



The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others ([resolution 317\(IV\)](#) of 2 December 1949).

Slavery has evolved and manifested itself in different ways throughout history. Today some traditional forms of slavery still persist in their earlier forms, while others have been transformed into new ones.

The UN human rights bodies have documented the persistence of old forms of slavery that are embedded in traditional beliefs and customs. These forms of slavery are the result of long-standing discrimination against the most vulnerable groups in societies, such as those regarded as being of low caste, tribal minorities and indigenous peoples.

The focus of this day is on eradicating these contemporary forms of slavery.

Secretary-General's Message on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

Eighty-five years have passed since the entry into force of the Slavery Convention, yet this dehumanizing practice has acquired new manifestations in the 21st century.

Every day, in all regions of the world, women are trafficked, sold and locked in brothels for sexual exploitation. Little girls are forcibly married, sexually abused and used as domestic

workers. Children work in mines, setting explosives and breathing toxic dust. Others are abducted and turned into soldiers, obliged to kill and torture. Men, separated from their families, are forced to work in plantations or locked in clandestine factories without any salary to repay never-ending debts.

The movement against slavery brought together the international community to declare that slavery practices constitute an affront to our common humanity and that no human being should be another's property. Today, governments, civil society and the private sector must unite to eradicate all contemporary forms of slavery.

We have important tools with which to advance this goal. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, for example, extends humanitarian, financial and legal assistance to victims. Over the past two decades, the Fund has assisted tens of thousands of victims of slavery in more than 90 countries. Yet the Fund is in dire need of funding to fulfil its mandate and respond to the growing need.

On the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, I call on governments and business enterprises to contribute to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and its activities in support of victims worldwide. Together, let us do our utmost for the millions of victims throughout the world who are held in slavery and deprived of their human rights and dignity.

Additional links:

- [UN website](#)
- [More background information](#)
- [UN.GIFT \(Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking\)](#)
- [Additional resources](#)