser price than a pack of cigarettes and if the same six-year-old girl could not perform, well that girl is buried alive in the pre prepared graves. Whose daughters are they? This is the most modern form of slavery we see. When the girls are trafficked and used liked that.

Young boys are trafficked and enslaved by these people, they are brain washed to become suicide bombers or terrorists and sometimes we see pictures. You might have seen pictures in the newspapers, where a seven or eight-year-old boy is given a sophisticated gun to kill a suspected traitor

of the group. If this child is not able to do it, he is killed or buried alive. Whose children are they? They are all our children.

We all know the figures; some 30 million or 29 million people are enslaved. A large number of enslaved people live in India. We are a great nation. We have great heritage, great cultures but sometimes these things are ignored. We have strong constitutional provisions as well but we have to build a strong social momentum. We have to ensure that how these laws are implemented. If the laws are weak we have to fight for stronger laws as we are doing in the case of child labour law which has been there for quite some time but it's quite a weak amendment being suggested. So there are several ways to do it.

We cannot make a strong, a prosperous, a digital India if all of our children are not able to get a good quality education. That is the global commitment now that we are not talking about education for all, in the new sustainable development goals we have all aspects included which relate to child slavery, modern slavery, trafficking, forced labour. When it comes to education its very explicit that education, which we have to impart for our children and guarantee and get it done, is inclusive, quality and equitable education for all children and not only primary education but secondary education and lifelong learning. So that lifelong learning and good quality, equitable, inclusive education is not possible if we allow any form of modern slavery, any form of trafficking, it cannot work. I would once

again call upon the Faith Leaders and I would definitely urge Andrew and Grace, to advance this process. Widen and deepen it globally because Faith Leaders have a strong outreach and followings and if they become leaders in this it would be great.

I remember once I went to free a group of children 20 years ago or so when these children were working in the glass industry. Many of the children are still working in the home based industry, the glass industry, they were making bangles and many of them were just handling the molten glass and blowing the liquid glass to make the bulbs and other things. One of those children who was very timid and shy, I hugged him and kissed him, his black face with all kinds of dust and dirt from the glass and fumes and looked very thin. But certainly, I noticed that there was a hole in his palm and I was shocked when he told me that one day he was handling molten glass and accidentally it dripped off on his palm and there was a hole. He was beaten up instead of being treated well medically. So he lost his emotions after that. When I asked this boy what is your name, he said I am Mohammed and I was almost in tears. Mohammed was his name. That man who has enslaved him, trafficked him, he was a member of this big committee movement. We are enslaving Mohammed and we are fighting for a temple, a mosque. I'm not very familiar with the debate but it hurts.

One day I went to rescue a group of children, there were twelve girls who were trafficked to work as slave labours in carpet weaving. Two mothers were with

us all the way crying here and there, they came to Delhi and we went there with the SGM and when we liberated them, we were very happy to see that eleven of them were freed but one was missing. Everybody was looking for her. I entered along with SGM inside it and I saw that this girl was weeping, putting her hands on her face and facing towards the wall. So she was that girl but she was weeping and crying badly and said, "No I don't want to be freed." Why? She said, "No I am dirty, I don't want to show my face to anyone because I have been raped again and again and I am pregnant, where should I go?"

And dear sisters and brothers when I asked her name she said, "I am Sita". We all know Goddess Sita, we cannot think of our culture without Rama Sita and Sita has been enslaved. She does not want to show her face and the most disgusting part of it was that there was a slogan written in front of her that all of us are sons and daughters of lord Rama, Sita's husband, and we all will fight for the birthplace of Rama temple.

So that is why dear friends we have to raise this issue. I have met Andrew for the first time and also Grace for the first time and somebody said that your daughter was quite concerned about your food, you did not eat food and he said no I have eaten some snacks. But I said your daughter has a great heart and I tell you that the future will always remember you Grace and the history will remember both of you because you are not people who are just clapping and talking and preaching and teaching

and sitting on the fence but you are the people who have jumped in the ring.

I am a person who for the last 35 years never believed in pessimism and passivity. Those who jump in the ring, they write the history. [Applause]

So we have to be those people who become the writers of history and we should be the first generation who can claim there are great people who are sitting on the dais I know Sunitha for many years she is like my sister or daughter, I know Ravi has been struggling and so many of you are sitting here from the civil society organisations... we all together can make and will make slavery history. We are not going to pass it on to the next generation.

This is the generation, today is the day, this is the time. We have to pledge that we are going to make slavery history. If the laws there are not good we will fight for it, if the laws are there we will fight for their implementation. We will go and talk to the business houses. We have to build strong coalitions within and between NGOs, within and between businesses, within and between villages and faith institutions, between and within corporate sectors and the Governments; because we feel that today, slavery cannot be abolished without building such strong coalitions and partnerships. No organisation can claim. I underlined in my 35 years of struggle when I started with a scratch and sitting with each single person to convince them that this is slavery, this is bonded labour system, please do something these children are enslaved. And people were not willing to listen.

Today this has become a global issue and with my very humble experience, I can say that none of us can abolish slavery from this planet alone. We may have differences of opinion, we may have differences of approaches, we may have differences in our knowledge and understanding towards the issue. But one thing is common that humanity and slavery should not co-exist and we all should know that this is the worst violation of human rights, this is a curse on our religions and cultures if it goes on, so we have to build strong partnerships, we have to build bridges between the 3 major players: State, corporate and civil society. Another major player, which is emerging now, especially today, is the Faith Leaders so let us make a full chair with four legs.

One leg should be State and Government. If Government think that they can find a solution to a growth in sustainability, equity, and justice in society that is not possible, I disagree with that. If businesses think they can solve the problem of their own sustained growth and justice, they cannot and no NGO can do it and the Faith Leaders – all of us should make a chair and the four of us have to build a strong coalition.

This process should continue it should not be a one off event. I once again call upon all Faith Leaders of the country those who came here but those who did not come here as many of them have huge followings; millions of people are watching them every day, every evening and morning. But I am sorry to say that I have never heard from their mouths that those

who are sitting here must pledge that they will not use domestic child labour, she is a slave, they never say that you must pledge that you will never do any form of child abuse or exploitation. I call upon them to be even more courageous and tell their congregation of a hundred thousand people if one person or one thousand people who have done any kind of sexual abuse to a girl or a boy, leave this place. [Applause]

This should not be just talking shop. I trust you Andrew I trust all these people sitting here and that is why I am here. I am not a public speaker, I am not a preacher, I am a very humble activist, I wanted to add my voice to any effort which will put an end to slavery on the face of humankind. I must go. Thank you so much.



Dr Lakshmidhar Mishra is a Special Rapporteur of the National Human Rights Commission India

Madam Chairperson, respected Swati Ji, respected Chairperson Mr Andrew Forrest, distinguished panellists on the dais, representatives of various faiths, ladies and gentlemen. I consider this a defining as well as a decisive moment in our history. The second time the collective conscience and wisdom of mankind represented through various faiths has pledged its total solidarity and support to a cause, which is very dear to all of us, but which is often lost sight of - eradication of all forms of modern slavery lock stock and barrel.

The Global Freedom Network and its very energetic and deeply committed president Mr Andrew Forrest which has made this conference of creative, sensitive and human forces possible, deserves to be congratulated from the core of our hearts, very timely, appropriate and splendid initiative.

The conference as I see it serves two important purposes. On the one hand, it will provide an outwardly ray of hope for the deliverance of 35.8 million victims of modern slavery and India accounts for number 1 with 14 million who represent the dumb and mute and expressionless sections of humanity, who lead a cloistered, withered and forlorn life. On the other hand, it will be expected to send

shockwaves down the spine of millions of captors and oppressors and exploiters who represent the most callous and insensitive elements of society who thrive and prosper at the cost of the blood, sweat and tears of those who derive a sadistic pleasure in dispossessing the poor, deprived and disadvantaged of the real and vital.

I quote a poem written by Edwin Markham *"Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground, The emptiness of ages in his face, And on his back, the burden of the world."*

Kailash spoke from his heart and it will be almost impossible to match the sensitivity, empathy and total identification with the plight and predicament of the poor with which he has spoken, for a period of nearly four decades. I would like to share with you some of the conceptual issues centred around bonded labour, bonded labour systems and what exactly is there in the constitution and the law of the land, what has happened so far which was mandated for a purpose. Kailash mentioned in very clear and succinct words the Government, the corporate enterprises and all sections of civil society: what has been accomplished, what has been unfinished and what has been the roadmap for the future.

Now conceptually all the distinguished representatives of faiths who are present here, they will agree that human life is the finest gift of the creator to humanity. It is sacrosanct and invaluable. Once that is mutilated and destroyed, it cannot be restored to its original form. Human life therefore deserves to be continually

promoted, protected, nurtured and preserved so that human beings live and let others live in a climate of peace, love, goodwill, understanding, freedom, dignity and self-esteem as opposed to distrust, dominance, ill will, intolerance, hatred and mindless violence.

