



**RE: United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - Draft General Recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration**

## **Written Statement from the Anglican Consultative Council, February 2019**

### **Introduction**

The Anglican Consultative Council, a non-governmental organisation in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1985, is the legislative and policy-making arm of the worldwide Anglican Communion's 85 million members.

The Anglican Consultative Council welcomes the opportunity to make the following submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the occasion of its half-day general discussion on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration.

### **The Anglican Communion and Human Trafficking**

*"The forms of slavery may differ [from the past] but they share the same essential characteristics - the coercive exploitation of the most vulnerable. People are enslaved through unpaid wages, withheld passports, physical violence, fraudulent contracts and un-repayable debt. The tragedy of slavery is that it is a human condition of our own making. It is driven by human greed and those that would make a profit from excessively cheap labour" - Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby<sup>1</sup>*

Trafficking in persons can be considered from a number of different perspectives, including human rights, crime control and criminal justice, migration, and labour. For people of faith, however, there is an added dimension. When moral theology asks what the ultimate good is for humankind, we are directed to the heart of this question found in the Hebrew and Christian scriptural command to love God above all and to love our neighbour as our self.<sup>2</sup>

Eighty-four per cent of the world's population self-identify as members of a religious or spiritual community<sup>3</sup>. Faith actors and leaders play a significant role in shaping values and norms of acceptable behaviours in society, guiding members of faith communities in understanding what constitutes a 'good life'. Tackling deep injustices such as gender discrimination and human trafficking is an urgent and integral part of the mission of the Anglican Communion.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/speeches/archbishop-canterburys-speech-istanbul-forum-modern-slavery>

<sup>2</sup> [http://anglicanwomensempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Human\\_Trafficking\\_Toolkit1.pdf](http://anglicanwomensempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Human_Trafficking_Toolkit1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Brabant, S. & Brown, J. (2018) *Advocacy Briefing: The Role of Faith Leaders in Achieving Gender Justice*, Side by Side: UK.

The Anglican Communion is a global church organisation with around 85 million members in over 165 different countries. This global network makes the Communion, and all faith actors, key partners for Member States and civil society partners in destination, transit and home countries, particularly in terms of exploring ways of building awareness and providing support for victims. This is a particularly important consideration in global migration mechanisms, particularly in light of the new Global Compacts on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and Refugees. This submission outlines just some of the ways that churches of the Anglican Communion around the world are responding to the issue of human trafficking, through support for victims of trafficking and those at risk of being trafficked, particularly women and girls. We request that the General Recommendation produced by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women reflects the key role that churches and other faith actors can, and do, play in the fight against trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration.

The Fourth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion is: “to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.”<sup>4</sup> To support the implementation of this goal across the member churches of the Anglican Communion, the Anglican Consultative Council has requested them to develop strategies and support to address trafficking, abduction and abuse of children and women for rituals, forced labour, and forced marriage.<sup>5</sup> When it met in 2012, the Anglican Consultative Council passed a resolution requesting the Provinces of the Anglican Communion to:

- Learn about, and raise awareness of, their own country’s or countries’ involvement in trafficking as senders and receivers or as a point of transit, and their level of implementation of United Nations protocols on trafficking in persons;
- Identify resources available and activities already being undertaken nationally in addressing the elimination of trafficking;
- Report findings to provincial and diocesan synods or conventions with a view to evaluating how churches can engage prophetically and develop local and regional strategies in response to trafficking; and
- Promote and disseminate new and existing liturgical and theological materials relating to trafficking in persons as a resource for local churches.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Role of Faith-Based Actors in Transformative Social Change**

We also take this opportunity to remind the Committee of the crucial role faith-based organisations play in the advancement of the rights of all women and girls. Our cry for gender justice is rooted in our faith. The Anglican Consultative Council has committed itself to gender equality and justice by upholding just relationships between women and men as a reflection of the Christian belief that women and men are made equally in the image of God.<sup>7;8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-15/resolutions.aspx#s37>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-15/resolutions.aspx#s10>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-16/resolutions.aspx#s3>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-14/resolutions.aspx#s33>

It is our conviction that a world which does not allow for the full flourishing and potential of all human beings does not meet the vision of our Creator. Human trafficking deprives individuals of their rights and freedoms, robs them of autonomy, and leaves them at risk of further violence and exploitation. Each member of the human family is made in the divine image to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect; never to be trafficked or exploited.

