



GLOBAL
FREEDOM
NETWORK

A United Faith Against Modern Slavery

The Joint Declaration
of Religious Leaders
Against Modern Slavery



Cover image: "Please don't photograph my face, my in laws cannot see me like this"
Photo Credit: Grace Forrest.

Into the light: "Sometimes I wish I could be a boy. Then I could just work, working is ok. When we get to a certain age, or look a certain way, other things are expected of us. Being a boy seems so much more simple."
Photo Credit: Grace Forrest.

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“

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.

Dr Andrew Forrest AO

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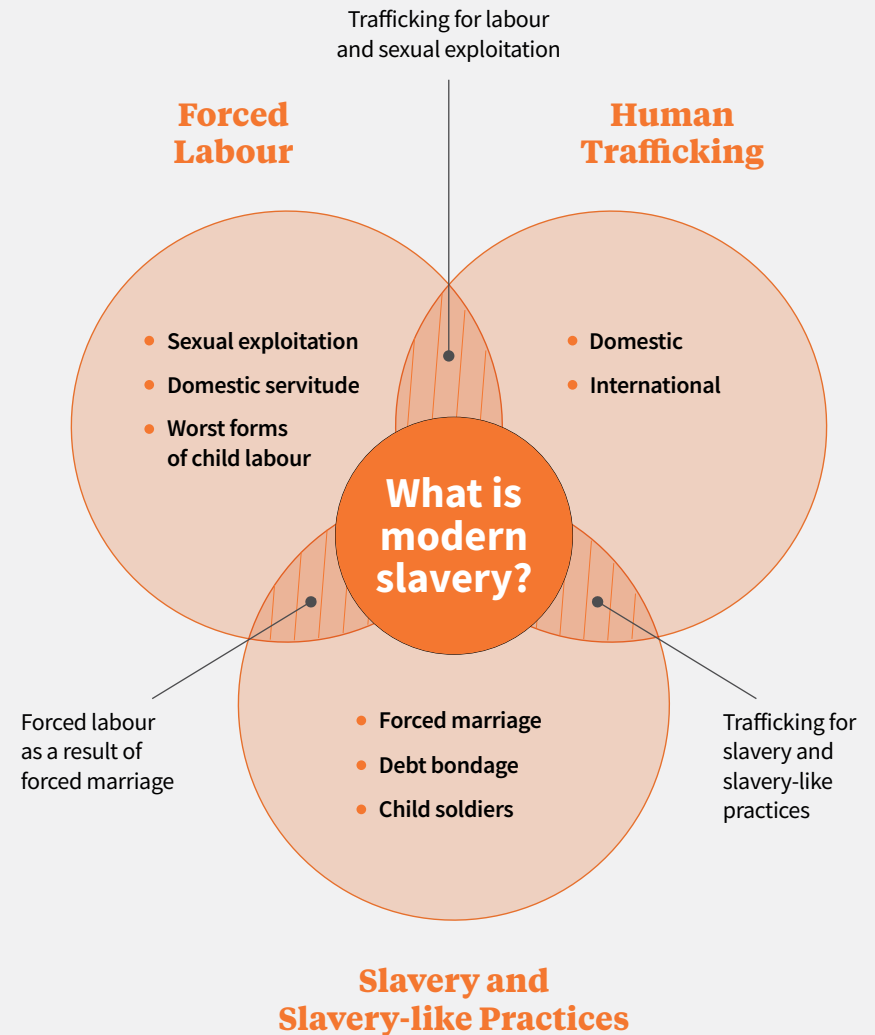
An estimated 49.6 million people around the world are trapped in modern slavery, more than at any time in our history and in spite of the fact that slavery is illegal in almost every country.

This figure means that almost one in every 150 people in the world are living in forced labour or forced marriage. That is almost 10 million more men, women and children living in modern slavery since Walk Free released the 2018 Global Slavery Index.

Modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, other slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking. Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.

At its core, modern slavery is a manifestation of extreme inequality, reflecting the world's existing power structures. Countries use various terms to describe modern slavery, including the term slavery itself, as well as other concepts like human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, and the sale or exploitation of children.

These terms are defined in various international agreements and treaties, which many countries have voluntarily signed onto and ratified into law.



Global Freedom Network

Global Freedom Network is the faith-based arm of Walk Free, an international human rights group working to eradicate modern slavery in all its forms.

We recognise that faith can play a vital role in fighting modern slavery because faith leaders are in a unique position to see into the hearts of their communities.

With a philosophy built on interfaith collaboration, Global Freedom Network is grateful to the faith leaders who have come together to tackle modern slavery — an issue which strikes at the heart of human dignity.

Global Freedom Network was founded in 2014, with the signing of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery at the Vatican, a world-first event which brought together leaders of many of the world's biggest faiths in a common cause.

