

**Protecting human rights during and after COVID-19**

**A response by Anti-Slavery International**

**June 2020**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, is committed to eradicating all forms of slavery throughout the world. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Anti-Slavery International has been working to collect data on its impact on slavery-affected and vulnerable communities globally. We conducted a rapid assessment across our global partners and allies and published [***Leaving No-one Behind***](https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ASI_Leaving-noone-behind-April-2020-1.pdf)*; insights and guidance for governments, donors, businesses and international agencies*. We collected further data through a global survey to civil society organisations.[[1]](#footnote-1) Using this evidence, this submission first responds in summary to relevant Common Questions, and secondly responds in detail to *Questions by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery***.**

1. **RESPONSE TO COMMON QUESTIONS - IMPACT ON PEOPLE IN SLAVERY**

**Protection of various groups at risk[[2]](#footnote-2)**

People who are in slavery or vulnerable to slavery are generally from the poorest and most marginalised communities in the world. They are often unreached by development policy or funds and have been over-looked in responses to previous emergencies. Hence, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is falling on them with greater force than most.

Across many different national contexts globally, Anti-Slavery International has documented the dire impact of the pandemic on people in and vulnerable to slavery. This includes food scarcity; lack of access to healthcare, sanitation and hygiene measures; inability to access information and services; fear and stigma; loss of work and income; homelessness; financial destitution; and increased vulnerability to exploitation and contemporary forms of slavery.

Our global survey to the anti-slavery movement found that, as in previous emergencies, national responses to Covid-19 are predominantly not reaching those in slavery. Of the respondents to our survey, 73% said their Government had not included or had scarcely included the needs and rights of people affected by slavery (45% and 28% respectively). Seventy seven percent said that their Government had not introduced specific measures for people in slavery, and 74% said that emergency responders were not being made aware of the needs of populations affected by modern slavery.

There are examples of governments considering the needs of people affected by slavery in their response planning, but overall, people in slavery have been left behind by Covid-19 responses.

Government measures to combat slavery are being disrupted by the pandemic in many countries, including identification, release, victim care and support, and actions such as work-place inspections. This is due to measures put in place to counter the spread of Covid-19 such as social distancing, lockdowns, key government staff working from home, alongside a shift in focus of key responsible personnel and agencies towards Covid-19 response and enforcement work.

Civil society organisations working to combat slavery and support survivors are experiencing new and increased demands on their services. Despite this, their ability to operate is also being severely disrupted due to measures in place to halt the spread of Covid-19. They are also reporting funding difficulties due to the pandemic.

**Participation and consultation**

Responses to Covid-19 must be designed to specifically reach the 40 million people in slavery, in addition to the increased numbers of people now at risk of slavery. Our experience shows that the voices, knowledge, and perspectives of people affected by slavery should be at the centre of policy responses, to ensure that they can reach them and are effective in practice. Regrettably, respondents to our survey reported in huge numbers that they were not being consulted or included by the Government when determining policy responses. Ninety one percent said that their Government had not effectively engaged with them or anti-slavery organisations to formulate policies, and 70% said that UN agencies and/or international humanitarian response organisations had not engaged or consulted with them.

1. **RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS BY THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY (P13)**

**QUESTION 1[[3]](#footnote-3)**

People in slavery and slavery-vulnerable communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and slavery risk is increasing globally. Anti-Slavery International’s global findings reveal new and increased risks to those in slavery; Covid-19 responses that are often not reaching those in slavery and vulnerable to slavery; disruptions to national anti-slavery mechanisms; disruptions to the work of grassroots civil society organisations; worsening discrimination; increased risk for particularly vulnerable groups such a migrant workers; and more people now at risk of contemporary forms of slavery.

***Increased risks for people in slavery and vulnerable to slavery***

People in slavery and vulnerable to slavery are more likely to contract the Covid-19 virus; they are often living in over-crowded situations making it hard to social distance and self-isolate or lack access to satisfactory hygiene facilities. They often have poor underlying health due to poor nutrition and extremely onerous work demands. There are barriers in access to health messages, due to location, language, and literacy. Even if they can access health information, they may lack the money to buy soap or masks or any protective equipment to keep them safe. When individuals from these communities get ill, they are less likely to be able to access sanitation or get medical help; because they may not be permitted to do so or may lack documentation and resources. Due to ill health, they may lose their home and source of income if they are no longer of use to their employer or ‘master’. Where caste discrimination is rife, vulnerable people will be excluded from community water and sanitation supplies.