This is what makes the right to life a fundamental right as guaranteed by article 21 of the constitution. That right goes beyond an animal like existence; it is basically the right to lead a life of dignity, equality, decency and freedom, which distinguishes human beings from animals. Animals survive on the instinct to kill and rob others of the real and vital but that cannot and should not happen with human beings. We have signed a momentous declaration by representatives of all distinguished faiths. We have similar declarations like *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Philadelphia Declaration* and the declaration adopted at the end of the *American War of Independence* way back in 1775. I don't think in terms of content or quintessence that any such difference between the two, I think they speak the same language, the same idiom, and convey the same sense.

I quote from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, no one shall be held in slavery or servitude. Slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

I quote now from the *Philadelphia Declaration*, which says that "labour is not a commodity. We therefore cannot attempt commodification of human labour. Human

beings irrespective of race, creed or sex derive to pursue their material wellbeing and spiritual development in conditions of dignity and freedom."

And what does the declaration from the *American War of Independence* say that "All men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". Governments have been instituted amongst men to secure them these rights.

Now what exactly makes the bonded labour system, or servitude, or trafficking or various forms of modern slavery objectionable? Now the basic rationale for this, that every individual in society has the right to grow, evolve, rise and prosper, expand and diversify by individual enterprise by harnessing ones imagination, creativity and innovation in a climate of dignity and spontaneity. Exercising such a basic right cannot be at the cost of others. It cannot be at the cost of demeaning, degrading and dehumanising others and in particular, the poor, deprived, dispossessed and disadvantaged by deception, fraud, coercion and regimentation. That amounts to exploitative labour or forced labour, which may be attributed to man's infinite greed and capacity to rob others of their basic dignity and rights at an enormous cost to humanity.

So this is what makes this most perverse or pernicious system highly questionable or abominable. But what do you see on the ground? Just going by the few excerpts, which Kailash has shared, with you from his own life and whatever little I have seen

as union labour secretary or representing labour welfare or as special advisor NCPR and senior advisor ILO, I would like to just share with you these 3 facets of human behaviour which appear to be strange and inexplicable.

Those who cause pain to others do not realise how excruciating this pain could be in body, mind and soul.

Those who bring tears to the eyes of others by robbing them and dispossessing them by deception and fraud, coercion and regimentation do not know how to wipe the tears from their face.

So that is how I call these elements the most callous, insensitive elements of human society.

Such elements think that the poor are ignorant, illiterate, have no access to the basic elements of development characterised by knowledge, information and skill, and they think that they can brow beat the poor because of access to knowledge, information and skill they have acquired without any reason.

Whatever little I have seen on the basis of my ground level experience I can share with you that the poor are not goofs or dunderheaded as the rich or the resourceful or the influential sections of society think them to be. The poor have infinite access to knowledge, information and skills, they have enormous amounts of earthly wit and wisdom and therefore the rich, the influential and resourceful are not justified in perceiving and internalising that the poor can remain at the bottom of bottomless pits or layers of exploitation for

all time to come.

So what exactly does freedom then connote if this is the sorry state of affairs? As noble laureate, Amartya Sen, has very lucidly and forcefully written in his book *Development as Freedom*, a New York University Press publication from 1999, "Freedom is both the primary end of development and is also amongst its principle means. Freedom implies in its broadest sense, freedom of expression, of association, of movement from one place to another of ones own volition, as a free citizen of a free country, of receiving a just and fair remuneration for labour or services rendered." It also connotes freedom from fear, want, violence, intimidation, tyranny, injustice and oppression, the totality of which amounts to exploitation.

Now if you draw lessons from all that Kailash shared with you, one can sum up in the following words as to why denial of freedom which tantamount to forced labour, which is highly perverse and abominable for the following reasons:

- It is repugnant to civilised human conscience; we cannot think of it, we cannot perceive it, we cannot internalise it.
- It is the most flagrant violation of inalienable human rights. Like trafficking, it's an obscene affront to human dignity and decency.
- It is the anti-portal to the concept of decent work, which was so forcefully propounded by the work of the ex-leader of the

trans labour organisation; it is an outrageous and unpardonable crime against humanity.

A well known poet celebrates the excitement and joy of freedom in a heart-warming song which I have translated to English and I would like to share this song with you of what exactly freedom connotes, "The sweetest and best of all symphonies is not the song of fields nor murmur of streams flowing through the hills and into the sea, nor the sound of the cuckoo. It is the sound of laughter anywhere of everyone; it is the sounds of shackles and tethers breaking down".

What has emanated from the discourses, which you have very clearly, lucidly and forcefully presented in the morning session, could be summed up as "there is a basic oneness of all religions, oneness in form, and oneness in essence. That oneness lies in the unity of mankind despite differences in cast, clan, sect, creed, colour, gender, faith and belief, political ideology and social origin.

All the distinguished representatives of the Faith were unanimous in their voice of protest against force, fraud, intolerance of recent hatred and mindless violence. They are also unanimous on the following; humanity is one and indivisible, God is one and indivisible, God dwells in the hearts of all beings, all human beings are endowed with reason, rationality and conscience, and God can be realised by imbibing and assimilating certain qualities of the heart.

I would like to first sum up, using the Tripitaka as the principle scripture in

Buddhism, what was said in the morning. "Not harbouring greed, bitterness, malice, force, fraud, ill-will, intolerance of recent mindless vendetta and violence of one against the other. Inward purity of heart lies in truth, non-violence, kindness and compassion.

And from Tripitaka the lines which are translated into English "Let all be happy, free from enemies and enmity, let all lead a happy, contented and delightful existence, let all be free from sorrow, let not anyone be deprived of his or her just and fair entitlements.

To conclude, the basic Ors to live, and live with dignity and honour amongst other human beings "I do not want to die, I want to live in this beautiful planet in the midst of human beings. I miss the rays of the rising and setting sun, I miss the green of this multi-coloured garden of beauty and fragrance, how fervently I wish I could secure a place amongst the hearts of living beings. Ragoor has from one of the anthologies of poems beautifully defined as true how sensitivity could provide a measured answered to most of the ills, which inflict mankind today.

If we really want to put an end to all these perverse forms of inequality inequity, tyranny, injustice and oppression we have to be sensitive, we have to possess sensitive hearts. A heart which can receive messages, which can observe and assimilate the messages, which are beneficial to mankind and repulse the messages, which are not so beneficial to mankind, a sensitive heart. Thank you.



**Mr Ravi Kant,
Advocate. Founder of
Shakti Vahini**

Thank you Swati Ji, and thank you Andrew and Grace for coming to India. I have been watching the growth of Walk Free and Andrews's commitment for the last two or three years and it's amazing and I am thankful on behalf of the people of India the work you are doing on trafficking. It's a very important issue, which you have raised this morning, the involvement of Faith Leaders. It is a true commitment I think because there are millions and millions of people that need to change their mindset, who need to change their thoughts on slavery and enslavement of people and I think when Faith Leaders have a huge responsibility and involving them in this human rights issue is going to be very helpful in the fight against trafficking.

Let me also bring to you that human trafficking is a violent of fundamental rights. In India it's already banned in our constitution, there are several laws and legislations in India, which talk about prohibiting human trafficking and banning human trafficking but the crimes still continue every day. Every day we are getting cases of bonded labour, child labour, forced marriages, sex trafficking,

you name it and we are inundated with cases. There are very few cases in which we can intervene because of our limited capacity but the cases continue to come in. The Government in India was earlier in denial, there is no such issue, but in the last ten years, we have seen the Government of India's commitment towards fighting trafficking has increased. Of course, with all the international attention, which the issue has, the Government of India is keen to talk about this issue. Recently on October 7th, our home Minister made a huge statement saying that it's a growing crime in India. Law Enforcement response people say that of course to stop trafficking, and trafficking is an issue, which is related to poverty, which is related to migration, which is related to movement of people.

As an activist in every day cases of intervention, which we are seeing, we see that trafficking is an organised crime and of course, there are vulnerability factors but it's an organised crime. There are people who are earning a living out of these people, there are people who are exploiting and that is why we need the commitment of the Government and the law enforcement agencies. People say that the rescues we do is like mopping the floor when the tap is on. Whatever rescues we do people say of course, you can do a

small amount of rescues and help a small amount of victims but it is again mopping the floor when the tap is on. I think people are right when they say that and that is where the importance of Faith based Leaders is, you have a reach of millions and millions of people and you can change their mindset.

In spite of people saying we are mopping the floor when the tap is on, rescues and law enforcement responses need to be strengthened. Every day, interventions need to be improved. What we are seeing in India is that investigations are very minimal, they don't happen properly and traffickers know that they can go out and just get away with the cases, they know that. We have to bring the fear of the law among the traffickers. Once there is fear of the law among the traffickers, we will see that the crimes diminish.

