

WE CAN BE THE GENERATION THAT ENDS SLAVERY



UNITED ACTION TO ERADICATE MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A PRINCIPAL THEME IN CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN POPE FRANCIS AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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On 16 June at the Vatican, the Archbishop of Canterbury will meet with Pope Francis to strengthen their commitment to work together to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking as crimes against humanity.

This bilateral visit is the first high-level meeting following the agreement between Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar and Australian philanthropist Andrew Forrest, President of the Walk Free Foundation, to establish the Global Freedom Network in March 2014.

Coinciding with the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index, the UNODC 2012 Report on Trafficking estimates that nearly 30 million people are living in modern slavery conditions globally. The perpetrators coerce, deceive, force and hold men, women and children against their will. They are profiteers of misery, benefiting from the trade, abuse and exploitation of these innocent people. Some observers speculate that, within ten years, human trafficking will surpass drugs and weapons trafficking to become the most profitable illegal and criminal activity in the world. Recent trends, however, indicate that human trafficking is already in the first place, so that far from being a declining social crime, it is becoming ever more threatening. According to the May 2014 Report of the International Labour Organization, it is estimated that the total illegal profits obtained from the use of forced labor worldwide amount to US\$150.2 billion per year. Of that, US\$99 billion comes from commercial sexual exploitation.

The Global Freedom Network's Chair, Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, said: "The Global Freedom Network believes that one person enslaved is one too many. This summit highlights the personal commitment of Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury to ensure all necessary strategies are deployed to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking and declare them crimes against humanity."

During his visit to the Vatican the Archbishop of Canterbury will also be meeting with the Council of the Global Freedom Network at the Casina Pio IV on Sunday 15 June, under the chairmanship of Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo.