Across many different national contexts, people in and vulnerable to slavery are reporting food scarcity; lack of access to healthcare, sanitation and hygiene; inability to access information and services; homelessness; loss of work and income; financial crisis and destitution; fear and stigma; being unable to access migratory regularization; and increased vulnerability to exploitation.

***An increase in contemporary forms of slavery***

We are already seeing a rise in exploitation and contemporary forms of slavery due to the pandemic. Fifty one percent of organisations responding to our global survey already had evidence of an increase, with trafficking, forced labour, and the worst forms of child labour the most common examples. Many more expected to see a rise in cases once lockdown restrictions are lifted in their countries as victims are able to access help.

Unless major preventative action is taken, the economic and labour market impacts of Covid-19 will lead to an increase in all contemporary forms of slavery. Extreme economic distress brings increased slavery risks as families find themselves with limited choices and must take considerable risks to support their own survival. Desperation will make it more likely that people will have no option but to accept exploitative working conditions. As parents’ access to work and particularly decent work opportunities decreases, the risk of child labour increases due to family poverty. Financial stress is one of the root causes of forced and child marriage. As borders remain closed, people will be forced into unsafe migration where they are vulnerable to trafficking for survival means. Major sections of the global population are now at greater risk of exploitation in forced labour, debt bondage, and other contemporary forms of slavery. The crisis poses a substantial threat to the potential of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7.

**In Mauritania,** the lockdown left the Haratine, a highly marginalised ethnic group, and other poor communities extremely vulnerable. Many thousands do not have the possibility of confining themselves to private homes as they live in tents or makeshift shelters on the outskirts of towns, in highly crowded informal settlements. There is obviously no possibility of ‘working from home’ – they need to travel outside to work and earn money, but people found outside are being punished by the police. People in descent-based slavery risked being ‘let go’ as it is impractical for masters to keep them all confined within their homes, and there is less incentive to keep their slaves if they are not able to send them out to herd animals or work on land. While this offers the possibility of a shift in social relations, with people therefore leaving their situation of descent-based slavery, it also leaves these survivors much more exposed to extreme poverty, starvation and illness. Finding alternative work in this context, when most businesses and activities have closed, will be near impossible.

***Particularly vulnerable groups***

Migrant workers, children, domestic workers, and workers in the informal sector have been extremely negatively affected:

**Migrants workers** have always been among the most vulnerable to trafficking and forced labour, and this risk has been heightened to critical levels during the pandemic. They are more vulnerable to contracting Covid-19 because they often live in cramped and overcrowded accommodation, and work in workplaces where social distancing is not possible. Access to healthcare, especially for those on temporary visa schemes in some countries, is a major challenge. In some countries, migrants have been denied access to healthcare in order to prioritise the needs of citizens where health services have been overstretched. Globally, borders were closed at short notice, and many found themselves trapped in their destination country without work, in some cases having lost accommodation that was tied to their employment. Many were not paid before their workplace closed. Migrant workers are often not covered by national social and financial protection schemes or have no recourse to public funds. Loss of income also means a loss of remittances so crucial to their families back home, increasing their family’s vulnerability to debt bondage, forced labour and child labour. When a migrant worker’s visa ties them to particular work, finding new employment following a sudden lay-off due to the crisis is extremely difficult, risking a push into exploitative work. Undocumented migrant workers experience heightened risks. Many are too scared to access medical help for fear of being reported to the authorities and detained, and the challenges of access to social and financial protection are even more pressing.

**In India,** where every year around nine million workers migrate from rural areas to urban cities for work, the world’s largest lockdown saw over a billion people forced to stay inside. Migrant workers lost their jobs and their homes. Many were forced to make arduous journeys on foot from cities back to their villages, sometimes walking for hundreds of miles. Transport and bus companies inflated prices. Many reported that upon returning to their home villages they were stigmatised as ‘bringing the disease with them’.

The ILO and UNICEF have reported that millions more **children** are at risk of being pushed into **child labour**, which could lead to the first rise of child labour after 20 years of progress.[[4]](#footnote-4) The invisibility of children during school closures has increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation, trafficking, and child marriage. Access to education protects all children from child marriage and child labour. The combined impact of school closures and falling family income presents a huge risk of increased child marriage and child labour as families seek desperate means to survive poverty. In addition, in agriculture, the volatility in pricing in global market prices for products such as cocoa, cotton and coffee is putting the livelihoods of farmers and farmworkers in these supply chains at high risk, and leading to a higher likelihood of the use of child labour and susceptibility to forced labour.

