

Human Rights Council

Study Guide

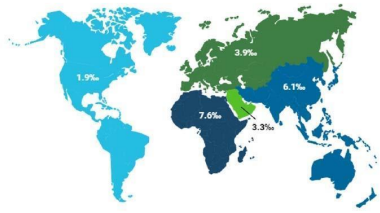
The issue of slave and unfair labour especially in the fast fashion industry

For decades, the majority of clothes we wear has been coming from developing countries. The workers' rights in these countries are often relaxed, sometimes completely absent. The term "slave labour" is nowadays a, unfortunately, widespread phenomenon, which refers to work that is done by people who are forced to work against their free will and with limited pay, sometimes even without.

The urgency is currently higher than ever, as over 40 million people around the world are subject to modern slavery, 25 of which are in forced labour. For comparison, this is roughly the same number of people as the population of Shanghai, the 3rd most populous city in the world. The number of people who live in slave-like conditions is currently the highest in the history of human civilization, and is becoming more and more widespread (can the map below be added to the TO?).

Nowadays, every continent has its share of workers, whose jobs are considered to be ignoring the basic workers' and sometimes basic human rights. Human rights abuse has reached a level, where it is necessary for the Member States to create more strict plans on tackling this issue of society.

The companies that commit these acts are more often than not international and thus require a large amount of workers. Given the financial burden that this creates, they move their factories to countries, where the policies on workers are more relaxed and allow the companies to exploit e.g. the minimum wage limit, or the minimum age for workers, which creates child labour. As this strategy is fairly simple for the large companies to follow, the forced labour industry now creates \$150 billion worth of revenue, annually. And as the worth of the industry itself rises, the value of a worker is, on average, mere \$90. That is roughly 440 times less than the worth of a slave in the 1810s.



*Numbers are per thousand.

Prevalence of modern slavery per region



Below you can find other sources for your research:

<https://50forfreedom.org/modern-slavery/>

<https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/old-working-conditions>

<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm>