

# MURKY WATERS

**A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT  
OF MODERN SLAVERY  
IN THE PACIFIC REGION**



**WALK  
FREE**



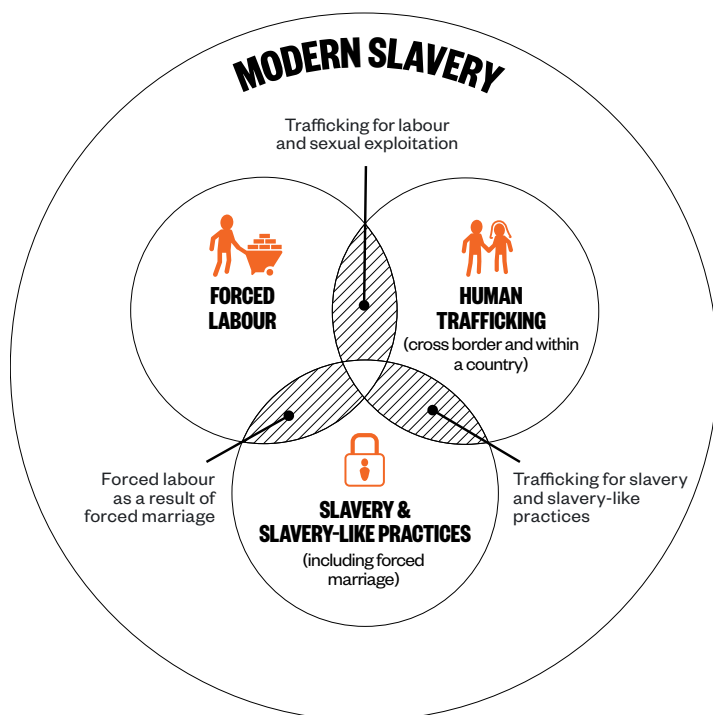
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Walk Free wishes to acknowledge and sincerely thank the interview respondents in this study for their openness and generosity in giving their time and contributing their expertise in order to improve the knowledge base on modern slavery in the Pacific region.

Many organisations across the region contributed their knowledge to this research. Special thanks go to ECPAT International, which provided valuable advice on conducting a study on modern slavery in the Pacific. The authors extend their heartfelt thanks to the stakeholders who voluntarily provided guidance and input to this publication.

All quotes and references to interview respondents in the report are anonymised.

## WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY?



## TERMINOLOGY

Countries use differing terminologies to describe modern forms of slavery. This includes how they describe slavery itself, but also other concepts such as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children.

In this report, modern slavery is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on the commonalities across these concepts. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, abuse of power, or deception.

Refer to Appendix 1 for full terminology.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While previous qualitative research has exposed select forms of modern slavery in the Pacific, this report provides a comprehensive assessment of modern slavery in the region. The report draws on existing peer-reviewed and grey literature, Walk Free's 2019 assessment of action taken by governments to address modern slavery, as well as information gathered through semi-structured interviews with anti-slavery stakeholders in eight countries in the region: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Interviews sought to capture local knowledge on the nature of modern slavery in these countries with regard to forms, victims, sectors at risk, vulnerabilities, key gaps, and practices that offer some hope of solutions.



## KEY FINDINGS

Modern slavery is a present and persistent issue in the Pacific region and one that must be dealt with alongside a multitude of complex, interconnected issues such as climate change, gender-based violence, poverty, and unemployment. Forced labour for labour exploitation and sexual exploitation, worst forms of child labour, and forced and early marriage were identified across the region. In all eight focus countries, at least one but often several forms of modern slavery were identified. Drivers of vulnerability identified in this study follow similar patterns seen elsewhere in the world; that is, poverty and economic insecurity, migration and displacement, weak governance, and cultural norms that allow for discrimination of and violence against women and children. Stemming from a lack of resources, but also reflecting limited political will, there remain significant gaps in the response to modern slavery in the Pacific region. Despite the challenges faced in the region, there exists a range of stakeholders committed to addressing these issues.

● **Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) exists among widespread sexual exploitation of children, underpinned by cultural norms about women, girls and children.**

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) has occurred in Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. These reports were often linked with mobility and implicated parents and family members. In the Solomon Islands logging sector, for example, CSEC was reported to be facilitated by male relatives from the immediate or extended family, while in the Tongan fishing sector, CSEC was reportedly facilitated by mothers. More generally, in the Pacific Island countries (PICs), vulnerability to CSEC was thought to be driven by poverty and traditional views of women and girls. Some Cultural norms exhibited across the PICs allow a permissive environment for discrimination and violence against women and children. These cultural norms lead to the abuse of some cultural practices, such as payments of bride price and informal adoption, which can leave women and children vulnerable to modern slavery.

● **Forced labour and trafficking for labour exploitation are increasingly being recognised across the region, particularly among migrants and in the fishing and construction sectors, though significant gaps in understanding and relatively low awareness remain.**

Forced labour has occurred in Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Across the region, forced labour tends to occur in sectors with known risks, characterised by low-skilled work and a high proportion of migrant workers, including hospitality and tourism, logging, construction, fishing, horticulture, and domestic work. Respondents reported vulnerability of migrant workers is driven by disconnection from social and formal supports, low visibility and transparency stemming from physical isolation and highly monitored and restricted movements, limited understanding of local contexts driven by low literacy and education, and language barriers between workers and locals. Significant gaps in knowledge remain regarding both the nature and extent of forced labour and labour trafficking, particularly among migrant workers in at-risk sectors.



*Suega Apelu stands in the lagoon on November 28, 2019 in Funafuti, Tuvalu. The low-lying South Pacific island nation of about 11,000 people has been classified as 'extremely vulnerable' to climate change by the United Nations Development Programme. Some scientists have predicted that Tuvalu could become inundated and uninhabitable in 50 to 100 years or less if sea level rise continues. Displacement resulting from natural disasters and climate change spur vulnerability to modern slavery in the Pacific Islands. Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images.*

● **An influx of foreign investment projects in the PICs has led to increased risk of forced labour and forced sexual exploitation of Asian migrant workers in high-risk sectors in the PICs.**

Increasing migration from China and elsewhere in Asia following investment flows into the PICs was reported to heighten risk of modern slavery among migrant workers from Asia in the construction, logging, and fishing sectors and of migrant women from Asia in hospitality and tourism, and in massage parlours. Interview respondents indicated that the confiscation of passports was common among male migrant workers in the construction sector in Fiji and that, in Fiji and Solomon Islands, there is little political will to enforce labour standards for fear of impacting on the much-needed investment.



● **Vulnerabilities linked to migration and discrimination against women are likely to be exacerbated by increasing effects of climate change in PICs.**

Reports indicate that displacement resulting from natural disasters and climate change spur vulnerability to modern slavery in the PICs. Increases in the frequency and intensity of climate-induced weather events – particularly in a region already prone to natural disasters – are likely to result in further displacement. As a result, people may make desperate decisions in their search for safety and a way out of poverty, thereby falling prey to deceptive smugglers, recruiters, and employers. Communities that will host those displaced by climate change also face vulnerability where competition for land increases and conflict between existing and relocated communities arises. Women are likely to be particularly vulnerable as customs around land rights often limit their access to land or put pressure on them to marry in order to access land.

●●  
*One of the residents of the village Eita is sitting and watching the ocean water slowly flood his village in Kiribati on 30 September 2015. The people of Kiribati are under pressure to relocate due to rising sea levels. Each year, the sea level rises by about half an inch. Though this may not sound like much, it is a big deal considering the islands are only a few feet above sea level, which puts them at risk of flooding and sea swells. The displacement caused by the inundation of peoples' lands puts them at risk of modern slavery, as people may make desperate decisions in their search for safety and a way out of poverty, thereby falling prey to deceptive smugglers, recruiters, and employers. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzner/LightRocket via Getty Images.*

● **Labour mobility scheme workers and their families are vulnerable to modern slavery through family breakdown, child protection issues, and gender-based violence.**

Workers participating in labour mobility schemes, which seek to fill labour gaps in low and semi-skilled sectors in destination countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, are vulnerable to labour exploitation. Reports indicate increased vulnerability among spouses (mostly women) and children of workers who stopped sending money home, and an increase in domestic violence once workers returned and had to readjust to life at home. Concerns were also voiced for children who are offered less protection when one or both parents participated in labour mobility schemes overseas, as well as for those who may have to work to help support mothers where family breakdown had occurred. Several respondents highlighted a need for research and evaluation on the social impacts of the schemes on communities in the participating PICs.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Coordination and cooperation at both the national and regional level are vital for a successful response to modern slavery, more so in resource constrained environments. Walk Free make the following recommendations not only to Pacific governments, which play a pivotal role in developing and implementing legislation and policy, directing funding, and putting priority issues on the agenda, but also to development partners who have the ability to build capacity in the region, civil society with expertise in operating in the Pacific context, and to faith, business, and community leaders who work in, and are part of, the communities within the Pacific.

- 1.** Fund and establish evidence-based and culturally specific awareness raising campaigns around how to identify and report cases of modern slavery, key vulnerability factors, and available support services in local languages.
- 2.** Provide comprehensive and systematic training on victim identification and victim-centred responses to those who may come into contact with victims, and support existing legislation by establishing training programs on laws and regulations that are meant to eliminate modern slavery.
- 3.** Increase access and strengthen victim support services. Provide emergency care and long-term reintegration support to all victims of modern slavery, including men and migrant workers. Build upon existing systems where suitable, such as services for victims of gender-based violence.
- 4.** Enact legislation, or strengthen existing legislation, to ensure that all forms of human exploitation are criminalised and penalties for crimes associated with modern slavery are appropriate to the severity of the crime.
- 5.** Develop National Action Plans to combat modern slavery, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, that are based on research and data on the nature and trends of human trafficking and child exploitation. This includes involving the private sector in the national response to modern slavery.
- 6.** Modern slavery extends beyond national borders. Pacific governments must implement a coordinated and focused regional response to successfully combat these crimes.
- 7.** Mainstream women's rights into national strategies. Support the empowerment of women and girls by ensuring access to education for all and access to land rights, and by investing in community programs.
- 8.** Extend programs that engage with communities through human rights-based education and other community empowerment models that address social issues related to modern slavery such as violence against women, child protection, and early marriage.
- 9.** Development partners must expand support to Pacific Island countries and territories to strengthen climate change resilience and minimise the number of those forced to migrate. This must be joined by action on the root causes of climate change and the provision of safe, orderly, and dignified migration pathways for climate migrants.
- 10.** Fund and support research that examines the vulnerabilities that boys face and that addresses gaps in knowledge on modern slavery more broadly, including prevalence of different forms of modern slavery and with a focus on at-risk sectors.