Since its founding, Global Freedom Network has expanded across the globe working with leaders of all faiths who are building bridges between victims and law enforcement, connecting social workers and victim support groups, and developing cooperative connections with governments.

Right: Jaipur, India, 2019. This image was taken at a brick kiln where local women are often trapped in a cycle of bonded labour and their wages are regularly withheld. Photo Credit: Grace Forrest.



How Can Faith Communities Help Combat Modern Slavery?

Religion guides values, morality, and identity across many communities. Religious leaders and faith organisations have increased access to family and community spheres, often reaching the hearts and minds of millions in ways that governments and humanitarian organisations cannot.

Faith leaders are uniquely positioned in their communities as trusted sources of information and advice, and therefore play a direct role in influencing beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

Throughout history, faith communities have responded to injustices like modern slavery. From seemingly small yet sacrificial acts of kindness, to powerful protests that have changed the world, ordinary people of all faiths have shown they are dedicated to fighting extreme exploitation.

No major religion tolerates modern slavery. Faith leaders across all communities have a vital role to play in recognising the incredible human rights issue that is modern slavery.

Our Approach

We empower faith leaders to work in collaboration with government, business, and civil sectors to fight modern slavery.

By building relationships and collaborating with faith leaders and faith-based organisations we believe we can increase awareness, understanding, impact, and action.

We are grateful to faith communities and their leaders for their generous support of our joint efforts to protect human rights and strengthen communities.

Below: Inaugural signatories of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery at the Vatican on 2 December 2014. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.

Our Impact

Eleven signings of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery over eight years, on five continents across the world.

More than 100 signatories have pledged to fight modern slavery. Representatives from all major faiths have participated including: Christians (Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Methodists, Baptists, Orthodox, Presbyterians and Quakers), Muslims (Shias and Sunnis), Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Bahá'ís, Sikhs.

Our Projects

- The Federation of Faith Leaders expanded in 2022 with new members joining.
- Expanded the Faith For Freedom smart phone app in Ghana and Kenya.
- In 2022 GFN ran a cross-border awareness campaign with Ghanaian faith leaders, the Ghanaian Police Service and the main road transport unions in Ghana.
- In 2022, Global Freedom Network deepened its engagement in Africa by entering three strategic partnerships:
 - GFN is working with the African Union to focus on their youth engagement in 2023-2024 and hopes to use this as a platform to expand the Faith for Freedom App and its advocacy work, bringing together faith leaders in the region.
 - Global Freedom Network entered into a partnership with the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya to carry out a programme of work. This involved the delivery of Government Engagement Workshops for faith leaders in Nairobi and Mombasa. We are also working together to form our local faith leaders Advisory Panel to update the Faith For Freedom App with IRCK and other stakeholders.
 - Global Freedom Network entered a partnership with Compassion International Ghana in June 2022, which will deepen our network in Ghana. It's aimed at leveraging Compassion International's incredible network of church partners to expand the reach of the Faith For Freedom app in the country.
- In March 2023, Global Freedom Network in partnership with the Anglican Archdiocese of Perth and under the auspices of Her Grace Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy hosted the first meeting of the Western Australia Advisory Panel for the Faith For Freedom app. Global Freedom Network is collaborating with faith leaders from WA to create a specific profile for Western Australia, which will serve as a template to develop similar resources for the other Australian states and territories.
- In July 2023, an awareness campaign was launched across places of worship in Ghana and new resources developed for faith leaders to engage with their communities and survivors of modern slavery.
- In August 2023, the online module of the Government Engagement Workshop was launched.



Our Partnerships

Global Freedom Network actively forges both formal and informal partnerships with organisations and leaders, whether they are faith-based or secular.

Through these partnerships, we identify areas of mutual benefit, develop joint work and deliver activities aimed at creating lasting change for communities.

Below: Signatories at the first African signing in Ghana on the 8th August 2021. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.

We have established partnerships with:



How We Work in Country



Stage 1

Drawing on research from the Walk Free team, Global Freedom Network identifies countries or regions of deep faith and high prevalence of modern slavery.



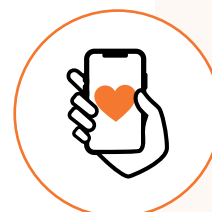
Stage 2

Global Freedom Network engages local experts to help us gain a deeper understanding of context, culture and religious traditions/beliefs in that country or region. Our local contacts assist us to develop relationships with faith leaders and organisations.



Stage 3

Global Freedom Network continues engagement with local faith leaders and organisations to identify areas of collaboration. We prioritise a grassroots approach to understanding and mitigating different forms of modern slavery and ensure planned activities are community-led.



Stage 4

We work with faith leaders and organisations to carry out planned activities. These may include campaigns, workshops, training, publications, specific Faith For Freedom app profiles or signings of the Religious Leaders' Joint Declaration of Modern Slavery.