Anti-Slavery International works to combat the practice of forced child begging in the Qur’anic schools of **West Africa**. With lock down restrictions arising from Covid-19, many children are now confined to these schools and subject to increased abuse and punishment because they are not bringing income into the schools from forced begging.

Exploitation and risks for child and adult **domestic workers** has increased during the pandemic. In **Mauritania** and many other countries, employers either terminated their employment at the onset of lockdown measures or required them to be confined inside their employer’s home to avoid travelling. For most domestic workers, this left them with the choice of unemployment and destitution, or to stay with their employer and leave their families alone without resources. Live-in domestic workers commonly report being forced to work longer hours without additional payment or adequate rest breaks, separated from contact with family and support networks.

*See question 3 on* ***informal sector workers.***

The pandemic has been accompanied by a rise in racism and discrimination globally, as particular ethnic groups, caste-affected groups, migrant workers have been scapegoated as ‘carriers’ of Covid-19.

***Exclusion from Covid-19 responses***

People in slavery have been over-looked in responses to past emergencies and regrettably this is occurring globally in response to Covid-19. Victims and survivors are reporting barriers in access to food, healthcare, hygiene, and sanitation measures, as well as exclusion from national social and financial protection policies.

*See question 2.*

***Increased and new demands for anti-slavery organisations***

The pandemic has increased demands on services provided by anti-slavery organisations. In response to our global survey, 64% said that they had already experienced extra demands on services, and the rest expected increased demands in the future. Many have needed to pivot their focus to immediate humanitarian relief efforts, particularly provision of food, sanitation and hygiene materials to slavery affected and vulnerable communities. For example, 79% of organisations responding to our survey had shifted *some* of their work to focus on Covid-19, and 6% had shifted *all* of their work.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**In Niger**, Anti-Slavery International’s partner organisation, Timidria, acted swiftly to adapt its activities to respond to Covid-19 through collaboration with local and international actors, providing emergency food, health and hygiene assistance, running awareness raising radio programmes and caravans, and supplying pharmacy kits. **In Senegal**, our partner Tostan has adapted most if its activities to address the risks posed by Covid-19 and related restrictions, including providing training courses for all staff and all *daaras*, distribution of emergency food assistance and provision of health and hygiene kits. **In Mauritania**, in partnership with UNFPA, our partner SOS-Esclaves distributed hygiene resources and facilities to a total of 678 vulnerable people, including many slavery survivors, across eight regions of the country. SOS-Esclaves also delivered food supplies and hygiene kits to families of slave descent including survivors living in project regions and Nouakchott who were identified as particularly vulnerable because their normal livelihoods (domestic work, selling on the street, casual work) had been disrupted by the pandemic. **In Nepal,** a rapid assessment conducted by NNDSWO[[6]](#footnote-6) in April identified 4,305 *Haliya* households[[7]](#footnote-7) that would not have any funds (mainly for food) within a month, and worked with local government to deliver food and soap to some 3,000 households.

***Disruptions to anti-slavery organisations***

The ability of anti-slavery organisations to operate is being disrupted by measures put in place to halt the spread of Covid-19 including social distancing and lockdown measures, bans or restrictions on gatherings, states of emergency, and school closures. Across the world, we have seen the cancellation or postponement of activities and assistance to the most vulnerable populations. Organisations responding to our survey reported that it was most difficult to carry out activities such as face to face outreach with victims; counselling (particularly where access to IT and the internet is limited); training, such as pre-departure and rights awareness; and community outreach and sensitisation.

**In Mauritius**, the Migrant Resource Centre, which was supposed to be a physical space from which to provide pre-departure training and support to migrant workers, is now operating as a remote advice line. **In Niger**, the schools for children of slave descent which Anti-Slavery International set up and has long supported were shut down in response to the pandemic. This immediately meant that children stopped receiving school meals, risking increased hunger, placing additional financial burdens on their families, and increasing their risks of being pushed into child marriage and child labour.

Anti-slavery organisations report funding difficulties due to the pandemic, with 42% already experiencing budget cuts. As of May, 34% had already had to cut regular programmes and a further 30% anticipated a future need to do so.

**QUESTION 2[[8]](#footnote-8)**

***Failings to include and prevent slavery***

Anti-Slavery International’s survey found that the needs of people in slavery were not being considered by the majority of governments in their policy responses to Covid-19: 73% said their Government had not included or scarcely included the needs and rights of people affected by slavery, 77% said their Government had not introduced specific measures for people in slavery, and 74% said that emergency responders were not being made aware of the needs of populations affected by slavery.