When we see conviction rates in our criminal system it's very very minimal, 2-3% of convictions in human trafficking cases and this is also the same in violence against women and children cases This is because our investigations are very weak, our law enforcement doesn't take the right steps because trafficking is an organised crime and it happens from source, transit and destination and investigations never reach to all those places. When

investigations are weak, nothing happens and the cases just go into acquittals. We have to strengthen investigations, we have to strengthen law enforcement responses and we have to change people's mindsets. Once we can do all these things I think we can certainly win the war on human trafficking.

Lastly I know there are very few people here but Andrew I can promise you the work that you are doing, the issues, which you have raised, are going to affect millions and millions of people in this country, and that's why I would like to again congratulate you for taking up these issues. These issues in India require a lot of attention and when people like you and international heroes and international people speak on these issues, the Government will listen. I again want to congratulate Walk Free and the Global Freedom Network for gathering the Faith based Leaders.

Thank you.



**Dr Sunitha Krishnan,
Founder Prajwala**

Thank you Swati for that introduction, thank you so much. I believe that it is not quantity but quality that matters and this audience is filled with quality change agents who will bring about change. I think if one piece of machinery can cut through mountains then each one of us can really bring a revolution [Applause]

Those of us who are deeply meditating on the subject with their eyes closed please open your eyes, I want you to look at me that is why I have got up from my seat thinking that you might not see me if I'm sitting on the seat. I want you to open your eyes and see me and hear my voice. My previous speakers have spoken a lot and I don't want to repeat any of that but I just want to tell one story, which has hurt me, challenged me and confronted me.

This happened two years back. A ten-year-old child in Hyderabad was married off to a Sheikh on the phone; everything was done on the phone. She was taken from Hyderabad in the name of making her passport, her visa and everything to Mumbai. Her parents came with her. She was sold in a red light area. We had gone tracking a missing case in the area for another case. By default, we found this ten-year-old child.

When we did the rescue itself, it was very painful for us, the entire operation itself.

When we barged into the room we had done a rescue at a time when none of them could escape, they could not even hide the children. Usually for a rescue, every brothel gets a tip off and children are hidden under the cellars and in basements and other places to keep them concealed. But this particular rescue was fantastic. Nobody tipped off. We had the entire team to ourselves.

This girl was with a customer when we entered. She was bleeding profusely from her head because the customer was banging her head on the bedpost continuously. When we found her, her whole body was bladed with blade marks. She was in a horrific condition. But this horror is nothing compared to the horror of bringing her to Hyderabad and her entire family rejecting her. Social stigma, shame, dishonour, blah blah blah. They refused to acknowledge her and a whole lot of community people actually stood by that concept of saying we don't want you back.

In 24 hours time there was a change in the mindset of the community. Obviously, there was fear of legal repercussion and suddenly the community became very friendly, they came rushing to the office and they said we want the child back. We will take care of our daughter. We will take care of her, we will do everything. The local religious leaders got involved, all kinds of people from all denominations of people making up a community: political leaders, religious leaders, everyone. They came to our office, they brought the CWC, they brought the legally competent bodies,

everybody.

With a very depressed heart, we actually gave the child back and said the child has to be brought back to our office in 24 hours. In those 24 hours, the girl has vanished. We don't know where this child is anymore. The next day when we landed in the community to take back the girl neither the family was there nor was the child there. The whole connivance of the community, of people who are important leaders including religious leaders who connived with a whole lot of criminal syndicates to actually ensure that the victim is completely wiped out. I still today don't know where this child is. We have been searching for her; we don't know where she is.

When we talk about organised crimes, when we talk about trafficking, we talk about the third largest organised crime next to drugs and arms, all that is nice blah, blah, blah but this organised crime of human trafficking, especially sex trafficking thrives on human weaknesses. It thrives on human weaknesses, which come from religious practices, tradition, culture, harmful practices.

How many thousands of girls from southern regions are sold, auctioned off? I don't know how many of you know, in Andhra region, children as young as six and seven years old are auctioned off. The daughters of the Donra community, a tradition based community, which actually dedicates their daughters to the Gods and Goddesses at the age of six you are

dedicated to the Gods and Goddesses. At the age of six and one day, you are sold to the first buyer in an auction. They land in Mumbai, Delhi, everywhere in the world.

Organised crime of human trafficking has a real human face, which is of you and me, which we are a part of. This is not a community which is in planet Mars or something else. This is a community that each one of us come from. Therefore, when we talk about a response, when we talk about how do we counter this thing, start from each one of us. We have to start questioning our silence. How many of us have the guts to break our silence when once from our own community, one from our own fraternity commits the crime. When in our ashrams, when in our mosques, when in our churches? When reports of sex scandal happens how many of us Faith Leaders have the courage to stand up and say this crime is not done, this is not done and I condemn it!

How many of us have that strength of conviction to speak. This morning I have been hearing wonderful things but believe me, I am not very encouraged. I am not feeling very happy and "oh wow this is the first time in the world this has happened here". I think it's all symbolic and these symbols will take real meaning when each and everyone one of us sitting here, when we go back and we become the voice of the cause. The voice of the cause for that victim who needs acceptance within our community, the voice of the cause when we say no this criminal will not be accepted back into our community. Because to me

legal repercussions are not a deterrence, you may have a fantastic law but in my opinion that will never act as a deterrence.

What acts as a real deterrence is actual repercussions. Do we have the courage to boycott or socially boycott a sex offender or a sex trafficker? Do we have the courage to do things like that? That is when fear starts coming in and when people start getting worried that this is not a low investment/high profit business but if you are caught this is going to be so big a loss to your life that you will never be able to bounce back. Each trafficker in this world whether that is in the United States of America, or in Australia, or in India lives with the courage that even if I'm caught all my community members will treat me with dignity. Maybe even honoured and given awards too.

That is the courage we have given them, that is the validation we have given them and we need to break that. We need to create a system where each one of us, not just the Faith Leaders, as students, as civil society members, as citizens we need to break our silence on this issue. Not just break our silence in wonderful auditoriums like this but break our silence when it is needed the most. When in your own local communities and things are happening to stand up and say, "No, this is not done and this person who is a victim I stand by that victim". Tell me why should a victim hide her face?

We have created the system for her. We have created that environment for her where she is hiding her face; she wants her

face to be blurred because she is ashamed of us. We have created that environment and it is for us to create an environment of compassion, to create an environment of acceptance and more than anything else to create an environment of empathy. You are not to be blamed for the crime that has been subjected to you. You are beautiful, you are powerful.

Today when Susheela went up on stage, my heart swelled with pride. I said this is the voice that requires validation and I wish that Susheela were the main speaker of the day today. I wish she had guided us and led us to change, Susheela and many other survivors across the country are our true leaders. Because they are the undefeatable souls who have been subjected to unimaginable brutal tortures yet stand up with courage and stand up and say I am not defeated, I will move forward. I will not only change my life, I will change the lives of many others."

Today I demand from each one of you all, I don't want to request. This is not a time to request and plead for something which I believe is all our, you know each one of us is mandated to do it. I demand from each one of you all, please become the agents of breaking the silence. We need to break our silence in our houses, in our schools, in our educational institutions, in our colleges, among our followers, among every human being that we know.

Today when we go back at least if you can tell two more people what we have felt today that will be the beginning of

a change. Today what is required is not more and more people becoming literate in schools, what is required is more and more people becoming educated. Education is not just about ABC's and maths and science, education is also spiritual education, values education and education in its totality because today when you talk about trafficking it's no more about "that poor girl". It's no more about the disadvantaged community it is about your daughter, my daughter, every child. Because today with technology no human being is safe.

I rescue around 60 to 70 girls every month from sexual slavery and more than 40% of the girls I am rescuing every day are middle class, coming from middle class families, from schools and colleges. Using Facebook, social media, WhatsApp, a mobile phone. This little instrument (holds up mobile phone) today is the conduit for one of the biggest sex trafficking rackets. How many of you are following that big case that happened last week from a Facebook page called "Little beautiful girls" which was actually a page for 3,000 Indian paedophiles who were talking and sharing their wonderful secrets about how they had sex with a two year old child, a three year old child, a four year old child... from that Facebook page an entire sex trafficking network was busted which started from Kerala, moved on to Chennai, Bangalore, I don't know how much more is happening because the investigation is still going on.

When we talk about organised crime, we need to start strategizing our moves. They

are so organised, so well organised. A rescue done in Delhi, within 48 hours that many numbers are outstanding waiting in Hyderabad to claim the girl within 48 hours. The way they are well connected, the way they are well networked and have fantastic communication between themselves. Somewhere we the wonderful good guys do not have that kind of networking. We are not well organised, we are not connected with each other, we have our egos, we have our turfs, we have our domains and we all operate in silos.