Federation of Faith Leaders

After meeting with faith leaders in Ghana, Global Freedom Network identified the need for a single platform so that faith leaders can share best practices and collaborate on work they do within their countries.

Signatories to the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery may join this international group of faith leaders so they may build a community of ethical leadership in the fight against modern slavery. The Federation of Faith Leaders is well established in Ghana and continues to expand internationally.

The Ghanaian Federation of Faith Leaders has already cooperated on several initiatives and the faith leaders plan to continue their valuable work together:

December 2021: International Migration Day Campaign run in Ghana.

June 2022: Global Freedom Network and the Ghanaian Federation of Faith Leaders in partnership with the Anti Human-Trafficking Unit of the Ghanaian Police Service and major bus companies launched a cross-border campaign by placing posters on buses across the country to raise awareness about human trafficking and inform people where to denounce any suspected case of trafficking.

June 2023: The poster campaign was expanded to create new posters and flyers to be displayed in faith communities. These raise awareness of specific forms of modern slavery – forced marriage and forced labour. The posters are accompanied by a toolkit for faith leaders with suggestions on how to engage concerned stakeholders, victims, and survivors.

Right: Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu, spokesperson for the National Chief Imam in Ghana, and Elizabeth Poku from Global Freedom Network with a poster raising awareness of forced marriage. Photo credit: Steven Adusei.





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 text on the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery:

- Andrew Forrest for the Global Freedom Network
- His Holiness Pope Francis
- Grand Imam of Al-Azhar
- Metropolitan Seraphim or behalf of H. H. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
- Other religious leaders' signatures in various scripts.

The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar uses the word - religions ~

The Vatican City

2 December 2014

"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."

His Holiness Pope Francis

On Tuesday 2 December 2014, the world's leading faith leaders gathered together with representatives from public and private organisations, and other influential individuals, at the Casina Pio IV in Vatican City. 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 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. They were joined by leaders from many countries of the world, representing the business, political and civil sectors.

Opposite: The Joint Declaration Of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.

Below: His Holiness Pope Francis and Dr Andrew Forrest AO meet in 2014. Photo Credit: Global Freedom Network.



Canberra, Australia

2 December 2015

**“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

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 the faith leaders of Australia.

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 Shia, Lutheran, Jewish, Hindu, Quakers, Uniting Church and Buddhist leaders took part in the event.

*Below: Dr Andrew Forrest with the Hon. Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia.
Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.*



Since 2015, the Global Freedom Network has participated in these Australian initiatives:

- Inspiring people to engage with the issue of modern slavery as an extension of their faith in Australia.
- Encouraging faith communities to take meaningful actions to end slavery in Australia.
- Supporting and amplifying existing anti-slavery work in Australia.
- Raising awareness about slavery in Australia amongst faith communities and continuing to provide ongoing support, strategic alliances and identifying opportunities for joined up practical and spiritual action.
- Unifying faith-based organisations to collaborate on ending slavery in Australia.

Above: The official party at the Australian faith leaders signing. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



New Delhi, India

3 December 2015

“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

On 3 December 2015, eight Indian religious 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 religious and spiritual leaders from the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Bahá'í and Jewish religions, whom together represent more than 95% of the Indian population.

The Joint Declaration ceremony began with the religious leaders gathered on stage for the lighting of the candle, followed by the formal introductions of each religious leader. The Global Freedom Network Chairman, Dr 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.

