

COURSE OF JUSTICE, PEACE  
AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

# THE SLAVERY OF THE XXI CENTURY NEW THREATS TO THE HUMAN DIGNITY



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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PEACE AND ALL GOOD**

I'm glad to present this e-book version of the texts from the JPIC course 2017. The JPIC General Office held the annual course on the theme of “The Slavery of the 21st Century: New Threats to the Human Dignity” at the Pontifical University Antonianum on May 8 – 14, 2017. Six speakers of the course gladly presented their texts for publication of e-book. I'd like to express deep gratitude to them. They are Paolo Beccegato, Massimo Pallottino (“Slavery, past and present scourge”), Manuela de Marco (“Labour exploitation in agriculture: Experience of the project ‘Presidio’ of Caritas Italy”), Tomás González, OFM (“Slavery in the 21st century, New threats to human dignity”), Stefano Zamagni (“How the global economy favours modern slavery: proposals for action”), and Gabriella Bottani, SMC (“Promoting the creation of new national networks in collaboration against human trafficking”).

These texts are valuable in the sense that they offer us the social analysis on diverse issues of violation of human rights such as forced/underpaid labour, human trafficking, migration, etc. as well as the grassroots experience and solutions. I believe that any reader could benefit in-depth perspectives on those issues from this e-book version of the last year's JPIC course. It is meaningful since this is the first e-book publication. I hope this would serve as many readers as possible in their pursuit of Justice and Peace.

**JPIC General Office - OFM**



## CHAPTER 1

### STATISTICS AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE HUMAN EXPLOITATION IN THE XX AND XXI CENTURIES

Paul Beccegato / Italian Caritas, International Area

#### Slavery. “Past and present scourge”

Introduction: a historical outlook

Initiating a reflection on slavery evokes a historical horizon set in the past, marked by cultures that are distant from ours. Yet this theme ought to be addressed with a different approach, one that reckons with a phenomenon present throughout the history of humankind, which significantly contributed to steering its course. Ancient chronicles testify to the use of slaves as spoils of war or victims of offensives and raids, in some cases by slavery, whereby abandoned children were placed in bondage. What we know with certainty is that in the course of history this phenomenon occurred in different shapes and forms: the mass mobilization of cheap labour catered to the development of economic systems ultimately characterising the history of humankind.

The exploitation of slavery played a central role also in European history, notably in the process leading to the creation of modern Europe, the form of slavery that is most closely linked to the history of Western countries is the one suffered by the peoples of Africa; the scope of this phenomenon was such that its consequences persist still today. As pointed out by French history scholar Pétrel-Grenouilleau<sup>1</sup>, an estimated 42 million African people were enslaved in the course of history; their stories developed along their routes. The first is the so-called east-African route with the highest number of slaves, involving 17 million Africans that were placed in bondage and deported to the Arab world. This barter began in the year 650 A.D. and it continued until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second route was intra-African, involving 14 million people reduced to slavery within the same African continent, perpetrated by African populations across a long period of time that ended only at the beginning of the past century. Some of the victims of this barter were sold to Europeans or to Arabs, while others were kept in bondage inside their continent of origin. Finally, the so-called Atlantic route organized by Europeans in the years 1519 -1867, which involved some 12 million people. This episode is the one that is most closely related to Western history, linked to the phenomenon of triangular trade in the framework of a much broader commercial network involving European states, African populations and American colonies. This route started on the west African coast. Ships from Europe sailed to the West African coast to sell their goods, they proceeded towards American colonies, where they exchanged African slaves bought during their stopover to be used as manual labour in their settlements and returned to Europe with their ships carrying goods produced from slave labour in the colonies, ready to leave again for Africa.

The history of slave-trade in Africa is of special relevance not only in terms of its proportions and gravity but also for its long-lasting consequences that are felt still today. The attempts to erase or water-down the memory of many African civilizations, the depopulation of certain areas of the continent and the imposition of colonial and post-colonial economy are in fact the result of the long history of slavery in Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> O. Pétrel-Grenouilleau, *Les traites négrières: essai d'histoire globale*, Bibliothèque des histoires, Paris, Gallimard, 2004

With the passing of time, slavery and the slave-trade were increasingly less morally justifiable, thereby determining their gradual abolition. Despite the isolated case of the Republic of Venice, which abolished slavery in 960, it was not until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that most of the Countries involved in such practices finally declared it illegal. By way of example, the United States and Brazil represented the largest concentration of slaves in the world, which they respectively abolished in 1865 and in 1888. But it was not until 1948, when the abolitionist movement declared that this practice denigrated the human dignity of all world peoples, that the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which proclaimed, in Art.4, that slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all its forms, incorporated into the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others<sup>2</sup>. Little by little slavery was abolished even in the last States that considered it a legal practice until 1980, when Mauritania, the world's last Country yet to do so, finally abolished it.

## **Slavery today**

The victory of the abolitionist movement represented humanity's landmark achievement, but it failed to eliminate all shapes and forms of slavery. International documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights mark the affirmation of a code of values shared at global level. However, these documents fail to guarantee the implementation of changes in human societies, where the practice of slavery is ingrained within deeply-rooted social values. Let it suffice to recall the struggle against racial segregation that shattered the American south until the first half of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup> Slavery continues to exist even today in many areas of the world, in many cases supported by social structures, cultural practices, institutions and economic motivations.

The analysis of contemporary slavery entails – first - identifying the definition of slavery today.

The anti-slavery League has proposed the following definition of a person in slavery according to a set of elements combined. Accordingly, someone is in slavery if they are: 1) forced to work- through coercion, forced to work – through coercion, or mental or physical threat; 2) owned or controlled by an 'employer', through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse; 3) dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'; 4) physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom of movement.

According to the International Labour Organization<sup>4</sup>, an estimated 40 million people are trapped in modern slavery, 24.85 million of them were in forced labour, and the remaining in forced marriage. An estimated 16.5 of those in forced labour live in Asia and in the Pacific regions, 3.4 million in Africa, 1.3 million in the Americas, 3.2 in Europe and in Central Asia, 350 thousand in Arab countries. According to the same source, of the 24 million victims of forced labour, 16 million were in the private economy, 4 million were in forced labour imposed by state authorities, and 4.8 million were in forced sexual exploitation. Child slavery is a worrying phenomenon, involving 10 million children, 4.3 of whom in forced labour.

Which mechanisms underlie the phenomenon of slavery? The conditions that contribute to the emergence of slavery are for the most part of a social, institutional and cultural nature. Poverty

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<sup>2</sup> The Convention was adopted on December 2 1949, marking the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Italy failed to transpose the Convention into its national legislative framework until 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, dark segregationist shadows loomed over the recent US presidential campaign.

<sup>4</sup> Figures are from: ILO, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*, Geneva, International Labour Office - ILO, 2017. Data on slavery and forced labour in the world are estimated figures that can vary according to the calculation methodologies employed by the various organizations.

constitutes one of the primary conditions, as it produces a situation of weakness that becomes a breeding ground for the onset of servitude and reduction to slavery. Another determining element is being victim of institutional fragility, of limited access to justice, of poor protection systems, of armed conflict, of widespread acts of terrorism and mass displacement. Other factors deserving further attention are female disadvantage and the presence of segmented societies divided into various castes or with marginalized minority groups. It's equally important to mention social processes triggered by natural disasters. In fact, the acceleration of poverty, people forced to abandon their homes, dismembered communities, weakened institutions, are in many cases linked to the spread of slavery practices<sup>5</sup>.

Slavery International classified modern slavery according to the various forms it takes today.

- **Forced labour** – Any work or service which people are forced to do against their will, under threat of punishment.
- **Bonded labour** – when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. They are tricked into working for little or no pay, with no control over their debt.
- **Human trafficking** – it involves recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion.
- **Descent-based slavery** – a situation where people are born into slavery because their ancestors were captured into slavery and their families have 'belonged' to the slave-owning families ever since.
- **Child slavery** – Child slavery is often confused with child labour but is much worse. Whilst child labour is harmful for children and hinders their education and development, child slavery occurs when a child's labour is exploited for someone else's gain. It includes child trafficking, children forced to marry, children forced to take part in armed conflicts, children forced into domestic work.
- **Early and forced marriage** – when someone has not given their free and informed consent to enter the marriage and cannot leave marriages. Many marriages involving children are considered a form of slavery

These forms of servitude and slavery are often combined and are mutually reinforced by complex social phenomena that are hard to describe nor are they effectively and efficiently countered. Among the above-mentioned practices, the most common form of modern slavery, in addition to the widespread practice of forced marriage, is bonded labour, also known as debt bondage. Bonded labour is most widespread in South Asian countries such as India and Pakistan, where bonded labourers are forced to work in the agricultural sector, brick kilns, mills, mines and factories. This form of slavery encompasses other forms of slavery, notably forced labour and trafficking. In many cases people borrow money for a journey to a country where their creditors promised them a job. Once at their destination their passports are taken away and they are forced to live in slavery until they pay off their debts, as frequently happens also in situations of human mobility across Italy. These forms of slavery flourish in situations of poverty and in societies with widespread caste-based discrimination, coupled by limited access to justice and to education. In many cases bonded labour

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<sup>5</sup> See Caritas Italy, Report n° 14, "Tratta di esseri umani. Disumana e globale... E l'emergenza terremoto aggrava il fenomeno", 2016

is illegal, but laws are rarely enforced, also because those who exploit their victims often belong to the ruling classes and can thus use their influence to bend regulations to their own advantage.

Another particularly relevant form of slavery connected to other phenomena of social nature is child slavery. This condition is characterised by the use of children for someone else's gain, to be thereby distinguishable from child labour, which, although it hinders children's health and education, it is often crucial for maintaining a subsistence livelihood of their families. Children victims of slavery are employed in a wide range of activities, some of them legal, such as agriculture, factories, brick kilns, mines, bars, the tourist industry or domestic work. Some of these children are involved in illicit activities such as prostitution, pornography, forced begging, petty crime and the drug trade, to the most extreme cases of "child soldiers" or they are indoctrinated into committing acts of violence. Children are often employed because, unlike adults, they are easily controllable and are too weak to protest or demand higher wages or better working conditions. This situation is all the more serious as children reduced to slavery come from poor households and owing to their working conditions they do not have the opportunity to go to school. They will thus be lacking the skills enabling them to overcome the condition of poverty that led them to fall into slavery. Child slavery is often linked to another form of exploitation, consisting in early or forced marriage that occurs when the child didn't give their consent to a marriage, or at a very young age, thereby forced into a state of enslavement by the other spouse or by the spouse's family.

Finally, there is another form of slavery called "voluntary slavery". It can occur, for example, in situations of monopolistic markets, where employers enjoy high bargaining powers. In these cases, there is no physical or mental coercion of an individual but a form of indirect violence, resulting from "voluntarily" accepting working conditions ultimately amounting to initial or concealed forms of servitude. A wide range of factors lead to such unbalances of powers that favour employers. These include: the lack of job alternatives, the enforcement of employer cartels to impose their working conditions, the exploited workers' impossibility to move to another place or the situation of social exclusion they are often afflicted by, a poor regulatory framework covering workers' rights, the absence of trade unions and other organizations representing workers' rights, their poor education preventing them from defending themselves from this form of exploitation.<sup>6</sup>

## Slavery in Asia

Slavery is a global phenomenon, but it is chiefly spread in the Asian continent, in countries where in many cases it fuels the production of consumer goods for the western market through various global industries including foodstuffs, clothing and technology. To exemplify the high proportion of slavery in Asia, let it suffice to mention that 58% of all those living in slavery are in India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan<sup>7</sup>. The Countries with the highest prevalence of slavery are listed in the following chart:

### Estimated proportion of population in modern slavery

	Country	Estimated percent of population in slavery	Estimated number in slavery	Population total
1	North Korea	4,373 %	1.100.000	25.155.000

<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive study on the factors critical to the preservation of dignified labour and to countering slavery-like practices is found in Caritas Italy, Report n° 30, "Per un lavoro dignitoso. Dossier di Caritas Italiana su diritti in Asia e nel mondo", 2017, partly referred to and expounded in the present paper.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/findings/>

2	Uzbekistan	3,973 %	1.236.600	31.125.000
3	Cambodia	1,648 %	256.800	15.578.000
4	India	1,400 %	18.354.700	1.311.051.000
5	Qatar	1,356 %	30.300	2.235.000

Source: Global Slavery Index 2016

As evidenced in the chart, the Country with the highest proportion of population in slavery is North Korea. Although it is an extremely isolated Country, from which it is difficult to obtain verifiable information, there is pervasive evidence that the State makes widespread use of forced labour, including labour forcibly imposed on political prisoners and forced labour abroad. The second Country with the highest rate of slaves is Uzbekistan, where, despite the adoption of measures to prevent forced labour in the cotton industry, the government continues to subject its citizens to forced labour in the annual cotton harvest. In depth documentation and studies have been conducted on Cambodia, third in this sad ranking, notably for exploitation of prostitution and for the phenomenon of “forced beggars.” In addition to these specific cases, in Cambodia people are subjected to slavery in sectors that include construction, manufacturing, domestic work. Although India is not the Country with the highest proportion of population in modern slavery, it has as many as 18.3 million slaves, according to researches carried out across 15 Indian States. The Indian government has made considerable efforts to reduce the phenomenon. However, according to findings, forms of slavery in domestic work, in construction, agriculture, fishing, manual labour and the sex industry, are still widespread.

In addition to the flagrant situations of slavery mentioned so far, widely documented episodes of modern slavery have been registered also in other areas. Such examples include slavery in domestic work in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan; in the technology industry in China and Malaysia, in the clothing industry in Bangladesh and Taiwan, in the fishing boats in Thailand and in the fish processing industry in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. There are cases such as the slavery of child soldiers in Afghanistan, India and Thailand, organ trafficking in India and Nepal, and early or forced marriage of children in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Indonesia.

It should be noted that the ten world Countries with the highest proportion of people in slavery are also the most densely-populated. These are: China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, North Korea, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia. Most of these Countries are in Asia. Special relevance should be given to the fact that these Countries provide low-cost jobs to produce consumer goods for Western markets, entering the production phase of various global supply chains, including the production of food, clothing and technology.