We request that the Committee remains mindful of the strong partnerships that can be built with faith-based organisations in tackling injustices such as human trafficking when drafting the General Recommendation. On multiple occasions the United Nations and its officials have acknowledged the vital role of faith-based organisations in social transformation. This recognition has been central to the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Actors for Sustainable Development and its Faith Advisory Council. As UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri commented at the launch of the International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development Platform, “The agenda of creating a planet 50-50, an equal world for men and women will not and cannot come true if religion, religious leaders and faith actors remain outside the conversation.”<sup>9</sup> This is particularly important in cases of human trafficking, where faith-based actors can be a key point of intervention, particularly as faith-based organisations are among the oldest providers of social and humanitarian assistance and are powerful agents of social change.<sup>10</sup> The ongoing development of a UN Women strategy on The Role of Religion in Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment is an additional testament to the transformative potential of partnering with faith-based organisations at the UN.

### **Mechanisms and cooperation required to identify victims and perpetrators of trafficking**

Churches are seen as places of refuge and safety where individuals may seek sanctuary and feel safe to disclose sensitive information; for example, that they are victims of trafficking or that they are aware of trafficking practices in the local area.

Located at the heart of local communities, churches can be key civil society partners for Member States in identifying trafficking victims and perpetrators. The Clewer Initiative<sup>11</sup>, established by the Church of England in 2017, works to enable churches to detect modern slavery in their communities and provide victims with support and care. By identifying resources, developing partnerships, and providing training, the Clewer Initiative hopes to play an important part in eradicating modern slavery. The Initiative has also launched a Safe Car Wash App as a tool for gathering community intelligence by identifying working standards in informal car washes, a key industry for the use of forced and bonded labour in the United

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/3/speech-ded-puri-international-partnership-for-religion-and-sustainable-development-platform>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.partner-religion-development.org/fileadmin/Dateien/Resources/Knowledge\\_Center/Religion\\_and\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_UNWOMEN.pdf](http://www.partner-religion-development.org/fileadmin/Dateien/Resources/Knowledge_Center/Religion_and_Gender_Equality_UNWOMEN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> The Clewer Initiative takes its name and its inspiration from the Clewer sisters, an Anglican order of Augustinian nuns founded in 1852 to help marginalised, mainly young women, who found themselves homeless and drawn into the sex trade, by providing them shelter and teaching them a trade.

Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> Trafficking victims are often pulled into slavery in destination countries, so the church can play an important role in shining a light on illegal practices.

Churches from the US-based Episcopal Church have been campaigning against human trafficking for a number of years. Significant action was taken around the 2019 Super Bowl, held in Atlanta, Georgia, in response to the event being widely regarded as the largest human trafficking incident in the United States. Congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta worked with hotels in the area on a campaign, *SOAP UP Atlanta*. The campaign utilises soap bars as tools against exploitation and abuse, placing anti-trafficking phone numbers on the packaging and encouraging hotels to place them in their bathrooms instead of their usual soap. Campaigners also produced informational materials and posters featuring pictures of missing children. Hotel workers reported recognising some children from the posters and reporting this to the authorities.<sup>13</sup>