# COMMENTARY

## Pacific Governments Need to Step Up to Fight Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

*Roshika Deo, Gender Equality & Social Development Specialist Consultant*

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the Pacific is an issue rarely discussed in mainstream spaces, however growing evidence and anecdotal stories reveal its prevalence in the region. In many of the Pacific Island countries it is an area that is not substantively addressed and largely left unarticulated. There have been very few public discourses and little to no policy formulation to respond and prevent CSEC.

In 1966 the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children stated commercial sexual exploitation of children as “comprising sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.”

In a staunchly patriarchal and religious culture, commercial sexual exploitation of children is largely invisible. Cultural sensitivities and taboo around sex and homosexuality create challenges which makes it difficult for children survivors to share and report commercial sexual exploitation.

It is harder for girls who are victims, as they are subjected to further victimization and met with disdain. The young girls are victim blamed and slut shamed. They are labelled as “fast”, “easy” and “bad character”. They are called “sexual deviants” and their sexuality and character attacked. This creates a hostile environment deterring victims to come forward.

Many countries in the region still criminalize homosexuality which perpetuates stigma and deters young male victims to come forward. Such an environment prevents lawmakers and enforcement authorities to adequately assess risks and vulnerabilities associated with boys.

Another concern is the grooming of children for commercial sexual exploitation. However the different stages of grooming are not understood by key stakeholders making it difficult to identify and monitor cases to prevent exploitation. Child commercial sexual exploitation in tourism and travel is another important dimension that is missing from mainstream discourse despite research and anecdotal evidence indicating its commonness.

It is urgent that an extensive public awareness campaign is implemented in the region to create public discourse and understanding on the nature of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Additionally, current efforts and policies to end violence against women and children, and child protection need to integrate CSEC, so resources are allocated accordingly.

Many key stakeholders, such as the police and social support services, do not sufficiently understand the power dynamics, risks and vulnerabilities, hence they are unable to effectively address the growing problem. A comprehensive training program is needed for key stakeholders with stronger laws and enforcement.

The patriarchal and harmful gender norms prevent a survivor-centered intervention and a rights-based approach in prosecuting and preventing commercial sexual exploitation of children.



●●  
 Children cool off in the tropical waters of Iron Bottom Sound in Honiara, Solomon Islands, 23 July 2003. Photo credit: Torsten Blackwood/AFP via Getty Images.



To broaden our understanding on the Pacific region's special situation of CSEC more research is needed. The research can also help identify culturally specific risk factors for effective prevention efforts. A multi-stakeholder collaboration between academic institutions, government agencies, civil society organisations and development partners is important for efficient use of resources, research and policy formulation.

Pacific Island countries need to show stronger political support to end commercial sexual exploitation of children. Countries that are yet to ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography must do so immediately and take measures to ensure national legislations are in conformity with the provisions of the Optional Protocol. This includes establishing extra territorial jurisdiction and promoting cross-border and international cooperation.

## Love thy neighbour: Work with us to protect our people from climate-induced displacement and modern slavery

*Rev. James Bhagwan, General  
Secretary, Pacific Council of  
Churches*



Climate change is presenting an increasing threat to our region.

The unprecedented bushfires that continue to destroy homes, lives and livelihoods across Australia are likely to become more common as a result of Human-induced climate change.

In the Pacific Islands, we face another set of challenges. Rising seas, coastal erosion, and the increasing salination of arable land are forcing people from their ancestral homes.

As neighbours, countries in the Pacific region must work together to mitigate and respond to this devastation.

As Walk Free's Murky Waters report points out: even with strong measures to increase resilience to climate change and a desire by the overwhelming majority of Pacific Islanders to stay and fight, increased migration is inevitable, as is the risk of modern slavery.

Those forced to escape the effects of climate change are vulnerable to unscrupulous subcontractors and agents, who sometimes take advantage and exploit their desperation and lack of knowledge, leaving migrants with large, unmanageable debts, or deceived

into working in unsafe and exploitative conditions. We have learned from the experiences of other regions that forced migration is linked with risk of modern slavery, including many of the forms of exploitation that are commonly associated with trafficking, such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, and organ removal.

Pacific Churches and Civil Society Organisations have already begun to work on frameworks to assist the most vulnerable in the region, those facing the increasing challenge of climate-induced displacement. We will continue to provide pastoral care for our members who are displaced by climate change, the communities that are taking in these climate-induced migrants, and providing relief to those who are unable to leave their sinking homes. However, the scale of the issues means we cannot do this alone.

In Fiji alone, about 400 communities have been identified as at risk due to climate change. Just over a tenth of them have been earmarked for urgent relocation. For the island nations of Kiribati, Tokelau, and Niue, the topic of permanent relocation has been on the political agenda for the better part of a decade.



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*A boy sits on a log in the village of Vunisavisavi in Fiji, 16 October 2017. The village is the first in the country to be forced to relocate due to rising water levels. Photo credit: Christoph Sator/ picture alliance via Getty Images.*

The Pacific Islands don't want to wait for emergency relief and loss of life before we confront these issues. We need action now and strong frameworks to better deal with what we know will happen. The impacts of climate change and related displacement are global, so too must the response be.

Already we are seeing our people's vulnerabilities being exploited by traffickers. This will only increase. We don't want emergency arrivals of hundreds of Pacific Islanders, displaced by climate change, in Australia and New Zealand.

We need partnerships with our friends and neighbours to address vulnerability to modern slavery. Our response cannot overlook the need to tackle climate change and put in place solutions and protections for people who will inevitably be driven from their homes. Funding for adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change is essential, as is the need to address the root causes.

It is also crucial our neighbours support safe, orderly and dignified relocation pathways including providing greater opportunities for seasonal or permanent migration accompanied by strong, well informed supports to reduce the risks of exploitation of workers, their families and communities.

For Christians, acting to prevent a climate catastrophe is not just about survival. It is about loving your neighbour and offering them life in abundance. We cannot isolate issues like climate and migration to our own borders and must work together, as neighbours, to act with speed and determination for the benefit of all.

# BACKGROUND



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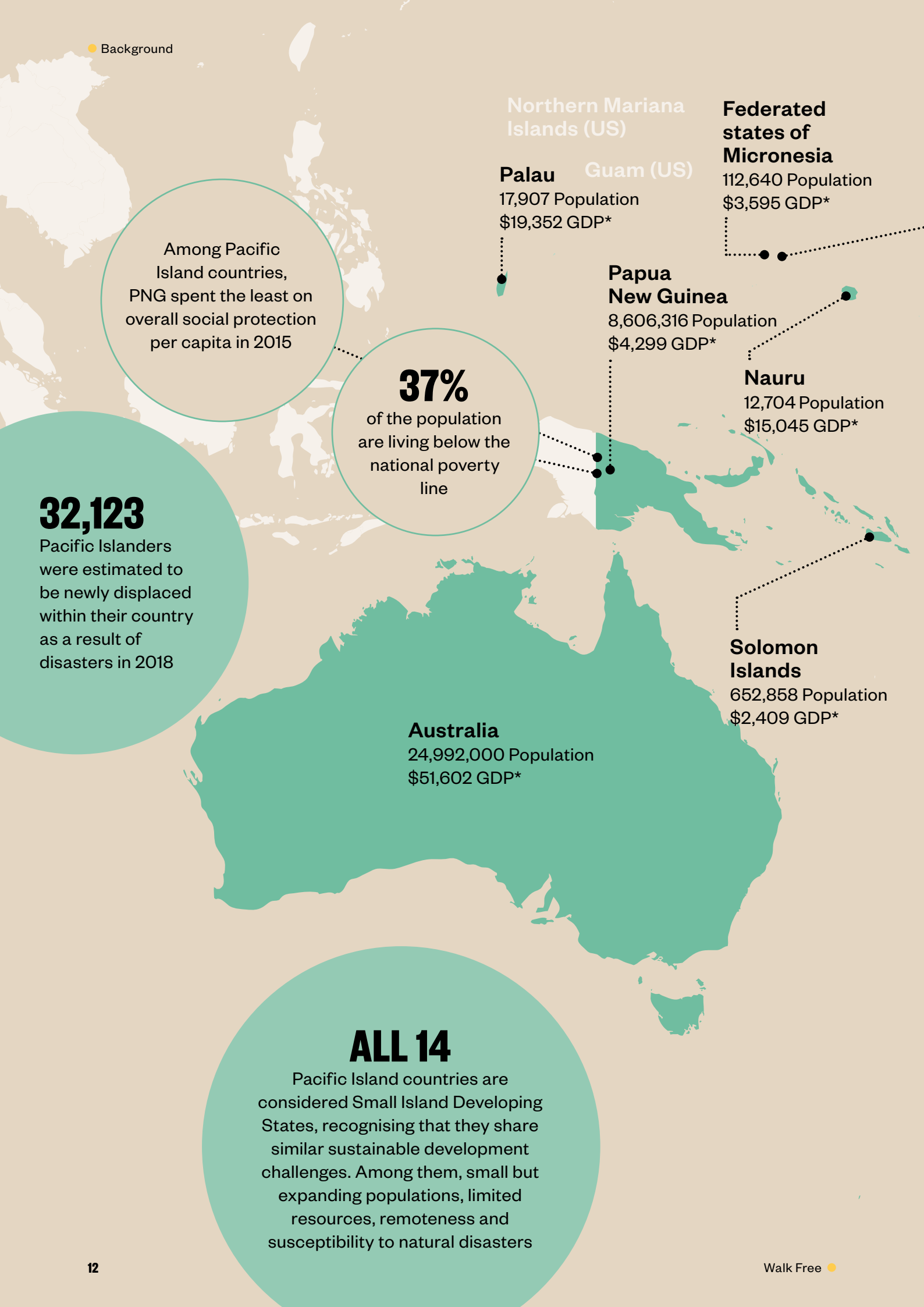
*Teka Bakokoto plays with children from her church at Eton Beach, Efate, Vanuatu, 30 November, 2019. While Pacific Island countries and territories do share social, economic and environmental development challenges, significant diversity is also present in terms of population, geography, history, culture, language, politics, and traditions. Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images.*



An estimated 40.3 million people around the globe were living in modern slavery on any given day in 2016.<sup>1</sup> This figure represents a conservative estimate of all those who were denied their freedom through forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, sexual servitude, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and human trafficking for any of these purposes. Addressing modern slavery is firmly on the global agenda, with UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 calling for the eradication of modern slavery by 2030. This goal has been agreed upon by UN member states, 13 of which are situated in the Pacific region. Bilateral, multinational, regional, and global cooperation is essential if we are to free 10,000 people per day from modern slavery, the rate required if SDG 8.7 is to be realised by the target date.