Several emblematic cases make it possible to analyze the dynamics of modern slavery, including its connection with global economy. One of the most significant situations was registered in Nepal, where the widespread presence of poverty, domestic violence, gender discrimination and low levels of education, combined with recurrent natural disasters and conflicts (and the permeability of neighbouring States’ borders), has led to the emergence of rampant trafficking of people to other Countries.<sup>8</sup> Within this trafficking, Nepalese citizens – most of them women – are often enticed with false promises of employment (often with false working contracts or fictitious marriages) deceived into undertaking journeys to India, Africa, or the Gulf Countries, while in reality they become victims

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<sup>8</sup> See the previously-mentioned Report n°14 by Caritas Italy.



of forced labour, domestic servitude, prostitution or organ trafficking<sup>9</sup>. The following chart summarizes the situation with special reference to this Country:

Nepal: destination and prevalence of human trafficking

Sector	Country of destination	Gender	%
Domestic labour	India, Emirates, Tanzania	Woman	40%
Prostitution	India, China	Woman	53%
Sale of human organs	India	Man	1%
Construction, foodservice, textile industry ...	Gulf Countries, India, Malaysia, Africa	Man/woman	6%

Source: Caritas Italy - data taken from interviews in Nepal, March 2016

Another significant case regards the changed living conditions of Indian farmers. In fact, many of them living in precarious conditions have abandoned rural areas and migrated into the city where they are used as manpower in sectors often marked by conditions of slavery. Those who decide not to emigrate to the city are forced to face adverse working conditions, largely resulting from the changes imposed on traditional agriculture by capital-intensive agriculture leading to increasing rates of suicides among the Indian farmers community, often perceived as the only way out of an unbearable life. According to a study conducted by Cambridge University<sup>10</sup> in 2014, farmers that are most exposed to suicide-risk include those growing products intended for the market, such as coffee and cotton, those that have land holdings of one hectare or less, and with debts of over 300 rupees (4.40 euro). Dependence on the global economy, small land extensions and indebtedness have caused a deterioration of living conditions in rural India that led to a significant increase in suicide rates among farmers, another situation whereby the current economic model produced the conditions for the emergence of exploitative episodes comparable to slavery.

One last emblematic case of modern slavery is Sri Lanka. The phenomenon of migration, especially of women, registered throughout the country, in many cases assumes the dark shades of trafficking and slavery. Many female citizens flee situations comparable to that of Nepal, headed towards Gulf Countries in search of a better future. In many cases they take loans from mediators to cover travel expenses and once they arrive in the destination country they are forced to work as domestic slaves, burdened by the debt incurred prior to departure. The Sinhala police reclaim bodies of Sri Lankan nationals who die abroad every year, often mutilated corpses or with missing organs. The families rarely have the opportunity to see the bodies of their deceased relatives or obtain an autopsy.

While it's true that the Asian continent has the highest percentage of modern slavery, it would be a mistake to confine these phenomena to distant corners of the world. The productive sectors marked by phenomena of servitude and forced labour, including veritable forms of reduction to slavery, are often found within global production networks of which Western countries represent the last passage, that of the final users. In concrete terms, how many times do we reflect on where the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the tools we use to communicate, are produced? For many years the Clean

<sup>9</sup> On this issue, among the few available sources, see *Kidney Trafficking in Nepal. A Study of Selected VDCs in Kavrepalanchowk District*, 2015. <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/KidneyTraffickinginNepal.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> J. Kennedy, L. King, «The political economy of farmers' suicides in India: indebted cash-crop farmers with marginal landholdings explain state-level variation in suicide rates», *Globalization and Health*, vol. 10, fasc. 1, 2014, p. 16.

Clothes campaign<sup>11</sup> has been carrying out in-depth research on the conditions of manufacturing workers in the global garment and textile industry often marked by situation of abuse, that we somewhat legitimize through our purchases.

An example of this connection is the recently released study “Watch your step!”<sup>12</sup>, on the Social and Environmental Impacts of Tanneries in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, India. The Report highlighted the serious problems caused by ‘careless’ tanning manufacturing process in these two regions, chiefly linked to the production of finished leather products, exported also to Europe. The most severe impact is linked to the use of Chromium (CrVI), found in wastewater and solid waste, often improperly dumped in open fields. This causes the contamination of surface water, including drinking water and fields near tanneries, which affects the very livelihood of the rural population. Field research carried out locally with interviews to workers employed in the leather sectors highlighted a set of problems linked to working conditions that range from occupational health hazards (the majority of workers reported a number of work-related disorders such as chronic fever, respiratory diseases, eye and skin irritation) directly linked to the lack or inadequacy of personal protective equipment. On top of this, working conditions in the leather sector are precarious, marked by extremely low wages, casualization of labour and lack of Employee State Insurance (ESI) and Employee Provident Fund (EPF) cover.

These cases of “voluntary semi-slavery”, with exposure to high risks in terms of workers’ health, characterise the manufacturing process of many of the things we use every day.

## Slavery in Italy

Although slavery is most widespread in poor Countries, it equally afflicts rich ones. Italy is no exception, with several areas marked by such sad situations. The most numerous episodes of slavery involve the trafficking of human beings, sexual slavery and exploitation of labour<sup>13</sup>. Over the past years, awareness of labour exploitation has increased proportionally to the growth of this sad phenomenon, even in our country. Forced labour, however, as pointed out by David Mancini<sup>14</sup>, a magistrate who has been working on this phenomenon for years, is significantly underestimated and insufficiently counteracted while being the most widespread form of modern slavery, despite its gravity. This issue is often addressed by the public at large in terms of mild condemnation or even justification. There is a disturbing tendency to explain or legitimize facts or conducts that imply specific responsibilities and which are anything but ineluctable. In the light of such a deeply-rooted mental attitude the same authorities fail to recognize, and therefore fail to pursue, behaviours that blatantly violate fundamental human rights. Yet labour exploitation in Italy is clearly defined and thus competent authorities are expected to counter these practices on the basis of easily identifiable factors such as: physical or sexual violence or the threat of such violence, limitations of freedom of movement, withholding of part of a worker’s salary as part repayment of a loan, or the absence of wages, the seizure of the worker’s identity documents or passport coupled by threat to report workers to Immigration Authorities.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.abitipuliti.org>

<sup>12</sup> S. Lakshmi Chellapilla et al., *Watch Your Step! A Study on the Social and Environmental Impacts of Tanneries in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, India*, Berlin / Vienna, Change Your Shoes, December 2017

<sup>13</sup> One such case is that of Romanian women forced to work in conditions of slavery in greenhouses in the district of Ragusa, Italy <http://espresso.repubblica.it/inchieste/2014/09/15/news/violentate-nel-silenzio-dei-campi-a-ragusa-il-nuovo-orrore-delle-schiave-rumene-1.180119>

<sup>14</sup> D. Mancini, *La tutela dal grave sfruttamento lavorativo ed il nuovo articolo 603bis c.p.*, in Altalex.com, 26.09.2011

The largest share of people in forced labour or slavery-like practices work in specific economic sectors that lend to abusive or illegal practices, such as construction, ~~OBJ~~agriculture, domestic work, in factories, in the sector of fishing and tourism. These forms of forced labour or of severe labour exploitation are difficult to identify, due to the vulnerability and fear of the victims, to monitoring and investigating difficulties on the part of the competent authorities and sometimes due to the absence of valid regulatory instruments, in terms of support and protection of victims, and of repressive instruments.

Exploitation and exploiters take different shapes and forms. According to reports released by the diocesan Caritas of Foggia, the economic crisis and resulting unemployment has led some entrepreneurs, especially in the agricultural sector, to hire friends, acquaintances and relatives with regular seasonal contract and contributions paid by the same subjects, while the actual work is carried out by immigrant farmers. In this way immigrant workers are granted no rights while the former, having completed 102 days of work in two years, are entitled to receive unemployment benefits. In other cases, despite an employment contract, migrant workers' employment contributions are paid for the first few days alone, thereby preventing them from accessing public services. In some cases, agricultural workers were promised a monthly wage but were never paid, even after years. Workers are often afraid to react, especially undocumented migrants working in environments with criminal activity involved. When the contract is made, it includes an agreement timetable of ordinary and extraordinary work, which is rarely respected: agricultural labourers engaged in the harvesting of tomatoes, especially during the month of August, work up to 15 hours per day.

To fully grasp the scope of the working conditions of so-called modern slaves, it is sufficient to visit southern Italy's countryside in the tomato season. Harvesting by hand involves uprooting the entire plant, which is shaken so that ripe tomatoes fall in a container, while the green tomatoes remain attached to the plant and are eventually thrown away. This heavy work causes back-aches, skin diseases also due to contact with chemical fertilizers and herbicides, eyes get easily irritated by the dust. Back-aches are temporarily forgotten when it's time to be paid, but that's when the worst forms of exploitation occur. The salary, resulting from an oral agreement, is further reduced by the employer citing various reasons such as the fact that the containers were not completely full, that there were considerable amounts of earth and weeds in the box to increase its volume, that the farm has lowered the price of tomatoes, or merely for the fact that it was a bad year. The farm using the "service" of the foreman entrusts him with the task of handing out the wages. The foreman withholds 30 to 50% of the total sum. If the foreman avails himself of the mediation of a "gang master" the latter withholds € 5,00 for transport to the place of work, some even claim compensations for the container and an additional fee for water and sandwiches, when requested. Sometimes the farms receive delayed payments and cannot – or don't want to – pay the labourers' salaries and promise to do so as soon as possible. But seasonal workers are likely to migrate to other areas when the job is over. In many cases, several years go by until they are paid what they are due. Thus, they receive just a few Euros for a 300kg box of tomatoes, even less is given to undocumented workers. These are the wages of immigrants working as farm-labourers in the Apulia, Campania or Sicily. This system is run by the local gang masters, namely, unscrupulous figures operating throughout Italy whose activity involves a cost for government coffers in terms of tax evasion, amounting to over 600 million euro a year. Every day, roughly 400 thousand farm workers (3/4 of whom are foreign nationals) are exploited by gang masters in fields to make the day. Not to mention the serious housing and environmental conditions involving at least 100 thousand of them. According to the CGIL (federation of Italian Trade Unions), 62% of migrants employed as seasonal farmworkers have no access to sanitation facilities, 64% have no access to running water, and 72% of workers who underwent a

medical examination after working in the fields were affected by diseases contracted prior to agricultural labour.

## Conclusions

The issue of reduction to slavery and 'ownership rights' inflicted by human beings onto other human beings is not confined to a distant past, as is often assumed so as to relegate this inhuman and inexcusable practice to realities that are alien to us, and thereby deny any connection to them. Phenomena of 'modern slavery' are pervasively present throughout the planet: in areas we deceive ourselves into considering distant from us, to which we are closely connected through an ever-globalized economy, in some cases even outside our doorstep, sometimes (clumsily) justified in the name of our right to purchase at the lowest price.

The analysis of slavery in Asia highlights obvious connections with the performance mechanisms of contemporary globalized economy. In the face of these structural mechanisms it is legitimate to ask whether there is still room for measures that ensure the eradication of practices of modern slavery. It's an extremely complex issue, and clearly such practices cannot be overcome without deep-rooted transformations of social and productive systems underlying the practice of modern slavery. Governments of countries afflicted by this problem, most of which are still lagging in the fulfilment of their obligations, namely to implement and adopt effective regulatory frameworks to counteract processes of servitude and reduction to slavery, are called to make the greatest efforts. In many cases, civil society organizations at local level carry out public awareness-programs on these realities, including situations of connivance (in some cases, the active participation...) of Government institutions. Special attention should be placed to avoid low-cost labour exploitation constituting an utter violation of fundamental human rights, exacted for purely economic purposes; measures are needed to ensure that private production activities observe a common set of minimum standards<sup>15</sup>. In this respect consumers have a key role to play by making enlightened choices in purchasing goods, thereby greatly contributing to improving the degrading, inhuman conditions of many people. Conscious consumption, along with awareness and information activities, have proved to be effective instruments to drive the private sector to adopt enforced principles and to establish new rules of the game and new standards.

Slavery-like practices, assumed to be distant, are in fact present in many areas of our daily life, often concealed under a thin layer of good conscience. Countering these practices is our own responsibility.

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<sup>15</sup> In this respect see the laudable initiative promoted by the Ethical Banking Foundation, Extended Hands, and SID (*Society for International Development*) that supports the activity of a working group within the Human Rights Council of the United Nations aimed at the adoption of a binding Treaty on the protection of human rights in the private sector. <https://business-humanrights.org>

## CHAPTER 2

### SLAVERY OF UNDERPAID LABOR

Manuela de Marco / Italian Caritas, Immigration Office

#### **Labour exploitation in agriculture: Experience of the 'Presidio' project of Caritas Italy<sup>16</sup>**

According to the well-known and certainly the most official estimate of the ILO (International Labour Organization), about 21 million people are victims of forced labour in the world, of which 11.4 million are women and 9.5 million are men<sup>17</sup>. About 19 million are exploited by private individuals or businesses, while the remaining 2 million are enslaved by States or rebel groups. According to ILO calculations, forced labour generates every year over \$ 150 billion in illegal profits in the private economy.

The construction, agriculture, manufacturing, domestic work, fishing, tourism and entertainment industries are those where most of the situations of serious labour exploitation are reported.

It is a widespread condition that frequently oppresses women and men, mostly migrants from different continents, including citizens of the European Union. Due to their vulnerability, migrant workers and those in situations of poverty or fleeing from conflict are among the main victims, while work exploitation finds fertile ground in certain economic sectors that lend themselves to abusive or irregular practices.

The emergence of this phenomenon is more complex due to some additional factors that are interlinked: on the part of victims there is not only fear of reporting the behaviour of their exploiters, but also the disappointment and a substantial indifference in seeking a criminal conviction for their exploiters whereas they simply would not wish to miss the opportunity to continue working and at best recover what they are owed, namely the difference between the actual pay and what they are entitled to. Another factor that significantly impacts detection is certainly the presence, the closeness, the proximity of protection agencies in the reference area: a phenomenon clearly emerges when it is taken over by third parties capable of supporting the individual during a process to reacquire dignity and rights.

Other factors greatly limiting the possibility of painting a broad picture of the phenomenon are: difficulty of monitoring and investigating by competent bodies, the lack of valid regulatory tools - both in terms of assistance and protection of victims - and repression; these are some of the reasons that make it difficult to surface these criminal phenomena through which "invisible" victims fuel massive profits of untraced economic systems. In general terms, it can be said that labour exploitation progresses without restraints wherever there are no structural and programmatic national policies aimed at guaranteeing both the victims' human rights and the eradication of the submerged illegal economic systems.