There are good-practice examples of governments considering the needs of people affected by slavery in their response planning. For example, **in Senegal**, civil society organisations and the local population mobilised to ensure that the needs of *Talibé* children affected by the practice of forced child begging were included in government plans and responses, as lock downs and school closures threatened to increase their vulnerability. However, governments generally need to take far more action to ensure that their policy responses reach and benefit people in slavery and mitigate against the current increased slavery risk.

Some governments are passing laws which remove labour rights and social protection regulations during the pandemic, for example by extending the workday to 12 hours, suspending the minimum wage, and suspending laws protecting freedom of association. Examples include India, China, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, and some Latin American countries. Strong labour rights standards, freedom of association, the right to organise, and social dialogue, are all essential to prevent exploitation and slavery.

***Disruption to Governments’ anti-slavery measures***

In many countries, government anti-slavery measures are being disrupted during the pandemic, including identification, release, and victim care and support such as legal advice and counselling. Survivors are struggling to access rehabilitation entitlements and other welfare benefits. Work-place inspections have been halted in many places.

Around 64% of organisations responding to our survey reported evidence of support services struggling to function during the pandemic. For survivors, the loss of regular contact with professionals increases isolation and their vulnerability. Mental health difficulties are on the rise, with the pandemic and its impacts re-traumatising already vulnerable survivors.

There are a number of reasons for these disruptions, including Covid-19 response measures such as social distancing, lockdowns, working from home, and a shift in focus of key personnel and agencies normally responsible for anti-slavery measures towards Covid-19 work. Almost all organisations reported it was difficult to get government attention to slavery issues in the current climate.

**In the UK,** there was a 14% decrease in referrals of potential modern slavery victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in the first quarter of 2020. The government stated it was “understood to be influenced by the effects of restrictions implemented in the UK as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”[[9]](#footnote-9) A reduction in referrals does not indicate a reduction in exploitation, but rather that victims are currently unable to access help due to restrictions in place,

**QUESTION 3[[10]](#footnote-10)**

***Business responses***

Global economic disruption has led to increased exploitation and slavery risk. While some global businesses have responded behaved responsibly, many have responded to the pandemic in ways which severely exacerbated the risks of exploitation and slavery of workers who were in their supply chains.

Many cancelled contracts with suppliers and factories were required to shut down, putting millions of workers at risk due to non-payment of wages and unemployment, particularly in contexts where state protections have been weak or non-existent. Others used their disproportionate power over factory suppliers to pay suppliers substantially less than agreed, or to grossly extend payment terms.

The garment industry has been particularly affected, with workers in countries reliant on the garment industry at considerable risk of increased poverty. Even temporary decisions by global businesses to halt or slow down operations lead to large-scale lay-offs which result in mass unemployment. By late March, over one million workers in Bangladesh had been laid off or temporarily suspended. Similar crises were experienced by workers across South and Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Vietnam. Unemployment on this scale, even if only temporary, will lead to increases in household debt, creating a real vulnerability to bonded labour, trafficking and forced labour.

There is a risk that mass unemployment and high debt will create opportunities for future exploitation by irresponsible businesses. Once global demand resumes, they may seek to cover their financial losses during the crisis by exploiting the cheap labour of people who have suffered sudden unemployment.

Some businesses failed to put in place social distancing measures in their workplaces and did not provide frontline workers with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

***Evidence of forced labour in Covid-19 response supply chains***

It was reported that the increased demand for masks, gloves and PPE, particularly in the early weeks of the pandemic, led to increased use of forced labour in their production in the US, China and Malaysia. The crisis may also be leading to the relaxation of rules about purchasing these products from suppliers who are suspected of forced labour.

Higher risks of exploitation also emerged in agriculture, an industry with already high rates of forced labour, as food production became and remains a global priority, with reports of workers in a number of contexts and products facing the decision between losing their jobs, or working in conditions highly exposed to Covid-19 transmission risks.

Covid-19 is therefore providing particular business opportunities to some manufacturers who are expanding their operations with forced labour. In addition, in for example the UK, the risk has been reported that recruiters and exploiters are taking advantage of the seasonal worker recruitment crisis faced by farmers (with migrant workers unable to travel due to the closure of borders) to move people in slavery from lockdown-affected workplaces (such as car washes) into agricultural workplaces. This risk is increased due to employers shortening and simplifying recruitment measures during the Covid-19 crisis.

