50 MILLION PEOPLE
are living in modern slavery

NORTH KOREA, ERITREA+ MAURITANIA
have the highest prevalence
of modern slavery globally

UNITED KINGDOM, AUSTRALIA+ NETHERLANDS
have the strongest government
responses to modern slavery

US$ 468 BILLION
of G20 imports are goods
at risk of modern slavery

Cover image:
Sydney, Australia, May 2021.

*Workers install solar panels on the roof of a
house. Modern slavery risks permeate every
step of solar panel supply chains — from the
collection of quartz through to the manufacture
of solar panel modules. Solar panels, as with
other renewable energy products, are key to
combatting the climate crisis. However, any
shift away from fossil fuels must also protect
human rights and ensure a just transition and
decent work for all, including those working in
supply chains.*
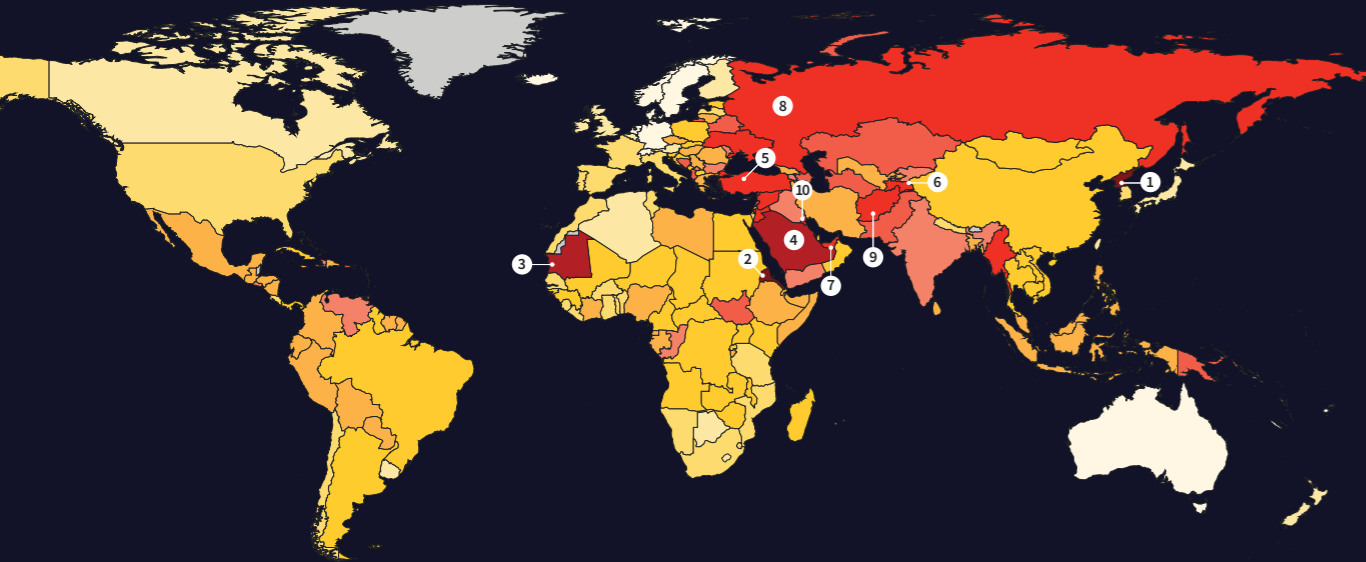*Photo credit: Brendon Thorne/Bloomberg
via Getty Images.*

This page:
Irpin, Ukraine, March 2022.

*Evacuees cross a destroyed bridge as they
flee Ukraine following the invasion by Russia.
While there has not been a spike in identified
cases of modern slavery, there are several
reasons that risks of modern slavery could be
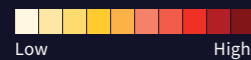higher than currently detected.*
*Photo credit: Dimitar Dilkoff/AFP
via Getty Images.*

MORE PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN MODERN SLAVERY...

On any given day in 2021 there were...

10 MILLION increase since the 2018 index

50 MILLION PEOPLE living in modern slavery

28 MILLION In **FORCED LABOUR**

22 MILLION In **FORCED MARRIAGE**

12 MILLION CHILDREN

Prevalence of modern slavery

Low — High

Highest prevalence

1	North Korea
2	Eritrea
3	Mauritania
4	Saudi Arabia
5	Türkiye
6	Tajikistan
7	United Arab Emirates
8	Russia
9	Afghanistan
10	Kuwait

Lowest prevalence

160	Switzerland
159	Norway
158	Germany
157	Netherlands
156	Sweden
155	Denmark
154	Belgium
153	Ireland
152	Japan
151	Finland

...BUT GOVERNMENTS ARE STILL NOT TAKING ENOUGH ACTION.

