



PONTIFICIA  
UNIVERSITÀ  
GREGORIANA

Faculty of Social Sciences



# The role of religion in eradicating modern slavery.

## International and local perspectives and practices



**WALK FREE**

Event organised  
in collaboration with  
SIMI (Rome):



## BACKGROUND

According to the **Global Estimates of Modern Slavery**, more than 40 million people were trapped in modern slavery on any given day in 2016. Of these individuals, 15.4 million were in forced marriage, and nearly 25 million were in forced labour. Eradicating modern slavery is a moral issue, that demands an urgent response. The international community has acknowledged this by incorporating the eradication of modern slavery within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) Targets, and specifically under SDG Target 8.7.

The Catholic Church has been at the centre of the **fight against modern slavery**. His Holiness Pope Francis has repeatedly called modern slavery a “scourge” and indicated the importance of eradicating it. In this context, the Pontifical Gregorian University is happy to partner with Walk Free in the fight against modern slavery and to support this initiative with its academic, pedagogical, moral, and spiritual resources.

**Walk Free** is a leading international organisation which aims to accelerate the eradication of modern slavery. Over the last six years, Walk Free, and its Global Freedom Network (GFN), have taken steps to **engage with faith leaders to take action to eradicate modern slavery**. Faith leaders are teachers and shepherds of their communities. In these complicated times, the importance of faith as a moral compass has been magnified, not diminished. Currently, 85 percent of the world’s population are members of, or identify with, a religious faith. On the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery in 2014, the GFN held a signing ceremony during which His Holiness Pope Francis, The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and leaders from the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh communities signed the “Religious Leaders Joint Declaration against Modern Slavery.” The GFN has since organised similar signing ceremonies in Australia, India, Indonesia, Argentina, Colombia, New Zealand, and Ghana.

The **Pontifical Gregorian University** is a centre of excellence among research and teaching institutions in the Catholic world, specialising in religious and ecclesiastical disciplines, humanities, and social sciences. It traces its origins to 1551, caters to an extremely diverse student body, and is nourished by the Jesuit educational ethos which blends a rigorous search for truth with a deep spirituality, engagement with today’s world and a commitment to place knowledge at the service to the most vulnerable.

## AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

Walk Free and the Pontifical Gregorian University have come together to promote a reflection on the role of religion in tackling modern slavery. This international conference will bring together leading academics, faith leaders, and civil society members to discuss modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and other forms of exploitation, and how lay and faith-based institutions, academics and practitioners can engage with one another internationally in seeking ways to accompany and empower the most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers, offering them hope and sustaining their search for justice, and in so doing achieve some of the most pressing SDGs.

In particular, this conference will:

- **Raise awareness of the issue of modern slavery**, including different conceptualisations of contemporary forms of exploitation.
- Explore the varied **roles, responsibilities, and responses of religious groups** in preventing modern slavery and accompanying those who have been exploited, as well as the spiritual and conceptual resources offered by faith to those committed to such efforts.

## WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY?

Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power. It is a hidden crime that affects every country in the world. Modern slavery has been found in many industries, including garment manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, and in many contexts, from private homes to settlements for internally displaced people and refugees. This crime impacts on all



of us, from the food we consume to the goods we purchase. It is everybody's responsibility to address and eliminate this crime where it occurs.

Modern slavery is an umbrella term and includes:

- human trafficking
- slavery and slavery-like practices
- forced labour
- debt bondage
- worst forms of child labour
- forced marriage

**Human trafficking** is defined by the *UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol* (2000) as involving recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threats, coercion, fraud or deception, or the use of leverage of others over them. Exploitation includes sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, forced labour and servitude, slavery and slavery-like practices, and organ removal. International law considers the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a minor for the purpose of exploitation as "trafficking in persons" even if coercion or deception is not involved.

**Debt bondage** is a condition where one person has pledged their labour or services (or that of someone under their control) indefinitely, or in circumstances where the fair value of their labour/service is not reasonably applied to reducing the debt or length of debt.