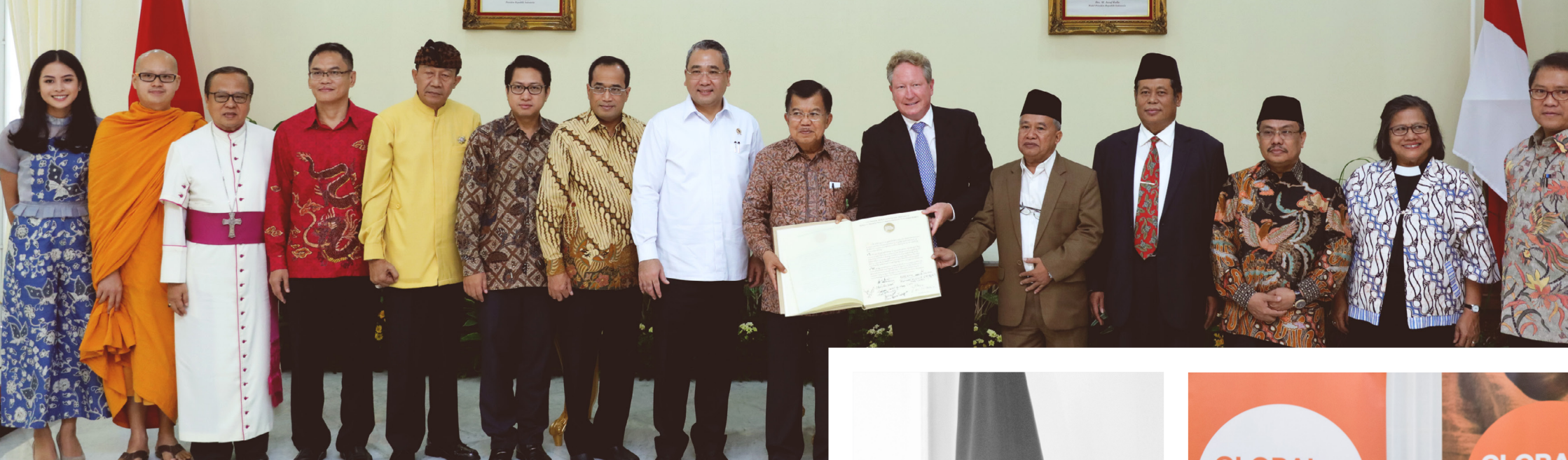


He stated in Hindi, “human life is sacred” and gave personal testimony of his learnings about modern slavery through his daughter’s experience in Nepal some years ago.

Faith leaders 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.

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.

Above: Faith leaders at the ceremony in India and His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Jakarta, Indonesia

14 March 2017

“To fight against modern slavery, we need not only advocacy, but also real action to not fall into the trap of modern slavery.”

Vice President Jusuf Kalla

On 14 March 2017, seven religious leaders who represent all religions constitutionally admitted in Indonesia; Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism gathered and expressed their commitment to stand united against modern slavery in an event hosted by the Vice President, Jusuf Kalla, at the Vice Presidential Palace, Merdeka Selatan, Jakarta. During the Ceremonial Act, Vice President Jusuf Kalla explained what this declaration meant for the Indonesian people and the importance of the Indonesian government to lead in the global fight on modern slavery.

The event also saw a launch of the Global Freedom Network in Indonesia, with singer and youth leader Maudy Ayunda appointed as an Ambassador for the Network.

In 2017 the Global Freedom Network in partnership with Paramadina University conducted a half day seminar for Indonesian religious leaders. During the workshop, the group developed a strategy for the curriculum of a training program for local faith leaders in Indonesia. The training program was delivered in three locations and each program was held over three days. The program included training delivered by subject matter experts from Indonesian universities and government agencies, international organisations including the International Organisation for Migration, religious, and non-government organisations. Over 80 participants attended the programs and they have been empowered to create further networks.



The training program resulted in strengthening the capability of the religious leaders and local organisations including how to reduce the risk of modern slavery in their communities.



Above: Religious leaders at the Indonesian faith leaders event pictured with Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, singer Maudy Ayunda and Dr Andrew Forrest. Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, singer Maudy Ayunda and Grace Forrest. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Buenos Aires, Argentina

16 November 2017

"We celebrate and accompany the commitment of the various religious expressions here present to work together on the task of securing the freedom of all the victims of slavery and trafficking in people."

Ambassador Santiago de Estrada, Secretary for Worship

In November 2017, the Argentine government hosted the International Labour Organization's (ILO) IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour. During this major global event leading experts and organisations from civil society, government and business sectors came together to discuss important issues for the international community.

The Global Freedom Network hosted a ceremony in which 10 religious leaders from the major faiths in Argentina came together to sign the Religious Leaders Joint Declaration on Modern Slavery.

Represented at the event was the Catholic Church, the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Evangelical faith, the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish communities, the Sikh Dharma Community and the Argentinean Islamic Community.

The event also saw the participation of the civil sector, with the attendance of the leaders of the Instituto de Dialogo Interreligioso (IDI), the leading Argentinean CSO working on interfaith relations in the country.



The Argentine Government, represented by the Secretary of Worship Ambassador Santiago de Estrada, celebrated the commitment from all the religious leaders to end modern slavery as well as highlighting the strength of interfaith relations in the country.



Above: Dr Andrew Forrest together with religious leaders and Archbishop Tarasios, Metropolitan Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Exarch for South America of the Greek Orthodox Church. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Medellin, Colombia

26 August 2018

“Today we are signing the Religious Leaders’ Joint Declaration Against Modern Slavery on behalf of over 100 denomination and organisations across 20 Latin American and Caribbean nations that make up the Latin American Council of Churches because protecting the lives of those most vulnerable is an evangelical obligation. Human lives cannot be sacrificed any longer in the pursuit of ever growing economic profits, regardless of how this is achieved.”

Reverend Jorge Daniel Zijlstra Arduin, acting President of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI)

On 26 August 2018, eight Latin American faith leaders have united to jointly declare their commitment to stand against modern slavery.

The religious leaders were brought together at a historic event in Medellin, Colombia, organised by the Global Freedom Network, in collaboration with the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM). The event united religious leaders from the region to commit to eradicating modern slavery through spiritual and practical actions.