Most government action

68 PER CENT UNITED KINGDOM

67 PER CENT AUSTRALIA

67 PER CENT NETHERLANDS

Least government action

5 PER CENT ERITREA

8 PER CENT IRAN

-3 PER CENT NORTH KOREA
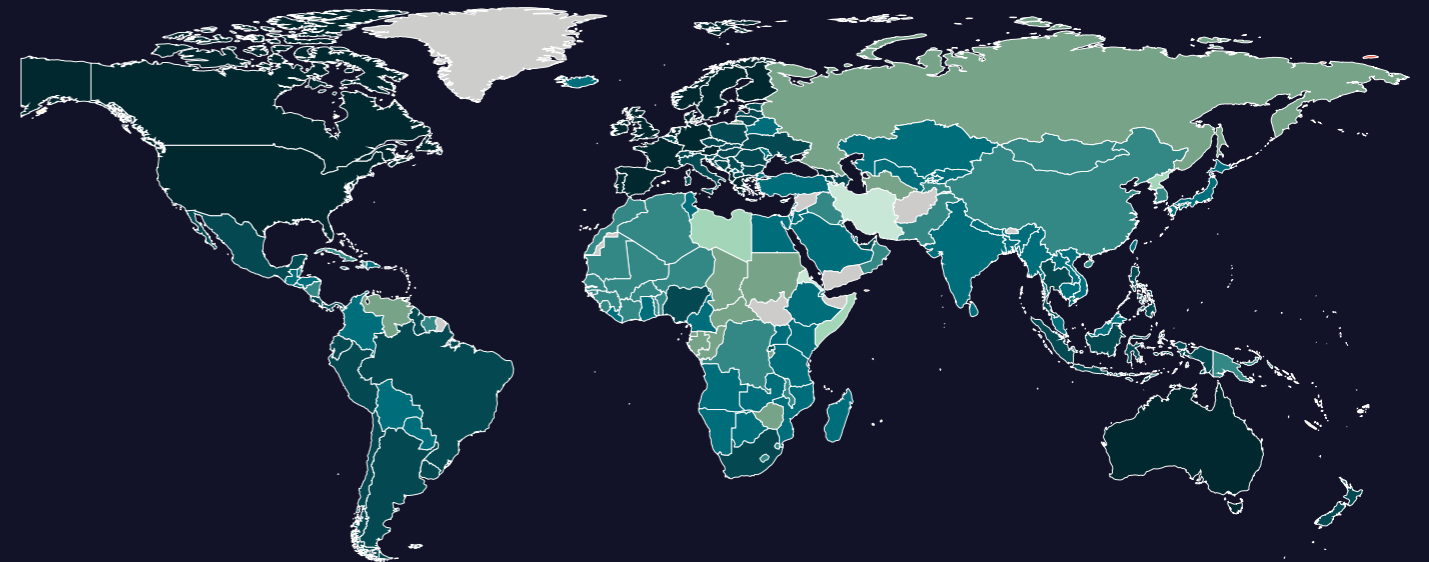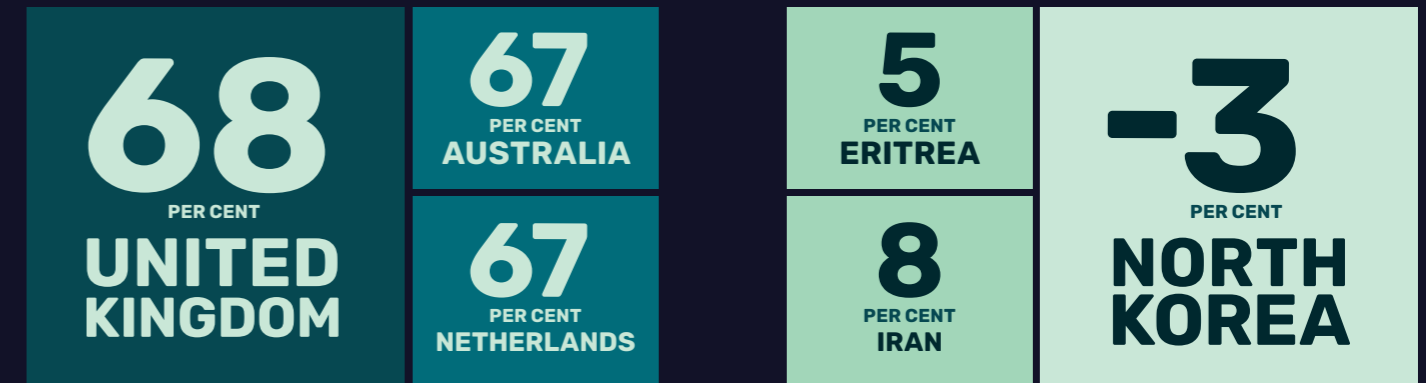
Government response

Most — Least

Most action

United Kingdom
Australia
Netherlands
Portugal
United States
Ireland
Norway
Spain
Sweden