We know that no country in the region, whether developed or developing, is free from modern slavery. While the existing research has provided a sound foundation for understanding the forms of modern slavery that occur and are most visible in the Pacific, there remains a need for a more comprehensive assessment of modern slavery in the region to identify gaps in research and action and inform policy recommendations that will effectively combat the problem.

This study provides a more comprehensive assessment of modern slavery in the Pacific by drawing on existing literature on modern slavery and from local expertise gathered through qualitative interviews. While there is limited publicly available information on the nuances of modern slavery in the Pacific, there exists a wealth of untapped local knowledge. Interviews were conducted with representatives of organisations that work directly or indirectly on modern slavery in eight focus countries – Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. While there is considerable diversity across Pacific countries, this study intends to provide clarity on addressing shared vulnerabilities.



**41%**

of the population are living below the national poverty line

**Vanuatu** is ranked the most vulnerable country in the world to the effects of climate change and natural disasters

**1 IN 4**

Pacific Islanders live below their national poverty line

**Kiribati** is one of the most remote and geographically-dispersed countries in the world

**93 - 99%**

of the population in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu adhere to a Christian faith

**50%** of all adults work outside their country. Remittances from overseas workers made up almost 41% of Tonga's GDP (2018)

**Marshall Islands**

58,413 Population  
\$4,048 GDP\*

**Tuvalu**

11,508 Population  
\$4,042 GDP\*

**Samoa**

196,130 Population  
\$8,850 GDP\*

**Kiribati**

115,847 Population  
\$2,290 GDP\*

**Vanuatu**

292,680 Population  
\$3,202 GDP\*

**Tokelau (NZ)**

**American Samoa (US)**

**French Polynesia (FRA)**

**Pitcairn Islands (UK)**

**New Caledonia (FRA)**

**Niue**

1,624 Population  
\$5,800 GDP\*

**Cook Islands**

17,794 Population  
\$16,700 GDP\*

**Tonga**

103,197 Population  
\$6,408 GDP\*

**Fiji**

883,483 Population  
\$11,004 GDP\*

**New Zealand**

4,885,000 Population  
\$41,026 GDP\*

\*GDP per capita.

# METHODOLOGY

## RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study draws on existing peer-reviewed and grey literature and is supplemented with anti-slavery stakeholder interviews to form a holistic understanding of modern slavery in the Pacific region. It is important to note that the study did not seek to provide an in-depth analysis of modern slavery at the country level.

The objectives of the research were to:

1. Understand the nature of modern slavery in the Pacific, including its forms, geographic hotspots, sectors where it occurs, characteristics of offenders, and emerging trends in the region.
2. Identify groups vulnerable to modern slavery in the Pacific.
3. Identify drivers of modern slavery in the Pacific.
4. Identify perceived gaps in responses to modern slavery.
5. Identify examples of promising practices in responding to modern slavery in the Pacific.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of existing peer-reviewed and grey literature was undertaken, with the search confined to literature published since 2009. Search terms included modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking, forced marriage, commercial sexual exploitation of children, child labour, and worst forms of child labour.





## SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWS

A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted in eight focus countries; Australia (n=5), Fiji (n=4), New Zealand (n=2), Papua New Guinea (n=2), Samoa (n=1), Solomon Islands (n=2), Tonga (n=6), and Vanuatu (n=5). Focus countries were selected based on size of populations and known instances of modern slavery identified through a review of existing literature and media reports of modern slavery across the region.

Interview respondents (hereafter referred to as “respondents”) were identified through wide consultation with organisations and government departments with mandates covering human rights that operated in at least one of the focus countries. A snowball sampling approach was used to identify additional respondents. Initial correspondence by way of email, phone, or face-to-face conversations sought to identify whether potential respondents would be able to answer at least one of the survey questions, with those that could do so invited to participate in the research. Of the 28 interview respondents in the study, one was a research consultant, six were public servants in either policy or enforcement roles, 13 were from front-line non-government organisations including emergency care, legal services, and advocacy and training, and eight worked for international organisations, including UN bodies.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face or over the phone and ranged in length from approximately 20 minutes to an hour and a half, with the majority taking approximately an hour to complete. Australian and New Zealand respondents were probed on knowledge of modern slavery experiences of Pacific peoples in their countries.

Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis in Microsoft Excel. Themes common across the focus countries were identified in relation to each research objective and interpreted against the findings from the literature review. Preliminary findings were validated at a one-day workshop in Suva, Fiji on 6 June 2019, attended by 29 representatives from local and regional civil society organisations (who did not necessarily participate in the research). Feedback was given on key themes and associated recommendations and has been incorporated into the findings of this report.

## LIMITATIONS

Despite wide consultation, researchers identified only a few organisations that included modern slavery or human trafficking as a key focus of their work, particularly in resource constrained countries. While this made it difficult to present the full picture of modern slavery in these countries, it is important to note that country-level assessments were not the intention of this study. Further, while a sample of 28 stakeholders is too small to gain a representative view of modern slavery across the Pacific region, and does not capture experiences of all countries in the region, this study does expose a considerable amount of untapped expertise of local and international stakeholders, which will be useful in developing well-informed responses to modern slavery in the Pacific.

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*Tepola Raobu weaves a Tapola or basket in Tuvalu in 2018. Tuvalu is striving to mitigate the effects of climate change. Rising sea levels of 5mm per year since 1993, well above the global average, are damaging vital crops and causing flooding in the low lying nation at high tides. Sea water rises through the coral atoll on the mainland of Funafuti and inundates taro plantations, floods either side of the airport runway and affects peoples homes. The nation of 8 inhabited islands with an average elevation of only 2m above sea level is focusing on projects to help it and its people have a future. Photo credit: Fiona Goodall via Getty Images.*

# MODERN SLAVERY IN THE PACIFIC



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*Eco-logging practised by a small group of men who cut only to order and bring a small portable mill to the tree itself rather than operate with destructive large scale traditional logging techniques, Lake Murray, Papua New Guinea, 1 January 2009. The logging sectors of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea have been implicated in modern slavery. Photo credit: Brent Stirton/Getty Images Reportage.*



An estimated 15,000 people in Australia and 3,000 people in New Zealand were in modern slavery on any given day in 2016.<sup>2</sup> There are currently no estimates of the prevalence of modern slavery in the PICs. While some official data on human trafficking in the PICs are collected, for example, the Pacific Immigration Development Community produces an annual report containing data on human trafficking in the region, it is not made publicly available.<sup>3</sup>

The limited and irregular data collection on human trafficking in the PICs has been previously noted as a barrier to improving our understanding of the issue.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery are known to occur in various forms throughout the region.

The findings from existing literature and respondent reports on forced labour, debt bondage, forced sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the Pacific region are detailed below. As in other parts of the world, modern slavery in the Pacific occurs in low-skilled sectors, often with a high proportion of migrant labour. The key sectors implicated in modern slavery across the focus countries included hospitality and tourism, sex work, construction, fishing, logging, domestic work, and horticulture.



## MODERN SLAVERY IN THE MEDIA

### AUSTRALIAN COUPLE FOUND GUILTY OF DOMESTIC SERVITUDE OF FIJIAN WOMAN

In April 2019, an Australian couple were found guilty of forced labour and human trafficking offences over the treatment of a Fijian woman who they kept as a domestic servant for eight years. The forced labour convictions were Australia's first under legislation introduced in 2013, for which Malavine Pulini was sentenced to six years in prison while her husband, Isikeli Pulini, was sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>5</sup>

The couple brought the Fijian woman, who had previously worked for them in Tonga, to Australia on a tourist visa in 2008, confiscated her passport and forced her to work long hours for little pay. Reports indicate that the couple exploited the victim's poverty and desire to seek better opportunities in Australia.<sup>6</sup>

●●  
*Malavine Pulini (left) and Isikeli Feleatoua Pulini (right) are seen leaving the Brisbane District Court, in Brisbane, Thursday, April 11, 2019. The couple were found guilty of human trafficking after allegedly keeping a woman from Fiji as a slave for eight years. Photo credit: AAP Image/Darren England.*



## DEBT BONDAGE OF FISHING CREW IN NEW ZEALAND WATERS

Between 2010 and 2011, a spate of human rights abuses aboard foreign chartered commercial fishing vessels in New Zealand waters came to light following reports by Indonesian crew members who had walked off South Korean vessels berthed in New Zealand ports because of exploitative labour treatment by their Korean officers. In addition to debt bondage, the crew had endured verbal and physical abuse, sexual abuse, inhumane punishments, underpayment, and non-payment of wages.<sup>7</sup> The public backlash in New Zealand that resulted led to a ministerial inquiry in 2014 and the New Zealand government to introduce regulations for foreign chartered vessels within their maritime jurisdiction, namely, that all foreign chartered vessels must be reflagged as New Zealand vessels.<sup>8</sup>

## MILESTONE HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONVICTION OF FIJIAN MAN IN NEW ZEALAND

In 2016, Fijian national Faroz Ali was the first person to be convicted under New Zealand's human trafficking laws. Ali was convicted of 15 charges of human trafficking and sentenced to nine and a half years.<sup>9</sup> Victims were recruited through newspaper advertisements placed in the Fiji Sun newspaper and promised jobs in the construction and horticulture sectors.<sup>10</sup> In a related case that came to light in late 2018 following a joint investigation between Fiji Police Force, New Zealand Police, and New Zealand Immigration, Ali's wife and his wife's sister were charged with trafficking 17 Fijian citizens over a period of five months in 2014. The two women operated a travel agency in Suva, Fiji's capital, through which they deceptively recruited the victims. The victims were promised visa or work permits and had money taken from them which they claimed was to pay for their visa applications.<sup>11</sup> Reports allege that the victims suffered forced labour, unfavourable living conditions, and minimal or no wages. At the time of writing, the two women are awaiting trial.