Anglican churches are being equipped to detect trafficking through awareness raising programmes. Freedom Sunday, observed each year, invites churches to pray, study and take action on tackling human trafficking and modern slavery. This initiative recognises that local churches know their communities and that this knowledge can be crucial for identifying trafficking activity. The Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development and Advocacy works with other church traditions and agencies to produce relevant resources. These resources advise churches on how to take practical actions, including: finding out about local services and help lines for assisting victims of slavery; raising awareness on prevention; knowing and spotting signs of slavery and reporting this; campaigning on supply chains to be free of slavery; and supporting anti-trafficking agencies.<sup>14</sup> The resources are also available for Jewish and Muslim faith communities.<sup>15</sup> The Anglican Alliance designated 2018 as Freedom Year, with a calendar of monthly activities and resources, encouraging churches to connect with other key partners, learn from each other, and recognise the crucial role churches play in the fight against human trafficking. A holistic strategic framework was also crafted to support churches in their response to tackling trafficking, using the 7 Ps: Prayer; Prevention; Protection; Prosecution; Partnership; Policy; and Participation.<sup>16</sup>

Anglicans have also been working ecumenically and with other religious communities and groups to tackle human trafficking. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, a vocal advocate for eliminating human trafficking and modern slavery, joined His Holiness Pope Francis and other global faith leaders in 2014 to commit to an interfaith declaration and ground-breaking initiative to eradicate modern slavery.<sup>17</sup> At the national level, the Archbishop of Canterbury has been particularly supportive of anti-slavery and trafficking

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/about-us;>  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58f723af1b631bc0c1e17415/t/5bb3500dc830257d0570590d/1538478093886/The%2BClewer%2BInitiative+edit.pdf;](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58f723af1b631bc0c1e17415/t/5bb3500dc830257d0570590d/1538478093886/The%2BClewer%2BInitiative+edit.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2019/01/31/episcopalians-join-hotel-soap-campaign-to-fight-sex-trafficking-as-atlanta-hosts-super-bowl/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://anglicanalliance.org/freedom-sunday-resources-launched-to-mobilise-churches-to-end-human-trafficking/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://freedomundayglobal.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://anglicanalliance.org/development/ending-human-trafficking/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2014/12/02/faith-leaders-join-pope-at-vatican-to-sign-human-trafficking-declaration/>

initiatives in the Diocese of Derby, where a Human Trafficking Summit was held in 2014.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, the Derby and Derbyshire Modern Slavery Partnership was established, partnering the church with the police and local authorities. The Mothers' Union, a Christian organisation supporting families internationally and regarded as the largest global women's network, has been working with the Partnership to provide supplies for victims through fundraising and distribution of emergency packs to assist in restoring the dignity of victims after rescue.<sup>19</sup> The former Bishop of Derby, the Right Revd Alastair Redfern, has played a central role in national and international action against human trafficking, helping develop ground-breaking legislation in the UK Parliament, as well as chairing the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Advisory Panel.

### **Providing access to justice, as well as short and long-term assistance and services to victims of trafficking**

The theology behind providing victim-centred access to justice and support is encapsulated in the Anglican Communion's Marks of Mission: to respond to human need by loving service and to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.

Churches across the Anglican Communion have been responding to the needs of victims by providing short and long term support, assistance, and services. Two examples of this support are offered below:

Ghana has emerged as a major country of origin for victims of child trafficking, both internally and across borders. In response to this, the Diocese of Accra partnered with the United States Embassy to tackle this injustice. They established a community shelter called Hope Village in order to facilitate the rehabilitation of rescued children, in addition to seeking partnership with the government to create awareness and ensure that the government of Ghana can eventually meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.<sup>20</sup>

HELP for Domestic Workers, a community outreach programme of St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong, provides free advice and assistance on employment, immigration and human rights issues to domestic workers in Hong Kong. Their mission is to aid foreign domestic workers in gaining access to justice and receive fair and equal treatment before the law. Over the last 26 years it has responded to more than 52,000 requests for assistance from domestic workers, many of whom have been trafficked into Hong Kong and become trapped in forced labour.<sup>21</sup>

The Cathedral also operates a walk-in centre, the Mission for Migrant Workers, which has been operating since 1981. The need for a temporary shelter, particularly for female workers, was identified and in 1986 the Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge was established to

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<sup>18</sup> <https://derby.anglican.org/en/news/human-trafficking/derby-human-trafficking-summit-2014.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/derby/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/news-and-stories/childhood-restored-to-victims-of-trafficking.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> <http://helpfordomesticworkers.org/en/home/>

provide shelter, counselling, emergency assistance and support around workers' rights to any migrant woman in distress.<sup>22</sup> It provides support to hundreds of women every year.