If we truly believe in fighting slavery, in fighting trafficking which is another form of modern day slavery we need to actually strategise ourselves and look at ways and means that we can really unite, that we can network.

We can become a team where if their common cause is money, our common cause should be human life and that should bring us all together united as one force. Thank you Andrew for making that wonderful first step for all of us to come together. I offer my pronounce to you for all that you are doing to bring all of us together because these are leaders who have never come together to speak and you made the first move.

So on behalf of the entire anti-trafficking mission I thank you for this wonderful gesture. Thank you so much.



**Mr Andrew Forrest
Chair, Global
Freedom Network**

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. My colleagues didn't have time to write a short speech so they've written me a long speech. I will say to them "can we put this short speech on the web" and perhaps let me give you a short speech of thanks and with an absolute feeling of such humility that I stand among such giants here and I am truly grateful to you.

It is absolutely true that this is a small crowd and it is just as true that there has been no precedent to draw together the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope, the Grand Imam, The Grand Ayatollah, to come and swear in love, peace and respect for each other; a declaration to end slavery within their communities. Now that I see as very largely symbolic but it led to a great deal of action and it led to an inspiration that had the great Faith Leaders of India come here.

Swami Ji your heart is without any question... in the middle of the energy of this morning I leant over as you just did to me, the Delhi Commission for Women Maliwal, is a person I have looked up to greatly and my daughter met in great privilege and basically put

an obligation on me which I knew was a lifelong obligation and you know I had no opportunity at all but to say yes. I could not get remotely cross because I'd done the same thing to Swami Ji this morning, I leant across to him and put my hand firmly on his shoulder and said "I need your leadership for the Indian Freedom Network" and he just looked at me and said, "My heart is yours". Thank you Swami I am deeply grateful to you Sir. [Applause]

It is because of the lack of precedent to draw such Faith Leaders together and not wanting to cover you all with sometimes the security I have to put up with, but we could I believe fill several stadiums with the rock stars of religion we had here but we didn't want to do that, we barely announced it at all and we invited you quietly. But it is running very strong all over social media in India and today it is number two just after the cricket and I want you to know I don't think that's too bad. I will be more pleased like you (Dr Krishnan) when it beats the cricket but I do want to say that that time is coming

I can sense the despair, I can sense the passion of "is it all too much" in Dr Sunitha's words and I can feel that Susheela feels that burden that so many millions of women are likely to follow those dreadful footsteps, and I see the strength of Mr. Ravi Kant and all of you and

your conviction and I say this firmly, "When the Indian Faith Leaders step up like they did, when they acknowledge and India acknowledges that for all the leadership in the world and legislation and politics, there's going to be vast areas of Indian community and communities around the world which politics and law simply will not reach effectively. Then those people who are deeply respected, who consider the life hereafter as proudly as they do living and enjoying a joyful and honest life here, when those people speak like Swami Ji and the other great Faith Leaders then we know the dark places that Dr Sunitha spoke of where people can transpose the guilt of their crime onto little girls who cover their faces, we know those dark places in the world are becoming light and they (the persecutors) will scurry away and who will be left will be the people of India who understand their citizenship and understand their rights.

So, I here today say to you I know business has a role and I am a very likely easy candidate/target to speak to you about global business because I am a global businessman, but I can say this and I appreciated the words of our Nobel Laureate. Of the business people who I know, only one, fortunately, he is incredibly wealthy, but only one said to me "I will not search my supply chains for fear that I will find what I look for." And I said why

not, you're worth X tens of billions. He said "Andrew when you came true about your supply chains the media left you softly"... well I don't know any media who's ever given me a free chance... but that's what he said and he said "For me I would be told I've been caught sleeping with the village girls and I'd be hung up on the wall". And I said no the people who will be hung up on the wall when there are Corporate Executives like you with global influence are the people who are discovered to have slavery in their supply chains.

Now we've got great companies like Tesco and Nestle and others they are volunteering to step up; household names. You've got companies like mine who when we looked in our 3,000 odd suppliers who supply around 65% of the world's economy and it's often several layers deep we found at least ten cases of suspected slavery. One case I visited myself with my wife Nicola and the conditions were shocking. They were running at a mortality rate of well over a life expectancy of less than five years. Imagine going to work knowing within five years you were definitely going to die; that you had no passport and you could not leave.

I had a major finance journalist tell me "Mr Forrest it's very hard to define slavery here in India, everyone's got their own view on it" and I said that's a heap of

rubbish. When you in media fall prey for excuses like that then slavery will thrive in India. He asked "what do you mean?" and I said can you leave your job and he said, "Yeah, anytime I like". I said can someone in modern slavery leave their job, "no". Are they paid just to exist if they are paid at all, "yes"? Well you don't need an oxford dictionary and you don't need the academics you can just say "if you cannot leave, if you can't go to a better boss with less pay or a worse boss with more pay but you're free then you have defined slavery.

So, I say when I discovered slavery in my supply chains what I may assure everyone here and I've assured international audiences in front of some of the biggest companies in the world and I've been invited by Bill Clinton to a boardroom luncheon where I heard the head of some of America and India and Australia and Europe and Africa's and South America's largest companies, all of us were there. They were telling President Clinton why they had no slavery in their supply chains and President Clinton looked over to me and said "Andrew what do you think?" I looked around at all these captains of industry and said "who uses this supplier?", and about half a dozen hands went up out of about 20, and I said "okay who uses that supplier" and the rest of the hands went up. So I said right everyone in this room has slavery in your supply chains because

I discovered slavery in that company and that company serving me so you are all now guilty. To their credit, each one of those companies have taken action. But, we need to understand that while consumerism is wonderful for standards of living, if it comes at a social morality cost it is not worth it. There is no way that we can ever deny a child an education anywhere in this world with a clear conscience than there is an excuse can give for someone being in a place of work where they can never leave without risking their life.

So I feel strongly as I sit here amongst you with you few champions that there are ripples of flame, of hope, of change in India such as I have never seen and when I've felt the despair and I felt crushed by slavery so big in the world we'll never change it. And when I've spoken to academics and corporate gurus from emerging nations like your own in India and they've said "Forrest it's hopeless go and do something else. Go push your head against another brick wall but it's not forced labour; it's not slavery in our country it's too embedded". I can only say in my experience, working now in slavery for a very small number of years, and having come to India regularly over the last 3 decades there is absolute change in India.

Now there is no change in other countries and you can recognise the stillness, you

can recognise the hands of freedom death, but it is not in India. In India there is a search, a thirst for change, there is an understanding of absolute injustice, and there is a knowledge by the slave masters of this country that their time is limited. And so I do reach out to the law makers and I do reach out to the legislators and I say take hope, the people of India are with you and by the very example of the brave Faith Leaders today who came here as one, reaching out to hundreds of millions of Indians is the truth in that statement.

India will not tolerate being the largest slavery sufferer on Earth. India can lead the world out of slavery. When another journalist said to me "surely we must be able to compete with countries like Bangladesh who have forced labour and have children in their textile factories we need to produce cheaper." I said explain to me son one incident where economy hasn't grown because of a child's education or a community hasn't grown because they've become free. Of course he couldn't. I said well I can give you thousands of where economies have grown and communities have become independently stable because they have freedom. And that is the future of India and it is being led by our Faith Leaders. I thank you Swami Ji for the example which you will give this country, I thank you.



Susheela, Survivor Advocate

My name is Susheela, and I am 25 years old. I will turn 26 on Saturday Dec 5. I have been working at an NGO for the past 6 years where I am training along with other girls in the skills of cooking and tailoring. I really love the cooking!

I am from a village called Byramgampally in Kolar, Karnataka where I grew up with my mother and father, two sisters and my brother. I was attending school until 7th grade at the age of 15 when my parents forced me to leave and enter into an arranged marriage. I was not happy about this, as I wanted to continue my studies. My sisters were also forced to marry, but unlike me, they were staying close to my family and village. I went a long way away. My new husband was a relative of my mothers and was about 25 years old. I hated being married and living with my new husband and wanted to leave but he wouldn't allow it. Finally, after 2 weeks, I just decide to leave without telling him and I caught the bus back to my village.

My parents were very scared for me and tried to convince me to go back. Even my husband came looking for me but I refused to go back and with the help of my neighbours support, they allowed me to stay. I stayed in my parent's home for about a year but was unable to go to back to school.

It was during this year that I became unhappy and worried that my parents would try to marry me off again and I was looking for an escape from my life. A friend of mine was telling me about an 'auntie' of hers who lived in Bangalore and who would take us in and give us work. So we ran away on the bus and came to Bangalore.

