

JOURNAL of MODERN SLAVERY

A Multidisciplinary Exploration of Human Trafficking Solutions

Call for Submissions

State-imposed Forced Labour

Guest Editor

Patricia Carrier

Business Engagement Lead - Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labour

In recent years, the discourse on forced labour and human trafficking has primarily focused on private actors and perpetrators. Legislation reflects this, both with criminal codes and with an increasing number of laws being implemented that place reporting and due diligence requirements on corporations in an attempt to eradicate forced labour and trafficking from global supply chains. Equally important, but less examined is where the State is the perpetrator. The principle of the State duty to protect the human rights of individuals within its borders, as established under international legal norms, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), is turned on its head. Because state-imposed forced labour is less understood, there is a lack of coherent response, including at the multilateral level, and this has drawn calls for a more considered approach to addressing forced labour and human trafficking when it is perpetrated by the State.

State-imposed forced labour and human trafficking are utilised by authoritarian regimes that mobilise labour for a number of reasons, including economic development, conscription for civil services, for political motives or to discriminate against religious or ethnic minorities. State-sponsored human trafficking is used, for example, to extract forced labour but is also used for purposes of sexual slavery and the recruitment of child soldiers. Within these contexts, the State coerces targeted groups by infiltrating every aspect of their lives and communities, at times using mass surveillance, physical violence, and threat of imprisonment or unemployment. In 2022, the ILO and Walk Free estimated that almost 4 million people are in state-imposed forced labour.

State-imposed forced labour and human trafficking must be addressed with a unique set of responses and standards other than those that have been relied upon when this occurs in the private sector. For example, in the private sector, a change in a person's socio-economic circumstances, such as immigration status, employment status, or gender can increase their vulnerability to exploitation by unscrupulous actors, including modern slavery. Within this context, business is expected to take measures to prevent abuse and use its leverage with suppliers to mitigate any negative impacts to the greatest extent possible. However, in state-imposed labour, targeted groups are at the mercy of the State and its policies and objectives. In such a situation, disengagement and divestment by the private sector is often the responsible course of action.

The State, as the perpetrator of the crimes of forced labour and human trafficking poses distinct challenges from that which is perpetrated by private actors. And it raises complex geopolitical and economic issues too. More academic research and advocacy are required to bring much needed attention to these human rights violations at the basic level of even identifying a situation of state-sponsored forced labour or trafficking.

This special issue intends to fill this gap by exploring from different fields and perspectives how and why state-imposed forced labour and human trafficking are used in different contexts, and its role in the current modern slavery discourse. We seek to include perspectives from scholars, practitioners and advocates, including persons with lived experience. Suggested themes include, but are not limited to:

- Prison labour in the USA
- Human trafficking and the export of forced labourers by North Korea
- State-imposed forced labour and crimes against humanity in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China
- State-imposed forced labour in cotton harvesting in Turkmenistan
- State-imposed forced labour by Russia for labour, linked to war, and/or Russia's use of workers from North Korea (i.e for building stadiums for Football World Cup 2018)
- State-imposed forced labour in global supply chains and the role of the private sector
- Lessons learned on ending compulsory child and forced labour in the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan
- Conscription for military training and national service in Eritrea
- Case study on state-sponsored human trafficking and recruitment of child soldiers
- Adequacy of ILO indicators to measure state-imposed forced labour
- Gender and the impact of state-imposed forced labour on women and girls
- Regulation to ban the sale of forced labour made products
- Sanctions to combat state-imposed forced labour

Deadline for article submissions: **January 31, 2024**

Articles should be 4,000-10,000 words, including abstract, footnotes, and authors' bios. For full submission guidelines: <https://journalofmodernslavery.scholasticahq.com/for-authors>.

Submissions should be made via our Scholastica platform:

<https://app.scholasticahq.com/submissions/journalofmodernslavery/new>.