## SAMOANS FORCED TO WORK IN NEW ZEALAND'S HORTICULTURE SECTOR

In 2018, charges of human trafficking and slavery were laid against Samoan national Viliamu Samu with the victims also from Samoa. Samu was charged with using 10 people as slaves and the trafficking of eight people. He is accused of committing the crimes across Samoa and in New Zealand's Hawkes Bay region.<sup>12</sup> Media reports indicate that the alleged trafficking had been occurring since the 1990s, with victims having had their passports confiscated, being denied wages and subjected to verbal and physical abuse, and having their movements closely monitored and controlled.<sup>13</sup> A joint investigation between Immigration New Zealand and New Zealand Police, assisted by Samoan authorities, found that the alleged perpetrator was recognised as a respected member of the community, using this trust to target vulnerable people with limited education and literacy.<sup>14</sup>

## 101 MEN TRAFFICKED FROM BANGLADESH TO VANUATU

In Vanuatu, an unprecedented case of labour trafficking made international media headlines in late 2018 when 101 male victims from Bangladesh were identified after police were tipped off by escaped victims.<sup>15</sup> The men, who transited through India, Singapore, and Fiji in the preceding two years to arrive in Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila, were reported to have sold homes and taken out loans to pay for the opportunity to obtain jobs in Vanuatu and Australia which never eventuated.<sup>16</sup> Once in Vanuatu, they were crowded into small properties and forced to work. The alleged perpetrators, also from Bangladesh and owners of Mr Price, a home and furniture store, used violence and threats of violence to force the men to work long hours before being locked up at night. The Vanuatu Police Force laid charges of slavery, money laundering and human trafficking against the four alleged perpetrators.

## FORCED LABOUR

Forced labour is known to occur in various forms across the region, including in Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Tonga, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.<sup>17</sup> Victims include men, women, and children. Forced labour and trafficking for labour exploitation are increasingly recognised forms of modern slavery across the region. In Australia, for instance, official data indicates that forced labour makes up a quarter of human trafficking and slavery referrals to the Australian Federal Police in 2016-17.<sup>18</sup> Forced labour and labour trafficking in the region were reported to follow a similar pattern to that seen elsewhere in the world, with migrant workers accruing debt through the recruitment process as a result of the cost of travel and arrangement of employment, which may take months or years to work off, and with passports retained by employers until these costs are repaid. The sectors implicated in forced labour across the Pacific region include hospitality and tourism, construction, fishing, logging, mining, domestic work, agriculture, and horticulture.<sup>19</sup>

Forced labour in the construction sector was reported by respondents to occur in Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.<sup>20</sup> Increased investment in the region in the form of aid and foreign direct investment has seen more than US \$1 billion worth of Chinese investment projects in Fiji alone over the last five years.<sup>21</sup> Respondents indicated visible increases in foreign migrant workers in the Fijian construction sector as a result, often with low visibility of working conditions, coupled with highly controlled movements to and from construction sites. Language barriers further limit workers' access to local authorities and local support services. In Fiji, as with other parts of the world, deception, debt, and confiscation of travel and identity documents are common elements of forced labour in the construction sector, with the confiscation of migrant workers' passports reported to occur. Forced labour in construction was reportedly experienced by Filipino migrant workers in Fiji, and respondents reported concerns for the labour conditions of recently arrived migrants from Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan working in Suva's construction sector.

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**We've also had cases of foreigners coming and working for labour. They are either smuggled and it becomes trafficking, but there are also cases of Filipinos and foreigners who sign contracts to work, come to work on some of the big buildings, they're qualified to work, like welders, and then their passports are taken.**

(Respondent, Fiji)

Forced labour and trafficking for labour exploitation has been reported aboard fishing vessels in the waters of Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.<sup>22</sup> Existing information indicates that persons from Asia, including China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as workers from PICs, have been exploited on fishing vessels operating in the Pacific.<sup>23</sup> That industrial fishing is a high-risk sector for forced labour aboard fishing vessels is well established, and the sector has long been associated with risks of labour exploitation and trafficking for labour purposes in the Pacific.<sup>24</sup> Driven by demand for cheap seafood, increased competition, and diminishing fish stocks, vessel owners may seek to drive down costs and maximise profits through illegal means such as forced and trafficked labour. Structural elements of the fishing industry further enable exploitative practices to occur. These include complex international networks that reduce supply-chain transparency, trans-shipment processes that allow vessels to remain at sea for extensive periods without docking, and the "flagging" regulatory framework under which vessels are given a flag by a nation where authorities are then supposed to regulate the vessels they

have flagged.<sup>25</sup> Forced labour in tuna fishing, for which most supply chains are located in the Pacific region, often involves high recruitment fees and subsequent debt bondage for the exploited individuals, who work under extremely poor conditions on board the vessels.<sup>26</sup> Deceptive recruitment processes associated with fishing vessels in the Pacific region include crew being given contracts without sufficient information, contracts with inaccurate details relating to pay and working conditions, and being made to sign new contracts stipulating different conditions

on arrival.<sup>27</sup> One respondent remarked that recent media attention to the poor treatment of fishers was in line with the reports that had been relayed to them by local fishing crew in Fiji.

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**[Forced labour is] a big issue in the fishing industry and it won't go away quickly.**

(Respondent, Fiji)

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 Fishing is one of the most common occupations for men in Kiribati. As in other regions of the world, the fishing sector in the Pacific region is at-risk of modern slavery. The fishing sector has been implicated in commercial sexual exploitation of children in Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, while forced labour has occurred in the fishing sector in Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzner/LightRocket via Getty Images





Forced labour has been identified in the agriculture and horticulture sectors of New Zealand and Australia. Victims of forced labour in Australia are often foreign migrants, often from Asia and newly arrived, unable to speak English, having little or no education or ability to read in any language, resulting in a lack of understanding of their rights as workers and their visa conditions. The lack of understanding of visa conditions was reported to have been used by unscrupulous employers to scare victims into remaining in their employment or out of seeking help from authorities. Similar cases have been reported by migrants on student and humanitarian visas who sought jobs that pay cash to avoid caps on hours worked, and who then faced threats from employers to be turned into authorities for this when they attempted to quit. Threats against family members were also reported to be a means used by perpetrators to keep victims from leaving, reporting to police, and/or participating in

the criminal prosecution process. Physical isolation and isolation from social support networks such as family were also reported to heighten the risk of migrants to modern slavery by denying victims a means of verifying threats of employers and support to exit an exploitative situation. It was reported that forced labour and slavery offences in Australia often had an element of deception, whether regarding the type of work the victim would be doing, the hours, or the pay.

Domestic servitude was reported to occur in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.<sup>28</sup> In Australia (in the state of Western Australia), Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, labour laws do not extend to domestic workers, heightening their vulnerability to modern slavery. In Australia, diplomatic immunity has allowed forced labour of migrant domestic workers in diplomatic households to go unpunished.<sup>29</sup> A 2019 study on trafficking for domestic work in Australia found that, among 35 individuals who received support

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*A builder working on a construction site in Sydney's central business district on August 28, 2014. As in other regions of the world, the construction sector is at-risk of modern slavery. Photo credit: William West/AFP via Getty Images.*



services after they had been trafficked into domestic work, almost all had experienced deceptive recruitment.<sup>30</sup> Some were lured into exploitation with the promise of marriage, others had intentionally sought work in domestic services and were then exploited, or had migrated for other types of work and were subsequently coerced into domestic work. The victims were controlled by means of confiscation of identity documents, violence or threats of violence, and through employers taking advantage of victims' lack of familiarity with their environment and financial situation.<sup>31</sup> Domestic servitude in Australia was reported to often be linked to forced marriage and other forms of exploitation. Similar reports were made by a respondent in New Zealand who indicated that forced domestic work is sometimes performed by victims who are also forced to work in other sectors. Fijian victims of domestic servitude in Australia and New Zealand were reported to have had their movements monitored, their communication with family and other support networks limited, and their travel home restricted. Reports also indicate that Fijian men have travelled to Nepal and Pakistan to marry local women, who are treated as domestic slaves upon return to Fiji.

## FORCED SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Forced sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation is thought to occur in Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.<sup>32</sup> The sex industry and extractive industries in the Pacific region have been linked to forced sexual exploitation.<sup>33</sup> Respondents reported that female migrants from China are at risk of forced sexual exploitation in Fiji, with a Fiji-based respondent reporting knowledge of Chinese women arriving along the Fijian coast via "little fibreglass boats" instead of through ports, raising suspicions of human trafficking or people smuggling.

In Papua New Guinea, Malaysian and Chinese-owned logging companies and other foreign businesspeople allegedly arrange for foreign women to travel to Papua New Guinea using fraudulent visas. These women, usually from China, Indonesia, the

Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand, upon arrival are passed on to traffickers to be transported to fisheries, mining and logging camps, or entertainment sites, where they are forced into sex work and/or domestic servitude.<sup>34</sup> Prior literature suggests that sexual exploitation in the fishing sector is particularly prevalent in Pacific Island countries which have key port cities, such as in Kiribati, with reports of young women and girls are sexually exploited by crews from foreign fishing vessels, either on the vessels themselves or in local bars and hotels.<sup>35</sup> Respondent reports of sexual exploitation aboard fishing vessels referred largely to "girls" and are presented in relation to CSE in the following section.