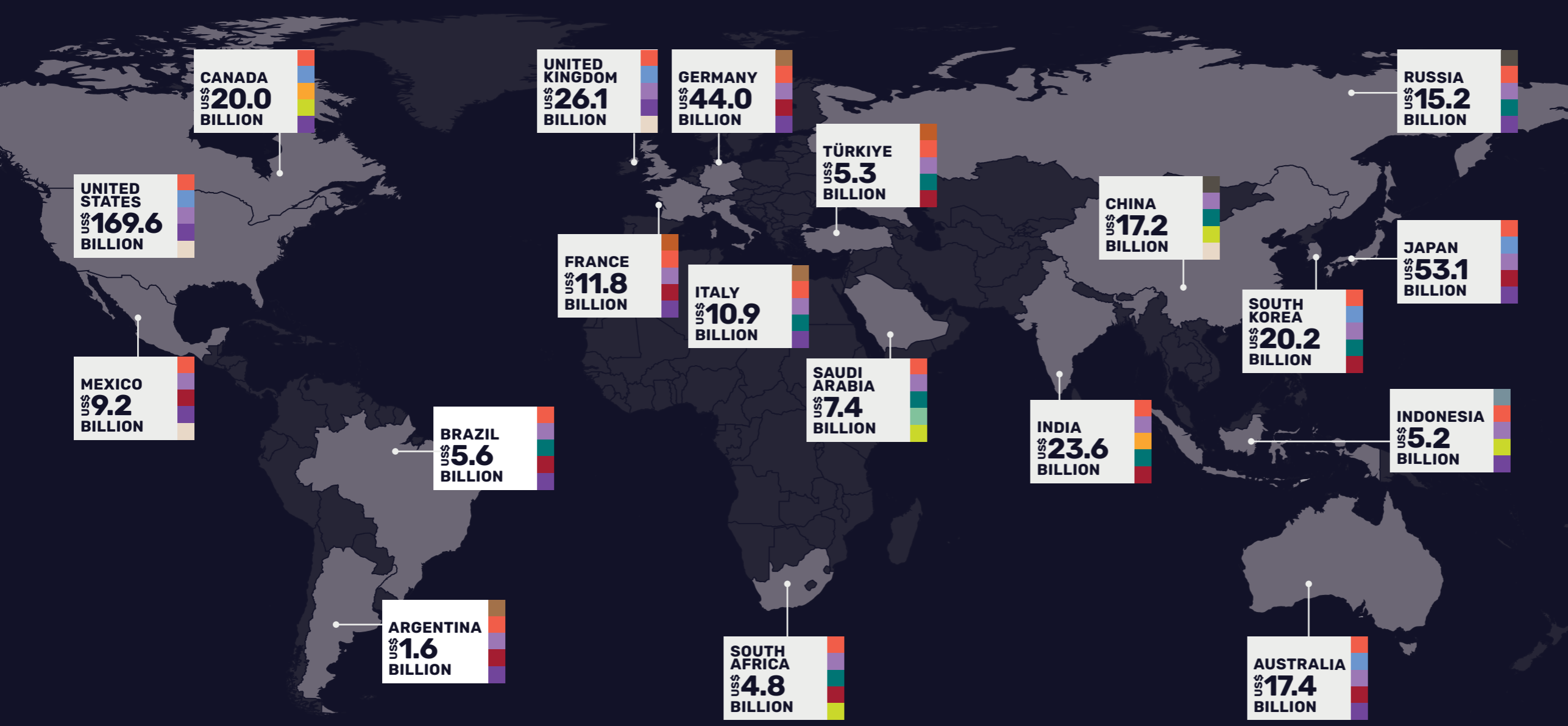### Least action

North Korea
Eritrea
Iran
Libya
Somalia
Equatorial Guinea
Russia
Gabon
Chad

Afghanistan, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen have been excluded due to ongoing conflict and extreme disruption to government function.

THE PRODUCTS WE BUY...

...CONNECT US TO MODERN SLAVERY

Value of at-risk goods imported by G20 countries

Legend

Annual value of at-risk products imported in US$

COUNTRY US$ XX BILLION

Top 5 at-risk products imported

Products

- Cattle
- Coal
- Cocoa
- Coffee
- Electronics
- Fish
- Garments
- Gold
- Palm Oil
- Rice
- Solar Panels
- Sugar Cane
- Textiles
- Timber

CANADA US$ **20.0** BILLION

UNITED STATES US$ **169.6** BILLION

MEXICO US$ **9.2** BILLION

BRAZIL US$ **5.6** BILLION

ARGENTINA US$ **1.6** BILLION

UNITED KINGDOM US$ **26.1** BILLION

GERMANY US$ **44.0** BILLION

FRANCE US$ **11.8** BILLION

ITALY US$ **10.9** BILLION

TÜRKIYE US$ **5.3** BILLION

SAUDI ARABIA US$ **7.4** BILLION

SOUTH AFRICA US$ **4.8** BILLION

RUSSIA US$ **15.2** BILLION

CHINA US$ **17.2** BILLION

JAPAN US$ **53.1** BILLION

SOUTH KOREA US$ **20.2** BILLION

INDIA US$ **23.6** BILLION

INDONESIA US$ **5.2** BILLION

AUSTRALIA US$ **17.4** BILLION

Governments and businesses must do more to tackle slavery in supply chains.

At risk goods imported by the G20

US$468 BILLION

Electronics US$243.6 BILLION

Garments US$147.9 BILLION

Palm Oil US$19.7 BILLION

Solar Panels US$14.8 BILLION

Textiles US$12.7 BILLION

About Walk Free

Walk Free is an international human rights group working to accelerate the end of all forms of modern slavery. Walk Free is the creator of the Global Slavery Index, the world's most comprehensive data set on modern slavery. We use this data to mobilise powerful forces for change against these human rights abuses. We work with governments and regulators, businesses and investors, and faith and community leaders to drive systems change and we partner directly with frontline organisations to impact the lives of those vulnerable to modern slavery. We work with survivors to build the movement to end modern slavery, recognising that lived experience is expertise and they are central to identifying lasting solutions.

Our international team includes statisticians, criminologists, lawyers, and international development experts, working to create and agitate for mass systems change to address the root causes of modern slavery.

Lesbos, Greece, September 2020.

People carrying their belongings flee after a major fire broke out in the Moria migrant camp. Thousands of asylum seekers were left homeless after a fire gutted Greece's largest migrant camp, plunging the island into crisis and provoking an outpouring of sympathy from around Europe and calls for reform of the refugee system. The blaze, which began hours after 35 people tested positive for coronavirus at the Moria camp, sent thousands fleeing for safety into surrounding olive groves. Photo credit: Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP via Getty Images.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Walk Free would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the production of this report. While the nature of the contributions varied, each one was invaluable.