### **Ensuring accountability and responsibility of States parties, in view of the SDGs, to address trafficking**

Anglican churches have played an important role in pressing many Member States in their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly around the issue of human trafficking and slavery. As mentioned earlier in this statement, the former Bishop of Derby has been a key voice in combating trafficking and modern slavery in the United Kingdom. As a member of the UK Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, he made significant contributions to drafting the Modern Slavery Act 2015.<sup>23</sup> This demonstrates the positive impact of faith leaders when given the opportunity to contribute to lobbying and the development of legislation.

The Anglican Church of Australia has also been a key voice in legislative efforts to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking in Australia. The Australian Freedom Network, a coalition of faith leaders which includes Archbishop Dr Philip Freier, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, lobbied the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee to pass the Modern Slavery Bill (2018).<sup>24</sup> The Public Affairs Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia made a statement in support of the Modern Slavery Bill, indicating the need for a strong modern slavery act of this nature to protect the rights of vulnerable workers in Australia and around the world.<sup>25</sup>

### **Gender-based approaches to combating trafficking**

In many of the examples given above, the support, counselling, resources and initiatives require a gender sensitive approach, recognising, for example, the different support required to aid a woman rescued from bonded labour and a woman rescued from sexual exploitation. Partnerships with other civil society organisations, faith-based or secular, are key for sharing best practices in approaching victim support and awareness raising with a gender lens.

Anglican churches have also utilised existing networks to support a gender-based approach to care for female victims of human trafficking. Women's Religious Orders in the Anglican and other Christian traditions are increasingly providing safe spaces, care and recuperation for victims.

The International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN), a global network of Anglican women working to uphold the God-given dignity of women and girls and promote just relationships

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<sup>22</sup> <https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/media/55889/trafficking.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.derby.ac.uk/news/2016/archbishop-of-canterbury-supports-campaign-to-end-human-trafficking-in-the-supply-chain-by-2030/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=3c18c74d-8a45-419e-80fb-4d57e6069bea&subId=613386>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal\\_and\\_Constitutional\\_Affairs/Modern\\_Slavery/submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Modern_Slavery/submissions)

between all persons<sup>26</sup>, identified the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children, including trafficking, as one of their priority concerns. In addition to partnering with the International Anglican Family Network to produce a newsletter sharing stories of faith-based responses to the trafficking of women and girls<sup>27</sup>, the IAWN has collated a number of resources to encourage churches to respond to the issue of human trafficking.<sup>28</sup>

## Recommendations

This written submission has provided a number of examples that demonstrate the ways in which churches play an important role in the protection and support of people who are victims of human trafficking, including women and girls.

As the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women prepares its General Recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of migration, the Anglican Consultative Council would like to invite the Committee to:

- Make explicit reference in the General Recommendation to the role that faith-based actors, including churches, can and do play in
  - mechanisms and cooperation required to identify victims and perpetrators of trafficking
  - providing access to justice, as well as short and long-term assistance and services to victims of trafficking
  - ensuring accountability and responsibility of States Parties, in view of the Sustainable Development Goals, to address trafficking; and
  - offering gender-based approaches to combating trafficking
- Use the drafting of the General Recommendation as an opportunity to encourage States Parties to partner with national churches to identify innovative and locally-grounded opportunities to combat the trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration.

*For further information please contact Mr Jack Palmer-White, the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations: [jack.palmer-white@anglicancommunion.org](mailto:jack.palmer-white@anglicancommunion.org)*

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<sup>26</sup> <https://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/about-us.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> See: [https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/media/106026/iafn\\_church\\_response\\_trafficking.pdf](https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/media/106026/iafn_church_response_trafficking.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> See: <https://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/human-trafficking.aspx>