Sex trafficking also occurs in clandestine establishments operating as legitimate businesses, as seen in Tonga.<sup>36</sup> Other cases suggest that the Marshall Islands is a destination country for the sex trafficking of young women and girls from East Asia.<sup>37</sup> In Australia, around 13 percent of slavery referrals to the federal police in 2016-17 were for sexual exploitation, with victims tending to be female migrants from Asian countries.<sup>38</sup> Official data in Australia indicate that the largest group accessing human trafficking support services is comprised of those who had been exploited in the sex industry. In Papua New Guinea, individuals who work in or near bars, restaurants, and gaming clubs in are known to be at risk of being trafficked, particularly as alcohol and drug intoxication are a frequent recruitment method for trafficking and exploitation.<sup>39</sup>

Limited information on forced sexual exploitation in the hospitality and tourism sectors of other PICs may reflect their comparatively smaller tourism industries and thus lower visibility of forced sexual exploitation in the sector. Data from 2015 data indicate that tourism directly contributes 15 percent and 18 percent to Fiji and Vanuatu's GDP respectively, compared with less than seven percent in other countries in the region.<sup>40</sup> However, globalisation and increasing investment in the PICs is likely to bring about the growth of the tourism sectors in countries not heretofore recognised as tourism destinations, and with that an increased risk of modern slavery.

## COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

CSEC has been evidenced in Australia, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu.<sup>41</sup> Existing understanding of CSEC in PICs indicates that victims tend to be from rural backgrounds and/or live near sites of natural resources, and this was largely supported by interview respondents.<sup>42</sup> Similar to forced labour in the region, the sectors implicated in CSEC were hospitality and tourism, logging, and fishing. Family involvement in facilitating CSEC was reported across the region, with family complicity reportedly linked to poverty and presenting an additional barrier to reporting given victims may be a dependent of the perpetrators. Existing literature suggests significant parental involvement in the prostitution and sexual exploitation of children in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>43</sup> Reports from the Australian Federal Police note that Australia is mostly a source country when it comes to travelling child sex offenders, who journey mostly to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.<sup>44</sup> However, existing information indicates that within Australia there have been cases of sexual exploitation and prostitution of Indigenous girls in the Northern Territory. In New Zealand, instances of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of Maori children have been identified.<sup>45</sup>

CSEC in the hospitality and tourism sectors of Pacific countries is well established, with evidence suggesting it has occurred in Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea.<sup>46</sup> Existing literature indicates that risk of CSEC in the hospitality and tourism sector is associated with the size of the contribution of tourism to national income and presence of an international airport, with Fiji, Samoa, and the Cook Islands vulnerable to perpetrators of child sexual exploitation, mainly from Australia and New Zealand. In Fiji, young girls are sexually exploited in hotels in the country's main tourism hotspots, with the taxi drivers acting as pimps or middlemen and connecting girls with prospective clients. One respondent reported an organised system of exploitation of schoolgirls on Fiji's main island of Viti Levu, whereby foreign

visitors to holiday hotspots on the west of the island selected girls from a catalogue of profiles, who were then picked up from school by a taxi driver and transported to the client. Taxi driver complicity in CSEC has also been reported in Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu.<sup>47</sup> In Fiji and Vanuatu, reports indicate that tourists have approached remote communities aboard yachts with offers of money in exchange for "marriage" to local girls or promises of taking girls to provide them with an education. One respondent remarked that tourists tend to approach the younger girls in remote locations in Fiji, surmising this is because they are more vulnerable and valuable. Such incidents are often not reported to authorities due to a lack of understanding of modern slavery and human trafficking among community members and no existing mechanism – such as a telephone hotline or local police bureau – through which to report incidents.

CSEC has occurred in the logging sectors of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.<sup>48</sup> In Fiji's logging sector, CSEC has been associated with child marriage and forced in domestic servitude and prostitution.<sup>49</sup> In Solomon Islands, the practice of facilitating transactional sexual relationships between young girls and male migrants working in logging camps is colloquially known as "*solair*" and often involves young male relatives – a cousin or young uncle – being approached by migrant workers offering cash, cigarettes, or beer in payment for their role as intermediary. A 2019 study on community health and mobility in Solomon Islands found that victims of CSEC in the logging sector were frequently under 18 and as young as 12 years old.<sup>50</sup> Earlier studies suggest girls as young as nine years old have been victims, with girls feeling pressured into transactional relationships facilitated by *solair* to strengthen or maintain their networks with male peers.<sup>51</sup> It has been suggested that child trafficking and CSEC in Solomon Islands is difficult to detect as there is a general lack of force used to facilitate CSEC and the facilitation is informal, with limited third party involvement such as that of recruitment agencies.<sup>52</sup> While the practice of *solair* has until recently occurred mostly in locations around logging camps, it is increasingly recognised as occurring in Honiara and provincial centres such as



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People gather at the airport on August 15, 2018 in Funafuti, Tuvalu. Reports from the Australian Federal Police indicate that Australia is mostly a source country when it comes to travelling child sex offenders, who journey mostly to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. Photo credit: Fiona Goodall/Getty Images for Lumix.

Gizo in the Western Province, where logging workers spend their time off. It was reported that some workers brought the girls with them when moving on to logging operations in other provinces or to their home countries, and that girls have been ostracised overseas and had to seek diplomatic assistance to return home.

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**We have a domestic airline here called Solomon Airlines, which is known colloquially as Solair. So when people are acting as solair they are acting as the go-between, they are moving the product towards the buyer.**

(Respondent, Solomon Islands)

CSEC in the fishing sector has been reported to occur to in Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.<sup>53</sup> Respondent reports indicate that in some parts of PICs, local girls aged 16 to 17 years were taken to ships by locals and were kept aboard for up to several weeks at a time for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Reports suggest the girls are not paid, but payment is instead made to the locals who recruit and transport the girls and sometimes also to the girls' families. It was reported that some families were under the impression that the girls were employed to cook and clean, while others knowingly allowed their daughters to be used for sexual purposes out of desperate economic circumstances. In Tonga, there was knowledge of young girls being taken to the Nuku'alofa port once ships had docked, with transactional sex facilitated by third parties and occasionally mothers desperate to earn money for the family.

## FORCED AND CHILD MARRIAGE

Forced and child marriage is known to occur in Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. In Nauru, 27 percent of girls are married by 18, and more than 10 percent of boys are married as children.<sup>54</sup> Where data exist on rates of child and early marriage in the other PICs, they indicate that the percentage of girls married before the age of 18 is around 20 percent in Kiribati, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands, 11 percent in Samoa, and 6 percent in Tonga.<sup>55</sup> This compares to the regional average for East Asia and the Pacific of 12 percent of women married before the age 18.<sup>56</sup> In New Zealand, where forced marriage has been criminalised since 2018, there is no official collection of data on its prevalence.<sup>57</sup> In Australia, forced marriage has been criminalised since early 2013, and while there have been no convictions for forced marriage under this legislation, there have been 183 forced marriage referrals to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) up to 30 June 2017.<sup>58</sup> Forced marriage in Australia and New Zealand is more evident in socially conservative families and communities that strictly conform to certain social doctrines and is associated with pressure to maintain traditional cultural practices and values.<sup>59</sup>

It was reported that, of those referred to services for forced marriage in Australia, a third were under the age of 18 and most were aged under 25. Reports indicate that almost all referrals to the AFP were Australian citizens or permanent residents who were often also first-generation Australians from immigrant families with varied backgrounds from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, including Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. While victims tended to be female, forced marriage among males had also been observed, with reports that a male victim had sought support for forced marriage arranged by family members who had done so to avoid the shame of having a gay member of the family. Suspected sexual activity or homosexuality has previously been identified as a risk factor for early or forced marriage in Australia as a way of demonstrating conventionality to the

community.<sup>60</sup> In Australia, trafficking of residents or citizens out of the country for forced marriage (referred to as “exit trafficking”) is known to occur and was reported to be driven by the value of potential migration options for prospective partners, with the opportunity of Australian residency or citizenship boosting any dowry payments made to the victim’s family.<sup>61</sup> One respondent reported that Australian citizens with migrant backgrounds that had a disability or cognitive impairment are particularly vulnerable to *exit trafficking* for forced marriage as they are susceptible to deception.

Given that families are often implicated in facilitating forced marriage in Australia, victims are often reluctant to report forced marriage to authorities, thereby leaving a considerable evidence gap. One respondent indicated that while parents are often complicit in planning and executing a forced marriage, pressure for the marriage to occur may be exerted on the parent by an extended family member abroad. Family complicity in arranging forced marriages in Australia or in trafficking out of Australia for forced marriage was reported to often be driven by concern for loss of cultural values held by their children or future generations of the family, with forced marriage seen as a means of curbing the “western influence” upon their children. This is supported by research by the Australian Red Cross, which reported that three major pressures drive forced marriage in Australia: pressure by the community to maintain cultural values and practices, community pressure on families to uphold reputation and use child marriage to control their sexuality, and economic pressures.<sup>62</sup>

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**I don’t think any country, culture, or any religion is exempt from forced marriage.**

(Respondent, Australia)

Where child marriage occurs in the PICs, it is often conducted under customary law, which is constitutionally protected in some countries, including Tonga and Samoa.<sup>63</sup>

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*School children wave Tonga flags in Tonga on October 25, 2018. Forced and child marriage is known to occur in Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. For girls who are married young, education moves even further out of reach. Photo credit: Peter Parks/AFP via Getty Images.*



In Papua New Guinea, despite laws that mandate a minimum age of marriage of 18 years, customary marriage reportedly still occurs, with children as young as 10 years old being arranged to wed in some areas where traditional marriage practices remain strong. In Papua New Guinea, bride price may be used as debt to force women to remain in servile or abusive marriages.<sup>64</sup> In Vanuatu, child marriage is reportedly used to retain land or inheritance, and sometimes requires that the groom's family swap a daughter for marriage in return. Respondents reported child marriage involving female and male children under the age of 15 in Solomon Islands, an assertion supported by a 2019 study.<sup>65</sup> Supporting previous research, respondents in this study also reported that in some cases, family members offered their girl children to foreign logging camp workers for marriage in exchange for financial benefit in the form of cash, food, housing materials, or water tanks.<sup>66</sup> The arrangements are reportedly often seen as short-term marriages and have been colloquially termed "log-pond" marriages. Respondents indicated that there were reports that girls as young as 13 years old had entered temporary marriages with logging workers. Respondents also highlighted the difficulty faced by girls

in objecting to such arrangements, given the patriarchal societal structures and the traditional view of the role of children, which often dictate that female children should not refuse the directives of older male relatives.