When we reached Bangalore, my friend's auntie met us and immediately took us to a hotel where she tried to force us to eat and drink. We tried to refuse but we finally took in some juice. Soon after we had taken the juice, we became sleepy and collapsed on the floor. When we woke, we were on a bus with many other girls who were hidden behind screens. Auntie was still with us, and so we asked her what was happening but she told us everything was ok and that we should sleep. When the bus finally stopped we realised we were in Mumbai but no auntie wouldn't tell us why or what we were doing there. I was very frightened and wanted to go back.

Auntie took my friend and me to a house but then straight away left with my friend and I was on my own. There were other girl in this house but I knew no one. I was so scared and I knew this house was not safe and that something was very wrong. I refused to eat or drink but finally I took in some milk. After drinking the milk, I fell into a deep sleep and when I woke, I was completely naked and knew that I had been raped. These people had taken my clothes from me and I stayed in a naked state for about a month. I tried to escape, but it was impossible. I was ashamed,

frightened and desperate, crying and screaming for help. Another girl was sent to guard me, but I found out that she was also just as desperate to escape from this place as I was. Priya, who became my friend was from Nepal and had also been brought to this brothel in Kamatipura, against her will. Auntie had sold me to this brothel for 150,000 rupees and I was told I had to pay this money back before I could be allowed out.

I stayed in that brothel for about a year and in that time was forced to have sex with up to 30-40 men a day. There were about 50 girls in the house and more than 200 men would come visiting each day. They were old and young, locals, and foreigners, and even policemen. We would be at work from 6pm until 6am with only 2 hours rest each day. I was sick, not sleeping and had to have an abortion when I became pregnant.

I was always looking for a way to escape but my customers were too scared to help and they were unable to bring mobile phones in with them. But one day a customer came who managed to get his phone in with him. I begged him not to touch me and told him how much I hated it there and how desperate I was to escape that place. He was kind, and ended up calling the police and telling them my story. That next night, the police came and raided the brothel. Forty girls were rescued and many ran away. I was one of the ones rescued and was taken immediately to an after care shelter. A medical examination showed that I was 3 months pregnant. I was taken to a government home. The brothel owners were taken to jail.

When I found I was pregnant, I didn't want that baby as it reminded me of the bad things that happened in the brothel. The Sister tried to convince me that God would take care of the baby and place it in a good home but I was not going to have it. I ended up having an abortion. I was so unhappy and wanted to die. I tried to commit suicide by hanging myself but God had other plans for me. My friend from the brothel had also been telling me these things too. I stayed there for about 2 years and learnt to pray and understand how much God loved me. I had to go to court to testify against the brothel owners and the judge asked what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go. I said I wanted to see my family and go back to Bangalore.

I ended up in a safe home in Bangalore and saw my family as well. I didn't tell them what had happened to me, they thought I had died! I am only now starting to tell them my story.

While I was in the home in Bangalore, I became angry with God, asking Him why this has happened to me. Through help, I started to understand again His love for me. I had a dream that God spoke to me and told me he would never leave me.

I am so hopeful today, I want to share my story to say that it is possible to recover and I feel restored. There are many people who helped me reach where I am and I am so grateful for their help and support. Most importantly, my faith in God has given me a reason to live and I am truly at peace.



**Smt. Swati Maliwal,
Chairperson, Delhi
Commission for
Women**

Thank you so much for such high praise Grace and Mr Andrew Forrest.

With high praise comes a lot of expectations and I just hope I am able to fulfill them in the 3 years that have been bestowed upon me. Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity and this platform to share my views and I really thank the two of you for organising a very powerful and beautiful event like this. I'm extremely hopeful that things will change. I'll just run you through the status of implementation of the measures that are being taken for women's safety in Delhi.

Delhi as we all know is the rape capital of the world. All of us are talking about women safety but when we come down to the implementation, is the implementation really happening. I'll be sharing some data, some thoughts and experiences with you and then let's maybe at the end discuss what exactly is happening in Delhi.

In the past month we have witnessed brutal rapes of 3 minors. One 4 year old girl was brutally raped. When I went and visited her after her operations in hospital I was completely shocked to see what I saw. The girl had bite marks, the girl had scratches, the girl was literally eaten by the man who raped her. For two hours she was operated on and subsequently for two months she was in hospital fighting for her

life. Even the next day when I visited her I was completely horrified to see that though she was heavily sedated, after every five or ten minutes she was shaken up. One could actually feel the child reliving that horrible incident again and again.

Within a week I got information that to more girls were gang raped, not just raped but gang raped in Delhi. A five year old girl gang raped and a two and a half year old girl gang raped and this is Delhi. It was completely shocking and a very very horrifying experience for all of us. I tried to understand why is this happening, why is Delhi the rape capital of the world? Some figures I sought from the Delhi police and it will be very shocking for you to note that only 9 convictions have happened in Delhi in 2014 for crimes against women. Can you imagine 11,000 FIRs were registered, complaints were registered by the police and only 3,500 complaints were charge sheeted which is very sad because the police are supposed to charge sheet these complaints within 3 months, this is 2014 I'm talking about, and only 9 convictions. Nobody is scared in Delhi you can do anything and you can get away with it.

All of us should tell women, tell girls, teach them to move forward. Tell them to raise their voices against evil and when they do so the entire universe, the entire system, the entire society just tries to crush this voice. We started to analyse this data asking why only 9 convictions and we found out that firstly police have not been filing the charge sheets in a proper and timely

manner. In a rape case of a ten year old girl the police filed the charge sheet after 20 months. You can imagine what kind of justice is going to be given by the court.

The second problem that we identified, Delhi has only one forensic science laboratory and you can be sure that we actually issued notice on this forensic lab, the Delhi Commission of Women, and we found that they have told us in writing that 1,500 samples have expired. Now for these 1,500 women, men or children who maybe are victims of gang rape, victims of child rape, these women, children and men have lost any... they've been denied justice. Because if the forensic report is coming in their cases in an accurate manner the court will not be able to decide on their matters. This has happened in Delhi and it was extremely shocking. We have issued a notice to the Home Secretary of the Delhi Government to explain who is responsible for this kind of a mess. On one end we talk about women safe and on the other end this is the implementation.

The third thing we discovered are fast track courts, which are supposed to be fast tracked, are not working in a fast track manner. One girl is forced to go through the courts for five years, six years and by the end of it she somehow just gives in. The opposite party is able to lure her with a little amount of money and there is a settlement and she goes silent. So now as the Delhi Commission for Women we are trying to work on all three of these issues in order to ensure that Delhi has some convictions.

Apart from that we realise that Delhi has a very very feared nature. It is a state but the policing of Delhi comes under the Central Government and the rest comes under the State Government. That actually leads to a lot of politics on the issue of rape. What we have tried to do is we are not here to do politics and I in the time until the Delhi Commission achieve it, I will ensure that none of my offices are used for politics on the issue of rape and neither will I allow anybody else to politicise the issue of rape. [Applause]

And what we are trying to do is, I went and met the honourable Home Minister of the government of India who is also the police head of Delhi. We have requested him to please set up a commission where the Home Minister of India, the Chief Minister of Delhi, the Police Commissioner and the Delhi Commission of Women Chief should meet at least every one week and make decisions on the spot. Whatever is on the Government side to do let them be accountable to the committee and whatever is the problem with the Delhi Police that should be solved through this particular committee.

I had a very positive meeting and I am extremely hopeful that he will agree to this idea and we will have this committee very soon. In the meantime the LG has set up a committee and we are trying to work through that. There are people and there are women who like you and me actually have a voice. If something goes wrong with us we know where to go, we know where to fight it out but are there

are these number of women in Delhi who have absolutely no voice. We have been discussing anti-trafficking initiatives and the moment I assumed office I went and visited the Garstin Bastion (GB) road, this is the most infamous road in Delhi this is the red light district in Delhi. Nobody, none of the politicians want to visit that because in fact when I visited it a very senior politician called me and said "look, don't go there, You won't get anything out of it, it is a dead end". But still I don't believe so, I think we should try all our initiatives.

Even today women and girls are being sold there. If you go there during the day there will be men/pimps who will be telling you "I have a very nice 12 year old girl for you, do you want her?" This is what is happening right in the centre of Delhi just km from the parliament of the country and it is 3km from the Delhi Secretariat yet nobody wants to talk about it. Women are sold, and like Susheela's story that we've heard, this is being repeated over and over again. 30 men, one day, no money: this is the condition of GB Road. The kind of situation that exists there I believe there are politicians who go there and they (were physically sick) because they could not even bear the stench of women's desperation that GB road actually has.

We are trying to work on it and it was very shocking for us to realise that within all the rhetoric of women's safety, that in 2012 a committee was set in the Delhi Government to look into trafficking measures and look into the rehabilitation measures by the Delhi Government and

you will be very shocked to note that the committee had not even met even once. When we came when I became Chair of Delhi Commission for Women I appealed to the Delhi Government and immediately this committee became active. We've had the first meeting and Delhi has no rehabilitation policy for these women. Because of which we have not been able to implement the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act properly and now we are working with the Delhi Government to ensure some rehabilitation policy comes onboard.