Yangon, Myanmar, October 2020.

A young woman in Personal Protective Equipment takes a break outside a medical facility where people were being quarantined due to suspected COVID-19 infections. Social and economic disruptions caused by the pandemic increased risks of domestic violence, labour exploitation, and forced marriage. Photo credit: Sai Aung Main/AFP via Getty Images.

FOREWORD

For over a decade, Walk Free has studied the number of people living in modern slavery around the world. Through each edition of the Global Slavery Index, our understanding of the problem has deepened, our estimates have become more precise, and our advocacy has catalysed global efforts. Despite having more knowledge about modern slavery than ever before, the situation has worsened.

GRACE FORREST

Co-Founder
Walk Free

This edition of the Index highlights how fragile hard-won human rights still are throughout the world, and how in times of crisis — be it the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing climate crisis, or ongoing armed conflict — it is the world's most vulnerable people who are hit hardest and fastest.

Modern slavery permeates every aspect of our society. It is woven through our clothes, lights up our electronics, and seasons our food. At its core, modern slavery is a manifestation of extreme inequality. It is a mirror held to power, reflecting who in any given society has it and who does not. Nowhere is this paradox more present than in our global economy through transnational supply chains. The growing demand for goods has led to the accumulation of vast wealth, with G20 counties accounting for 85 per cent of the world's GDP. It has also led to environmental degradation, deep social inequality, and prolific forced labour.

Unsurprisingly, no country in the world is effectively responding to modern slavery – an issue which the international community continues to rally against but has failed to address. Since the release of the 2018 Global Slavery Index, we have seen only four countries introduce mandatory human rights due diligence or modern slavery laws — with Australia, France, Germany, and Norway setting new standards for the type of legislation we would like to see adopted everywhere. While this progress is promising, it is nowhere near enough. Governments worldwide continue to display a shocking capacity for cognitive dissonance; for example, funding support services for women and girls while simultaneously failing to close legislative gaps that increase their risk of being forced to marry, such as not having a legal minimum age of marriage set at 18 without exception.

If modern slavery reflects existing man-made power structures, it follows that we cannot win this fight working within the bounds that those same structures created. 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.

This report comes at a critical juncture — a time when the world is awakening to ongoing injustices and their connection to historical inequalities, while confronting unprecedented crises. At the same time, Walk Free's reporting has also grown more accurate and truly global by increasingly embedding survivor voices in our data collection, our methodology, and our advocacy.

If there is one message you should take from this Index, it is that exploitation is by design, not default. As you read through the report, remember that each statistic reflects the reality of tens of millions of people. Let this data serve as an alarm bell, one that shakes us from inaction and loudly demands that we all act now.

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NAVIGATING THE INDEX

Jubaland, Somalia, April 2022.

A man walks in a sandstorm. After three failed rainy seasons, Somalia is experiencing the worst drought in decades, exposing about 6 million people to extreme food insecurity which has been heightened after the war in Ukraine blocked wheat exports. Food insecurity and social instability are key drivers of risk of modern slavery. Photo credit: Sally Hayden/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Modern slavery is hidden in plain sight and is deeply intertwined with life in every corner of the world. Each day, people are tricked, coerced, or forced into exploitative situations that they cannot refuse or leave. Each day, we buy the products or use the services they have been forced to make or offer without realising the hidden human cost.

Modern slavery takes many forms and is known by many names — forced labour, forced or servile marriage, debt bondage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, and the sale and exploitation of children. In all its forms, it is the systematic removal of a person's freedom — their freedom to accept or refuse a job, their freedom to leave one employer for another, or their freedom to decide if, when, and whom to marry — in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

An estimated 50 million people were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2021. These Global Estimates of Modern Slavery produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) form the starting point for the national estimates of modern slavery for 160 countries presented here in Walk Free's flagship report, the Global Slavery Index (GSI). Our estimates draw on thousands of interviews with survivors collected through nationally representative household surveys across 75 countries and our assessment of national-level vulnerability. This report, the fifth edition of the GSI, shows how the compounding crises of the last five years have impacted modern slavery and provides a road map for actions to eradicate it.

A growing global problem against a backdrop of compounding risks

Nearly 10 million more men, women, girls, and boys have been forced to work or marry since 2016. The worsening situation has occurred against a backdrop of increasing and more complex armed conflicts, widespread environmental degradation, assaults on democracy in many countries, a global rollback of women's rights, and the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have caused significant disruption to employment and education, leading to increases in extreme poverty and forced and unsafe migration, which together heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery.

The 10 countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery in 2021 are North Korea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. These countries share some political, social, and economic characteristics, including limited protections for civil liberties and human rights. Many are in volatile regions, which have experienced political instability, conflict, and/or authoritarianism. Several of these countries have governments that force their citizens to work in different sectors, in private prisons, or through forced conscription. Others are home to large numbers of refugees or migrant workers, who are often not afforded the same legal protections as citizens and are highly vulnerable to exploitation. Some, like Mauritania, live with the legacy of historical exploitation through hereditary slavery which continues to be practiced; and around the world, inherited systems of inequality continue to embed risk of modern slavery for the most marginalised groups within communities.

The largest estimated numbers of people in modern slavery are found in the following countries — India, China, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Türkiye, Bangladesh, and the United States. Collectively, these countries account for nearly two in every three people living in modern slavery and over half the world's population. Notably, six are G20 nations: India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Türkiye, and the US.