However, this is not a very recent history: in our country we still witness serious to very serious situations of sexual or labour exploitation which are similar in all aspects to forms of feudal enslavement. The degradation in which the so-called modern slaves are forced to live is no longer a mystery also due to the great media attention given to illegal hiring, ghettos and prostitution along

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<sup>16</sup> This paragraph is a contribution drawn from Caritas Italy, *Nella terra di nessuno. Rapporto Presidio 2015*, in [http://immigration.caritas.it/sites/default/files/2016-10/Rapporto\\_Progetto\\_Presidio.pdf](http://immigration.caritas.it/sites/default/files/2016-10/Rapporto_Progetto_Presidio.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> ILO (OIL), *Global estimate of forced labour - Summary*, 2012, in [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_181953.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@declaration/documents/publication/wcms_181953.pdf)



the streets of our “Beautiful Country” where Nigerian or Eastern European women are forced to sell their bodies.

These realities of our everyday life constantly urge us and call us to a respect for the human being that is annihilated in these contexts by dynamics of multiple exploitation often victimizing vulnerable people.

Although it is forbidden by the fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization and it is considered the most modern form of slavery, forced labour is still unfortunately underestimated even by the Italian legislation, flawed in the characteristic aspects of labour exploitation: it takes place in submerged, impalpable and difficult to monitor environments.

Italy is the first victim of an economic system that allows the spread of parallel labour markets; the construction, agriculture and domestic work industries are among the work environments which mostly record situations of serious work exploitation. Many players and factors can determine serious instances of labour exploitation from the culture of raw materials to the delivery of the product to the end consumer. The reasons for the exploitation cannot always be traced to the mere role of the ‘corporal’ or the abuse of the employer. The supply chain is one of the processes that would demand a thorough investigation in a national system of severe economic crisis. Dropping market prices also play a role as they force small farmers / entrepreneurs to turn to the ‘corporal’ system, which, as we said, “enlists” workers among those experiencing circumstances of social hardship who submit themselves to fictitious contracts and often-inhuman working conditions just to receive a salary. In this context, the inclusion of immigrants to the Italian productive economic system shows the persistent vulnerability of their condition, which in some cases results in systems that violate the most basic human and social rights. These working conditions are characterized by wages that are considerably lower than the average in the country or its current regulations, by violation of the rules on working hours and safety in the workplace, by the adoption of control or surveillance methods that restrict personal freedom and tend to combine workplace and housing, and by degrading living conditions. No security measures, no insurance coverage, scarcity of food (often subject to forms of blackmail or usury by the ‘corporals’), dirty and run-down accommodations provided by the employer (as a means of earning “gratitude”, in addition to the ‘enslavement of the worker’), dwellings in abandoned and decadent farmhouses at illegal rent rates. Thousands of people, aged between 20 and 50, experience unspeakable conditions of poverty and para-slavery marginalization. Due to their degree of vulnerability, the main victims among exploited human beings are migrant workers and those in situations of poverty or fleeing from conflict; but they are not the only ones.

For many years, numerous organizations have been working in the area to support these workers with actions aimed at protecting and reporting conditions of exploitation. However, these activities are fragmented and they can seldom cover the entire national territory. Therefore, to try to respond more effectively to these multi-problem situations (related to different areas of need: housing, health, legal, etc...), the Italian Caritas, with the support of the CEI (Italian Bishops’ Conference), determined to act in a systemic manner through a two-year national project aimed at guaranteeing multilevel intervention in 10 different territories.

The problem of irregular seasonal workers who, especially at the beginning of summer, pour into the countryside of Southern Italy where they adjust to work in completely degrading living conditions, often experiencing situations of real exploitation, is a phenomenon unfortunately known to several diocesan Caritas operating on those territories.

Several of them took charge of these situations for several years, not without difficulty. In the absence of public services, the diocesan Caritas have often intercepted these situations, taking charge of

them based on their capabilities, from covering basic needs to the handling of their legal-labour situation.

Until 2014, the action of the diocesan Caritas and the coordination of Caritas Italy consisted mainly in emergency interventions such as financial contributions mostly aimed at meeting the immediate basic needs of workers through the supply of kits for personal hygiene, clothing, medical aid, food, water and blankets. As of the 2014 'harvest season', however, the perspective of Caritas Italy was and still is overcoming the above-mentioned type of action to begin a systemic action in the areas affected by this phenomenon as well as monitoring, case collection and strong institutional dialogue. It is obvious that the role of the diocesan Caritas organizations represented the qualifying factor in these actions allowing ample scope to this project in areas such as Rosarno, Castel Volturno, Foggia etc., where instances of exploitation and illegal hiring strongly relate to the socio-labour local circumstances at alarming levels.

That is what gave rise to the 'Presidio Project': with a general objective of launching a systemic action aimed at addressing the labour exploitation phenomenon in agriculture through the action and collaboration of 10 diocesan Caritas (18 during the second two-year term of the project) that established to this end a 'Garrison', that is a place for listening, meeting, care, orientation, and support for second-tier services specific to the needs identified.

Each Garrison is easily identifiable by way of a project logo and it relies on mobile facilities, whether mobile homes or vans, that move around the countryside or fixed locations that workers can visit. The latter are located at parish support centres or in places of passage or meeting of workers where foreign labour recruitment often takes place.

The facilities operators, both specialized individuals (social workers, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, experts) and volunteers, ensure protection and assistance through a widespread action of information aimed at improving the workers' living conditions. The project's activities often relate to administrative issues concerning residency permits, health care, legal assistance particularly regarding work-related issues.

These activities are supported by the implementation of a database that guarantees the sharing of information (user profile, background, needs, etc.) among the different facilities useful in the continued support of workers that move through the areas based on seasonality. In fact, the needs of a beneficiary recorded at one Garrison are often then taken up by the Garrison of the area where the worker has moved subsequently.

### **Typical profile of a worker registered with a 'Presidio': from personal to working circumstances<sup>18</sup>**

As of June 30, 2017, the 'Presidio' database had collected the background and exploitation cases of approximately **4.700 workers** with a harvest season still in progress.

Most of the reports proceed from the facilities located in Ragusa (20,4% of the total), Foggia (17,3%), Saluzzo (12,5%).

Men still clearly prevail in the database (86%), **however, the presence of women (over 600) has been constantly on the rise** (there were only 44 as of 31.12.2014, they reached 200 as of 30.06.2015 and tripled in a little over one year). They are fewer among the users of the facilities not

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<sup>18</sup> This paragraph is based on the study of the data contained in the *Database* of the Presidio Project pertaining to workers subject of one or more actions for assistance/protection of operators.

because they are not present, rather due to the far more difficult life and work situations they face which often involve largely, **segregation, violence, sexual exploitation and even forced surgeries (for instance, ‘home-made’ abortions)**. They therefore need greater confidence to come forward given the dramatic stories they have had to face.

Many nationalities are involved: at the highest ranks, we currently find **Romania, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Morocco**, usually proceeding from rural areas in their respective countries and with an average to low level of schooling and little knowledge of the Italian language and even lesser knowledge of Italian law and the rights it upholds.

In addition to sub-Saharan nationalities, the number of EU citizens is increasing, mainly **Rumanians, but also Bulgarians**, who in some territories are particularly affected by serious labour exploitation. There is a significant presence of **women** in the aforementioned communities.

**The typical Garrison user** is predominantly a **young man**. The 18/30 and 30/40 **age groups** together account for 75% of the total, with a slight predominance of the 18/30 group (40% of the total). Workers registered at the area facility also include a number of individuals over the age of sixty (5%) and minors, which number is small compared to the total number of project beneficiaries, but nevertheless it has alarmingly doubled over a period of one year (from 2% at the same time in 2016 to 4% in 2017).

As for the legal status, the workers who answered that question (95% of the total) declare to hold a document in at least 72% of the cases and 6% claim to be in the process of renewing it; 17% of the cases state they hold no documents. The residency permit is mainly related to international protection (62% of cases): specifically, these are permits for humanitarian reasons (25% of residency permit holders), for refugees (1%) and subsidiary protection (9%), as well as applications for political asylum (8%). Another important portion of residency permit holders is linked to employment (14%). Lastly, there is a small but important number of residency card holders / public records registration (3%).

The report on the Presidio project “In the land of no one” (2015) investigates further aspects of the migration process and the living and working conditions of the beneficiaries interviewed.

For example, concerning the first aspect, it showed:

- **To cross the border and reach Southern Italy**, 1/10 of the workers had contracted a debt especially with people belonging to their family or circle of relatives;

With regard to living conditions in Italy:

- **Housing conditions are critical**: 1 out of 3 lives in a home or housing facility (parish, canonical...); 2 out of 3 on the other hand live in very precarious conditions (tents, wrecked farmhouses, in open air...);
- **Overcrowding is a common condition: only 12% of the sample population lives alone.**

As to the rest:

- o **48% lives with** a number of cohabitants ranging from **1 to 10**;
- o **40% lives with** a number of cohabitants ranging from **11 to 50**;
- o **15 users cohabit with more than 50 individuals**

- As to **working conditions**, the Presidio project has revealed that:
  - o Most of the users do **not have a work contract** (58% that is 865 users out of the 1487 who answered that question). Among those who have a contract (471) not all of them have a copy (only 348, that is 74%... therefore a significant number of workers affirm they are legitimately hired but they cannot prove it).
  - o There is a **systematic violation of the labour rights** recognized by Italian law, including the rate of pay, the right to rest and safety at the workplace;
  - o **exploitation occurs in many different manners**, including the mandatory use of the transportation arranged by the employer or the corporal, forced accommodation and the withholding of documents;
  - o **the practice of the grey is also widespread**, which only confers an apparent observance of the law to the work relation but violates it substantially through the failure to pay the compensation reported on the payroll or replacing the identity of the worker (i.e. a work contract is stipulated to formally show the existence of a work relation however, the service is performed by individuals other than the bearer of the contract).

### **Actions achieved by the Presidiums in favour of workers**

More than 4,000 interventions were carried out, in addition to contact and listening, involving users coming mainly from the facilities of Ragusa, Foggia, Acerenza and Caserta.

This ranking however, does not necessarily reflect the action requested by the user. During the dialogue, the operator may identify more pressing needs requiring a priority action or he may decide to provide for the immediate one, to then focus on a more complex issue after the opportunity to engage the worker.

There are three types of prevailing actions which together account for about 60% of the total, namely:

- **Meeting of basic necessities;**
- **Orientation;**
- **Administrative action.**

**The meeting of basic needs** (supply of food, water, hot drinks, blankets, clothing, etc.) is at the same time a response to a basic need of the user due to his very precarious living conditions and a way for operators to create an opportunity for an initial contact with the worker to then further investigate his situation, as mentioned above. It is therefore almost naturally the more frequent type of action; however, it would be wrong to interpret it as a sign of an action by the facility only limited to meeting basic needs. In fact, this initiative almost irrevocably supports or triggers others.

As we continue our review, the **administrative action** is in turn specific to orientation and consists in a more detailed and timely report on the administrative situation of the facilities' user, that is the verification of his legal status and the bureaucratic measures necessary to file an application for a permit to stay, a conversion or renewal of the same or any other administrative transaction (listing in public registry, health card).

There are then actions achieved in the form of **health support** (about 9.5% of the total) consisting in taking charge of the health conditions of the user when it is obviously fragile or requiring treatment and medical examinations. In these cases, medical exams and instrumental tests are requested; transportation or rides are arranged to visit the doctors volunteering for the local project or the

applicable state local health facility, or the medical teams of organizations present in the area of action of the facility (for example MEDU, MSF, Emergency).

Another type of **action** that is much in demand is that to respond to **housing** needs (about 9.3% of the total). In this case, the need is identified, and the action is implemented mainly in those territories where local or area institutions establish a camp for seasonal workers: that is the case in Saluzzo, Acerenza, Melfi. Thus, these area garrisons coordinate the supply and demand for housing and ensure that the workers registered at the facility with a request for housing can obtain a home or accommodation in the camp (tent city as in Melfi and Saluzzo; or facility or building as in Acerenza).

Lastly, other types of actions more specifically target the improvement of the user's working conditions aimed at further investigating the different illegal aspects in the arrangements and financial terms of the service rendered: these actions cover a wide variety of services, including help in writing a resumé, checking payroll, existence of a contract, support to register with employment offices, handling of a possible labour dispute or help in filing a criminal action.

#### **As to the working conditions, the Project revealed that:**

- Most of the users **do not hold a work contract** (58% or 865 users out of 1487 who answered the question). Among those who do have a contract (471), not all of them have a copy (only 348, that is 74%...therefore, a significant number of workers affirm to be legitimately employed but cannot prove it).
- There is a systematic violation of the labour rights that are recognized by Italian law, including the rate of pay, the right to rest and safety at the workplace;
- Exploitation occurs in many different manners, including the mandatory use of the transportation arranged by the employer or the corporal, forced accommodation and the withholding of documents.
- **The practice of the grey is also widespread**, which only confers an apparent observance of the law to the work relation but violates it substantially through the failure to pay the compensation reported on the payroll or replacing the identity of the worker (i.e. a work contract is stipulated to formally show the existence of a work relation however, the service is performed by individuals other than the bearer of the contract).

#### **We can no longer only speak of seasonality**

The data collected through the monitoring of specific areas indicate that this **phenomenon now exists all year round**, thanks to the ever-increasing use of greenhouse crops and the spread of exploitation practices in hidden sectors and in areas and environments that are hardly visible.

This happens particularly in the territory of the Garrison of Trani, Teggiano, and Ragusa, where the presence of migrants who are victims of labour exploitation is rooted and permanent; this is however not indicative of better working conditions. On the contrary.

Moreover, it is even more concerning to note that the most settled and segregated nationalities are those from the **EU: Romanian and Bulgarians conceal their exploited status**.

#### **What is a possible future scenario?**



On 27 May 2016, the **National Protocol against illegal hiring and labour exploitation in agriculture**<sup>19</sup> was signed by the Ministries of the Interior, and of Labour and Agricultural Policies, and also executed by the National Labour Inspectorate, the Regions (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Piedmont, Puglia and Sicily) by trade unions (Cgil, Cisl and Uil), by trade associations (Coldiretti, Cia, Copagri, Confagricoltura) by CNA and by some third sector organizations including Caritas Italy.