The association between forced and child marriage and domestic servitude has been reported in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Some girls in Papua New Guinea have reportedly been sold into polygamous marriages to be forced into domestic servitude for the husband's extended families or subjected to sex trafficking. In Fiji, it was reported that parents sometimes marry off daughters aged 16 to 17 years to foreign men who seek traditional marriages with rural and uneducated girls in Fiji, and then return to their home countries with their young wives. Once in the man's home country, girls have reportedly been treated as slaves within the home and have had their travel and communication restricted. Similar cases have been previously documented, with foreign men who seek to marry young Indo-Fijian girls placing advertisements in newspapers. The married girls subsequently work for the men's families and are often subject to abuse.<sup>67</sup> One respondent reported that the practice is not as common as it once was due to the improvement in girls' education in Fiji.

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*Young villagers walk to a pre-Christmas celebration in Ifira, Vanuatu on 1 December 2019. Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images*



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## SUMMARY: MODERN SLAVERY IN THE PACIFIC REGION

- Instances of modern slavery were reported in Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- Forced labour, debt bondage, forced sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, and commercial sexual exploitation of children occur across the region.
- Modern slavery was reported to occur in low-skilled sectors – often with a high proportion of migrant labour – including hospitality and tourism, construction, fishing, logging, domestic work, and horticulture.
- Forced labour is known to occur in Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Tonga, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.
- Forced sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation is thought to occur in Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
- CSEC has been evidenced in Australia, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
- Forced and child marriage is known to occur in Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- Reports of CSEC, child marriage, and forced marriage in the region often implicated parents and family members.
- In the PICs, family involvement in facilitating CSEC, child marriage, and forced marriage was thought to be driven by poverty and traditional views of women and girls. In Australia, forced marriage was driven by desires to maintain cultural ties and the promise of migration opportunities in Australia.
- There are still significant gaps in knowledge regarding both the nature and extent of forced labour and labour trafficking, particularly among migrant workers.

# VULNERABILITY TO MODERN SLAVERY IN THE PACIFIC REGION



*A woman counts her money in a village market in Port Moresby on November 15, 2018 ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. One in every four Pacific Islanders live below their national poverty line. Photo credit: Peter Parks/AFP via Getty Images.*





Vulnerability to modern slavery in the region stems from a complex interplay of poverty, cultural norms and traditions, migration, poor governance, and limited capacity to respond to natural disasters.<sup>68</sup> While these factors play out to varying degrees according to the country or territory, they present persistent challenges for governments, service providers, and human rights practitioners alike.

### **ECONOMIC INSECURITY**

One in every four Pacific Islanders live below their national poverty line.<sup>69</sup> Other economic stressors include high rates of unemployment among PICs, particularly among women and youths, and the youth bulge in the population. The scarcity of work opportunities in PICs can lead prospective migrant workers to take greater risks when searching for employment.<sup>70</sup> Vulnerability driven by poverty and economic stress often results from third parties taking advantage of the desperation of those seeking to improve their economic situation. These third parties may include recruiters, smugglers, middlemen, or employers in the case of forced labour and labour trafficking, and perpetrators in the case of forced sexual exploitation and CSEC. Foreign tourists also take advantage of the economic insecurity and limited opportunities in remote communities, which they reach via yachts to offer money to families to marry girls or promise education for girls abroad. The remoteness of these communities, as well as the limited understanding of modern slavery within them, exacerbates challenges related to monitoring and reporting.

Poverty can also push parents and relatives to facilitate exploitation (intentionally or unintentionally) of family members seeking to escape their deprivation, with many societies in the region accepting the practice of trading sex or, in some instances, children for money or goods.<sup>71</sup> Numerous examples of parents and other family members facilitating exploitation of female relatives in low skilled, male dominated sectors, such as in the fishing and logging industries, were reported across PICs. A 2015 study by ECPAT on the employment and exploitation of children found that communities with high rates of unemployment were more likely to see children in Solomon Islands seeking work, such as vending, around logging or fishing operations. In Fiji, the most vulnerable to child labour and sexual exploitation are those who experience poverty and/or live on the streets, most of those children on the streets being boys.<sup>72</sup> In Fiji, girls aged 16 or 17 years were sold by their parents to fishing crews to be sexually exploited and in Solomon Islands, parents have been known to be involved in arranging marriages between daughters and foreign workers in mining camps, driven by the desire to make money quickly or clear debt.<sup>73</sup>

Explored in more detail below, poverty and unemployment also underpin traditional practices such as informal adoption and bride price that put children and women at risk of modern slavery. For example, a 2015 study on CSEC in Solomon Islands found that the most frequent reason given for informally adopting out children was there were too many children to feed and not the means to support their needs.<sup>74</sup> In Papua New Guinea, reports indicate that some adoptive families seek to adopt girls as a potential source of future bride price income, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation.<sup>75</sup>

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**We also have the poverty levels as well. There are a lot of people struggling a lot with getting the basic services and stuff that they need, and it also makes them vulnerable.**

(Respondent, Papua New Guinea)

## MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Migration within and into the Pacific region is driven mainly by the desire for better employment and education opportunities, but also by conflict or natural disasters.<sup>76</sup> Where avenues for regular migration are not available or are costly, undocumented migration is often viewed as the only feasible option. As a result, some prospective migrants turn to people smugglers to facilitate the journey. This places them at risk of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, and organ removal.<sup>77</sup> For those migrants who have the means to access legal migration pathways, unscrupulous recruiters can leave them with large, unmanageable debts, or deceive them into working in unsafe and exploitative conditions. Further, employers can take advantage of migrants' limited access to social networks, information, or resources in order to exploit them.<sup>78</sup> Relaxed migration regulations, absence of border control mechanisms, and weak governance further exacerbate vulnerabilities of migrants to exploitation or trafficking.<sup>79</sup> Respondents' reports highlighted four main groups that are vulnerable to modern slavery in the context of their migration journey: foreign migrant workers in high-risk sectors, workers on labour mobility schemes and their families, persons displaced by climate change, and persons displaced by development.

### Foreign migrant workers in high-risk sectors

High-risk sectors are often those which are low-skilled, labour intensive, and have high proportions of migrant workers. Respondent reports indicate that foreign migrants working in high-risk sectors in Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Australia, and New Zealand are vulnerable to forced labour. The sectors implicated included agriculture, construction, logging, mining, domestic work, and fishing. Risk of sexual exploitation of foreign migrants is also known to be present in the region, particularly in the hospitality and tourism, fishing, logging, and mining sectors.<sup>80</sup> The remoteness of farming, fishing, and extractive operations, limited victim



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*A worker harvests grapes by hand at a vineyard in the Yarra Valley region, Australia, March 23, 2015. Migrants working in the Australian and New Zealand horticulture sector are vulnerable to modern slavery. Photo credit: Carla Gottgens/ Bloomberg via Getty Images.*

support services (especially for male victims), lack of awareness of modern slavery, and inability to communicate concerns due to language barriers present significant hurdles to victim identification and a barrier to reliable data on human rights.<sup>81</sup> In Fiji, there were concerns regarding the vulnerability of foreign migrant workers in the construction sector, with worker movements tightly monitored and controlled, resulting in low visibility of and transparency around labour conditions. This coincided with a reluctance by authorities to regularly monitor and regulate foreign businesses, with reports indicating that lack of regulation stemmed from fear of spooking foreign investors. The vulnerability of migrant women in hospitality and tourism was reported in Fiji and Vanuatu, with reports that women from China and South Asian countries are at particular risk of sexual exploitation in bars, beauty salons, and massage parlours. China's increased trade, aid, and investment in the PICs, particularly in infrastructure developments, have resulted in an increase in construction projects and have coincided with an expansion in service industries, including beauty and massage parlours. In Fiji, there is concern about the risks of forced sexual exploitation of female Chinese migrants who are employed in the increasing number of massage parlours in Suva.

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**With the Chinese, we suspect [forced labour] is happening but there needs to be more investigation of these cases, especially with construction workers.**

(Respondent, Vanuatu)

In Australia and New Zealand, vulnerability to modern slavery among migrant workers was reported to be driven by limited understanding of the local context, particularly with regard to domestic criminal and labour legislation, which often stems from and is exacerbated by lack of formal education and limited understanding of English. Unscrupulous employers take advantage of this, imposing excessive working hours, underpayment, poor living conditions, and other exploitative practices. In some cases, employers prevent workers from leaving their exploitive conditions by instilling fear of arrest or deportation if they were to seek assistance from police or other authorities. These tactics leverage concerns among migrants who may have overstayed their visa or are exceeding caps on the amount of work they can legally perform, or that they would not be believed by the authorities due to their immigration status or could face punitive action.