**Forced marriage** is any situation where persons, regardless of age, have been forced to marry without their consent.



Global Slavery Index



M&R Pastoral Orientations

## WHERE DOES FORCED LABOUR FIT?

### Forced labour

- Worker cannot refuse or cease work because of coercion, threats or deception
- Worker may also be deprived of personal freedom

### Dangerous or sub-standard working conditions

- Worker can refuse or cease work but doing so may lead to detriment
- Worker is not paid fairly and does not receive some or all entitlements
- Worker may be required to work excessive hours
- Workplace is unsafe

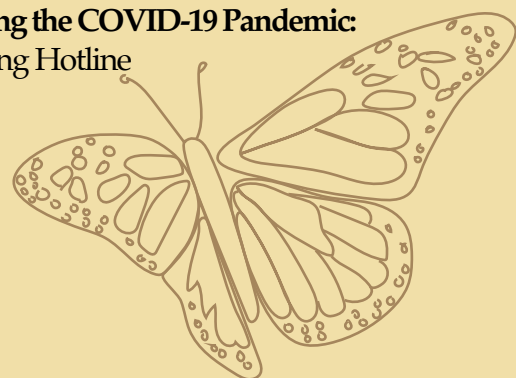
### Decent work

- Workers' rights respected
- Worker free to refuse or cease work
- Worker paid fairly (at least minimum wage)
- Workplace is safe



FRIDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022 - AULA MAGNA:  
WHY TACKLE MODERN SLAVERY?

- 14.00-14.20 **Welcome addresses:**
- Fr. Nuno da Silva **Gonçalves S.J.**, Rector, Pontifical Gregorian University
  - Franca **Pellegrini**, Director, Global Freedom Network at Walk Free
  - Fr. Peter **Lah S.J.**, Acting dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
  - Chiara **Porro**, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See
- 14.20-14.40 **Keynote 1: *Slavery, Human Rights and Encounters Among Believers: A Mediterranean Perspective***  
Card. Francesco **Montenegro**, Archbishop emeritus of Agrigento
- 14.40-15.25 **First Panel discussion:**  
*What is modern slavery?*
- Moderator:** Pia **Cantini**, Save the Children - Italy
- **Definitions: Chattel and Modern Slavery, Trafficking, Exploitation**  
Tomoya **Obokata**, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
  - **Quantifying and mapping the phenomenon – data and sources**  
Katharine **Bryant**, Walk Free
  - **How do definitional debates impact interventions?**  
Giovanni **Abbate**, International Organization for Migration – IOM
- 15.25-15.55 **Question and answer session with panel speakers**
- 15.25-15.55 Tea / coffee / networking, with poster presentations from NGOs  
*Foyer*
- 16.25-16.45 **Keynote 2: *Understanding and Combatting Modern Slavery from a Religious Perspective: Theological, Spiritual and Ecclesial Resources***  
Fr. David **Hollenbach S.J.**, Georgetown University – online presentation
- 16.45-17.30 **Second Panel discussion:**  
*Contextual Perspectives: What does modern slavery look like in Italy?*
- Moderator:** Seàn-Patrick **Lovett**, Pontifical Gregorian University
- **Illegal Recruitment, Forced Labour and Criminal Syndicates in Italian Agribusiness:**  
Marco **Omizzolo**, EURISPES / Sapienza University of Rome
  - **“Made in Italy” and Sweatshop Labour**  
Jean-René **Bilongo**, FLAI-CGIL Trade Union
  - **Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation in Italy:**  
Sr. Monica **Chikwe S.O.M.**, Vice-president of “Slaves No More”
  - **Human Trafficking in Italy – Developing Trends During the COVID-19 Pandemic:**  
Gianfranco **Della Valle**, Italian National Anti-Trafficking Hotline
- 17.30-18.00 **Question and answer session with panel speakers**
- 18.00- 19.30 Pre-prandial reception and networking  
*Foyer*



**SATURDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022 - AULA MAGNA:  
HOW CAN WE TACKLE MODERN SLAVERY?**

09.00-09.15	<b>Welcome and Recap of day 1</b>
09.15-10.00	<b>Third Panel discussion:</b> <i>How can Personal Faith and Religious Institutions Help Us Eradicate Modern Slavery?</i>
<b>Moderator:</b>	David <b>Holdcroft</b> , JRS International
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Francis <b>Campbell</b>, University of Notre Dame, Australia</li><li>• Sheikh Armiyawo <b>Shaibu</b>, Office of the National Chief Imam of Ghana</li><li>• Katharina <b>Fuchs</b>, Pontifical Gregorian University</li><li>• Cristina <b>Molfetta</b>, Migrantes Foundation</li></ul>
10.00-10.25	<b>Question and answer session with panel speakers</b>
10.25-10.40	<b>Presentation:</b> <i>The Global Freedom Network and Faith for Freedom Phone App</i> Franca <b>Pellegrini</b> , Walk Free
10.40-11.00	Tea / coffee / networking, with poster presentations from NGOs
11.00-11.50 <i>As announced</i>	<b>Three breakout groups:</b> <i>What is the role of faith and religion in tackling modern slavery?</i>
<b>Moderators:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>English-speaking group – C008</i> Franca <b>Pellegrini</b> and Katharine <b>Bryant</b>, Walk Free</li><li>• <i>Italian-speaking group – C009</i> Fr. Aldo <b>Skoda C.S.</b>, Director, Scalabrini International Migration Institute</li><li>• <i>Bilingual group: Aula Magna</i> Luca <b>Di Sciullo</b>, President, IDOS–Immigration Statistical Dossier Research Centre</li></ul>
11.50-12.30 <i>Aula Magna</i>	<b>Presentation of ideas and proposals discussed in the groups</b> Group moderators
12.30-13.00	<b>Plenary and conclusions:</b> <i>Looking to the Future while Learning from Past Experience and Current Best Practices</i> Fr. René <b>Micallef S.J.</b> , Pontifical Gregorian University