Most of the countries with lowest prevalence of modern slavery — Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, Japan, and Finland — are also members of the G20. Yet, even in these countries, thousands of people continue to be forced to work or marry, despite their high levels of economic development, gender equality, social welfare, and political stability, as well as strong criminal justice systems.

The widescale deterioration of civil and political rights in the face of multiple crises increases risks for those already vulnerable to modern slavery. The most vulnerable — women, children, and migrants — remain disproportionately affected. Over half of all people in modern slavery are female. A quarter are children. Women and girls are disproportionately at risk of forced marriage, accounting for 68 per cent of all people forced to marry. Migrant workers are more than three times more likely to be in forced labour than non-migrant workers. People who belong to multiple marginalised groups — such as those related to religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, caste, sexual identity, or gender expression — face even greater risks, reflecting deeply entrenched biases around the world.

Those fleeing conflict, natural disasters, or repression of their rights, or seeking to migrate for work, are particularly vulnerable. More people are migrating now than at any other point in the last five decades. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and irregular migrants face even greater risks during their precarious migration journey, during which they are typically coping with significant upheaval to social networks and economic status. Increasing anti-immigrant sentiment in many countries, including Europe, where many seek to start a new life, has led to more restrictive policies, which in turn expose displaced people to even greater risks of exploitation.

Low prevalence among the G20 masks their responsibility

While estimating prevalence of modern slavery where it occurs is critical in identifying where the need for intervention is most pressing, it does not paint a complete picture of where responsibility lies. Forced labour occurs in all countries regardless of income, with the majority occurring in lower-middle and upper-middle income countries. It is deeply connected to demand from higher-income countries. The production and movement of goods between countries — from the sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing, packaging, and transportation — creates complex and opaque supply chains, many of them tainted with forced labour.

Strait of Gibraltar, Atlantic Ocean, September 2018.

A boat carrying migrants is pictured while stranded at sea, before being rescued by the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Salvamento Maritimo rescue agency. More people are migrating now than at any other time in the last fifty years, according to reports by the International Organization for Migration; and many of these migrants are driven to leave their homes due to crises, such as conflict or displacement caused by the effects of climate change. Photo credit: Marcos Moreno / AFP via Getty Images.

The purchasing practices of wealthier governments and businesses fuel exploitation in lower-income countries that are at the frontlines of global supply chains. In fact, G20 nations account for more than 75 per cent of the world's trade and consume many products at risk of forced labour. Collectively, these countries import US$468 billion worth of at-risk goods per annum. The top five highest value at-risk products imported by the G20 were electronics (US$243.6 billion), garments (US$147.9 billion), palm oil (US$19.7 billion), solar panels (US$14.8 billion), and textiles (US$12.7 billion).

Spotlight on sectors

The growth of consumer culture and demand for goods has both positive and negative impacts. On one hand, it can drive economic growth and innovation, create jobs, and improve quality of life. On the other, it can contribute to environmental degradation, social inequality, and unsustainable patterns of consumption and waste. Goods produced using forced labour now travel farther around the world than ever before, with nearly two-thirds of all forced labour cases connected to global supply chains. Workers are exploited across a wide range of sectors and at every stage of the supply chain, although most forced labour occurs in the lowest tiers such as the extraction of raw materials and production stages.

Modern slavery permeates industries that are characterised by informality, with higher numbers of migrant workers, and where there is limited government oversight. Global demand for fast fashion has spurred exponential growth in the garment industry, while garment workers, hidden deep in supply chains, face poor and exploitative work. Forced labour in fisheries is driven by the motivation to reduce costs amid diminishing profits and as the industry tries to meet the global demand for seafood. Despite the progress of some companies, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour are used to farm and harvest the cocoa beans that end up in chocolate. Perhaps surprisingly, recent investigations have uncovered troubling associations between children's institutions (including orphanages) and modern slavery.

Greater connectivity between countries, economies, and people can create new risks of exploitation. For example, modern slavery has permeated the entire digital value chain, from the raw materials that create the devices that consumers use daily to connect online to the overseas workforces processing data and even onto social media platforms themselves. The growth of new "sustainable" industries to create renewable energies to tackle the climate crisis has led to further risks of exploitation, with evidence of state-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim majority groups in China occurring in the supply chains of solar panels and other renewable technologies.

Government action is critical but current efforts fall short of the challenge

The strongest government responses to modern slavery were found in the United Kingdom, Australia, Netherlands, Portugal, the US, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. Among these countries, the most notable improvement in the last five years is the passing of Australia's Modern Slavery Act, which requires certain companies to report on modern slavery risks in their supply chain and actions they are taking to respond. However, while we commend all efforts to address modern slavery, the improvements since our 2018 assessments were far fewer and weaker than the situation requires.

During the same period in which millions more people were forced to work or marry, efforts by the wealthiest nations stagnated and, in some cases, hard-won progress has reversed. Many wealthy countries are failing in their duties to protect the most vulnerable. For example, while the UK currently has the strongest response, significant gaps in protections expose survivors to risks of re-trafficking. Some countries with strong responses, such as Brazil and the US, undermine their own efforts by forcing their citizens to work beyond the specific circumstances that international conventions deem acceptable. In the Gulf States, where eight in every ten workers is a migrant and working under the *kafala* (sponsorship) system, many of the reforms intended to provide much needed protection have not been fully implemented or fall far short of providing real protection for a highly vulnerable group. Migrants working in high-income countries across Asia and Europe are also subject to tied visa systems which offer them limited protection from unscrupulous employers. Most G20 governments are still not doing enough to ensure that modern slavery is not involved in the production of goods imported into their countries and within the supply chains of companies they do business with.

