

Modern Day Slavery

News:

About 45.8 million people around the world are trapped in modern-day slavery, almost a third more than estimated two years ago, a charity said on Tuesday.

The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index said that India had by far the largest number of modern slaves, 18.35m, followed by China with 3.39m and Pakistan with 2.13m.

The report ranked 167 countries by the number of people affected by practices including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage and sexual exploitation.

"We call on governments of the top 10 economies of the world to enact laws, at least as strong as the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, with a budget and capability to ensure organisations are held to account for modern slavery in their supply chains, and to empower independent oversight," Walk Free Foundation Chairman Andrew Forrest said. (Source: Dawn, June 1st, 2016)

Comment:

Slavery brings to our mind the slave ships from Africa leaving for Europe and America in days gone by and is something we read about in novels, history books and in recent year's movies with the theme of slavery has made box office hits. In our minds we also think that slavery was abolished and to hear of modern day slavery is truly saddening. The report tells us that "Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception."

Calling on the world's leading nations to abolish modern day slavery fails to see that the reason why human beings can be treated in such a way is linked to the ideology these same powers implement and believe in, Capitalism. Capitalism is an exploitative ideology that only sees benefit as the basis for human judgment and action. To maximize profits, it makes perfect sense to use labour that is cheap or better still free. Living in a global economy means that governments and big businesses are both responsible for the conditions that give rise to human beings being exploited. The nations that are being identified as having the highest number of slaves are the same nations that provide sweat shops, factories and cheap goods for Western markets. To fail to mention this correlation is failing to look at the root causes of modern day slavery.

When RasulAllah (saw) came with the message of Islam, slavery was a normal part of life for the people all over the world. Islam began to regulate the relationships of people and initially raised the ranks of slaves by granting them rights they had never had until eventually slavery was abolished. The rewards of freeing slaves, expiation for sins by freeing a slave or punishments for harming slaves are divine laws that develop a mindset on how other human beings should be viewed. Islam's injunctions regarding slaves were seen as revolutionary. Furthermore the economic system of Islam ensures that the state provides basic needs so no one would be forced to sell themselves or to take huge loans just to survive making them vulnerable to exploitation.

Islam alone gives us the correct way of viewing all people, an economic system which has a goal of circulating wealth so that no one is left open to exploitation and most importantly a realization of accountability in our actions through Taqwa. Only when we witness the implementation of Islam through the Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of Prophethood will we see the complete abolishment of slavery in all its forms insha'Allah.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

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