**THE PANEL MODERATORS**

- **Pia Cantini**  
is the Child Protection Head of Department at Save the Children, Italy
- **Seàn-Patrick Lovett**  
is a senior lecturer at the Pontifical Gregorian University and former head of English-language programming at Vatican Radio
- **Fr. David Holdcroft S.J.**  
is a Field Specialist in Professional and Post-Secondary Education at JRS-International (Rome)

## THE SPEAKERS



### **Giovanni Abbate**

is the Labour Exploitation Prevention Contact Person and Project Manager within the Integration Unit of the Coordination Office for the Mediterranean of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). For six years he has been involved in the management of projects developed with the public and private sectors and has direct experience in assisting vulnerable groups arriving by sea. Previously he was part of the team of Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London which dealt with issues related to Search and Rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Dr Abbate graduated in Law from the Second University of Naples, and obtained a Master in "Human Rights and Conflict Management" from the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa. He has practised law since 2013.



### **Jean-René Bilongo**

is the Head of the Migration and Social Inclusion Policies Department and the Director of the Placido Rizzotto Social Observatory at the FLAI-CGIL Trade Union. Since 2012, the Observatory has published the Mafia in Agriculture and Gangmastering Report every two years, the 6th edition of which is currently being prepared and will be presented later this year. Mr Bilongo is an immigrant, originally from Cameroon, who has resided in Italy for over two decades, and has gained a long experience of civil militancy, starting in the difficult context of Castel Volturno (near Naples).



### **Katharine Bryant**

is Head of Policy and Programs at Walk Free and co-author of the Global Slavery Index (GSI). She oversees Walk Free's program focused on, 'what works?' to combat modern slavery, including the eradication of the exploitation of women and girls. She has worked in counter trafficking and anti-slavery programming and research for the past decade.



### **Francis Martin-Xavier Campbell**

is the rector of the University of Notre Dame (Australia) and a former British Ambassador to the Holy See (2005-2011). He joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as a member of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service in 1997. He has also worked at the United Nations Security Council in New York, the European Union, and on diplomatic postings overseas. From 1999-2003, he served on the staff of the then Prime

Minister Tony Blair. He also served on secondment with Amnesty International as the Senior Director of Policy. From 2011-13, he served as Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan. From 2013-14 he was the Head of the Policy Unit in the FCO and Director of Innovation at UK Trade and Investment.



### **Sr. Monica Chikwe S.O.M.**

is a Hospitaller Sister of Mercy and vice-president of the association Slaves No More since September 2021. For years she has represented the nuns who work against the trafficking and exploitation of people within the RENATE network (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking And Exploitation). Since 2000 she has collaborated with the USMI (Union of Major Female Religious Superiors in Italy) in the fight against trafficking in persons, with particular attention to girls and women who are victims of sexual exploitation. She also collaborates with the Nigerian Religious Network Against Human Trafficking. She has helped Slaves No More to launch a voluntary and assisted repatriation project for the victims. With the association she has also developed a support service for the victims for obtaining identity documents via the Nigerian Embassy.



### **Katharina Anna Fuchs**

is a trained psychologist and assistant professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Pontifical Gregorian University, with German origins. She specializes in topics related to clinical psychology (e.g., consequences of traumatic experiences to mental health, anxiety, etc.), the prevention of sexual and spiritual abuse, the impact of the pandemic on maltreatment and mental health, human formation in priestly and religious formation as well as issues linked to the fields of emotions and empathy. She has studied at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, from which she holds a PhD, at the Pontifical Gregorian University and at the University of Glasgow.



### **Fr. David Hollenbach S.J.**

is the Pedro Arrupe Distinguished Research Professor of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. His teaching and research deal with human rights, religious and ethical responses to humanitarian crises, and religion in political life from the standpoint of Catholic social thought, theology, and the social sciences. His most recent book is *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*. Earlier work includes *The Common Good and*



*Christian Ethics*. He has taught often at Hekima University College in Nairobi, Kenya, and he collaborates with Jesuit Refugee Service.