There has been some notable progress since 2018. Another 15 countries have criminalised human trafficking in line with the UN Trafficking Protocol, bringing the total to 137. Some countries, such as Republic of the Congo and Brunei Darussalam, have improved their response to modern slavery, while Albania, Georgia, and the Philippines have relatively stronger responses despite having fewer resources at their disposal. More countries are beginning to engage with survivors in the development of policies and programs, although this remains woefully low at only 16 governments. The high proportion of modern slavery connected to global supply chains, while dismaying, also presents new opportunities to drive change through businesses and investors whose actions could quickly and directly improve the working conditions and livelihoods of workers across at-risk sectors — and perhaps succeed where governments have failed.

Stagnating action on modern slavery appears to be connected more to compounding crises than to changes in attitudes or a diminishment of the will to eradicate this crime. There is no doubt that governments have faced many challenges since 2018, including those that have significantly impacted funding and delivery of modern slavery programming as national resources are diverted to tackling more immediate harms. However, the obligation of governments to protect people from modern slavery cannot be set aside when crises occur. In fact, addressing modern slavery needs to be embedded into crisis responses if we are to get progress towards ending it back on track.

The urgent need to move from intention to real action

World leaders agreed on an ambitious agenda to address the world's most intractable problems when they adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) nearly 10 years ago. This included a commitment to ending modern slavery, forced labour, and human trafficking by 2030 (Target 8.7). In 2018, we warned that progress towards ending modern slavery was too slow to achieve this goal. In the period since, a significant increase in the number of people living in modern slavery and a stagnation in government action highlights that the global community is even further from achieving the goals they agreed to make a priority. This sobering picture of the current state of progress is not necessarily a signal for the future. In fact, it likely reveals truths that can point the way to success.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world largely awakened to the need for an overhaul of current systems in order to curtail the worst impacts of the pandemic and to better respond to the climate emergency. The impacts of COVID-19 drew global attention to the points at which vulnerable populations fall through the gaps and to the structural inequalities that advocates have long highlighted as core drivers of modern slavery but that governments have failed to meaningfully address. Despite the uncertainty created during the height of the pandemic, a great deal of hope lies in an important lesson that it revealed — that the global community is, in fact, capable of rapidly responding to crisis at scale.

When it comes to addressing modern slavery, the global community must move from intention to action without delay. This requires reinvigorating the movement to end modern slavery, with survivors leading the way to identify lasting solutions. It requires recognising that the world's great challenges are all interconnected: modern slavery, climate change, conflict, poverty, gender inequality, and racial injustice. None can be effectively addressed in isolation. Recognising this interconnectedness, and resolving to act on it, presents a huge opportunity to ensure the resources mobilised go further and have lasting impact for the world's most vulnerable people.
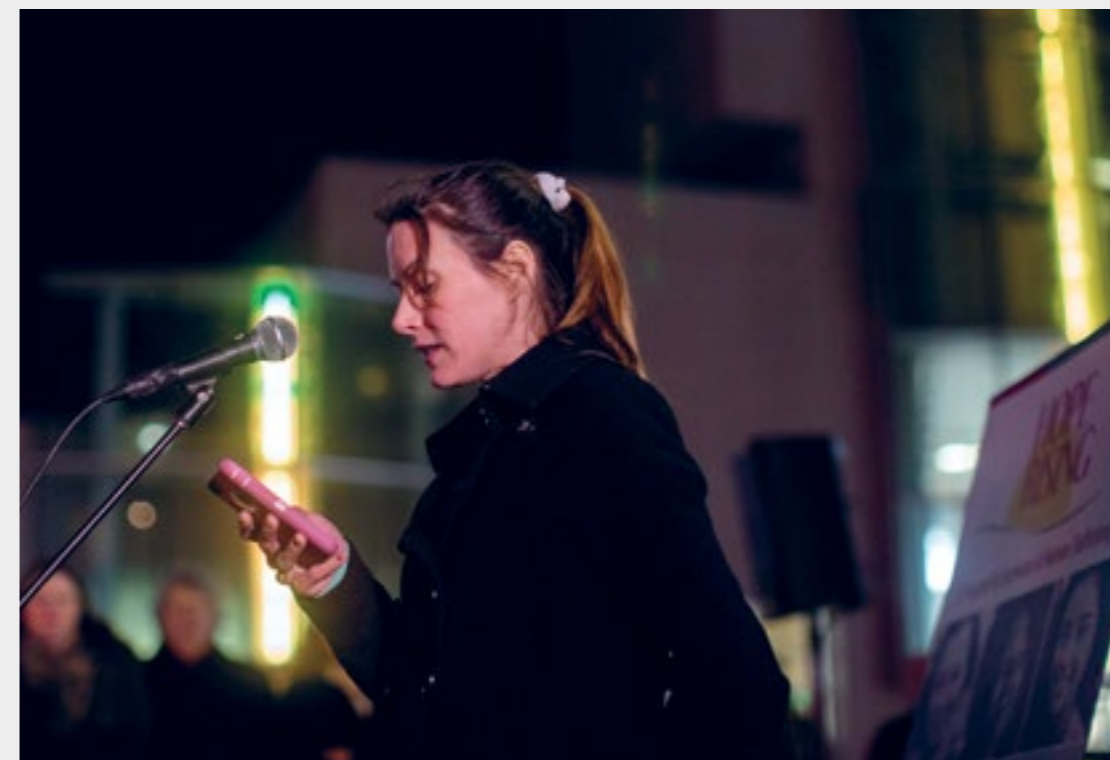
Portland, United States, January 2018.