The main purpose of said Protocol is to support and reinforce actions to oppose corporals and labour exploitation throughout the national territory from the provinces of Bari, Caserta, Foggia, Lecce, Potenza, Ragusa and Reggio Calabria; it aims at consolidating a "network" among the subjects involved in the field to implement initiatives, medical facilities and information desks for the promotion of legal protection, listening and orientation. The actions anticipated include an important new element, namely the call for funds for the hospitality of seasonal workers in decent conditions, even temporarily using state property or those confiscated from organized crime, to overcome informal settlements (so-called "ghettos") and to fight criminal interferences in them; the establishment of services of orientation to work through the employment centre to guarantee safe and healthy work environments; the implementation of a service of information and protection through third sector organizations to promote lawfulness and safety; the fight against labour exploitation with the collaboration and involvement of the labour inspectorate, INAIL, the Territorial Labour Department and prefectures. The latter will play a fundamental role in the implementation of the National Protocol on the territory; in fact, the coordination of activities is entrusted to the prefectures that will establish permanent Tables (presided by the Prefect and attended by area representatives of the institutions involved) aimed at identifying projects and activities to be achieved. The national funds anticipated for the implementation of the actions provided for in the National Protocol are attributable to the Pon Legality (National Operational Program) and the Fami (Fund for Asylum Migration and Integration) and have not been issued by the Ministries. To date, unfortunately, there has been a failure to activate the planned coordination and control group referred to in Article 6, which is necessary to implement the obligations envisaged for the aforementioned group.

The territorial mapping has reported that, to this date, only the regions of Basilicata and Puglia have observed the National Protocol against labour exploitation stipulating agreements for its implementation.

The region of Basilicata, before its execution of the National Protocol, had already implemented actions aimed at welcoming migrant seasonal workers and the establishment of a link among the most involved institutional players. It is so far the first Region which has applied the memorandum of understanding against labour exploitation in agriculture to implement the national agreement by releasing the regional PON security funds in addition to those already provided for the regional program against illegal hiring. The latest news report that the region of Basilicata has issued a call for tender for municipalities aimed at recovering unused buildings in historic city centres<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> In <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/Terzo-settore-e-responsabilita-sociale-imprese/focus-on/Volontariato/Documents/Protocollo%2027%20maggio%202016.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> To consolidate similar initiatives anticipated to date, possibly only in regional laws, the Council of Ministries based on a proposal of the Labour and Social Policy Minister Giuliano Poletti has approved upon final examination three law decrees for the implementation of the law for the reform of the Third Sector, social enterprise and the discipline of universal civil service (law 6 June 2016, n. 106). Among the measures approved, those "to support the assignment of unused state buildings to agencies for institutional purposes", in

The Region of Puglia has also taken its first steps by stipulating some territorial protocols in favour of meeting the labour demand and supply in the agricultural sector (to prevent illegal forms of labour brokerage) and for health care. Nothing or little more is moving in the other regions involved where there are difficulties in reconciling institutional interventions with the emergency of camps and the exploitation of migrants.

The year 2016 was filled with political and regulatory changes referred to agricultural work, irregular employment of foreign labour and illegal workers; in addition to the above-mentioned National Protocol, there was also the final approval on October 18 of the new **Bill against illegal hiring** by the Chamber of Deputies<sup>21</sup>. It represents an important step that fills some gaps in the previous legislation and which also envisages the possible implementation of actions filed from trade unions and the third sector, providing for tools such as mandatory confiscation, detention in the act, the responsibility of agencies, that of the employer, the establishment of a Quality Agricultural Work Network and especially the extension of the audience of recipients of the anti-trafficking Fund of the Department of Equal Opportunities. The repeated violation of the law on working hours and times of rest, the subjection of the worker to exhausting working conditions, to means of surveillance and degrading housing, as well as the recognition of work exploitation as a crime, are certainly innovative aspects. However, there is still some perplexity about the ability to implement these regulatory provisions that too often are subjected to the chronic lack of training of the bodies designated for their implementation.

Anyhow, in order to be truly effective, a law on illegal hiring must be supported by initiatives at the grassroot level aimed at a real cultural change, capable of presenting agricultural work as an activity worthy of all protections and safety features existing in other industries. In fact, the scourge of illegal hiring and exploitation will not be defeated by legal provisions, rather by new lifestyles which begin with the choices we make as consumers of supermarket goods. These choices involve everyone, from entrepreneurs to end consumers who through their purchases can also direct the food chain supply that often keeps workers trapped in its links.

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<http://www.regioni.it/riforme/2017/06/28/comunicato-stampa-del-consiglio-dei-ministri-n-37-del-28-06-2017-520629/>.

<sup>21</sup> The Bill was then passed as law, 29/10/2016 n° 199, in G.U. of 03/11/2016.

## CHAPTER 3

### **THE 72", HOME-REFUGE FOR MIGRANT PEOPLE IN CARE OF THE FRIARS MINOR IN MEXICO.**

Fr. Tomas Gonzalez Castillo, OFM

#### **Experience**

Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, New threats to human dignity

#### Introduction

Those of us who work in the comprehensive assistance to migrants, whether inside or outside the Church or as a civil society, are accustomed to saying that what we do is an emergency pastoral that has placed the same missionaries in a situation of deadly war for life.

We are all aware of the humanitarian tragedy that has been developing over the last few years involving migrants in the American corridor that is the passage of individuals proceeding mainly from Mexico, Central America, Cuba, South America, Haiti and other continents (Africa, Asia). We must refer to a single region that is the one expelling the largest number of people worldwide, where Mexicans only range from 6 to 7 million in the US. This area represents an actual scenario of death, pain and suffering for those leaving their places of origin, forced out by the system we are immersed in. Our evangelizing action occurs in a context of shameless inequality, extreme poverty and scandalous violence that cries to heaven.

We are moving within an economy of death that mercilessly tears natural resources while thoroughly devastating the earth. A death economy that displaces human beings leaving unpopulated communities that had settled in the region since ancient times. A savage death economy that impoverishes to the extreme and even strips human beings of their transcendent values. The engine of migration has been for many years the economic system imposed on us. This area is the home of the richest men in the world although it ranks among the poorest ones (Haiti, Honduras).

We are faced with a vicious and perverse circle where the receiving states need cheap labour; a workforce of thousands of hungry people turns into millions of dollars sent to expelling states to sustain their economy. An economy that will not help social development or guarantee the basic rights (dignified life, health, education, security) of the people left behind. On the contrary, the political class, the security forces, mainly the army, the new rich who are true apocalyptic monsters, will insatiably suck that economy. Neither the receiving nor the expelling states are interested in putting an end to that economy that represents their livelihood. Mexico is at the centre of the American corridor as a transit country which has turned the path of migrants into a real hell as a strategy and migration policy to allow the passage of only those who are needed and necessary.

Mexico, as a transit country, has transformed the path of migrants into an issue of national security; it has militarized the National Migration Institute; it has unleashed real paramilitaries onto the cargo train called "the beast" and on roadways, it has raised the price of the clandestine journey for all migrants. The Mexican strategy is truly diabolical. A strategy that is obviously designed in the US Pentagon: take water away from the fish; increase of detention jails; executive orders replicated in every country, mainly in Mexico.

Before the existence of Trump as a candidate to the US presidency and then as President, few were aware of what occurred in Mexico with migrants. As of the year 200, we started receiving at the migrant's houses scattered throughout the Mexican territory heart-breaking testimonies about the migration traffic: sexually abused people, abducted men and women whose life is worth what their relatives can pay as ransom; extortion by all the security authorities in Mexico: police, army, navy and, above all, migration agents. Adolescents kidnapped to be victims of labour, sexual trafficking and sale of organs. We ironically said that Trump was not exhaustive in everything he was ranting at first and then through his executive orders. In Mexico there is a history of massacres, forced disappearances, roads full of clandestine graves flooded with corpses of migrants; jails full of migrants for the only crime of crossing the border with no papers.

The engine of all this tragedy is still the economic system, but this is not the worst. It is now combined with the criminal and devastating violence affecting this region.

Organized crime has now taken on the face of drug cartels in Mexico and it deals in absolutely everything: forged goods, sex, animals, wood, fauna, drugs, even human beings; the latter are the ones who have most fed money to criminals and their closest collaborators, namely the authorities. In Central America, crime has taken the face of gangs, colluded with the justice system of Central American countries that are a real scourge for the inhabitants of these countries.

So, the second motor of migration today in Central America is criminal violence. Every day people, men, women, girls, boys, young and elderly people, entire families, fleeing from a real threat of death arrive at the houses for migrants.

Regarding drugs, we know that for years chemical drug consumption has been increasing in the US and Canada; this has reconfigured the geography of drug-trafficking, its allies, its enemies and those used to transport significant quantities of drugs. Although it sounds very bad, North America consumes human beings from all over the world but especially from Latin America, despite the strong tightening in the US immigration policy since 2001. But the migration policies in expelling countries throw migrants into secrecy. A clandestine status is fertile ground for organized crime and the corruption of authorities.

The migrant goes from being a customer of the trafficking business in his country of origin to becoming a victim of that same business in Mexico. As the most authoritative voices have said, in this country we are in a situation of State Terrorism, where issues of violence, migration and drug trafficking are now in symbiosis and it is impossible to unravel the threads of this infernal skein. Violence, Migration and Drug Trafficking are faces, the heads of a single apocalyptic monster that is killing whoever gets in its way and whose real victims are migrants.

On the southern border of Mexico, when some people and organizations began receiving Central American migrants to feed them, to house them in their churches or homes, they did not know that they were violating the general population law in Mexico, which not only considered a federal crime to go through the border "without permission and with no documents", but also criminalized the people who helped them.

That is why we humbly say that those of us who are working in this pastoral ministry, in this evangelization, do so from a revolutionary evangelical perspective and in civil disobedience. We have taken to the streets and we have attended forums, conferences, meetings with governors, legislators, secretaries of state, among others, and we told all of them: Mexico has not had twin

towers destroyed, Mexico is not an expansive empire that has taken up a flag of freedom and democracy to invade peoples and destroy their culture and keep their wealth; Mexico is not threatened by terrorists. Mexico is a noble population with transcendental values that has harboured many peoples in conflict: During the first half of the 20th century, Mexico opened its doors to the victims of the wars in Europe when citizens from Germany, Italy, France and Spain came over. During the second half of the 20th century, Mexico opened its doors to the victims of South American dictatorships: Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil; later, conflicts in Central America gave way to receiving refugees and victims of the wars in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Today Mexico acts as a butcher for people in motion and is a front man for the US immigration policy.

### **The house for migrants in Tenosique: An evangelical project of the minor brothers in South-Eastern Mexico.**

With these ideas as an introduction to our reflection, I would like to present the House for Migrants in Tenosique, Tabasco, called La 72, Hogar – Refugio para Personas Migrantes (The 72 Home – Shelter for Migrant People). It is named after what we believe was the worst massacre of migrants in Mexico: in Northern Mexico, in San Tamaulipas, the bloodiest organized crime in the history of our country: The Zetas, kidnapped, tortured and finally massacred seventy-two individuals from Central America, Ecuador, Brazil and India. Our efforts join those of other Homes for Migrants throughout the Mexican territory. It is no longer sufficient to open our arms and welcome the wounded from this inhuman and cruel war, it is no longer enough to clean the sores on their feet or as a result of the assaults; it is not enough to comfort them and say, "good luck, may God bless your journey". We have taken up the defence of their rights, of their dignity and the proclamation that we must transform their history.

We must again recall that our house is located on the Southern border and there it is in the most forgotten place. We call it the Forgotten border. In fact, The 72 is located in a land of violence. The Mexican State of Tabasco is the leader today as far as kidnappings and armed assaults. Our house is the first oasis of attention for people expelled from their countries who at barely 60 km from the "line", are attacked, raped, kidnapped, buried and crushed by the cargo train called the "beast".

### **An alternative economic, political and social project: The other possible world for the identity of migrants.**

We want to turn The 72 into a global village; it is the first place in this corner of Mexico where borders are broken down because even by law the INM is prohibited from approaching it. We therefore try to achieve an alternative global comprehensive project, a new just order, a place for the emergence of a new model of society and a new economic model. Anyone entering The 72 is welcome and the first thing that is satisfied is his or her hunger, thirst, need for rest; this is the onset of a proposal for a new order different from the one that imposed hunger, thirst and made him or her work to exhaustion without ever the necessary retribution for a life with dignity. From the time of initial contact, when we share bread and listen to their painful stories we are betting on a project that is humanizing.

We cannot give them money, we do not only do charity. The message of the early church reminds us of our task: "... I have no silver or gold; but what I have I give to you...". We attempt to recover the health and financial dignity that are at the basis of life. They are economically relevant



in their countries as long as they send contributions which, are in fact one of the major pillars of the expelling countries' economy.

Our project bets on a new political identity. Migrants are on a journey and The 72 is only one part of it. This journey will turn them into destitute people or beggars, authorities will treat them as criminals, society will label them as filthy foreigners. Cities will not allow them any access either since in many places Migrants Houses are out of the urban areas, in this cursed system that lives off them but that cannot stand them and supports leper colonies as in ancient times. In their countries of origin, they are the forgotten ones, the poor, but at least they had some sort of identity; on their journey, in our country they will be the nobodies, the invisible ones. Politically, they do not matter outside of election times. At the 72, a new political identity is also forged. Through the mini workshops on reality and human rights we sow in them the fight to change the world. Not seldom will they leave the 72 shouting: "... migrants are not criminals, we are international workers...". They leave with their eyes turned to the horizon challenging the long road ahead of them. They will no longer lower their eyes when faced with any uniform, be that green, blue, grey or brown. They know they have rights and they are willing to uphold them. Along the way, they become real subjects, defenders of their own rights and wandering social fighters. Even those who choose to remain in the forgotten border or any other part of the country know they have the right to manage their migration regularization.

We are therefore building a new social order with them. We ensure that migrants leave The 72 with, in addition to their backpack, freedom, fraternity and solidarity tattooed in their heart. These values will accompany them whether they reach the US, are arrested on the way or return to their country. Their outlook will be different even onto that organized crime that hurt them so much. We bet on the identity of migrants as that of a human being capable of transforming structures and the system that forced them to leave their country and launch history into a different direction.