***The impact on workers in the informal sector***

The ILO reports that the full or partial lockdown measures implemented across the world bear a significant impact on as many as 1.6 billion of the world’s two billion informal workers.[[11]](#footnote-11) Many workers in the informal economy need to earn an income to feed themselves and their families, as most cannot rely on income replacement or savings. Not working and staying at home means losing their jobs and their livelihoods. Therefore for survival means, and in the absence of recourse to social protection or alternative decent work, the risk is high of families resorting to distress sale of assets, taking out loans from informal moneylenders and falling into debt bondage, or resorting to child labour. Specific groups of workers, including women, youth, children, indigenous people, and migrant workers, who are overrepresented in the informal economy, will experience further exacerbation of their vulnerability. [[12]](#footnote-12)

The ILO estimates that the pandemic threatens to increase relative poverty levels among the world’s informal economy workers by as much as 56 percentage points in low-income countries. In high-income countries, relative poverty levels among informal workers is estimated to increase by 52 percentage points, while in upper middle-income countries the increase is estimated to be 21 percentage points.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The ILO reports that the COVID-19 crisis is causing an unprecedented drop-off in economic activity and working time. Global working hours fell in the first quarter of 2020 by an estimated 4.5 per cent and the ILO estimates that global working hours in the second quarter will decline by 10.5 per cent, representing approximately 305 million full-time jobs. Fewer employment opportunities and lower wages can drive more people into informal or exploitative work, which can further suppress wages and in turn contribute to child labour.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**QUESTION 4[[15]](#footnote-15)**

***Initiatives to promote responsible business practice***

Anti-Slavery International is aware of a number of multi-stakeholder initiatives to promote responsible business practice in response to Covid-19, at international, regional and local levels.

As an example, the UK-based Ethical Trading Initiative has organised a series of webinars and events to bring in a range of stakeholders from across business, civil society, and trades unions to identify and discuss the emerging areas of risk and potential mitigating actions.

Given the particular risks and vulnerabilities experienced by workers in the garment sector, through a multi-stakeholder consultation process including trade unions, business associations and brands the ILO developed a global call to action, [COVID-19: Action in the Global Garment Industry](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/sectoral/WCMS_742343/lang--en/index.htm), which aims to support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect garment workers’ income, health and employment.

There is also increasing pressure from [Investors](https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/investors-exhort-apparel-companies-to-meet-supplier-commitments-during-pandemic?mc_cid=c737a16c81&mc_eid=51e1cdf102), who are asking apparel companies to meet supplier commitments during the pandemic.

***Good practice***

A number of companies have endorsed the ILO’s Call to Action In the garment industry[[16]](#footnote-16), including ASOS, H&M, Tesco and Marks and Spencer’s. Some companies have supported suppliers to access finance, for example Unilever and L-Oreal offered early payments to vulnerable small and medium-sized suppliers to help with financial liquidity and offering cash flow relief. Some companies have paid for all in-production orders and completed orders[[17]](#footnote-17) Other good practice examples include sick leave arrangements, cash loans, and salaries paid in full to hourly and salaried staff that have been impacted.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The risk of forced labour in workplaces is also compounded by the inability of businesses to conduct *human rights due diligence* in order to assess conditions in workplaces. A number of multi-stakeholder learning events have taken place to discuss ways to overcome this barrier, with a focus on the role of local trade unions and civil society acting as credible worker representatives.

***‘Building back better’***

The response of businesses globally to the Covid-19 pandemic has been mixed; some have acted in ways which significantly increased the vulnerability of workers, whereas others behaved responsibly which shows that better practice is possible. In the short and long-term it is crucial that businesses and governments put in place measures that promote responsible business operations which protect, mitigate, and prevent the risks of increased exploitation including contemporary forms of slavery. Businesses must undertake human rights due diligence to protect all workers in their supply chains to ensure that business actions do not cause increased vulnerabilities for workers. This includes by honouring all contracts. Businesses should also ensure that buyer-supplier relationships enable the respect of workers’ rights, including that pricing covers full production costs such as the living wage and benefits to all workers. Governments must introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws to hold companies responsible for preventing abuses within their supply chains.

**QUESTION 5[[19]](#footnote-19)**

Please see response to Question 2. It is our opinion that these disruptions will also extend to investigation and prosecution of slavery offences. The emerging economic crises may also result in a lack of political will to prioritise resources to tackling slavery.