The new signatories join 63 other Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist, Hindu, Evangelical, Jewish, Sikh, Bahá’í and Muslim leaders who have signed the Joint Declaration at historic events in Vatican City (2014), Canberra (2015), New Delhi (2015), Jakarta (2017) and Buenos Aires (2017).

Dr Andrew Forrest, Chairman of Global Freedom Network, called on all Latin American religious leaders to join governments and businesses in the fight against modern slavery.



“We face a mighty foe in slavery and if we work alone we will not succeed, no matter how influential or powerful we may be. But if we recognise this as an urgent cause to unite all leaders, across faiths, borders and industries, we can end suffering for tens of millions of people,” Dr Forrest said.

“I call on all faith leaders to raise awareness of this horrible abuse of human rights, to shape positive social values in line with your teachings, and inspire hope.”

The event was held following the Congreso Eclesial which gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Medellin Conference.

Above: Religious Leaders together with Dr Andrew Forrest and Hieromonk Simeon Lopez, Representative of Bishop Kirilo, Serbian Orthodox Bishop for Central and South America signing the Book of Declaration. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Auckland, New Zealand

1 November 2018

“I didn’t know how much money my cousin was getting from my labour... There was never any contract or accounting for my work. I jumped on a truck at 6am and pruned and picked grapes until 6pm or dusk, seven days a week. These grapes went to supermarkets and farmers markets in Melbourne and Sydney... After about two years, I was finally able to contact my mother and found out that my cousin had never sent any money to her. I couldn’t believe this, and I was emotionally devastated. I felt cheated and deceived by this man, who I and our community trusted, but I also felt trapped.”

Moe Turaga, Freedom Advocate

On 1 November 2018 HRH Queen Nanasipau’u of Tonga, together with senior church leaders from 17 Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand, have gathered in Auckland, New Zealand for the signing ceremony of the Joint Declaration Against Modern Slavery.

This event brought together faith leaders, heads of councils of churches and government representatives representing 15 denominations to attend proceedings and mark the launching of the Pacific Freedom Network.

The new signatories join 71 other Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, Bahá’í, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox leaders who have signed the Joint Declaration at historic events in Vatican City (2014), Canberra (2015), New Delhi (2015), Jakarta (2017) Buenos Aires (2017) and Medellin (2018).

This event took place alongside the Pacific Conference of Churches’ General Assembly, where leaders and key representatives across the Pacific gathered in Auckland, New Zealand from 29 October-1 November.



The assembly meets once every five years and one of the main agenda items is for delegates to determine their priority areas for the next five years. Modern day slavery was unanimously supported as one of these priorities and has been put forward by the secretariat to the council. It is anticipated that this will be adopted, and focus groups established in the coming months.

“Today’s development by the Pacific Conference of Churches is really important in strengthening that support mechanism for the Pacific Islander diaspora, and we’re working with faith leaders in Australia and NZ to make sure we can support those people, and end the abuses,” Walk Free Government Strategist Chris Evans said.

Freedom Advocate Moe Turaga told of his own experience being held in modern slavery in Australia, where he was promised work, study and the opportunity to earn an income for his mother in Fiji.

At the event, leaders spoke of their duty to care for the needs of those who have been discriminated against and treated unfairly.

Above: Religious Leaders together with Walk Free’s The Hon. Chris Evans and Freedom Advocate Moe Turaga. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Accra, Ghana

8 August 2021

A coalition of 14 faith leaders from many of the world's biggest religions united in the Ghanaian capital Accra for the first African signing of the declaration.

The location in Western Africa was poignant because it was the site of such inhumanity during the Transatlantic slave trade hundreds of years earlier. The buildings and remnants of that period are still visible in Ghana, and are a stark reminder that we must never let such an appalling human rights abuses happen again.

Grace Forrest, founding director of Walk Free, told the meeting that while in the past, humans in forced labour were traded across the seas, now we trade the products of forced labour across the seas. There was still so much work to do to eradicate modern slavery and religious leaders could play a vital role in this cooperative effort, she said.

“As faith leaders, you have a very special position in Ghanaian society. You can see changes in people that would pass many others by. And you understand what poverty and desperation can do to men, women and children. So you are uniquely placed to identify victims and help victims by putting them in touch with professionals who can help them and who can help deal with the perpetrators.”

Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu, spokesperson for the National Chief Imam of Ghana



The signing event was attended by religious leaders from Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, as well as government and law enforcement officials.

The declaration ceremony was preceded by workshops and roundtables during which faith leaders shared their experiences of working with their congregations and pledged to come together to tackle modern slavery.

The warm bonds that were created in Accra have resulted in continuing collaboration since the historic signing.

Above: Signatories at the first African signing in Ghana on 8th August 2021. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Nairobi, Kenya

8 March 2022

In a landmark event with the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK), faith leaders came together to agree to do what was in their power to fight modern slavery in their country.