In the meantime policies will happen with CII and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and also with the American Chamber of Industries to actually select 50, 100, 150 women and start a pilot project. I really very strongly believe that change can come and we will work with 50 or so women and ensure that their rehabilitation happens in a proper manner so that other women from there also come out. It is extremely sad when a woman is rescued from GB Road she ends up in a place which is there for protecting these women, for protecting the victims from the State and society.

I met a girl a few months back and this is her story. She was 12 and she was gang raped at the age of 12. She delivered a baby within one year. Between 13 and 17 and a half years of age she was raped continuously every day and every night by her own brother and by her own father. When she came to us I was completely shocked by the condition that she was in.

Her entire story and the agony of what she has gone through was visible on her face and in her body. We ensure that NFI was registered and now this girl because she is in protection, she is in need of protection she has ended up in a (women's shelter). We as activists have been hearing that women's shelters are in a very bad way in the entire country but we were never allowed access to it. Thankfully I came into this position and one fine day we realised that we must go and visit this place. We realised that if we do this visit during the day the officers there will make sure that we never get to know the truth.

That is why at 8pm at night me and my team, two other members of our commission, we landed in (the area) where they tried to deny us access but years of activism helped us to just barge in. We told them that you can call the police if you want but we are members of the Delhi Commission of Women and you cannot deny us access. We went there and stayed the entire night with these women and believe you me in years of activism I've seen a lot of things but I haven't seen anything like this. I've only seen it in the movies, in Bollywood movies which Indians would know. You had 100 women in this place and 60 women were actually mentally ill. There were screaming, they were shouting and they were not given any kind of care. The rest of the women, 40 women who had just recently been rescued from GB Road, they were in a corner completely scared because they did not know how to deal with these mentally ill people. That

was the situation and the little food that was coming in in their name was being siphoned off. There was no psychiatric help, there was no vocational training, there was no employment opportunities.

These are victims of the State and of society who are being jailed without any kind of recourse to them and when I went there it was so emotionally moving because all of them they just hugged us and they begged us and we realised they were becoming "files" of bureaucracy for a woman coming in there and creating files. Women who had been there languishing for ten years. I don't know if this woman had been so-called "mad" when she first came there or if she became mad because of the kind of torture she went through in this protection home. So we created quite a damning report for the Delhi Government and the Chief Minister immediately suspended 6 officers but a lot of work is needed to be done and we are now working with NGOs to make sure that things improve.

Another section of society, which doesn't have a voice, is the acid attack victims. In India, even today, if a girl denies the advances of a man acid is thrown on her. We had an acid attack victim, a 15-year-old girl, she was completely poor. She came all the way to Delhi in the general compartment by railway and she was covered from top to bottom. The kind of condition she was in, her eyes were melted, and it was a horrible situation. She comes all the way to Delhi for treatment and there is a supreme court direction which clearly says that these kind of acid attack victims

will be treated free of charge by all the hospitals. She comes to Delhi and is denied admission by two major hospitals in Delhi. At 10am in the morning she reaches one hospital and is denied admission and for 3 hours her parents and family beg that she will die, she is infected and to please give her admission. Still they denied admission.

Then at 3.50pm she reaches another hospital and is denied admission. Until 7.30, she is denied admission until we get to know and intervene and we threaten the hospital with dire consequences and that is when she is admitted. But the fact is that what they have done is extremely wrong. We issued notices on them and now we have recommended to the Delhi Government and the Central Government to register criminal complaints against both these hospitals, FIRs, because what they have done is completely unacceptable.

Apart from that, one night we realised that there are these women who are sleeping on the streets and these women are everybody. They are victims of trafficking, they are victims of slavery, they have come from all parts of the country and they are here right in Delhi when all of us are living and sleeping in the comfort of our quilts these women are sleeping on the streets. So we stayed one entire night in one of the night shelters in Delhi and what we came across was extremely shocking. There was absolutely no privacy, the men's night shelter and women's night shelter all of them are in together. There were only three toilets there and 150 women and children are supposed to use just these three toilets

so they are being forced to defecate in the open and this is right in the centre of Delhi.

There are various other issues that I could speak forever on but I just wanted to raise some to this esteemed audience and I would also like to say that right now, because this is a conference of religious leaders I think that spiritual leaders play a very very important role in India. Maybe much more than the rest of us and I would like to just share my own story.

Ten years back I decided to leave my engineering job to work with the poor. When I left my job I had no idea, I had no direction in life but I decided to do it because I heard this inner calling, inside some powerful story was there in me which was trying to come out so I just decided to do it. For ten years I was ridiculed, I was made fun of, I was told that this is the most stupid thing anybody can do, I could have earned (lots of money) each month. My friends, my family and everybody ridiculed me but I continued with my work. I continued because I had the conviction that whatever I do, even if it is making a small little change, I was happy about it. And I did it and today if you are able to hear me and hear my experiences it is because of that long process, not religious process but a spiritual process, that I followed and I tried to be living and the change that I wanted to see in the world and now this is where I am.

I just wanted to thank everybody for listening to me and I also want to tell everyone that in whatever capacity we

have I'm sure that, I mean not all of us can actually leave everything and start working for the poor in society and this is not what I'm trying to say but whatever capacity we have, if we start thinking about others I am very sure the world will change. Thank you.



I AM SO **HOPEFUL** TODAY,
I WANT TO SHARE MY STORY
TO SAY THAT
IT IS POSSIBLE TO RECOVER
AND **I FEEL RESTORED.**

Susheela, Survivor Advocate



FULL SPEECH TRANSCRIPTS

THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE EVENT, AUSTRALIA

We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historical initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time.

In the eyes of God each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.

We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative.

*Andrew Forrest
for the Global Freedom Network*
Josh Carter
Grand Imam of Al-Azhar uses the word - religions -
Shah
Ilse Koolen
on behalf of the A.H. Foundation and Patrycja Bartholomew

The full speeches of all leaders who spoke at Parliament House, Canberra Australia, at the signing of the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* on 2 December 2015, are provided.



Pastor Wayne Alcorn
*National President,
Australian Christian
Churches*

"The Australian Christian Churches believes that every human being is entitled to freedom and equality, to live with dignity and be treated with respect.

As a movement of over 1,000 churches, we condemn slavery in all its forms and we are committed to actively ensure that human trafficking is eradicated in our world during our generation.

Today we stand as advocates for the freedom of those whose lives are being traded as commodities, and as a voice for liberty and justice for those who have no voice and whose rights have been violated.

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that this is our mandate; in the words declared by Jesus: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring good news to the poor; to proclaim that captives will be released, the blind will see; that the oppressed will be set free..." (Luke 4:18 NLT)

Together with the co-signatories of the Australian Freedom Network, the Australian Christian Churches affirms our support for every effort and endeavour to effectively stand against and eliminate human trafficking in the 21st century. We believe that by working together in faith, we can achieve this goal."



Rev Dr Bill Brown
*Chair, National Council of
Australian Baptists in Australia*

"Australian Baptists affirm the supreme authority of the Bible, the living Word of God, in all matters of faith and conduct, and seek to thoughtfully and diligently apply biblical teaching to issues of public and private morality.

From the Bible we are assured that all persons are created in the image of God, and should be treated with dignity and respect; and all persons are created equal, and should be treated with justice and compassion (Genesis 1:26-27; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:25-37; James 5:1-6).

We believe that all slavery – whether chattel slavery, serfdom or debt bondage – is contrary to the will of God, who sees and hears the suffering and injustice caused by slavery (Exodus 3:7-8). We believe that slavery alienates humankind from God and from one another; that no person should be owned or exploited as the property of another; that workers are not to be

considered as merely instrumental in the production of goods and services; that work done should be justly remunerated; and that workers have a right to adequate rest from their employment.

We believe that an essential element of the mission of God, expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, is to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, and release from oppression – including the physical and psychological oppression of slavery (Luke 4:18-19). All those who seek to follow Jesus are called to join him in this work.

We believe that, while the Bible does not explicitly outlaw slavery, the church of Jesus Christ constitutes a new kind of society which enables and empowers social transformation, including the elimination of slavery in all its forms. We are confident that the consistent application of the biblical principles of human dignity and equality, supported by universal human rights, will result in equality before God that is no longer a hidden, metaphysical reality but a social one, and that delivers freedom for slaves everywhere.

We commend the prophetic witness of all who work toward the noble goal of freedom from slavery and an end to its evil institutions. We commend the actions of governments and non-government organisations dedicated to ending slavery in our time.

