

Paraguay must prioritize children in fight against modern slavery – UN rights expert

[Spanish](#)

ASUNCIÓN / GENEVA (24 July 2017) – United Nations human rights expert Urmila Bhoola today called on the Government of Paraguay to prioritize children in the fight against exploitation, after hearing evidence they were still working as domestic servants and forced beggars.

During an eight-day official visit, the Special Rapporteur heard reports of exploitation that she believes constitute contemporary forms of slavery, or place people at risk of being victimized.

“These concerning situations include child domestic servitude, forced begging, other forms of child labour, forced and bonded labour and the potential for servitude amongst domestic workers,” Ms. Bhoola told journalists [at the end of her fact-finding mission](#).

“I noticed again and again the heightened vulnerability of children to contemporary forms of slavery and urge the Government to continue to build a comprehensive system of child protection.”

She added: “Other groups including indigenous peoples, women and people living in rural areas are also at heightened risk of extreme exploitation. The Government must also prioritize steps to address their vulnerability.”

The Special Rapporteur praised the Government for overcoming challenges and budget restraints to make progress on a number of issues, such as ratifying international instruments and introducing strong legal provisions.

She also hailed work to raise people’s awareness of exploitation, improve social support programmes, build a comprehensive child protection system and increase the number of labour inspectors.

“I was heartened to hear about cultural shifts which are making exploitation less socially acceptable, and about reductions in the number of children in the worst forms of child labour and domestic servitude,” Ms. Bhoola said.

“To build on this progress and to protect the human rights of all those vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery, the Government of Paraguay and other relevant groups must take further steps to build a comprehensive programme against such abject exploitation,” the Special Rapporteur underscored.

During the mission - her visit official visit to the country - Ms. Bhoola visited Asunción, Filadelfia and Neuland, where she held talks with Government officials, the Human Rights Ombudsman, coordination bodies, Congress and Supreme Court representatives, as well as UN officials.

Meetings were also held with NGOs, trade unions, private sector representatives and people affected by contemporary forms of slavery.

The Special Rapporteur will present a report containing her full conclusions and recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.

UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.

Ms. **Urmila Bhoola** (South Africa) assumed her mandate as [Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery](#), including its causes and consequences, on 2 June 2014. Ms. Bhoola is a human rights lawyer working in the Asia Pacific region on international human rights, gender equality and labour law. She has 20 years of experience as a labour and human rights lawyer in South Africa and served as a Judge of the South African Labour Court for five years.

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