The IRCK's tradition of interfaith cooperation was hailed as a model for tackling such tough problems which affect communities stricken by inequality and poverty. IRCK Chairman Rev. Father Joseph Mutie said faith leaders condemned modern slavery and would use all the resources available to them to end the practice.

"It is indeed gratifying to convene senior religious leaders from all Religious Coordinating Bodies that form the IRCK to sign this immensely important and critical declaration and to join the ever-increasing number of religious leaders from all faiths across the world in this endeavour as a sign of commitment to rid our global spaces of this vice of modern slavery."

Abdirahman Ismail, IRCK Executive Director

Global Freedom Network director Franca Pellegrini said faith leaders were best placed to fight modern slavery because they occupied a prominent position in their communities.

"The philosophy of Global Freedom Network is built on interfaith collaboration. We are honoured to work in Kenya with the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya.



"Global Freedom Network believes passionately that in the interconnected, divisive and unequal world we live in, faith leaders can play a crucial role in supporting governments and societies navigate the most complex problems that the 21st century throws at us.

"Our philosophy is that we have to learn from each other and listen to community and faith leaders from as many parts of the world as possible if we are to stand a chance of addressing the root causes

of modern slavery, including poverty and inequality. We are living at a particularly fragile time, when the need to listen to solve the world's most complex problems could not be more important.

"We thank the Kenyan faith leaders for signing this declaration today, joining the community of faith leaders across the world who have endorsed this pledge."

Above: Reverend Fr Joseph Mutie, Chairman of the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, signs the declaration. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

11 March 2022

Faith leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) gathered in the capital Kinshasa in a show of unity and dedication to upholding the human rights and dignity of their congregations.

The meeting of religious leaders was the first of its kind in the DRC and acknowledged that the country faced some extreme challenges, including poverty and the remnants of conflict.

This could result in some DRC citizens feeling as though submitting to situations of extreme exploitation such as modern slavery was their only option.

Global Freedom Network director Franca Pellegrini said that the Global Freedom Network was “acutely aware that poverty and inequality were driving forces of many forms of modern slavery.”

She said that because of this, “countries recovering from war and instability, like DRC, faced a much harder fight against such crimes.”

However, the positive and powerful influence of faith and faith leaders was a vital force that could protect congregations from modern slavery, especially with support and cooperation.

“The philosophy of the Global Freedom Network is built on interfaith collaboration. We are honoured to be here with faith leaders from so many religions, from across the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

Franca Pellegrini



Leaders of Muslim, Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Kimbanguist denominations came together to sign the declaration, on a landmark day for religious cooperation in the DRC.

Above: Signatories at the signing in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo in March 2022. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.



Johannesburg, South Africa

15 March 2022

South African religious leaders gathered at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg to endorse the declaration in a ceremony which acknowledged the history of a country which has emerged from apartheid, a period of legalised exploitation.

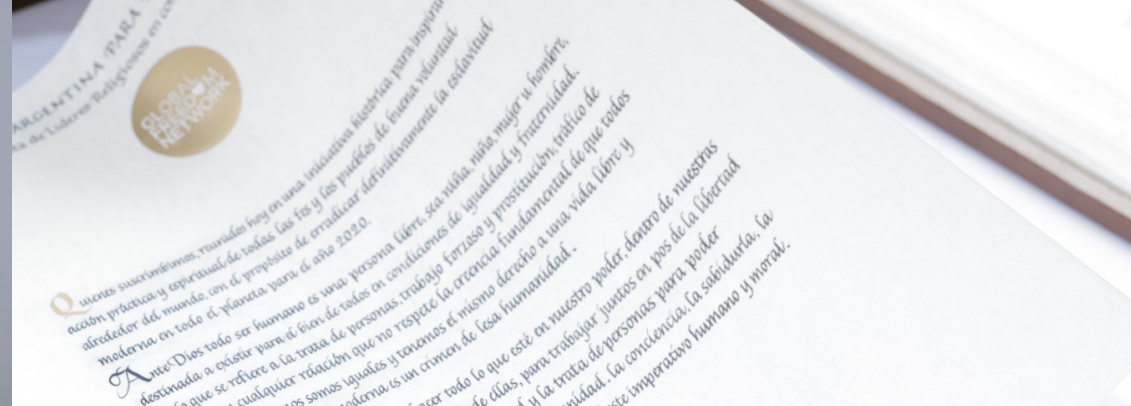
Fittingly, the signing ceremony took place at a site once used to house political prisoners and human rights activists and which is now home to South Africa's Constitutional Court.

“For any society grappling with inequality and divisiveness, South Africa – despite the challenges it has faced in addressing the extreme inequality bequeathed by apartheid – remains a beacon of hope and inspiration,” said Global Freedom Network director Franca Pellegrini.