We commit ourselves to expose the sin of slavery, to serve as Christ's presence in support of enslaved people, and to help to bring healing and wholeness to individuals and families and communities broken by slavery, for the glory of God and the realisation of the kingdom of God.

We further commit ourselves to work together with others of similar convictions toward a world where economic injustice and discrimination are eliminated – or, as the Apostle Paul put it, where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)."



**Commissioner
James Condon**
*The Salvation Army
Eastern Territory*

"The Salvation Army Australia is deeply committed to ending modern slavery however it may be manifested. The Salvation Army stands together, united in one purpose, and with one voice to affirm that modern slavery must end.

Modern slavery is contrary to the principles of freedom and dignity, which are core to who we are.

The Salvation Army is opposed to the corrupt abuse of power against other human beings. We have a responsibility, both individually and collectively to work for the liberation of those who have been enslaved.

We believe all people are created in the image of God and are loved by Him (Genesis 1:26), no person is of less value or importance and therefore all should

be treated with the same respect and the same love.

Every person has the right to freedom, every person should be respected and every human life should be held in high regard. The Bible teaches that nobody should be exploited or damaged. Psalm 10 describes the wickedness of those who entrap others and the Psalmist calls on God to intervene. This Psalm is as relevant now as it was when it was written many years before the birth of Jesus.

Jesus taught that no one should live in physical or spiritual bondage. He said, 'The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, 'This is the year the Lord has chosen.'" (Luke 4: 18 - 19). He was quoting Isaiah 61: 1 - 2. Later in Isaiah 61 are these words, 'I, the Lord, love justice! But I hate robbery and injustice.' (v. 8).

We are called to rise up, to speak out and to act, to end modern slavery."



**Right Rev David
Cook**
*Moderator
Presbyterian Church of
Australia*

"The Presbyterian Church of Australia affirms its faith in the God and Father of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the triune God.

We believe that God has breathed out the words of Scripture via His Holy Spirit, the Bible is the God-breathed Word of God, our supreme authority, that which a careful and serious reading of the Bible affirms, this denomination affirms, that which it condemns, we condemn.

We believe that all humankind is to be respected because man and woman were created by God in His image (Genesis 1:26 -27).

We believe that Jesus Christ took on human flesh and revealed God's model of humanity (John 1:14, John 14:9,

Colossians 1:15 - 19) and that humans are more truly human by knowing Him and growing to be like Him (Romans 8:29).

We believe that Jesus Christ was committed to the love of enemy (Matthew 5:44) and friend (Luke 10:27 - 28), we therefore commit ourselves to the consistent pursuit of the elimination of 21st Century slavery - which is profoundly unloving.

We believe that all enslavement, whereby humans lose freedom and are exploited, against their will, for the profit and advantage of others, is both disrespectful of God and dehumanising of the human being.

We believe that every effort ought to be made to rid the world of such a stain, by all legal means, thus expressing solidarity with our brethren of the 17th and 18th centuries who worked for the eradication of slavery in an earlier age."



His Grace Bishop Daniel
Coptic Orthodox
Church of Australia,
Sydney and Affiliated
Regions

"The Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions affirms its faith in one God and Father of Our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We believe in the triune God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe that God created man and woman equally in God's image and human mankind was created (Genesis 1:26 -27).

We believe that Jesus Christ was Incarnated of the Virgin St Mary and of the Holy Spirit, and became man except for sin, for the sake of humanity, in order to show us a model of life in Godliness and Holiness by being His disciples for the Kingdom of Heaven.

We believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross and resurrected on the third day and ascended to the Heavens on the 40th day and will return to judge the living and the dead.

We believe that Jesus Christ gave us the commandment of "love", "to love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

We believe all men and women are born equal and hence, all men and women have the right to live in peace, harmony, without prejudice of any kind, without harm of any abuse, and of any kind of violence to all human beings.

We believe that we will work in solidarity to eliminate slavery of all kind for the benefit of mankind."



Archbishop Dr Philip Freier
Primate Anglican Church of
Australia

"Today, I am signing the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*.

For any person the concept of slavery is abhorrent.

We know that it exists in far too many places in the world today, even in our own country.

It's important that we all take a stand to eliminate this great evil.

We join together to recognise the God-given dignity of each human person to know freedom, to live without their lives being owned by others and to express themselves to the fullest potential that God has given them.

So join with me in helping to make our world free of slavery."



Archbishop Denis Hart
President, Australian
Catholic Bishops
Conference

"In the words of Pope Francis, today slavery is rooted in the notion of the human being treated as an object.

When we no longer regard our neighbours as being of equal dignity, sharing a common humanity with our brothers and sisters, but rather as objects, slavery can often take root in our society.

It is a tragedy that in our world today, human beings created in the image and likeness of God, are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others.

Many are treated as a means to an end. With education, respect and dignity for every human person, we can make a difference.

Together, let us commit to eradicate this affront to our humanity."

The following is a Joint Statement made by **Sheikh Ali Jaber**, Director, *Al Sadiq Foundation, Melbourne* and **Sheikh Youssef Nabha**, Imam, *Masjed Al Rahman*

"We the **Muslim Eithna Ashari school of thought**, stand with our brothers in faith and our like in creation, for a practical action plan to eradicate modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trafficking, and any other abuse to a fellow human being across the world.

Allah created us free; no one has the rights to enslave or abuse the rights of his/her fellow human being.

Islam came as a practical religion to guide humanity from darkness into light with the teachings of the holy Prophets (Noah, Ibrahim, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad peace be upon them all) who were sent as a mercy onto humanity all brought reform of slavery by encouraging the followers of the faith to free their slaves or treat them as their brothers, feed them from what they eat and dressed them from what they dress and not to ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you they do so, then to help them.

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, **and for the ransom of slaves**; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing. (Quran 2:177)

Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation, feed ten indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families; or clothe them; **or give a slave his freedom**. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths. Thus doth Allah makes clear to you His signs, that ye may be grateful. (Quran 5:89)."



Pastor Brian Houston
Hillsong Church

"From the very beginning human beings were created in the image of God.

"Hillsong Church believes that all people are created in the image of God and that, as image bearers, all human beings are entitled to freedom, dignity and respect.

As a local church in Australia we are opposed to slavery in all its forms and are passionate about eradicating human trafficking across the globe.

The Bible says: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" Prov 31:8 (NIV). Today we are raising our voices to speak on behalf of those whose voices have been silenced by injustice.

Together with the co-signatories of the Australian Freedom Network, Hillsong Church supports every effort to stand against, and eliminate human trafficking in the 21st Century. Working together we believe we can achieve this goal."



Bishop John Henderson
Lutheran Church of Australia

"From the very beginning human beings were created in the image of God.

Reverence for human life as a sacred gift and trust fills each person with dignity and worth.

We learn this also from the life of Jesus Christ, who treated each person with dignity and compassion. He did not come to be served, but to serve. As the Son of God he freely served other human beings with his whole life. He showed us the way that God wants us to deal with one another.

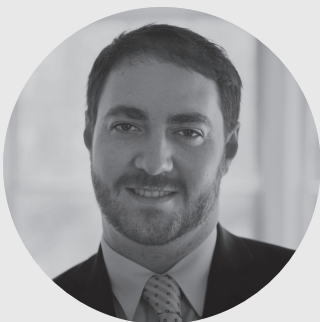
Forced service or bonded labour shatters that dignity. Turning one human into the possession of another, to deal with as they will, dehumanises both. This practice undermines the basis of human society,

and cheapens the value of human life. We are to explore new ways of living in which one human being does not exploit or dominate another.

We believe that slavery in all its forms is wrong. As a society we need to work to remove it, and repent of inhumane practices and the economic benefits we have received from them.

The Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand joins with church, faith, business and community leaders across the world to do all we can spiritually and practically to eradicate modern slavery.

Let us pray for the strength, grace, and determination we all need to achieve this end. Even as Christ has set us free, so let us live in that freedom for the welfare and benefit of all."



Rabbi Alon Meltzer
*Rabbinic Council of
 Australia and New
 Zealand & Executive
 Council of Australian
 Jewry*

"Maimonides the 12th Century philosopher, Joseph Caro, the author of the Shulchan Aruch (codification of Jewish law) in the 14th century, and modern day philosophers have maintained throughout history that slavery is not a Jewish attribute, and that fair treatment of all workers is mandated due to the fact that we are created b'tzelem Elokim, in the image of God.

Rabbi Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine, transposed the ethics taught in the rules surrounding slavery, as an opportunity to educate the industrial hierarchy of their responsibilities to their works. Kook, realising that each of us works for someone, describes these laws as a way to ensure that each of us should be granted rights to combat injustices.

The Jewish people are commanded numerous times to remember that we were slaves in Egypt, strangers in a strange land. These principles govern much of our interactions between our fellow human beings. It is why Jewish communities have been seen linking arms in various civil rights movements and actions.