Four years ago, we began welcoming to The 72 victims of violence in Central America; people and families who literally flee from death. We guide and support all of them in their process to apply for shelter in Mexico. Therefore, our house is now also a refugee camp where children and migrants who are completely alone can coexist as well as LGBT people, the elderly and women victims of machismo and the State.

We have also launched a new project that will bring together the cause of the Sister, that of Mother Earth and migrants and refugees: The agroecological farm "LAUDATO SI'. A ROOF, WORK AND EARTH. A Franciscan project that combines two of the main lines of the current papacy: environmental justice and justice for migrants and refugees.

### **The 72, daily Pentecost, ecclesiological model stemming from permanent crucifixion.**

We must critically admit that the itinerant crowds that come to The 72 are men and women of deep faith who have left the Catholic Church also due to neglecting bad pastors, among other things. However, the bread they are lacking calls us to be the daily bread for them in Jesus. Thus, every day there is a renewed and creative emergence of the liturgies that nourish ecumenical faith and support the hope that is forged through daily martyrdom.

Through the daily arrivals of brothers and sisters from all corners of the world, cultures, beliefs, ideologies and more, come together to transform our house into a real Pentecost where the Spirit will be revealed in different ways, joining all the dreams of these people in constant exodus.

Faith will again be one and it will unite them to be nourished in solidarity along the way and to endure the martyrdom that awaits them: assaults, rapes, humiliation, kidnappings, mutilations by the beast and death. We do not own faith and migrants; we are companions who share faith in Jesus.

It is therefore the rebirth of the ecclesiological model raised by Jesus.

**“The Lord led me among them... and I made mercy”: The 72, a privileged time and space to reinvent the Franciscan charism.**

This is our time, it is our kairos and the opportunity to establish the kingdom in a ‘Franciscan style’. The 72 is not an isolated project, or should not be, of the Church and society. We are faced with a structural problem affecting an entire extended region. We are yet another cry to the heavens, we are one more step on the search for the good and peace; we are a shoulder which along with other shoulders, want to turn this earth into a paradise.

The spiritual legacy of Saint Francis of Assisi provides us with the evangelical reason for our provincial project of assistance to migrants: “The Lord led us among them... and we did mercy”. This is what we intend to do in that area of Southern Mexico.

I want you in my paradise  
That is, that in my country  
People should live happy  
Even if they are not permitted.  
M. Benedetti

Fr. Tomas Gonzalez Castillo, OFM  
Home – Shelter for Migrants  
La 72 – Tabasco – Mexico

## CHAPTER 4

### HOW THE GLOBAL ECONOMY FAVORS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Stefano Zamagni

#### **How the global economy favours modern slavery: proposals for action**

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##### 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of modern slavery (prostitution, forced labour, organ trade, systematic exploitation of workers) connected to slavery-like practices, unquestionably represents one of the most morally upsetting and socially devastating scourges of our modern development era. In his address to participants in the plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences of April 2015, Pope Francis reiterated that “human trafficking is a new form of slavery” and that such practice is a “crime against humanity”, hence not a mere crime, despite being one of huge proportions. Compared with the many and various historical forms of slavery, the Pope said, the current victims of trafficking share three common denominators with those enslaved in the past: subjection to one of the most extreme forms of violent social domination; alienation from any legitimate social order; degradation and dishonour because freedom is necessary to attain any form of status in society except the lowest. However - the Pope remarked –while historically slaves could look towards some formal process of manumission, albeit in a distant future, modern slaves cannot. Predatory practices make them “disposable people” marginalised beyond the borders of social systems, making them invisible (PASS, Human Trafficking, LEV, Vatican City, 2016).

Within this general picture of extreme sadness, Italy’s position deserves being mentioned, albeit briefly. Estimates published by the Global Slavery Index show that in the year 2016 129.000 people in Italy were victims of modern slavery, placing the Country at the 29<sup>th</sup> place in the tragic ranking of the Global Slavery Index. (To give an idea of the proportions of this phenomenon: the above-mentioned findings estimated for Germany 14,500 people in modern slavery with the Country ranking 117<sup>th</sup> ; 12,000 in France that ranks 124<sup>th</sup>; 11,700 in the UK that ranks 127<sup>th</sup>; 8,400 in Spain that ranks 134<sup>th</sup>). We would by far prefer to do without Italy’s leading position in Europe. Yet Italy fails to devote sufficient attention and resources to address this peculiar situation and thus undertake the necessary remedial action.

In the following chapters, however, I will not focus on Italy’s situation alone. In fact, the purpose of this reflection is twofold. On the one side, I intend to address a set of myths, still prevailing in the public opinion at large, which prevent in-depth understanding of the extent of the issue of human trafficking. On the other, I will bring evidence aimed at overcoming the dangerous conceptual confusion between trafficking in human beings and illegal (or clandestine) migrations. I will also highlight the role that transnational enterprises could play – if they only wanted – in countering the tragic scandal that is the object of this paper. I will conclude with a set of policy suggestions to show that it’s not true that nothing can be done in this respect.

##### 2. The trafficking of human beings: reality and myths

Three myths take centre stage when analysing the deep roots of the phenomenon of modern slavery in public debate. And since action is always guided by thought, if the latter is fragile or even aporetical, the former will inevitably be ineffective, if not counterproductive. The first is the opinion that there is nothing new; since it has always existed. Accordingly, it is more a form of harassment than a scourge, hence we can learn to live with it as we have always done in the past. But such a

minimalist attitude ignores the radical transformation of financial and economic systems that have occurred since the 1980s as a result of the acceleration of the globalization process. As known, this process is characterized by the free circulation of outputs (goods and services) – as occurred with the internationalization of long-standing economic relations – and of inputs (capital and labour). Moreover, the emergence of a global labour market and of a global market of capitals and goods, has limited the ability of weakened national governments to control their borders; at the same time, it has greatly increased criminals' convenience to breach the law in spite of sanctions. (M. Naim, *Illicit*, London, Arrow Books, 2007).

The second myth spreads the false notion that human trafficking is ultimately just a manifestation of criminal activity to make illegal profits. This myth has brushed under the carpet a fundamental point, namely, the role played by demanders of services or goods exacted by slavery. Such practice involves not only those subjected to sexual exploitation but also the victims of forced labour (manufacturing, cleaning, construction, catering, domestic work) as well as children subjected to forced combat and used for petty crime. On top of this, organ trade is steadily increasing. To this regard, it should be noted that the absence of official data is due to the fact that from a legal point of view it is impossible to ascertain whether the act of organ removal (kidney, heart, liver, cornea etc.) was committed against a living person or a corpse.

The criminalization of such practices, however necessary, only acts as a deterrent on the supply side (over 90% of Countries criminalize trafficking in human beings since the Palermo Protocol came into force almost fifteen years ago, but it had far too few consequences for perpetrators, for obvious reasons). At all events, the focus on just one end of this practice has a twofold negative impact. On the one side, modern slaves not only receive insufficient assistance and support, they are also accused to connive with traffickers. (Let it suffice to consider the case of prostitution). On the other, the aspect of the demand of slavery-like services and related profits, is substantially neglected. Demand for low-cost labour, for a vital organ, for prostitution and other slave-like practices, provide incentives for traffickers. If the demand-side of this sad "market" – as has been the case in some North European countries – is not addressed, there is little room for hope. In fact, the celebrated Say's Law, which states that supply generates demand, is not being applied to this form of "human trade", while demand determines the scope of the services supplied by hideous criminals, driven by rent-seeking (and not by profit). In this respect, even the "Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons" adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2010, is insufficient.

Finally, the third myth mentioned earlier, is the idea whereby human trafficking is ultimately an "underground" phenomenon. (It admits its increase, in proportion and gravity, but conformist culture tends to relegate this phenomenon to a different world than that of "honest citizens.") This is the most subtle and dangerous of all illusions, as it uses pseudo-moral justifications to legitimize inequalities based on the exclusion of the new slaves from its membership. The migration crisis of the past two decades has greatly fuelled this myth, to the point of criminalizing immigrants for violating laws of the hosting countries. Neither regular admonitions by UN agencies, nor accusation by civil society organizations have changed this approach. (N. Demleitner, "The Law at a Crossroad", in D. Kyle e R. Koslowski (eds), *Global Human Smuggling*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Furthermore, this third myth has strengthened the widespread belief that certain inequalities can be justified in the light of the general good or because it is in the public interest to do so. It's a very subtle argument, that hinges on the renowned "Declaration of human and citizen rights" of 1789 that reads: "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights" – and that goes on to explain that "social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good." This principle is applied in our contemporary societies in order to make the treatment of modern slaves subjected to juridical

discontinuity, acceptable, or at least bearable. Let it suffice to consider the tendency to view the victims as being largely responsible for their situation.

Before concluding this chapter, I will briefly mention the official findings that exemplify the proportion of the phenomenon herein addressed. The “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons” of November 2015 published by UNODC – the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with headquarters in Vienna – shows that 49% of the victims are adult women, 33% are children (of which 21% are females and 12% are males) and the remaining 18% are adult men. It is estimated that over 70% of all victims of various forms of human trafficking belong to the female gender. On the other hand, 72% of traffickers are men. This means that modern slavery has a woman’s face. (In the past the opposite was true). But this specific form of gender-based inequality, whose consequences on the sustainability of our development model are far worse than certain groups of people with specific interests want us to believe, is hardly ever the object of in-depth reflection. The above-mentioned Report highlights another aspect of great interest, namely, the correlation between the affluence measured in terms of GDP of the destination country and the share of victims trafficked there from other regions. While richer countries attract victims from abroad, less affluent countries are mainly affected by domestic or sub-regional trafficking flows. (The so-called South-South migration) This determines the persistence of veritable poverty-traps. There ensues that effective measures to end this practice must take this specific aspect into due account. (For a more detailed account, see my essay: “How the Global Economy Fosters Human Trafficking”, in PASS, 2016, pp. 377-400).

3. Trafficking of human beings versus illegal migration? It is largely believed that the phenomenon of trafficking in persons must be differentiated from the broader phenomenon of illegal migration. This idea is supported by the following claim: while illegal migration involves the consent of the person intending to expatriate – who is in fact willing to pay back the cost of the journey – the non-consensual nature of trafficking distinguishes it from other forms of migration where a trafficker uses force or coercion to exploit his victim. Furthermore, the illegal migration process ends when the migrant person reaches (provided that he/she arrives safe and sound!) his/her point of destination. On the other hand, in case of trafficking upon arrival, the victim is forced into slavery and coerced into a situation of bondage that lasts over time – as in the case of prostitution or forced labour. Now, regardless of practical considerations, in my opinion the notion of voluntariness, taken as a criterion to differentiate trafficking from migration, is not as grounded as people are led to believe. I shall explain.

The market is the ideal-typical place where the coordination of economic decisions takes place through voluntary cooperation. This occurs because “both parties to an economic transaction benefit from it, provided the transaction is bilaterally voluntary and informed.” (M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1962, p. 13). There ensues that when two (or more) parties, with no trick or coercion, originate an economic transaction, they also agree to any consequences. This is the ethical justification, in economics, of consequentialism. The concept of consent based on the freedom of choice is well explained by R. Posner, when he writes: “I personally believe that he who buys a lottery ticket and loses, agrees to the loss if there was no fraud or coercion” (*The Economics of Justice*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1981, p.94).

Therefore, apart from these last cases, choosing freely means giving one’s consent and agreeing means legitimizing. As pointed out by F. Peter (“Choice, Consent and the Legitimacy of Market Transactions”, *Economics and Philosophy*, 20, 2004), the market does not need to ask for a certificate of ethical legitimacy, because it is capable of legitimizing itself on its own. This is not the case of the State, which, in order to be able to use coercion – the main tool for attaining its goals – needs the approval of the electorate, for only the latter can confer its legitimization.



What's wrong with this line of reasoning, only apparently convincing? Basically, freedom of choice almost never entails consent. It would if the choosing subject were involved in the definition of the array of options available – which is never the case in real life. Free choice has the power to legitimize a given option only if the alternatives available are part of the subject's choice problem. If the alternatives are given or established by others, this requisite is not fulfilled. As known, the key-role played by consent is a typical feature of social contract theories, first propounded by Thomas Hobbes (1651). The idea is that if I made an agreement to do something but now I want to back out, the other party will answer: "you signed the agreement at the time and now you have to fulfil your commitment", i.e. consent creates an obligation. This is morally acceptable only if the rules of the game are agreed by the parties to the contract.

In other words, freedom of choice is the absence of coercion by others. In fact, it involves the possibility to choose, namely, it envisages a space where the subject is free to exert his/her sovereignty. But this condition still says nothing about the ability to choose, namely, the true exercise of choice. If I ignore the ways to make rational choices or I lack the resources enabling me to exercise choices, the freedom to choose will be meaningless. This is the great lesson of Pope Benedict XVI and of Pope Francis when they remind us that the use of freedom is somehow essential to its definition. Just to give an example, let us consider the impact of climate change of the decision to emigrate. (See the issue of *Equilibri*, 1, 2017 devoted to the theme "Migrazioni indotte dal cambiamento climatico"). Could it be said that climate migrants consent to the consequences deriving from their choice to emigrate? The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated the following figures, considered accurate, in its annual report "Global Estimates. People Displaced by Disasters" (IDMC, Geneva, July 2015). In the period 2008-2014 an average of 26.4 million people per year have been displaced from their homes. This is equivalent to one person being displaced every second: an impressive number!

There is another tragically important event that deserves our attention. In May 2007 humanity experienced a veritable turning point in world history. For the first time, half of the world's population lived in urban areas. No less than 95% of urban population growth occurred in the developing world, with cities absorbing five million more residents a month. (Half a million in developed countries). Unlike the first wave of urbanization, the current process is not a result of growing industrialization. In fact, it's driven by poverty. It's no longer true that "all roads lead to cities" (F. Braudel); they lead to slums and shack towns! It is not surprising that these are the places whence traffickers lure most of their victims! Can it be reasonably claimed that people undertaking the path of migration are doing so as a result of free choice?