Cary Dyer tells her story of survival during a vigil in support of the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day held by Hope Rising in Monument Square. Dyer graduated from Hope Rising and is now the president of Survivor Speaks USA board of directors. Photo credit: Brianna Soukup/ Portland Press Herald via Getty Images.

Recommendations

1 Governments and the international community must recognise and respond to modern slavery as an intersectional issue.

– Embed modern slavery responses in humanitarian responses, including by providing training for humanitarian actors.

– Strengthen social protection and safety nets so vulnerable communities are more resilient to shocks, including addressing discrimination of people who belong to multiple marginalised groups, such as those related to religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, caste, sexual identity, or gender expression.

– Ensure that human rights, including right to freedom from forced labour and from other forms of modern slavery, are embedded in efforts to build a green economy to respond to the climate crisis.

2 Governments must focus on prevention and protection for those already vulnerable.

– Increase access to primary and secondary school education for all children and particularly girls. These programs should focus on those most at risk of not receiving an education, such as girls in conflict zones, people with disabilities, or those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

– Ensure survivor support services, including shelters, crisis support centres, and community-based protection. Cover all populations — including males, adults, and migrants — and make available specialised support for children.

– Strengthen efforts to protect vulnerable populations on the move by repealing hostile migration policies that place national security above human rights, expanding the provision of safe and regular migration pathways, and by screening asylum seekers and irregular migrants for modern slavery indicators, regardless of how they arrived in the country.

3 Governments must ensure effective civil and criminal protections in legislation to tackle forced and child marriage.

– Raise the legal age of marriage to 18 without exceptions, criminalise the act of marrying someone who does not consent, regardless of age, and provide civil protections that allow survivors to choose which solution best suits their needs, as not all wish to pursue criminal actions, particularly when it can involve bringing an action against family members.

– Provide trauma-informed protection measures for survivors of forced marriage, including safe accommodation, emergency funds, and psychosocial support.

– Tackle underlying drivers of forced marriage, including engaging with communities to subvert harmful patriarchal norms and amending gender discriminatory legislation.

4 Governments must implement stronger measures to combat forced labour in public and private supply chains.

– Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence to stop governments and businesses from sourcing goods or services linked to modern slavery. In G20 countries, enact additional legal measures, such as import controls on products linked to forced labour, Magnitsky-style sanctions, and public lists of companies found to tolerate forced labour in their supply chains.

– Extend labour laws and fundamental labour rights to all groups without exception, including freedom of association and collective bargaining. Extend social protection to all workers and provide remedy for modern slavery survivors.

– Introduce and enforce laws to prohibit charging of recruitment fees to employees, register and monitor recruitment agencies for deceptive practices, and ensure contracts are made available in a language migrants can understand.

5 Governments and businesses must prioritise human rights when engaging with repressive regimes.

– Conduct due diligence to ensure that any trade, business, or investment is not contributing to or benefitting from state-imposed forced labour, including where it occurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.

– Where links to state-imposed forced labour are identified, and operating in line with the UN Guiding Principles has become impossible, withdraw from sourcing goods and services.

– Ensure survivors of state-imposed forced labour have access to remediation, which may include financial compensation and access to legal, health, and psychosocial services.

Newtok, Alaska, June 2019.

Indigenous women living in temporary housing, as erosion caused by climate change has displaced communities. Social instability caused by increasing volatile climate events increases risk of exploitation and modern slavery. Photo credit: Bonnie Jo Mount/The Washington Post via Getty Images.

ABOUT THE INDEX

The Global Slavery Index presents a detailed picture of modern slavery as it exists across industries and countries 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, 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.

All supporting data tables and methodology are available to download from the Walk Free website: **walkfree.org.**

What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuses of power. It takes many forms and is known by many names — forced labour, forced marriage, debt bondage, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children. Refer to Appendix 1 for full terminology.

Modern slavery is a hidden crime that affects every country in the world. It has been found in many industries, including garment manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, and in many contexts, from brick kilns and fishing boats to private homes and refugee camps.

Modern slavery affects us all, from the food we eat to the clothes we wear and across a wide spectrum of the goods we purchase. Accordingly, it is everyone's responsibility to address and eliminate this crime everywhere it occurs.

In some regions, ongoing conflict, political instability, and forced displacement are key drivers of modern slavery. Elsewhere, increased vulnerability to exploitation is driven by global events such as transformations in the world of work, climate change, and migration.

From poverty to gender discrimination and inequality, addressing risk factors is fundamental to combating and preventing modern slavery. Effective responses to modern slavery must account for these drivers and risks if we are to achieve the 2030 target for UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, which calls for the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour.

Nearly every country in the world has committed to eradicate modern slavery through their national legislation and policies. Governments have a central role to play by enacting legislation, providing safety nets to their populations, and pursuing criminals who participate in this heinous crime. But no single actor can address all these challenges. To meet their commitments, governments need the support

METHODOLOGY

Estimating prevalence

In 2022, the second edition of the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery was published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The regional estimates produced through this collaboration form the starting point for the national level estimates presented here for 160 countries.

These national estimates were calculated using individual and country-level risk factors of modern slavery. The analysis draws on data from nationally representative surveys — 68 forced labour surveys

and 75 forced marriage surveys, and data from the Global Slavery Index vulnerability model. The final set of risk factors was selected from an exhaustive list of variables to optimally predict confirmed cases of forced labour and forced marriage. The model was then used to generate average predicted probabilities of modern slavery by country. The regional totals in the 2022 version of the Global Estimates were then apportioned based on each country's average predicted probability of modern slavery.

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part A.

Phase 1

Individual and country-level risk factors were identified and then used to build a model that predicts modern slavery. This drew on data from the Global Slavery Index vulnerability model and nationally representative surveys.
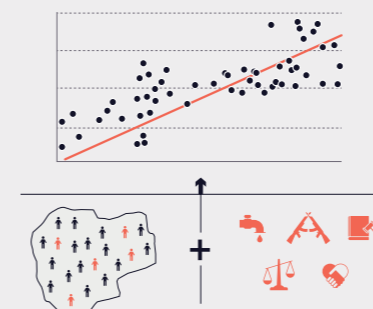
Phase 2

Individual predictions were aggregated into country-level risk scores.
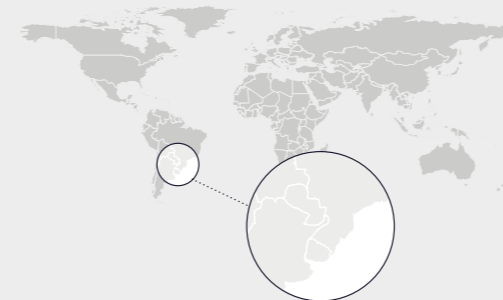
Phase 3

Regional-level population estimates of modern slavery from the 2022 Global Estimate were allocated to individual countries in the region, proportionate to each country's relative risk.
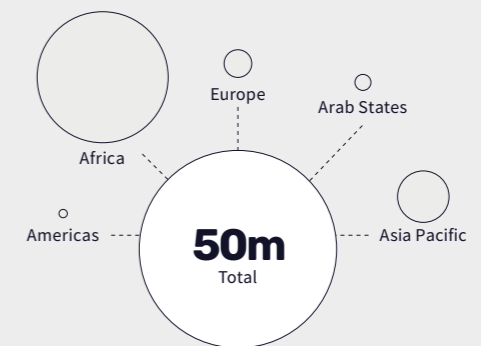
Phase 4

The number of people living in modern slavery was then estimated by applying the country prevalence estimate to population data for each country.
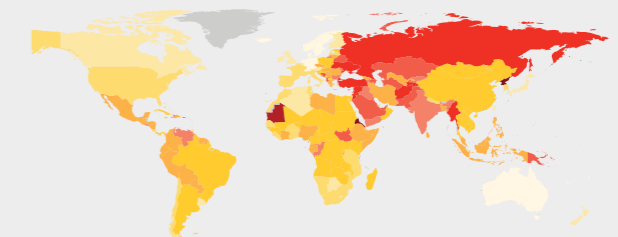
Figure 2:
Estimating prevalence of modern slavery at the national level

Measuring vulnerability

The Global Slavery Index vulnerability model is built on statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery. The vulnerability model provides a risk score for 160 countries based on an analysis of data covering 23 risk variables across five major dimensions (see Figure 3).

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part B.

Assessing government responses

The government response assessment provides a comparative assessment of the legal, policy, and programmatic actions that 176 governments are taking to respond to modern slavery. This is based on data collected on 141 indicators that are relevant to understanding how each government is tracking towards achieving five milestones (see Figure 4).

A detailed description of the methodology is set out in Appendix 2: Part C.

Identifying promising practices

The Promising Practices Database was created in 2015 to collate evaluations of anti-slavery and counter-trafficking programs in a searchable format — allowing stakeholders to quickly identify what works, and what does not, through a simple search by country, population, type of slavery, sector, or intervention. To date, the Database houses 262 evaluations, covering every region of the world.

A detailed description of the methodology is available on the Walk Free website.

Assessing business compliance with Modern Slavery Acts

We also work with WikiRate to understand the level of compliance with the UK's and Australia's Modern Slavery Acts. With an estimated thousands of companies having to publish statements per annum, this work entails reviewing modern slavery statements and creating tools for greater transparency for consumers, businesses, policymakers, and civil society organisations. We take a sector-specific approach to conduct a more tailored analysis of the statements and their quality, and to develop recommendations of what constitutes a strong statement and good business practice.

A detailed description of the methodology is available on the Walk Free website.

Figure 3:
Vulnerability model 2022

Governance Issues
Political Instability, GSI Government Response, Women's Physical Security, Political Rights, Regulatory Quality, Disabled Rights, Weapons Access

Effects of Conflict
Impact of Terrorism, Internal Conflicts Fought, Internally Displaced Persons

Vulnerability

Lack of Basic Needs
Undernourishment, Social Safety Net, Ability to Borrow Money, Tuberculosis, Access to Clean Water, Cell Phone Users

Disenfranchised Groups
Employees Prioritise Nationals, Social Group Equality, LGBTI Acceptance

Inequality
Ability to Obtain Emergency Funds, Violent Crime, Gini Coefficient, Law Enforcement Liability

Figure 4:
Government response conceptual framework

Survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of modern slavery

Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery

Government Response

Government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour

Coordination occurs at the national and regional level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response

Risk factors that enable modern slavery are addressed