At this time, when the Australian Freedom Network is launching, at the centre of our democratic institution, that the Rabbinic Council of Australia and New Zealand stand with our entire Jewish community, and faith leaders from around the country, to decry human trafficking, the exploitation of men women and children, and the very concept of slavery.

For too long, we have seen reports and the impacts of human trafficking, and for too long the world has sat idly by doing too little. Now is the time to stand up and make our voices heard, joining a global network of faiths and organisations to bring an end to the destructive consequences of slavery!

In the Ethics of our Fathers (Pirkei Avot 1:14) we read of Hillel, the great Mishnaic Sage where he said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?"

We have to make sure we look after ourselves and our people, but if we are only for ourselves what is the point of being here. If we do not act, we are part of the problem, and we are giving up parts of our very humanity. If we don't act now, then we will never act."



Pandit Narendra Dave
*President, Australian Council
 of Hindu Clergy*

"One of the core beliefs of Hinduism is that God resides in the heart of every living being.

All living beings are the embodiments of the Divine. But it is only in the human birth that one can strive for self-realization and unification with the Divine.

The human birth is thus an extremely precious attainment and we deplore all forms of trafficking, slavery or any form of degradation, exploitation or coercion of other human beings for commercial gain.

There is a common universal prayer that we recite: "May the wicked become virtuous, may the virtuous attain peace, may the peaceful be liberated from their bonds and may those who are liberated help to liberate others!"



**His Eminence
Dr Ibrahim Abu
Mohammed**
Grand Mufti of Australia

"Today, I am signing an important *Declaration* calling for the freedom from slavery, liberating people from the fear of creation and worrying about their livelihood.

On behalf of the Muslims of Australia I am honoured to sign this *Declaration* that lifts the status of the human being, restoring his or her dignity and freedom.

Thank you.

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be with you."



Julian Robertson
*Presiding Clerk of
Australian Quakers*

'Love thy neighbour as thyself' (Mark 12:31).

Most Quakers envisage a world in which 'that of God' in each of us enables us to recognize and acknowledge 'that of God' in our neighbour; a world in which we strive to put into practice our testimonies of Peace, Integrity, Equality, Simplicity, Community and Earthcare.

As well as trying to live by these guiding principles in our personal lives, Quakers, along with many people of goodwill, are committed to changing society, morally and politically, to provide equal opportunity, equal access to health and education, and equal right for all to enjoy a safe, wholesome and fulfilling life.

When we regard all people as equal in the sight of God we cannot exploit or humiliate them. For this reason Quakers everywhere work to make their society more equal, and

to make relationships between countries fairer. A good society is one in which people enjoy seeing other people thrive.

In the 19th century Quakers were very active in the anti-slavery movement. Today global slavery and human trafficking are less conspicuous but more widespread globally, and continue to be an appalling abuse of human rights and equality.

Many Quakers try to reduce their participation in human exploitation by purchasing Fair Trade products, but what else can we do, especially for those who are exploited here in Australia? We can also raise public awareness, support organizations that are active in this area, including the Australian Freedom Network, and 'speak truth to power'.



Venerable Ban Ruo Shi
*Senior Abbott, Prajna
Monastery Australia*

"Slavery in all its forms should be abolished as it does not respect the rights of peoples of all faiths. It undermines our common humanity and seeks to destroy individual, family and community bonds.

Buddhism believes that we are all equal and that we should show compassion and respect to all sentient beings. Slavery does not respect or value the lives of others as it exploits the vulnerable and often voiceless members of society.

All sentient beings have the potential to gain enlightenment and we should all work together to help those most in need."



Stuart McMillan
*President, Uniting
Church in Australia*

"The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God's children.

Each person's life and rights need to be protected or the human community - the reflection of God - is diminished.

All forms of slavery and forced labour are an abuse of human rights and contrary to the gospel of God's love in Christ for all human beings and the earth.

The Uniting Church in Australia has a long-standing commitment to advocacy for human rights through our own councils and agencies, and in solidarity with our partner churches around the world.

We proudly support this network for the elimination of human trafficking and slavery which is an abomination of human rights and dignity."



Commissioner Floyd Tidd
The Salvation Army Southern Territory

"The Salvation Army Australia is deeply committed to ending modern slavery however it may be manifested. The Salvation Army stands together, united in one purpose, and with one voice to affirm that modern slavery must end.

Modern slavery is contrary to the principles of freedom and dignity, which are core to who we are.

The Salvation Army is opposed to the corrupt abuse of power against other human beings. We have a responsibility, both individually and collectively to work for the liberation of those who have been enslaved.

We believe all people are created in the image of God and are loved by Him (Genesis 1:26), no person is of less value or importance and therefore all should be treated with the same respect and the same love.

Every person has the right to freedom, every person should be respected and every human life should be held in high regard. The bible teaches that nobody should be exploited or damaged. Psalm 10 describes the wickedness of those who entrap others and the Psalmist calls on God to intervene. This Psalm is as relevant now as it was when it was written many years before the birth of Jesus.

Jesus taught that no one should live in physical or spiritual bondage. He said, 'The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, 'This is the year the Lord has chosen.'" (Luke 4: 18 - 19). He was quoting Isaiah 61:1 - 2. Later in Isaiah 61 are these words, 'I, the Lord, love justice! But I hate robbery and injustice.' (v. 8).

We are called to rise up, to speak out and to act, to end modern slavery."

The background of the image is a close-up of parched, cracked earth in shades of brown and tan. The cracks are deep and irregular, creating a textured, almost abstract pattern. In the bottom right corner, a small portion of a person's sleeve is visible, featuring a colorful pattern of blue, orange, and pink circles on a light background.

#EndSlavery





#EndSlavery

www.globalfreedomnetwork.org

Andrew and Nicola Forrest
Australia

Dear Bill and Warren,

Nicola and I are honoured to be inaugural members of the new group of international (non U.S.) pledgers. We join you in the common hope that our example may give others in similar fortunate circumstances pause for thought. Accordingly, we say the following:

Dear readers, and indeed any person who is considering philanthropy,

As a family we agreed many years ago to give away the majority of our wealth. We felt that if our children were to inherit considerable wealth, it would only get in the way of them striving for and achieving their best, and truly making a positive difference in other people's lives.

As you contemplate your own long term choices in life, perhaps consider joining us. Then consider also committing the same leadership, passion and determination that created your wealth, to the causes you believe in. Giving your most precious gift – your talent, time and capital will ensure the most powerful result.

Nicola and I grew up in Australia, a prosperous country whose friendly people share a deep desire to help others least fortunate. A country that affords opportunities born of education, democracy, respect for law and title, and an independent judiciary. Australians cherish their freedom to accumulate capital and distribute it, in the manner they consider best. We are proud that our fellow countrymen, in any crisis, always show willingness to do what they can, with whatever they have to help others. Taking our cue from them and the book that has guided much of our lives to date, the New Testament, we have focussed on helping those least fortunate. In our country, Indigenous Australians form part of a proportion of those least fortunate. Globally, it is those suffering the unbearable yoke of modern slavery, which infects every country.

Nicola and I resist the temptation and pressure to alleviate suffering through short term solutions, such as cash handouts. This can ultimately weaken the very people that it is intended to help. Instead we choose to construct long term solutions, often through responsible collaboration with governments and other organisations. Our aim is to significantly improve people's lives through encouraging freedom, education, training and opportunity, thereby providing them with the greatest gift of all – individual personal empowerment and freedom from poverty.

We believe in every child's inalienable right to receive and benefit from education. They had no say in joining our world so it is our responsibility to give them safe passage when they arrive into it. Education provides the foundation to break the cycle of poverty and lack of freedom. Perhaps even more, it gives parents the exhilaration to realise that there are far greater outcomes available for them and their children than they may have ever dreamt possible.

It is for these reasons that we pledge, with the love and support of our children, to shine a light on inequality and share the vast majority of our wealth. We hope to help empower individuals and families currently suffering the despair of poverty, slavery and the lack of opportunity for themselves and their children. We feel that if we all do whatever we can with whatever we have, large or small, then each of us will help make our world a more equitable and positive environment for others to thrive in.

We humbly ask that with your philanthropy and your time, you also consider helping those who do not enjoy the gifts of life we have been so fortunate to receive.

Andrew and Nicola

THE GIVING PLEDGE

In 2009, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett met, and agreed to give away the vast majority of their own wealth, and to appeal to other globally recognised business people to give away at least US\$500 million or 50 per cent of their wealth to charitable causes. As the Forrest family had already made that commitment amongst themselves, when they were approached by Bill Gates to join what became universally known as the *Giving Pledge*, the Forrests readily agreed to join in order to publicly commit to the cause. The letter of commitment is housed at The Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington DC.



#EndSlavery

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