“Where we stand today – at the Women's Jail at Constitution Hill – is a stark reminder of a recent past where the majority of the country was deprived of the most basic freedoms. And how the empathy and vision of a generation of leaders can make dramatic changes to a society in a relatively short space of time.

“It is therefore a particular honour for Global Freedom Network that South Africa now joins the international community of faith leaders – united through the declaration – who can work together in the fight against modern slavery.”

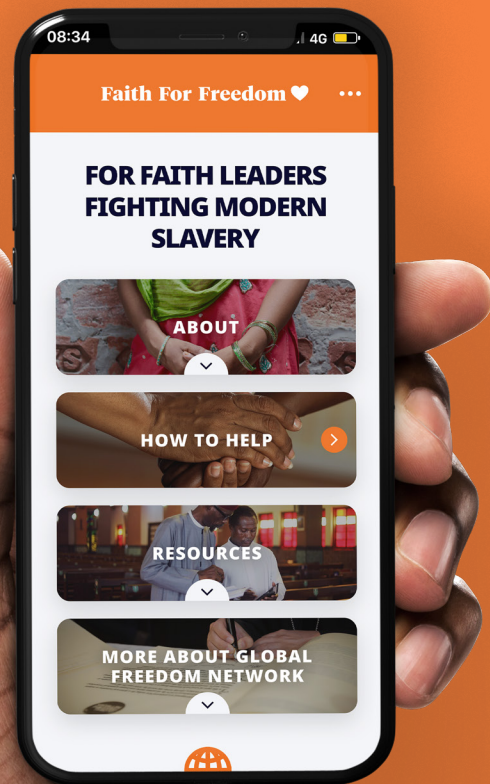
Franca Pellegrini



The gathering heard that the root causes of labour exploitation were often poverty and inequality. Faith leaders were uniquely suited to tackling modern slavery because of the prominent role they played in their communities.

Above: Signatories at the signing in Johannesburg, South Africa, in March 2022. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.

Faith For Freedom ♥



A smart phone app for faith leaders

The Faith for Freedom app is a practical information tool for faith leaders, clergy, and their staff to help identify modern slavery and human trafficking and safeguard their communities.

The Faith For Freedom app was produced by Global Freedom Network and developed in collaboration with a panel of faith leaders to create an information bridge between those who may witness human trafficking and those in authority who can take action.

Franca Pellegrini, director of the Global Freedom Network, the faith-based arm of international human rights group Walk Free, said faith leaders were in a unique position to see into the hearts of their communities.

“This is a practical tool designed for and developed by faith leaders to assist with their important work addressing modern slavery in their congregations and communities,” Ms Pellegrini said.

“We are using modern technology to address an age-old problem.”

The close consultation resulted in an app which suited the unique needs of religious leaders, their assistants, and staff.



Above: Faith leaders Very Rev. Fr Lazarus Anondee and Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu use the Faith For Freedom app. Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.

“This app links faith leaders with social workers and law enforcement and provides practical advice on how to identify, assess and act on instances of modern slavery, and how to engage with congregations on this subject.

“I am very grateful for the deep insights and advice from the panel of faith leaders who advised on the app’s design and content.”

Use the free Faith For Freedom app to gain clear and concise information about:

- What modern slavery is.
- How to detect modern slavery.
- How to respond to people affected by modern slavery.
- How and where to find help to address modern slavery.

The app has country-specific information as well as an international profile.

Scan the QR code and download the Faith For Freedom app, today.



faithforfreedom.org



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The Faith For Freedom App is a trailblazer in the engagement of faith-based organisations in joint action against all forms of human trafficking, which is a crime against humanity.

Thank you Global Freedom Network for all you are doing in God's name for humanity.