In Australia, migrants on visas with a cap on the amount of work that can be performed, such as student and humanitarian visas, were reported to be particularly vulnerable. The lack of understanding of the legal system in Australia was also reported to lead to views held by some migrants that reporting against Australian citizens would lead to an unfavourable outcome, being less likely to be believed by police as a result of their migration status. Australia's immigration system has few options for low-skilled Pacific peoples to permanently migrate to Australia and has led to some migrants from the PICs overstaying visas and continuing work in Australia illegally.<sup>82</sup> A 2019 study capturing the experiences of visa "overstayers" in Australia highlighted that, in some cases, irregular migrants looking to regularise their migration status in Australia fall prey to scams by unregistered immigration agents.<sup>83</sup>

### Workers on labour mobility schemes and their families

Labour mobility schemes (LMS's) provide seasonal labour migration opportunities for workers from PICs, mainly in Australia and New Zealand, and contribute to the economic development of labour sending countries through upskilling, skills transfer, and remittances to families and communities.<sup>84</sup> Increasingly, LMS's are being looked to as a climate change adaptation strategy in PICs. They also address employment shortages in key sectors in labour receiving countries such as the horticulture and viticulture sectors of Australia and New Zealand. Despite the benefits of these schemes, they do also create vulnerabilities to forced labour and other forms of modern slavery in labour sending and labour receiving countries which must be managed.

Despite provisions for the protection of migrant workers on New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and Australia's Seasonal Worker

Program (SWP), including registering employers and labour hire companies, exploitation of those working as part of these schemes have been documented in both Australia and New Zealand.<sup>85</sup> Respondents reported that poverty drives those seeking work through labour mobility schemes to sign labour contracts despite lacking the literacy skills to properly understand them and, as a result, some workers are uncertain if their treatment qualifies as exploitation. While pre-departure training is offered in some labour sending countries, and there are some attempts to address vulnerabilities by providing education and training to improve cultural awareness, literacy, and financial literacy of participants, the procedures for pre-departure training for the SWP and RSE vary according to PIC.<sup>86</sup> In some PICs, training is provided by recruiting agents, while in others, government departments provide the training.<sup>87</sup> In PICs that require pre-departure training be conducted by recruitment agents, lack of regulation of recruitment agents meant the training is not always delivered to the standard required, if at all.



The use of private recruitment agents to facilitate entry into the schemes is common in PICs (and is the most common pathway to LMS participation for those in remote parts of some PICs), with the government providing licenses for recruitment agencies.<sup>88</sup> Recruitment regulations vary among PICs. Respondents spoke of insufficient regulations around agent recruitment practices in origin countries, with workers often entering labour mobility schemes with a significant amount of debt accrued during the recruitment process as a result of monopolies on approval for medical and other clearances. Insufficient monitoring of labour conditions and living standards, particularly when work is remote, present additional vulnerabilities. According to a 2017 study, 9,000 seasonal workers under the RSE in New Zealand were monitored by only six labour inspectors and six compliance officers.<sup>89</sup> In Australia, it was reported that those working as part of the SWP are vulnerable to debt bondage stemming from a lack of regulation of how much employers can take out of workers' wages for transport and accommodation.

In addition to these concerns, there is evidence that LMS's have also caused or aggravated family relationship breakdown in ways that can drive spouses and children into poverty. While the social impacts of LMS's in labour sending PICs are not well understood, they remain an area of concern for the communities they affect. That seasonal workers are away from home for extended periods of time and tend to be males and aged 20 to 39 has implications for their households and communities, with existing literature identifying marital dissolution or family abandonment, domestic violence, disciplinary problems with children, and cultural transgressions among the social impacts.<sup>90</sup> The impacts are amplified where the proportion of the population participating in LMS's is significant, such as in Tonga, where participation has reached 13 percent of the population aged 20 to 45.<sup>91</sup> Respondents in Tonga and Vanuatu told of noticeable increases in the rates of marriage breakdown and increased vulnerability among wives and children of workers who stopped sending money home, sometimes

stemming from extramarital affairs abroad, and an increase in domestic violence as returning seasonal workers struggled to readjust to life at home. Reintegration support for seasonal workers is limited or entirely lacking despite the potential for wide-ranging benefits to migrants and their families.<sup>92</sup> Given these concerns, it is unsurprising that the expansion of labour mobility schemes in the Pacific has been met with cautious optimism by some, with concerns that the recently introduced Pacific Labour Scheme, which allows workers to remain in Australia for up to three years without provisions to bring their families, will exacerbate the social impacts of labour mobility.<sup>93</sup>

### Individuals and communities displaced by climate events

Climate change poses an urgent threat to the lives and livelihoods of Pacific Island countries and exacerbates existing vulnerability to modern slavery.<sup>94</sup> PICs make up a third of the top 15 countries most affected by disaster risk globally, owing to their heightened vulnerability to climate-induced weather hazards and sea level rise, along with poor economic and social conditions.<sup>95</sup> Low-lying PICs are already dealing with the most destructive effects of climate change. In atoll countries such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue, and the Marshall Islands, permanent relocation as a coping strategy for climate change has been on the political agenda for the better part of a decade.<sup>96</sup> The vulnerabilities created by environmental hazards are likely to increase as the effects of climate change cause sea level rise and more frequent and intense cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic activity, droughts, and floods, contributing to food and water insecurity, crop loss, a reduction in arable land, overcrowding, poor health and sanitation, and increased competition for limited jobs.<sup>97</sup>



*Elderly people being evacuated from Vanuatu's Ambae island on September 30, 2017. All 11,000 residents on Ambae were evacuated. Following the evacuation, women were reported to be at increased risk of forced marriage. Photo credit: Dan McGarry/AFP via Getty Images.*

Pacific Island countries are highly dependent on natural resources and agriculture and are therefore at risk of being pushed into the path of poverty, with one in every four Pacific Islanders already living below national basic needs poverty lines.<sup>98</sup> Further, natural disasters have the potential to disrupt governance and law enforcement. Even with strong measures to increase resilience to climate change and a desire by the overwhelming majority of Pacific Islanders to stay and fight, increased migration is inevitable. Migration is predicted first and foremost within Pacific Island countries but also to other countries in the region, including Australia and New Zealand, and further afield to the United States.

These factors and conditions create opportunities for traffickers to exploit vulnerable individuals.<sup>99</sup> Where avenues for regular migration are not available or are costly, undocumented migration is often the only feasible option. As a result, some people resort to making journeys facilitated by people smugglers, placing themselves at risk of many of the forms of exploitation that are commonly associated with trafficking, such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, and organ removal.<sup>100</sup> For others, unscrupulous recruiters leave migrants with large, unmanageable debts or deceived into working in unsafe and exploitative conditions. It's the poorest and most marginalized people, who are disproportionately women, children, elderly, disabled, indigenous communities, and other groups already faced with increased vulnerability, that are most vulnerable to climate-induced modern slavery.<sup>101</sup>

For example, in the Pacific, limited land rights for women can leave those forced to migrate with little protection. Following the volcanic eruption on Vanuatu's Ambae Island in 2018 and the subsequent relocation of some 11,000 residents, women were reported to be at increased risk of forced marriage resulting from pressure from families for women to marry to enable access to land in sites of relocation. As one respondent suggested, such traditions surrounding land rights exist elsewhere in the region with similar vulnerabilities expected as the effects of climate change increase. In Vanuatu, it was reported that the loss of livelihoods caused by natural

disaster has created vulnerability among children of families affected, with parents forced to travel to find alternative work or to access social welfare payments, leaving children in the care of extended family, neighbours, and friends and heightening their vulnerability to domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Vulnerability to modern slavery may also be spurred by conflict that can arise between relocated communities and existing communities around the relocation zones.

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**Displacement of communities after disasters is making these issues worse. We're getting really busy.**

(Respondent, Vanuatu)

### Displacement due to development

Displacement resulting from investment and urbanisation is driving vulnerability to modern slavery in PICs. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the Paga Hill community in Port Moresby, made up of some 2,000 members, was evicted from their traditional lands by foreign developers in 2017. Without resettlement or compensation, it is thought the eviction pushed up to 500 people into homelessness.<sup>102</sup> While not at the same scale, similar accounts of land evictions have been described in Vanuatu, with land that had been occupied by several generations of families, though without official land titles, sold to developers and leaving former residents without compensation. Women are particularly vulnerable to displacement-related vulnerabilities in those PICs where land is inherited by men in the family. Competition for land and the potential for displacement is expected to be exacerbated by population growth, with the total population of the PICs predicted to grow more than 60 percent by 2050 from 11 million to 17.7 million, with much of this growth expected to occur in Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea.<sup>103</sup>

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*A logging truck heads through the village of Vanimo, Papua New Guinea. Forestry officials in Papua New Guinea have reportedly accepted bribes to issue logging permits in breach of environmental standards and land ownership rights, leading to displacement and loss of livelihood and driving vulnerability to exploitation. Photo credit: Pete Souza/Chicago Tribune/Tribune News Service via Getty Images.*

## WEAK GOVERNANCE

Limited resources of Pacific Island governments often translate to weak institutions, inadequate regulation, and limited technical capacity to monitor and enforce compliance with regulations. These factors increase vulnerability to modern slavery while hampering the capacity of governments to design and implement legislation and policies to address the problem.

Weak governance is further exacerbated by the substantial geographic area and vast length of coastline borders in the Pacific Islands region, much of which is not effectively policed.<sup>104</sup> This challenge is made even more difficult by the differences in governance and in general law enforcement capacity across PICs and

the region.<sup>105</sup> Relaxed immigration laws also increase the risk of exploitation or trafficking.<sup>106</sup> For example, Fiji allows 132 nationalities to freely enter the country without a visa, which may partially explain Fiji's status as a major transit point in the Pacific for trafficking, especially in Asian trafficking routes.<sup>107</sup> In the Pacific, relaxed migration laws and identity documentation requirements mean that children do not always have official birth registration documents, especially those who were born in times of political crises or natural disasters. This increases the risk of exploitation and trafficking for those children.<sup>108</sup> These factors underpin the difficulties in detecting, monitoring, preventing, and responding to transnational crimes, such as human trafficking, in the region.