4. The role of transnational enterprises in the fight on human trafficking Scientific research applied to economics is lopsided in a troubling way. While economic literature on organized crime and illegal markets is the result of widely documented research, the same is not true as regards the phenomenon of modern slavery. How can this *fin de non recevoir* be explained? The general reason is that economics has traditionally devoted greater attention to the supply side, thereby overlooking the demand side of these phenomena. As a matter of fact, the theory of production is much more developed than the consumption theory. However, the more specific reason is that fewer economic agents are involved in the supply side as compared to the side of demand, which means that it is simpler to pass legislation against traffickers than sanction the customers of slavery-like practices. However understandable this may be, it is not altogether justifiable.

The following reflections exemplify the potential contribution of multinational enterprises (MNEs) to countering human trafficking. Consider, for example, MNEs' responsibility in countries that violate or fail to respect human rights. The United Nations' Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework on TNCs and Human Rights (2000) comprises three core principles: The State duty to

protect; the corporate responsibility to respect; and the need for more effective access to remedies. Despite the good intentions and the attention garnered upon its adoption, to date the Framework has been seldom implemented. In fact, the harsh criticism it was subjected to ultimately endorsed a reductionist view whereby corporate responsibility to respect human rights was reduced to generic responsibility, which had immediate repercussions. As a matter of fact, the systematic violation of the specific category of human rights, *iura hominum*, typical of the last few decades, is largely ascribable to the behaviour of over seventy thousand multinational corporations (U.N. estimates) operating at global level.

This explains why a serious strategy to counter the spread of slavery-like practices must not fail to involve multinational corporations, which have become veritable political players. There ensues the importance to accelerate the transition from corporate social responsibility to corporate moral responsibility. (S. Zamagni, *Impresa responsabile e mercato civile*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013). During almost all the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the above-mentioned problems have been conceptualized as political problems that public players had the duty to solve in accordance with the principle that governments set the rules (and enforce them), while businesses follow them. The present situation is the result of the absence of division of labour and the related disappearance of adequate enforcement tools in case of infringement of the norms. While on the one side global outsourcing of production –initiated in the 1980s by Nike, Levi-Strauss, Apple, and other multinational corporations – has enormously increased production levels and profit margins, on the other it brought to notice the problem of human rights, and it ushered in a new understanding of the principle of responsibility. According to this understanding, multinational companies must be held responsible not only for their direct actions. In fact, their responsibility encompasses the entire supply chain, in accordance with the ethical principle whereby the ability to choose – which, as previously mentioned, must not be confused with the freedom to choose – implies the ability to accept the consequences deriving from these choices.

In recent years, the broader debate about the role of human rights in corporations was based on two distinct processes, yet convergent in practice: on the one hand, the philosophical critiques of the principles of the UN Global Compact on Human Rights launched in 1989; on the other the debate characterising the final stage of the work of the UN Special Commission on Human Rights. The Commission, tasked with completing the work carried out by Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the period 1997-2002, failed to complete its assignment. In other words, it failed to reach an agreement on the very definition of human right. In order to overcome the standstill, on April 20 2005 the Commission adopted a Resolution on “Human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises”, requesting the UN Secretary General to appoint a “special representative” mandated to define a set of non-negotiable principles underlying inalienable human rights. In fact, owing to their specific nature, human rights are not “granted” by the State or by other organizations, they are recognized and protected because they exist regardless of whether or not a government welcomes and protects them. One notable example: until 1954 the Supreme Court of the United States sustained the constitutionality of racial segregation laws!

The new economic order brought the chief player of globalized capitalism to the forefront, namely, multinational corporations, understood as veritable social institutions. The latter were burdened by a new responsibility: to defend free market economy. By virtue of its new role as a social institution, the enterprise - especially large enterprises - has the duty to contribute to the definition of the public agenda. In particular, corporations are thus bound to contribute to bridging the moral gap, given that the persistent absence of globalized governance – not a government – marked by subsidiarity and organized in a stratified way, does not allow for the definition of universally enforceable standards. But if the goal of the business is only to maximize profits, while respecting the obligations deriving from social responsibility, it loses its “social licence” to operate,

and ultimately, its moral justification. In the light of nation-States' declining legislative power, corporations cannot abdicate the responsibility of contributing to the definition of a global market law that incorporates non-negotiable values. Consider, for example, the changes in the financial regulatory landscape occurred over the past decade: from light touch regulation to no touch regulation, nearing the utter absence of regulations, whose tragic consequences are under everyone's eyes to see. This would not have occurred had large investment banks and financial operators not absolved themselves of any moral obligations.

5. Not a conclusion but openness

The arguments propounded so far show that the fight on the many forms of modern slavery requires a thorough knowledge of the mechanisms and incentives that fuel this wicked human practice. Outrage and anger are not enough, nor is the determination to remedy this situation, for the efficient organization of evil practices must be countered with equally effective measures. Follow a set of guidelines for further reflection and to advance public debate.

First. The current State-system based on the principle of territorial sovereignty is wholly inadequate to fight human trafficking. There ensues the urgent need to take decisive steps towards the creation of a World Anti-Trafficking Agency (WATA) tasked with enforcing the rules and regulations enshrined in international Conventions and Treaties. In fact, despite the highly commendable and meritorious commitment of UN agencies such as UNHCR and UNODC, the powers of these institutions are confined to advocacy and research, and they rely almost entirely on the voluntary contributions of a few Countries. Moreover, just as the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT – later incorporated into WTO) was formed immediately after World War II to ensure widespread benefits of the fast-paced integration of goods and services, today we face the urgent need to establish a World Anti-Trafficking Agency.

Secondly. It is essential to address the issue of assistance policies to the source countries (or regions) of migratory flows where human trafficking originate. The challenge involves finding ways to improve the living conditions of these countries' populations without increasing the power of highly-corrupt governments and local elite's groups. As known, even those who are not actively involved in human trafficking indirectly profit from it and thus have an interest in keeping this infernal industry thriving. It is therefore necessary to develop tools to determine the social impact of counter-trafficking measures and activities. The Handbook on Performances Indicators for Counter Trafficking Projects, published in 2008 by the International Organization for Migration in Geneva, states: "The global monitoring and evaluation of counter-trafficking projects has generally been non-standardized and output focused" (p.95). Yet it would be necessary to know the outcomes, not the output, namely, the indicators that must be taken into account when reviewing the social effects of dedicated interventions and activities. In essence, the social impact assessment (SIA) does not top the agenda of the various policy-makers.

Thirdly, the multifaceted nature of the social and political phenomenon we are dealing with suggests devoting major attention to the indirect, unintentional consequences of counter-trafficking measures if we wish to obtain long-lasting results. The reason is simple: the presence of criminal organizations that generate revenue creates a demand for non-productive skills (based on the use of violence) which the local populations tend to satisfy for well-known reasons. This in turn determines a reduction of share capital, it disrupts social confidence and degrades the rule of law, thereby making it impossible to promote sustainable human development on that territory. If law-enforcement measures are not accompanied by productive job opportunities the local population risks being allured by the deceptive proposals of organized crime. A detailed study on this issue was carried out by Laura Ralton, "Trafficking and Fragility in West Africa", World Bank, WP7079, Oct. 2014.

Finally, it is important to mention the phenomenon known as economic complicity. In his scholarly contribution (*Market Complicity and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), Albino Barrera raises a fundamental question: "Are we morally responsible for the distant harms spawned by our market transactions? If so, what are the grounds for these non-contractual obligations? (p.1). The author accurately identifies the ways in which market division of labour and specialization make us unwitting parties to others' wrongdoings and to the ensuing collective damage. This explains why today there is an urgent need to emphasize the importance of consumer social responsibility, as writes Benedict XVI in his Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) at n° 66. Not only enterprises are socially (and morally) responsible for their actions - as mentioned above -; so are consumers, whose responsibility is, in some respects, even greater. In the Letter of John Paul II on the occasion of the International Conference on "Twenty-First Century Slavery" of May 15, 2002, the Pope wrote: "Attention needs to be paid to the deeper causes of the increased 'demand' which fuels the market for human slavery and tolerates the human cost which results." It is a remarkable case of what Albert Bandura recently defined "moral disengagement". (*Moral Disengagement*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2016).

I would like to conclude with a general consideration. Underlying the outrageous phenomenon of modern slavery there is also the fact that to date globalization (financial and real) has failed to ensure the coexistence of multiculturalism - that is, the presence of cultural diversity within the same territory - with Countries' social and economic integration. As a matter of fact, globalization has exasperated the conflict between these two fundamental goals. Contacts and interactions between culturally different groups trigger behavioural adjustments that facilitate economic transactions. In turn, however, changes in behaviour feed back into values and cultural traits. Hence the dilemma of our time: if we want to slow down the cultural homogenization process we must accept obstacles to socio-economic integration, vice versa, if we want to foster the latter we must accept a greater degree of cultural levelling. It should be noted that this problem is not caused by the intermingling of different cultures on the same territory, a phenomenon that dates back to ancient times. Rather, it is due to the intermingling of cultures and claims for equality. Since cultures that had been separated for centuries suddenly became osmotic as a result of globalization, what is lacking is a unity of understanding.

It thus happens that the places that originate values, social norms, and ways of living, are extraterritorial environments that are not subjected to local constraints, unlike the living conditions of people bound to a specific place, forced to give meaning to lifestyles that are not indigenous but imported. This is the core reason why increasing numbers of social groups are becoming "uprooted", with consequences linked to the emergence of new forms of slavery. What can be done? Some suggest letting the ongoing process advance according to its inherent logic; conversely, some propose decelerating the pace of globalization. However, both cases involve ineffective, dangerous shortcuts. A feasible option is one aimed at changing the institutional system based on the post-Hobbesian model of social order by providing a multitude of power centres, namely, based on polyarchy, which, unlike pluralism, envisages diversity. Safeguarding the diversity of development is the most plausible way to combat human trafficking as a "crime against humanity", which is unquestionably the most worrying crime characterising our current development era, that jeopardizes the very sustainability of democratic social systems.

## CHAPTER 5

### **“TALITHA KUM”: PROMOTING THE FORMATION OF NEW REGIONAL NETWORKS IN COOPERATION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

Gabriella Bottani / “Talitha Kum - UISG”

Human trafficking is a crime against humanity<sup>1</sup>, a serious crime that hurts not only those affected in the first person but also humanity as a whole. Human trafficking is in fact the tip of the iceberg highlighting one of the main crises in our time: the anthropological one. Indeed, human trafficking transforms human existence into a commodity for the purpose of raising profits. The illegal profits in this market are such that they have reached and surpassed those produced by drug trafficking and it is second only to arms trafficking (smuggling).

In addition to being a disproportionate source of profits, human trafficking is a low-risk crime for traffickers. Investigations leading to the conviction of those responsible for these crimes are still too few, for a variety of reasons. In many countries, the sentences pronounced against human traffickers are lesser than other crimes. In addition, law enforcement agencies or border agents are poorly trained to identify human trafficking victims. The identification of traffickers is further hindered by the difficulty in reporting crimes due to the lack of appropriate protection for both victims and their relatives.

The phenomenon of human trafficking, defined by many as the 21<sup>st</sup>-century slavery, has its own characteristics that differentiate it from the historical one: above all, its illegality. The financial factor is the essential element of continuity: human exploitation represents an illegal source of sure profits moving 150 billion dollars per year<sup>2</sup>, of which two thirds proceed from sexual exploitation.

The United Nations have chosen three key elements to define human trafficking:

The first element consists in actions: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.

The second element is characterized by the use of specific means: the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation;

The third element lists the modalities of the trafficking, which always consist in forms of exploitation. The definition refers to exploitation by prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or similar practices, servitude and the removal of organs.

In the definition of human trafficking offered by the UN, the consent of the victim is irrelevant only in cases involving the means described in the definition. This raises ambiguities as to adults and places the legal burden of proof on the victim. In cases involving children, namely all individuals who have not yet turned eighteen years old, the means are irrelevant, thus a proven situation of exploitation is sufficient for there to be a crime.<sup>3</sup>

The experience of religious engaged against human trafficking has highlighted that the essential element to define human trafficking for all is the third one; namely exploitation combined to restriction of freedom.

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon on the rise throughout the world. There are no certain figures referred to victims of human trafficking; but it is certain that there are tenths of millions<sup>4</sup> of children, women and men exploited in the sex market, in domestic work, forced to perform heavy and dangerous tasks, to get married, forced to beg or steal or commit crimes or trafficked for the removal of their organs or other parts of their body. They are mostly women and girls.

Joyce – a fictitious name – was a 16-year old girl from a village in Nigeria. She had lost both her father and mother. Her grandmother took care of her, she had a small shop and had difficulties in sending her to school. Joyce did not attend much school, only up to the end of primary school. She then did house chores and helped her grandmother at her small shop. One day, a lady approached her and promised her a job at a restaurant in Burkina Faso where Joyce could work. Thanks to her job, Joyce could have helped her grandmother and taken care of her. She decided to embark in this adventure without informing her grandmother since she was certain she would not approve. After a dangerous journey with no documents, Joyce arrived at Burkina Faso. The lady placed her in a home with other girls and after one night to recover from the journey, she gave her an eccentric dress and asked her to follow her to the sidewalk for prostitution. Joyce refused, fought back and refused to eat. She ultimately had to give in and pretended to agree. At times she would rebel, and her trafficker beat her and bullied her. Joyce wanted to get out of this environment. After two months in this hell, she decided to escape even if she did not know the local language to communicate. After a difficult night, while her exploiter slept, at dawn she pretended to go to the bathroom and escaped. On the street, she ran into a college student who was going to class and attempted to tell her story. The young man did not want to miss class and the girl would not leave him, so she stayed with him the entire time, seated at the university desks. With the little English he knew, the student realized that the girl was a victim of human trafficking, so he led her to a social worker to be taken to a shelter where Joyce was given assistance and taken back to Nigeria along with another girl who, like her, had been trafficked to Burkina Faso. The repatriation program provided for some financial support which allowed Joyce to establish a small business in her village to support herself<sup>5</sup>.

There are many stories like that of Joyce. All emphasize that human trafficking is a phenomenon loaded with physical, psychological and symbolic violence; a complex, multidimensional and transversal reality overlapping other instances of exploitation such as the great migration movements and the destruction of nature to exploit its resources, both minerals and in the fishing industry. The issue at the core of these different forms of exploitation is profit.