Very Rev Opeyemi Awe, General Secretary,
Africa Methodist Council

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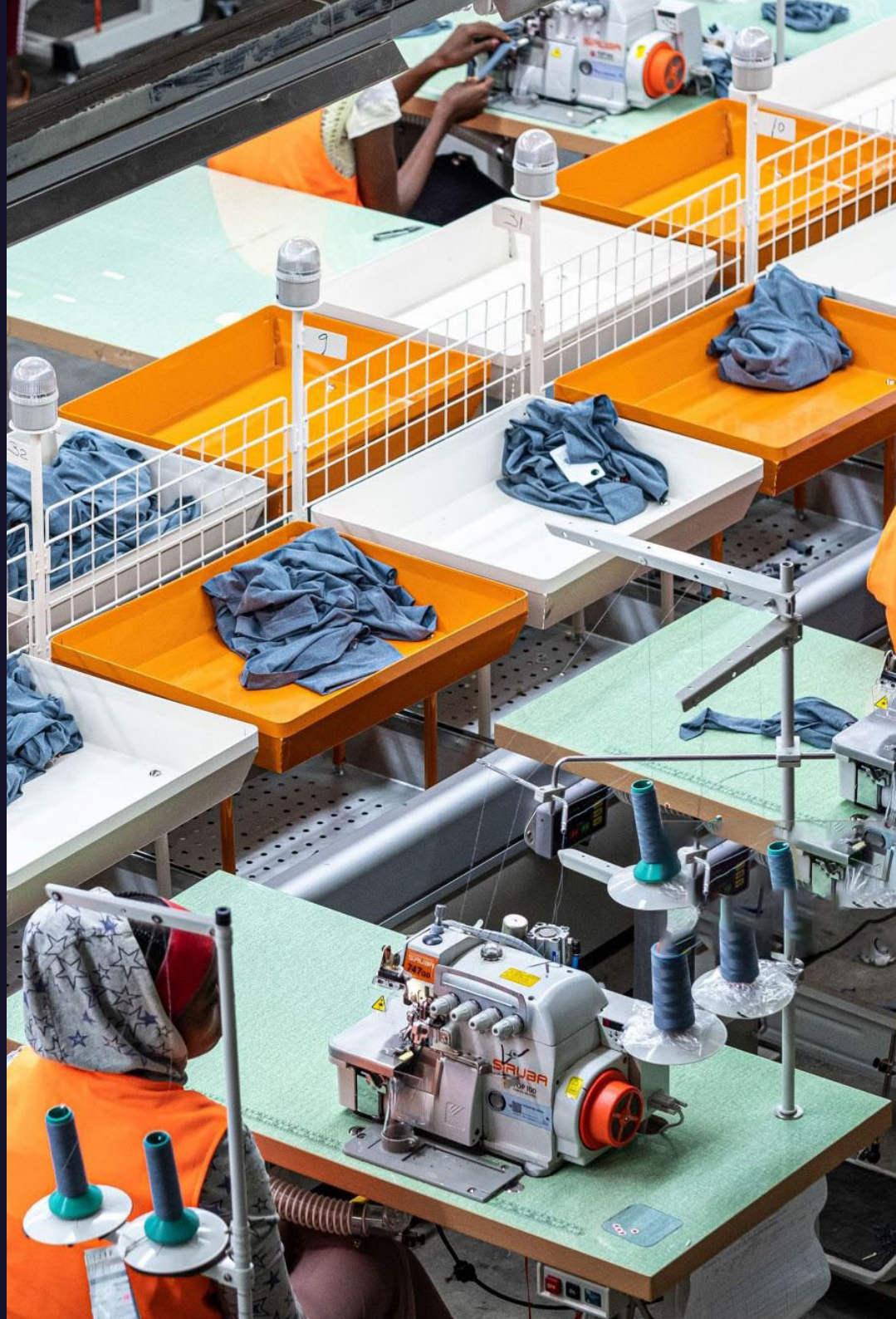
*Left: Rev Paul Boafo, Presiding Bishop
of the Methodist Church Ghana, March 2022.
Photo credit: Global Freedom Network.*



Modern slavery is a complex and often hidden crime that crosses borders, sectors and jurisdictions. Walk Free believes that a strong, multifaceted approach is needed to end modern slavery. This includes building a robust knowledge base to inform action, driving legislative change in key countries and harnessing the power of businesses and faiths.

The Global Slavery Index presents a detailed picture of modern slavery as it exists across countries and industries today. It also indicates the actions governments are taking to combat modern slavery and the risks that populations face around the world.

The Global Slavery Index is a tool for citizens, civil society, faith communities, businesses, and governments to understand the scale of the problem, existing responses, and contributing factors so that they can advocate for and build sound policies that will eradicate modern slavery.



“As the effects of historical slavery are still felt today, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the millions of people suffering in modern slavery around the world. It is time for governments, businesses, and individuals to take a stand and demand change.”

Grace Forrest

More broadly, Walk Free works with governments and businesses around the world in a range of initiatives to change legislation and address supply chain issues. Walk Free works closely with the Australian Government on the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, and champions business sector engagement in tackling modern slavery.

It also successfully advocated for an Australian Modern Slavery Act and works to encourage all leading global economies to enact laws to ensure all organisations are held accountable for taking proactive steps to remove modern slavery from their supply chains. Walk Free also works with partners, such as the Freedom Fund, to scale effective antislavery responses.

Through a combination of direct implementation, grassroots community engagement and working in partnership with faiths, businesses, academics, NGOs, and governments around the world, Walk Free believes we can eradicate modern slavery in all its forms.

Left: Tuul & Bruno Morandi via Getty Images.

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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.

Grace Forrest

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A domestic worker looks out the window of the home in which she works. In the Gulf States, eight in every ten workers is a migrant and working under the restrictive kafala system. The majority of migrant domestic workers are women and are highly vulnerable to modern slavery. Photo credit: Grace Forrest.



globalfreedomnetwork.org

GFN United Against Modern Slavery, 04.10.23.