**QUESTION 6[[20]](#footnote-20)**

While recognising the grave challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we urge Governments not to retreat on commitment and action to tackling contemporary forms of slavery.

The crisis has highlighted the fundamental need to do things differently; to ‘build back better’, with slavery prevention at its heart. We call for: **responses to Covid-19 that include and reach people in slavery; social and financial protection measures that include and protect people in and vulnerable to slavery; national anti-slavery measures to continue to function during the pandemic; responsible business operations that do not exacerbate risks of exploitation; and measures that prevent greater numbers falling into slavery as a consequence of Covid-19.** The voices of those affected by contemporary forms of slavery must be central in policy responses that impact them. Without inclusion and participation, it will not be possible to ensure that policy measures reach them and are effective in practice.

**For further information[[21]](#footnote-21)**

1. Anti-Slavery International, Free the Slaves, and Freedom from Slavery Forum, *Survey: The impact and response to Covid-19,* May 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Can you inform us about particular measures taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for communities and groups subject to structural discrimination and disadvantage?; What measures have been taken by public authorities to ensure continued provision of services… to persons in vulnerable situation, including… g) human trafficking, i) victims of contemporary forms of slavery, including forced labour; Has there been any interruption of services, such as the closure of emergency shelters, food banks, or the disruption of health care or psycho-social services that has been of concern? [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ***What is the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on contemporary forms of slavery…, including descent-based slavery; forced labour; debt bondage; serfdom; sexual slavery; commercial sexual exploitation of children; child labour; domestic servitude; and servile forms of marriage?*** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. International Labour Organization and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘COVID-19 and Child Labour: A time of crisis, a time to act’, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As of May 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The *Haliya* system of bonded agricultural labour is predominantly found in the geographically isolated Far-Western Region (FWR) of Nepal. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ***What steps have been taken by the Government to reduce increased risks of contemporary forms of slavery in the context of the outbreak? Please, share any good practices and identify persistent challenges, including with regards to prevention; identification of victims; provision of access to recovery and rehabilitation services; and investigation and prosecution of slavery-related crimes.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/889969/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-uk-quarter-1-2020-january-to-march.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ***What steps have been taken by the Government to reduce increased risks of contemporary forms of slavery in the context of the outbreak? Please, share any good practices and identify persistent challenges, including with regards to prevention; identification of victims; provision of access to recovery and rehabilitation services; and investigation and prosecution of slavery-related crimes.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. ILO, Covid-19 crisis and the informal economy, May 2020,

    https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\_protect/---protrav/-travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms\_743623.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, *Impact of Covid-19 on informal sector workers,* 19 May 2020, available at http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8560en/ [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ILO, Covid-19 crisis and the informal economy, May 2020, op.cit [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. International Labour Organization and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘COVID-19 and Child Labour: A time of crisis, a time to act’, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ***Has there been engagement with business entities and other stakeholders to develop joined strategies on reducing the risk of vulnerable workers in their operations and supply chains becoming exposed to contemporary forms of slavery in the context of the pandemic.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/statement/wcms_742371.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A list of brands that have committed to pay in full for orders completed and in production and those that have not is available here: <https://www.workersrights.org/issues/covid-19/tracker/> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. For more information on the actions that individual businesses are taking in relation to their suppliers, please see the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre Covid-19 Action Tracker at https://covid19.business-humanrights.org/en/tracker/ [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. ***Since the outbreak, has the Government continued investigating and prosecuting human rights violations related to decent-based slavery; forced labour; debt bondage; serfdom; sexual slavery; commercial sexual exploitation of children; child labour; domestic servitude; and servile forms of marriage?*** [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. ***In light of the Sustainable Development Goals and global commitments to eradicate slavery (target 8.7) and measure progress in this area, has the Government been able to ensure timely collection and analysis of disaggregated data? If available, please share the data collected in the first quarter of 2020, including information regarding the number, age, gender and nationality of identified victims; number of prosecution of perpetrators; types of services provided to the victims; industries where victims were identified. Has any of these data significantly varied from previously recorded trends due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic?*** [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. **Anti-Slavery International,** *Leaving No-one Behind: Insights and guidance for governments, donors, businesses and international agencies,* May 2020*:*

    <https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ASI_Leaving-noone-behind-April-2020-1.pdf>

    Kate Elsayed-Ali, International Advocacy Manager, Anti-Slavery International

    [k.elsayed-ali@antislavery.org](mailto:k.elsayed-ali@antislavery.org) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)