**Fr. René Micallef S.J.**

is a Maltese Jesuit priest and associate professor in moral theology and social ethics at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

He specializes in topics such as migration, conflict, human rights and the sources of moral reasoning. Fr. Micallef holds an undergraduate degree in Biology and Chemistry (University of Malta) and graduate degrees in Philosophy (University of London) and Theology (Facultés Jésuites de Paris; Universidad Pontificia Comillas - Madrid). His doctoral work in Sacred Theology, defended at Boston College (2013), focused on the ethics of migration policies.



**Cristina Molfetta**

is the International Protection Research and Training Contact Person for Italy and Europe at Migrants Foundation (Italian Catholic Bishops' Conference), in charge of

the Vie di Fuga Social Observatory. She is a cultural anthropologist and has worked for more than 15 years in the protection of human rights and international cooperation in various refugee camps near conflict zones.



**Card. Francesco Montenegro**

was born in Messina in 1946 and completed his studies at the Seminary of Messina. On the 18 March 2000 he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Messina-Lipari-Santa Lucia del Mela, and on 23 February 2008, Metropolitan Archbishop of Agrigento. He was created a cardinal-priest on 14 February 2015. Card. Montenegro has served as president of the Italian Episcopal Commission for the service of charity and health and, as such, president of Caritas Italiana. He was also president of the Italian Episcopal Commission for Migration. He is a member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.



**Tomoya Obokata**

is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, including its causes and consequences, since March 2020. He is a Japanese scholar of international law and human rights, specialising in transnational organised crime, human trafficking and modern slavery. He currently serves as Professor of Internatio-

nal Law and Human Rights at Keele University.



**Marco Omizzolo**

is a sociologist at Eurispes, president of Tempi Moderni and Assistant Professor of Socio-politics or Migration at Sapienza University of Rome. He is an expert on

labour exploitation, international trafficking, illegal hiring and contemporary slavery. Through participatory observation, he lived for 18 months in an Indian farmworker community with dozens of Indian laborers. He also pretended to be a farmhand to work on various farms in Italy. He followed an Indian human trafficker in India to investigate international labour trafficking. In 2016 he organized, together with the CGIL, in Latina, the most important strike of Indian laborers in Italy, and repeated the strike in 2019 and 2020. In 2019 he was nominated Cavaliere della Repubblica by the Italian president, in merit for research on labour exploitation and slavery.



**Franca Pellegrini**

is the Director of the Global Freedom Network, the faith-based arm of Walk Free. She has led GFN for the past four years,

overseeing the growth and delivery of the project's initiatives, including signings of the Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery around the globe. She has built strong engagement with partners and together they have found new and innovative opportunities to fight modern slavery. Working with an advisory panel of religious leaders, Franca developed the world's first smart phone app to help faith leaders fight modern slavery. Ms Pellegrini is passionate about the impact that religious communities can have in tackling modern slavery and brings personal and professional values of empathy and integrity to the faith space.

**Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu**

is the Spokesperson for the National Chief Imam of Ghana and member of the Chief Imam's Advisory Board. He is the Principal Imam of Dare-Salam Masjid in Accra, and also the representative of the National Chief Imam on the National Peace Council (NPC).

Sheikh Shaibu holds degrees in psychology and religious studies. He was Greater Accra Regional manager of the Islamic Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service from 2003 to 2017.



**In loving memory of  
Fr. Jacquineau Azétsop SJ  
(1972-2021),**

former dean of the Faculty of Social  
Sciences at the P. U. Gregoriana,  
who energetically supported our  
work on this event.

'Certainly, there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience; because it is thorny; because it is shameful. Then there are those who, even knowing this, do not want to speak because they are at the end of the "supply chain", as a user of the "services" that are offered on the street or on the Internet.

'Young people are in a privileged position to encounter survivors of human trafficking. Go to your parishes, to an association near home; meet the people, listen to them. Your response and concrete commitment will grow from there. In fact, I see the risk that this may become an abstract issue, but it is not abstract. There are signs that you can learn how to "read", which tell you: this could be a victim of trafficking here, a slave.

'How horrible it is to realise that many young victims were first abandoned by their families, considered as rejects by their society! Many were then introduced to trafficking by their own families and so-called friends. It happened in the Bible too: remember that the older brothers sold the young Joseph as a slave, and thus he was enslaved in Egypt (cfr. Gn 37:12-36)!

Pope Francis

*(Dialogue with Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action  
against Human Trafficking, 12 February 2018)*

### **Walk Free**

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