Modern slavery in Eritrea
Global Slavery Index 2023
Country Snapshot

The scale of modern slavery
According to the 2023 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 90.3 in every thousand people were in modern slavery in Eritrea at any point in 2021. In other words, 320,000 people experienced forced labour or forced marriage in Eritrea in 2021. In terms of prevalence of modern slavery, Eritrea ranks 2nd globally and 1st within Africa.
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Vulnerability to modern slavery
How vulnerable a country’s people are to modern slavery is dependent on a range of factors which reflect the strength of governance, access to basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict. On a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest vulnerability, Eritrea is rated as 66 and has above average vulnerability for the region. Vulnerability is highest in terms of disenfranchised groups.

Figure 3. Vulnerability of Eritrea to modern slavery by dimension, compared to the regional average

Government response to modern slavery
The government of Eritrea scored 5 out of 100 in their response to modern slavery. This places the government’s response below the average regional response. Of the five areas of response assessed (milestones), the government has taken most action on national and regional coordination of the response to modern slavery and the least action on addressing risk factors of modern slavery.

Figure 4. Government of Eritrea’s responses to modern slavery by milestone, compared with the regional average

Priority Recommendations for the government of Eritrea

1. Immediately end state-imposed forced labour by ending indefinite periods of military conscription – limiting them to 18 months – and ensuring any work performed by conscripts is of a purely military character.

2. Criminalise forced labour in line with international conventions.

3. Criminalise human trafficking in line with international conventions.

For more information on modern slavery, visit the Global Slavery Index 2023 website.