As we encounter these life stories marked by the violence of human trafficking, we, consecrated men and women are called to bring a look of mercy and compassion, overcoming the curious eye suggested by the mass media or the distant and indifferent one of those not interested (after all, they are in that situation because they asked for it!), or those denying reality because it is too close for comfort and may disrupt our securities or quiet life! The words of Pope Francis shake us and show us the ancient path of Moses in front of the burning bush as a fundamental attitude to consider this drama:

“In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people’s lives, shamelessly **given over to morbid curiosity**, the Church must **look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary**. .... which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Es 3,5).” (EG 169)

Our encounter with God through our contact with those experiencing human trafficking on their flesh, asks us to challenge ourselves, to let our heart be touched by that pain. To encounter God, as Moses, we must get closer, place ourselves in a respectful listening attitude and accept the invitation to take off our sandals which may be always be different: sandals of indifference, of comfortable life, sandals of fear of differences, of my securities...

People are mainly trafficked within the borders of their nation or in neighbouring countries; only about one third of all victims follow transcontinental migration routes.

At this point it is important to make a distinction between trafficking of transnational people and smuggling of migrants, commonly defined today as trafficking in migrants. These are different phenomena. It is however, increasingly difficult to distinguish them, both because the routes are intertwined, and because the migrants who travel through unofficial streets face a great risk of exploitation and trafficking during transport, where migrants are sexually exploited, constrained to forced labour, blackmailed, tortured and sometimes even killed for organ harvesting; and upon arriving in the country of destination where, in the absence of adequate reception facilities, they fall prey to unscrupulous traffickers who exploit them.

Human Trafficking and smuggling of migrants are high-income businesses controlled by internationally organized criminal networks.

The following are the main differences between the two phenomena:

Human traffickers promote entry into a foreign country using legal or non-legal means and victims may be in possession of valid or forged travel documents and visas. Upon arrival in the country of destination, people are exploited and kept under control by traffickers who frequently withdraw identity documents, restricting spaces for movement and freedom. In human trafficking, the commodity is the individual and the crime is against the person.

In the case of smuggling of migrants, however, entry into the country is always with no recognized documents for entry into a country, through unrecognized routes. The trip is voluntary, and the person asks the smugglers for help in migrating. In this case, the goods provided is a service and the crime is against the state. Upon arrival at their destination, the relationship between smugglers and migrants terminates.

### **A new paradigm for a complex reality: networking**

The criminal networks responsible for human trafficking are well structured and articulated, which is not always the case in networks of organizations engaged in fighting it. In Fortaleza (Brazil), during the first community leaders' formation course for the prevention of human trafficking organized in 2009 by the network "Um Grito pela Vida"<sup>6</sup>, a young university student of social science spoke up during an exercise to build traffickers networks and those engaged in fighting human trafficking. She said: "The traffickers' networks are well-woven; the connections work and all members in the network know that the others will do what they are supposed to. On the other hand, the networks fighting human trafficking are fragmented; we compete with one another and there is a lot of corruption". Those involved in this area know that reality is not so easily defined, however this contribution helped in understanding the importance of devoting time and energy to join forces among those who believe and work for the common good in accordance with the law.



At this point we must ask ourselves honestly whether we, as church organizations engaged in this area, are actually interconnected, capable of collaborating and joining forces to promote dignity in life and freedom against all types of exploitation.

Networking and collaborating to fight human trafficking is not an option but a necessity also reaffirmed by the United Nations which recognize partnership as a strategic element in implementing the fight against human trafficking<sup>7</sup>.

The addition of dynamics that promote collaboration and networking is asking consecrated life to change its paradigm and to be guided by the Holy Spirit to be a prophetic, bold and creative presence and to be prepared to adequately respond to the needs of our time. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (33) invites “everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities”.

The network of consecrated life against human trafficking Talitha Kum was formed and grew on the impulse of the need to find new ways and new types of organizations to more effectively fight such a complex and violent phenomenon as human trafficking. That is why the pioneers of this great network sensed the need to network, to collaborate, to support each other, to not lose heart before adversities and continue pursuing the common goal with evangelical fidelity.

The dynamic of the network provides consecrated life with new forms of authority which, supported by the traditional authority of consecrated life, opened new spaces placing the common mission at the centre, promoting fraternal collaboration among different religious congregations and charisms, emphasizing what Consecrated Life has been experiencing since the Second Vatican Council<sup>8</sup>.

## **Talitha Kum – The worldwide network of consecrated life against human trafficking**

### **Background and identity:**

The inspiration to constitute the worldwide network of consecrated life against human trafficking emerged at the end of the 20th century when some religious sisters from the Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the International Union of General Superiors (UISG) and Union of General Superiors (USG) invited Sr. Lea Ackermann, MSOLA<sup>9</sup> to Rome to speak about Human Trafficking. This meeting was part of a series of events which led the UISG to promote a greater commitment on the part of religious sisters against trafficking, especially of women and children.

The official decisions of the General Superiors of UISG were reached during the plenary assembly of 2001 and subsequently that in 2004, when they committed to promote collaboration and inter-congregational projects against human trafficking. These decision-making processes led to the creation in Australia of “Australian Catholic Religious against Trafficking in Humans” (ACRATH) and in Canada of the “Comité D'Action Contre la Traite Humaine Interne et Internationale” (CATHII). Another important fruit was the formation project achieved in partnership with UISG and the International Migration Organization (OIM), financed by the US State Department, which allowed the formation of a little less than 500 religious sisters in five continents and of religious networks engaged against trafficking, coordinated at the national level. The project lasted from 2004 to 2009 and ended with a meeting of representatives of all the inter-congregational networks of religious sisters that emerged during those years against human trafficking. The project was coordinated by Sr. Bernardette Sagma, FMA (deceased), in collaboration with different religious sisters including Sr. Eugenia Bonetti MC, who contributed in establishing the first formation sessions in Italy and Albania.

At the end of 2009, when this great project ended, religious sisters engaged at the grassroots level against human trafficking asked UISG to establish an office in Rome to guarantee continuity in the formation of religious sisters against human trafficking and promote the coordination and collaboration at the international level among existing networks. The name suggested for this office was “Talitha Kum”. The Executive Council of UISG accepted said request and on September 21, 2009, Talitha Kum was officially established as the worldwide network of consecrated life against human trafficking. The following year, in 2010, Sr. Estrella Castalone, FMA was the first sister called to take on the responsibility for Talitha Kum, and she held that position until 2014. Sr. Estrella came from the Philippines network, a member of Talitha Kum. In May of 2011, Sr. Estrella organized the first International Coordination Meeting of Talitha Kum in Rome. The years between 2010 and 2014 were devoted to the consolidation, formation and growth of territorial networks.

In 2015, its coordination was entrusted to Gabriella Bottani, SMC, called to Rome from Brazil where she had worked for years against human trafficking, with particular attention to prevention and formation of leaders. In 2016, Talitha Kum organized its second coordination meeting and with the approval of the UISG Executive Council, in June 2016 it constituted the International Coordination Committee of Talitha Kum presided by Sr. Gabriella Bottani, with representatives appointed for each continent.

Currently, Talitha Kum gathers twenty-two local networks present in seventy countries throughout the five continents<sup>10</sup>.

Talitha Kum is an expression in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 5, verse 41. The word translated from Aramaic means “Little girl, I say to you, arise”. These words are addressed by Jesus to Jairus’ daughter, a twelve-year-old girl who lied apparently inanimate. After saying those words, Jesus took her hand and she immediately stood up and walked. The worldwide network of consecrated life engaged against human trafficking chose these words to define its identity. The expression “Talitha Kum – arise” carries the power and strength of compassion and mercy, awakening a deep desire for dignity and life drowsy and wounded by so many forms of exploitation. It is an invitation addressed to all to stand up to fight with words, actions, daily choices and life itself against all that promotes and supports human trafficking. We denounce the arrogance and violence of economic-financial power when it acts against the dignity of people and exploits and destroys all forms of life for a profit.

Those adhering to Talitha Kum commit to stand close to those who suffer the dramatic consequences of human trafficking: women, children, men and their families. The activities and projects of Talitha Kum are destined to all those who are deprived of dignity and freedom, regardless of their lifestyle, race, religion, financial situation and sexual orientation. The members of Talitha Kum recognize and uphold their Christian values through dialogue and respecting the different traditions, religions and the non-believers. The work of the Talitha Kum networks does not only provide for the protection and assistance of survivors. The activities promoted by the networks are aimed at vulnerable human groups at risk of human trafficking, including people whose fundamental human rights were violated and people victims of exploitation. The latter is precisely the group which “conceals” victims of human trafficking. Religious sisters are trained to identify suspicious cases and proceed to report said situations. As the religious of “Asian Movement of Religious against Trafficking” AMRAT, the Talitha Kum network in India, which gathers about 600 religious from different congregations. Approximately 10% are engaged in a full-time basis in welcoming and helping survivors of human trafficking, while the majority are sisters involved in other socio-educational and pastoral activities. These are sisters trained in identifying human trafficking situations among groups at risk during their pastoral visits in rural villages, home to many victims of human trafficking, or engaged in education among vulnerable individuals through prevention

activities to identify cases which may involve human trafficking. In many instances, the sisters learn of children who have disappeared, or little girls taken to the city with a promise to study whose traces are then lost. They collect as much information as possible then transmit it to the sisters of the network in the city where the girl is suspected to be exploited, often for domestic work or sexually. The sisters receiving said report collaborate with government organizations engaged in fighting trafficking to find the whereabouts of the girl and rescue her, offering protection in centres often managed by female religious congregations.

### **Talitha Kum: A network of networks**

Brazilian philosopher Euclides Mances<sup>11</sup> defines the networks as “an **articulation among different units** which **exchange** elements **through certain bonds, mutually strengthening** each other. They can **multiply** into new realities which in turn will reinforce the whole to the extent they are reinforced, allowing it to expand into new units.”

A network is established and develops based on a shared common objective; for Talitha Kum this is the fight against human trafficking and the care for those who are rescued, promoting the freedom and dignity of all people.

The activities promoted by Talitha Kum abide by the paradigm of the 4 “P” listed in the Palermo Protocol: Protection for victims; Punishment of traffickers; Prevention and Partnership. To these, we add a fifth “P”: Prayer.

Concretely, the Talitha Kum networks

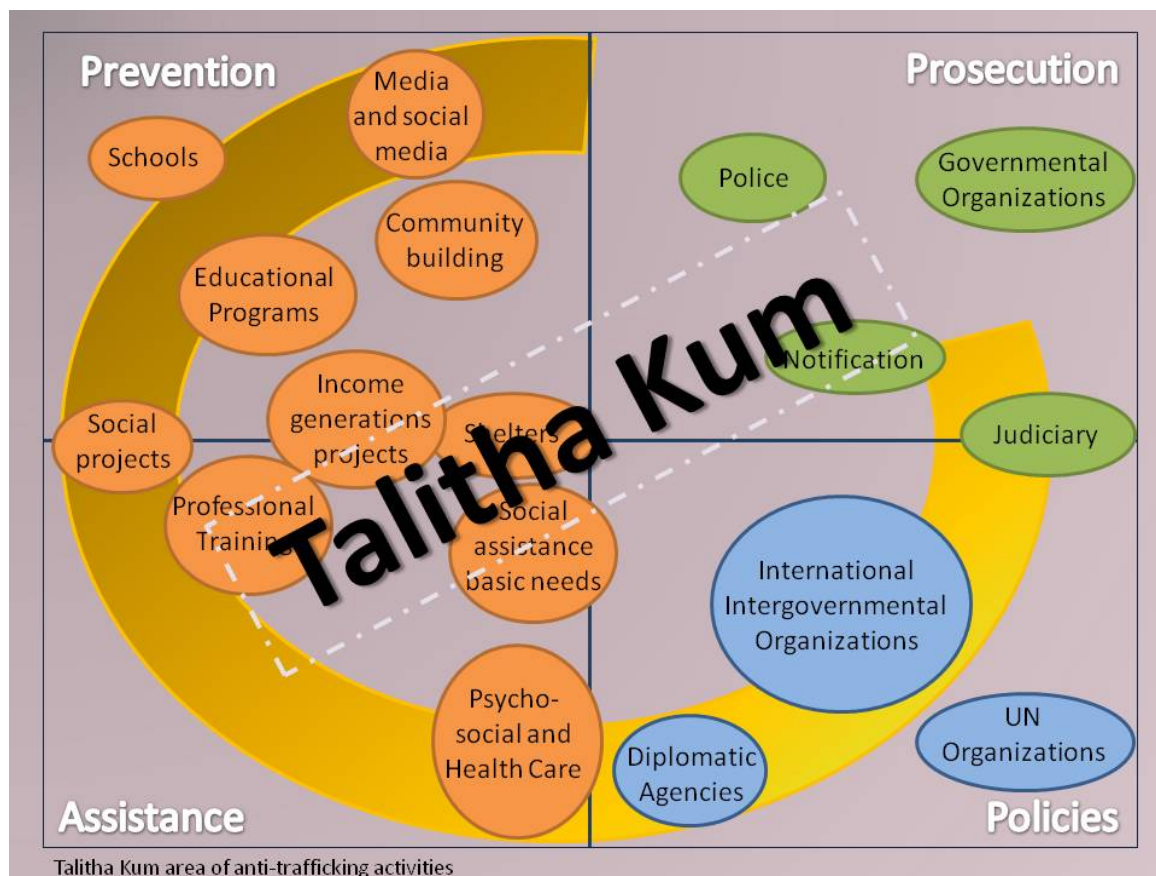
- Carry out prevention activities. The network promotes prevention considering three levels of intervention. At the primary level, actions aim at informing, raising awareness to influence behaviour through change to ensure people do not become victims of traffickers. This includes activities for information, awareness raising, educational programs and advertisement campaigns such as those promoted against human trafficking during major sports events in 2010 in South Africa and in 2014 in Brazil during the Soccer World Cup, and in 2012 and 2016 during the Olympic games of London and Rio de Janeiro. Second degree prevention includes all those activities addressed to people particularly at risk of human trafficking, such as people who have decided to travel abroad. These are provided information as to how to behave in the country of destination to be protected from human trafficking, or services are provided to ascertain the truthfulness of the job offers they received. These are among the services provided by Talitha Kum sisters in the Philippines to individuals who accept a job offer in the Middle East. Third-degree prevention is aimed at survivors of the human trafficking drama, essentially consisting of projects for social and financial reintegration, micro-credit initiatives, school reinsertion at different levels whether high-school, professional or university courses in accordance with individual capabilities. The prevention projects promoted by Talitha Kum include training sessions against human trafficking for leaders and people who can in turn act as multipliers of formation activities among specific groups such as religious people, teachers, social services personnel and border agents. Every year, tens of thousands of community leaders and vulnerable individuals at risk of human trafficking are reached by Talitha Kum’s networks: in schools, social projects, communities and parishes. Through their widespread presence, religious sisters manage to reach places that are difficult to approach for Non-Governmental and Inter-

Governmental organizations which focus their presence in capital cities and main urban areas.

- They report human trafficking and its causes. Various groups within the network devote their time and expertise to the study of the human trafficking phenomenon to understand its most concealed dynamics and actual causes. This is essential to an effort aimed at removing the causes rather than just treating the wounds, as deep as they may be. Let us recall that Talitha Kum operates by keeping in mind three fundamental issues in a context of market economy:
  - The pull factors, which may be defined in the market economy as those factors related to demand: be that of sexual services, workforce or low-cost goods;
  - The push factors, which include among others, conflicts, natural disasters, lack of employment prospect, social inequality, race, gender and age inequality;
  - The third group, essential to the maintenance and growth of this vicious circle, consists of corruption and impunity. Both realities feed the system that allows the growth of human trafficking and many other crimes against nature and people throughout the world.
- They manage centres for protection, accompaniment and assistance of people rescued from human trafficking, especially women, girls and boys. These are accompanied through protected psycho-social processes where survivors are welcomed and supported and guaranteed medical care and qualified legal assistance. A census by the Italian Union of Major Superiors of a few years ago had counted in Italy alone, 200 receiving communities for women victims of human trafficking managed by feminine religious congregations.
- They promote lobbying actions. In several countries, the members of Talitha Kum not only collaborate with government organizations; they also participate to committees and groups that promote processes to implement laws for the protection of survivors; to prevent human trafficking by reducing its causes; and to attribute its responsibility to all those who directly or indirectly contribute to exploitation of life.
- On every February 8th – the date of liturgic memory of Saint Bakhita – they promote the World Day of Prayer and Reflection against human trafficking, whose slogan is “A LIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING”.

Participants to Talitha Kum include thousands of people, especially religious sisters and some religious men and an increasing number of lay collaborators engaged in many areas and with a variety of professional skills: socio-educational, welfare, health, pastoral, biblical, theological and political. The complexity of human trafficking and the difficulty in identifying victims and accompanying their socio-economic reinsertion processes require multidisciplinary and complex actions. Religious life, with its different charisms, provides an existing fundamental support network for a more effective action against human trafficking.

The following image represents the four main action areas against human trafficking: prevention, prosecution, assistance and political action. The yellow band depicts the areas covered by Talitha Kum



Kum.

This graphic representation of activities highlights how Talitha Kum is mainly engaged in prevention, assistance to survivors and their social reinsertion, as shown in the left-hand boxes. The right-hand boxes show the efforts of Talitha Kum in promoting social laws and their implementation. In addition, the same boxes include all the activities promoted by congregations maintaining a representation at the United Nations with which Talitha Kum has been cooperating since 2016. The top right-hand box shows how little effort there is in the area of prosecution by the network. This is in fact the area of greater involvement on the part of governmental organizations responsible for security and judicial power; the Talitha Kum networks collaborate through support services for victims deciding to file a report and, in some countries, offering legal assistance to victims and their families.

The Talitha Kum networks are formed at the grassroots level by joining different groups of people and organizations directly engaged at different levels against human trafficking. By promoting an organization in a network structure, Talitha Kum introduces to consecrated life a new organization model based on a systemic structure that is circular and inclusive, which extends and coexists with the traditional one of consecrated life that in turn is rather linear and vertical.

### Key elements in a network

In today's globalized world, the network organization promotes:

- Working together and meeting among groups and individuals in a growing process of individualization of society where social responsibility is decreasing thereby forcing individuals to take on responsibility for themselves in an increasingly isolated manner;
- The joining of different organizations, groups and people, respecting and enhancing diversity, in an increasingly diversified and fragmented context;
- Collaboration, cooperation and solidarity as opposed to competitive relations filled with conflicts;
- Decentralization and subsidiarity as a leadership model complementary to that based on centralization and verticality;
- The systemic and complex analysis of reality that promotes a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach.

Networking challenges us to go against the currents, expanding our horizons be they personal, congregational or institutional.

At this time when networking is “trendy”, we must prevent a networking organization from being reduced to a demagogic discourse not put into practice through coordinated actions based on real collaboration. Networking requires people to decide to participate and join relational processes of collaboration, sharing to pursue a common objective. This can only occur when we understand and experience that “the whole is much more than the sum of the parts” as affirms Pope Francis in the encyclical letter “*Laudato Si*”.

The Talitha Kum formation manual<sup>12</sup> lists the key points in a network.

A network is established through the free participation of individuals or organizations. Therefore, it cannot happen by obligation or obedience; rather, it is based on the sharing in freedom of the collective projects of the network. Participation to the Talitha Kum network is free. There are cases in which sisters engaged against human trafficking coexist within the same congregation, some of whom are part of the Talitha Kum network while others are not. On the other hand, there are many religious men, diocesan priests and lay people who identify and participate to Talitha Kum’s networks.

The internal relations among different participants to a network may be symmetric or asymmetric: the first kind provides for a continuous exchange whereas the second are one-way; namely, one part issues inputs and the other receives them without giving any feedback. The Talitha Kum network is a complex network which currently includes both types of relations. For some years, Talitha Kum has been promoting a move from the mainly asymmetric type of relations that characterized the early years of the international network, to symmetric relations based on exchange and reciprocity.

What joins and keeps together the different members of a network is trust which must be acknowledged and nourished through a continuous affirmation of shared values and objectives. This is what clearly separates a group of players who operate within the same territory maintaining a dialogue among them, and the subjects actively cooperating with each other who feel represented by the other members. In the social field, there cannot be a social network that includes members adopting coercive measures, disrespectful of human dignity, while others firmly believe in the sanctity of the person and one’s free will. In this sense, the social network influences and alters the members’ behaviour since interaction that is truly geared at exchanging and understanding compels to a continuous confrontation with ourselves, with our actions and especially our emotions.

Networks, be they formal or informal, can be horizontal when agencies performing the same services decide to support and help each other, and vertical when relations among the actors are characterized by asymmetry, hierarchy and dependence. Moreover, they can be informal when participation is entirely free and on a voluntary basis or formal when members decide to structure their collaboration through rules and regulations.

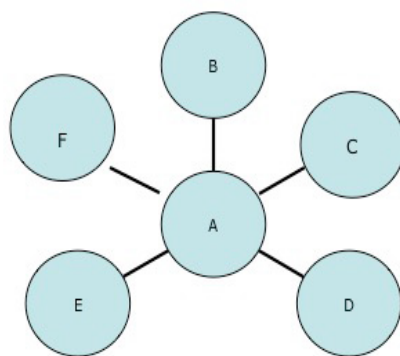
The intensity, i.e. the degree of in-formality in the relationship among members, determines the strength of a network; it is therefore possible to distinguish between strong link networks and weak link networks. The strength and weakness in this case does not refer in any way to the effectiveness of the network, but only measures the connection between members. Strong-bond networks are those that are activated almost automatically when a common goal is to be pursued (need to assist a person, need to defend a principle or a right etc.).

Weak-link networks are those where members establish contacts without having a common goal, but only to exchange information, organize conferences, etc.; that is, for activities linked to reflecting on a phenomenon, in this case human trafficking.

The Talitha Kum networks present typical characteristics of both weak and strong bonds, which are activated according to the needs of actions or activities.

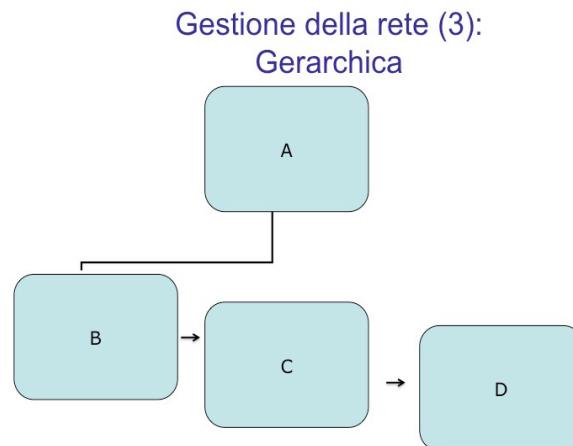
The above characteristics generate different models of network management. These models can vary from a communication flow management and free and casual internal relations, where all the networks communicate with each other or with a centralized coordination that maintains the relationship among the networks

## Gestione della Rete (2): Centralizzata e Coordinata





or, even, hierarchical



Those above are extreme examples that are also extremely abstract; reality is half-way between these models in networks with a rotating coordinating role, or that structure relationships based on the "competence" of members. The Talitha Kum networks tend to be managed in a free and random manner, such as those that arose in Latin America, while others are centrally coordinated like some networks in Europe, North America or the Asian continent. Others are still basically managed in a hierarchical manner as in Nigeria and Thailand. It is not about having a unique model, defined as the best ever. The structure of the network is successful only when it takes shape and is structured respecting the socio-cultural context and the reality of consecrated life and the role of leadership, to reach the goal of fighting human trafficking in the best possible way.

The diversity of the Talitha Kum networks is a great richness and at the same time it challenges its members to find ways to collaborate and manage a worldwide network, while respecting local diversity.

The network is built by connecting different points among them, so it can only exist when there are stable links that allow continuous relations. To facilitate this process, the Talitha Kum networks promote connections that are mainly local or national, with connections at regional, continental and intercontinental levels.

The network is always different, it grows and expands continuously. The connection is the reason for the permanent movement of the network. Connections, producing new connections; the new connection points are inserted into the network system of which they are a part. This happened in South East Asia, where the established networks took up the promotion of the religious life network against human trafficking also in Eastern Asia. Or in the networks in Latin America, that involved and promoted the creation of networks against trafficking in other countries of the Latin-American continent and in border regions.

Every point on the network expands the limits of the network as it establishes a new connection. This allows new connections with other points, continuously pushing the limits further as the process continues.

Although the management of a network can be centralized, a network does not in fact have a single centre. Each connected point can become or be the centre of the network at a given time. This aspect in the dynamics of a network is very important because it allows a respectful growth of all the

identified groups that have chosen to participate in the network. This is only possible when connections and relationships are reciprocal.

A network can have many levels, circles, dimensions and layers. Since the network has no centre, it has no peripheries either. Networks are interpenetrated and combined; this distinctive element allows maximizing existing resources to achieve the objective pursued while offering quick multidisciplinary approaches.

A network is also transitive. This means that by establishing a bridge, that is a single connection between two points, two entire networks are automatically joined. The connections of one point are used for second-level connections of another point.

A few individuals connected with each other can network entire communities to the outside world. Just as points with a thousand lines function in networks, hyper-connected people can serve as catalysts for transformation in communities.

The Talitha Kum network expands and strengthens all its members. Each member of the network gets trust and power. All the power of the network converges at every single link, depending on the circumstances.

In order to exist, the network depends on communication processes to be established as such. The articulation of different and multiple leaderships and the coordination of actions are only possible when information is shared. Communication is the regulating factor in a network system.

The growth of the Talitha Kum networks at the international level is due to the following characteristics<sup>13</sup>:

- The Talitha Kum networks are organized in circles and local groups which are interconnected.
- The Spirituality of Consecrated Life promotes confidence in shared values.
- Clarity as to the common objective: The fight against Human Trafficking motivates participating to the network.
- The Talitha Kum networks are formed based on a pre-existing network: that of UISG and the National Religious Conferences.
- Local groups develop around charismatic leaders: consecrated women, people capable of influencing others.

The Talitha Kum networks promote networking and collaboration, not only among religious congregations but also with other governmental, non-governmental and church organizations. Internationally, Talitha Kum collaborates with the Department for Integral Human Development, Migrant and Refugee Section, the International Organization for Migration, some Embassies at the Holy See, Caritas Internationalis, Pontifical Universities based in Rome and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, among others.

Decades of experience of Talitha Kum have shown that the fight against human trafficking needs leaders who are passionate and capable of collaborating, of having a future vision and of influencing others through their testimony. Leaders are key people in promoting those capabilities that make

things happen with and through others, launching personal and collective conversion processes that transform all instances of exploitation and abuse through trust, distrust and care, and all attitudes of conflict or competition through collaboration and dialogue.

“Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a **“mystique” of living together**, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled! To go out of ourselves and to join others...” (EG 87)



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## Footnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis: Joint Declaration of religious leaders signed at the Vatican on December 2nd, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Source International Labour Organization – 2014 Annual Report

<sup>3</sup> Art. 3: Definition of human trafficking, supplementary Protocol of the Convention of the United Nations against transnational organized crime to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

For the purposes of this Protocol:

(a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

<sup>4</sup> According to the ILO 2012 Report, there are 20.9 million identified victims of human trafficking. The data reported in the 2016 Global Slavery Index indicate a total of 48 million estimated victims.

<sup>5</sup> Story of a girl assisted by the Talitha Kum network in Burkina Faso

<sup>6</sup> Brazilian network member of Talitha Kum

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: supplementary Protocol of the Convention of the United Nations against transnational organized crime to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: New Wine in New Wineskins, N. 41

<sup>9</sup> In 1985, she founded SOLWODI in Kenya caring for Kenyan women victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

<sup>10</sup> The geographic map with a complete list of Talitha Kum networks is found on the website [www.talithakum.info/members](http://www.talithakum.info/members)

<sup>11</sup> MANCE, Euclides A. The network revolution. EMI, 2003

<sup>12</sup> VOLPICELLI Stefano, Talitha Kum Manual. ROME, 2016 – Available at: [http://www.talithakum.info/files/news/2016/Manuale\\_IT\\_Talitha\\_Kum\\_Interattivo\\_20161130.pdf](http://www.talithakum.info/files/news/2016/Manuale_IT_Talitha_Kum_Interattivo_20161130.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Cf. BRAFMAN Ori, BECKSTROM Rod. With no leaders. From internet to Al Qaeda: the secret power of network organizations. ETAS, 2007