These systemic vulnerabilities also enable corruption. The most recent US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report indicated that corruption among officials in Papua New Guinea was endemic, particularly in the logging sector, facilitating vulnerability to sex trafficking and forced labour among foreign and local communities.<sup>109</sup> In addition, forestry officials in Papua New Guinea reportedly accept bribes to issue logging permits in breach of environmental standards and land ownership rights, leading to displacement and loss of livelihood and driving vulnerability to exploitation.<sup>110</sup> In the Pacific Transnational Crime Network's 2012 Transnational Crime Assessment, it was reported that Papua New Guinea Regional law enforcement representatives acknowledged that logging, fishing, and mining are "corruption prone" sectors because they typically operate in isolated or remote areas that are difficult to police and access.<sup>111</sup> Systemic corruption among officials in Solomon Islands has also been reported to enable modern slavery around the logging industry including through lack of rigorous monitoring, highlighting the need for greater enforcement capacity.<sup>112</sup> In Fiji, reports indicate low-level official complicity impeded anti-trafficking

efforts in 2018, including by preventing the investigation of trafficking in Chinese-operated brothels.<sup>113</sup> In Palau, there have been investigations conducted by authorities into government officials' complicity in trafficking crimes.<sup>114</sup>

Pacific communities often rely on informal, local, and community-based traditional kinship systems for social protection; however, urbanisation and globalisation are causing these traditional support systems erode. According to 2015 figures, on average, Pacific Island countries spend 6 percent of aggregate GDP on social protection compared with the global average of just over 11 percent. These levels are considered inadequate to fully support vulnerable groups and provide enough coverage of child welfare assistance. In 2015, almost two-thirds of those eligible were left without support.<sup>115</sup> In addition, intermittent registration of marriages and births makes it almost impossible to provide an accurate record of the prevalence of child marriage within the Pacific region. To accelerate progress towards ending poverty and thereby reducing vulnerability to modern slavery, governments need to boost the amount of public spending on social protection, education, and health care.<sup>116</sup>

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*Women holding a banner demanding equal representation in Vanuatu's parliament during a visit by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to a market in Port Vila on May 18, 2019. Women are significantly under represented in politics in the Pacific Islands; at less than eight percent, women's representation in Pacific parliaments is the lowest globally. Photo credit: Ben Boha NE/AFP via Getty Images.*







## ●●

*Elizabeth Fosape speaking during an interview at a women's shelter in Port Moresby on November 14, 2018. Violence against women and children is prevalent across the Pacific region and creates an environment where modern slavery is able to occur. Photo credit: Saeed Khan/AFP via Getty Images.*

## CULTURAL AND SOCIAL NORMS AND TRADITIONS

Traditional patriarchal views of role of girls, women, children, and sex in the PICs were reported to drive vulnerability to modern slavery by creating an environment of tolerance of violence against women, limiting opportunities for women and girls, and presenting barriers to victim identification.

### Discrimination against women and girls

Discrimination against women drives vulnerability to modern slavery by limiting access to education, employment, and land ownership. Gender discrimination in the legal system has also been highlighted as a concern across the PICs. In Vanuatu, for example, the courts often adopt decisions based on customary laws, which are frequently discriminatory towards women.<sup>117</sup>

When poverty is linked with a patriarchal society, the opportunities for women and girls in PICs become extremely limited in terms of education and employment. These factors may contribute to the increase in women working in the sex industry and cases of sex trafficking

and may, in part, explain the prevalence and normalisation of systems where sex is traded for goods such as fish or produce.<sup>118</sup> The discrimination faced by girls and women in transactional sexual relationships with logging camp workers in Solomon Islands was reported to exacerbate economic insecurity and drive vulnerability by leaving girls and women without social supports or a source of income once the logging operations conclude and workers move on. Some reports note that girls have moved to urban centres and engaged in commercial sex to earn a livelihood as a result of being ostracised from their communities. Children, young people, and females in the Pacific are vulnerable to exploitation due to the unavailability and/or inaccessibility of education, financial hardship, and lack of employment opportunities.<sup>119</sup> In Papua New Guinea, female children are at least twice as vulnerable as male children to being subject to trafficking, and children who did not attend school are at a greater risk.<sup>120</sup>

Matrilineal land inheritance in some Solomon Islands provinces was reported to be associated with lower rates of transactional sexual relationships and informal marriages in the logging sector and, where it did occur, more accepting of children born out these arrangements. In provinces with patrilineal land inheritance, women and girls engaged in transactional sexual relationships and informal marriages were reported to be more likely to be ostracised by members of the community. Respondents also voiced concerns for the implications for the future of children borne out of transactional sexual relationships with logging camp workers, given that land in Solomon Islands and many other PICs where logging and mining occur is often inherited from the father.



## Violence against women and children

A permissive environment for violence against women and children creates an environment where modern slavery is able to occur. In the Pacific Island countries, patriarchal beliefs that reinforce male dominance and devalue women lie at the root of gender-based violence. In some Pacific Island cultures, gender and age determine an individual's status, perpetuating the devaluation of women and children in society. Violence against women is widespread in the Pacific Islands region, which experiences some of the highest rates of violence against women globally.<sup>121</sup> In Fiji, for example, 64 percent of women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by a partner. One source suggests that 10 women per day in Fiji lose consciousness as a result of domestic violence and one woman per day becomes permanently disabled as a result of the violence.<sup>122</sup> Similar rates are observed across the PICs, with two-thirds of women aged 15 to 49 having experienced physical or sexual violence in Solomon Islands.<sup>123</sup> In Samoa, there is a widespread perception that *fa'a Samoa* (the " Samoan way") permits men to beat their wives.<sup>124</sup>

Rates of violence against children are exceptionally high in the Pacific Islands region. For example, an estimated 83 percent of children in Vanuatu aged between one and 14 experienced violent physical and emotional discipline at home and rates in other PICs where data are available are all above 69 percent.<sup>125</sup> Further, among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 in eight Pacific Island countries, median levels of physical violence sat at over 24 percent and median of levels sexual violence were at just over 10 percent. Among the factors that contribute to high levels of abuse among children in the Pacific Islands is the low status and power assigned to children.<sup>126</sup> This sentiment was echoed in Vanuatu where the role of children was reported to be to serve the parents. In Solomon Islands, it was reported that CSEC and child marriage that occurs around the logging industry is underpinned by entrenched attitudes towards children, girls, and sex and that

social norms make it incredibly difficult for young women to be able to refuse male relatives who facilitate transactional sexual relations or informal marriage with logging workers. Cultural norms against interference in private family matters and a normalisation of the use of harsh punishment when parenting were also reported to contribute to the vulnerability of children to violence and abuse in the PICs.<sup>127</sup> Sexual exploitation of girls was widely reported by respondents in target PICs. These findings are in line with previous research, with an estimated 37 percent of children having experienced sexual abuse in Solomon Islands.<sup>128</sup> In Vanuatu, an estimated 30 percent of women experienced child sexual abuse before the age of 15.<sup>129</sup> While not considered modern slavery without the commercial element, high levels of child sexual abuse create a high-risk environment for modern slavery.

Violence against women and children is stigmatised and, as a result, under-reported. Cultural taboos around discussing sex and the associated stigma attached to victims of sexual exploitation also presents barriers to victims seeking support.<sup>130</sup> In Vanuatu, respondents reported that the stigma around sex out of wedlock and the impact that can have on the perceived dignity or honour of girls meant that it is not uncommon for parents to force girls to marry their partner. Similar reports were relayed by respondents in Tonga, where parents are reported to feel better about marrying off an underage daughter rather than having her run away from home or go out with a boy. In Tonga, one respondent reported that such sentiments persist even in the case of rape, with the stigma around rape and pregnancy preventing victims and their parents from seeking police assistance.

For many Pacific Peoples, the church is intertwined with their identity and culture and Christianity is embedded within public discourse on social, cultural, and political issues. With the exception of Fiji, affiliation with Christianity in the PICs far surpasses that in Australia (at 67 percent) and New Zealand (at 49 percent), with the proportion of the population that adhere to a Christian faith ranging between

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 Elizabeth Fosape speaking during an interview at a women's shelter in Port Moresby on November 14, 2018. Violence against women and children is prevalent across the Pacific region and creates an environment where modern slavery is able to occur. Photo credit: Saeed Khan/AFP via Getty Images.

93 and more than 99 percent in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Global evidence indicates that effectively engaging with faith-based organisations is essential for effective violence prevention programming in countries where churches are pivotal in social processes shaping community attitudes and norms<sup>131</sup> Given the moral authority of the church in the PICs, it has an important role to play in promoting gender-equality and discouraging violence against women. However, respondents across the region reported that church teachings often presented a barrier to addressing vulnerability to modern slavery, for example, by hindering the success of violence prevention initiatives by advocating for women to return to abusive relationships with men for the sake of preserving marriage.<sup>132</sup> A 2006 study on domestic abuse in Samoa by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) found that 31 percent of women cited Christian teachings, including the sanctity of marriage (19 percent) and forgiveness (12.5 percent), as the reason they remained in violent relationships.<sup>133</sup> In Tonga, church teachings are seen to reinforce the views that it is more important for women to submit as wives and that domestic abuse against wives is often perceived as an acceptable form of punishment for women who did not submit to their husbands.



**...there might be sexual abuse in the home and sometimes the wife will report but more than likely she won't because there is so much social pressure to stay married because the sacredness of marriage is more important in some cases.**

(Respondent, Vanuatu)

### Abuse of cultural practices

Across the focus countries, the traditional practices of bride price and informal adoption were reported to create vulnerability to modern slavery, particularly among girls and women. Despite legislation on the minimum age of marriage, customary law is inconsistent with state laws in some PICs and can create a permissive environment for child marriage. For example, customary law in Solomon Islands is not in line with state law regarding minimum age for marriage and, as such, child marriage is seen by some communities as an acceptable practice. The 2015 study by Save the Children found that not only were girls exposed to the harms traditionally associated with child marriage, but they also experienced harms associated with customary treatment of women in a marriage, that is, the right of a husband to treat his wife as he pleases.<sup>134</sup> The same study found that in one community in Solomon Islands it is customary for a male relative of a prospective bride, often a brother, to consent to a relationship before it commences, and that the male in the future relationship may make a symbolic payment to the male family member. While such traditions may be perceived by communities that practice them to be for the protection of girls, they limit the ability of girls to object to marriages into which they do not want to enter.

Bride price is a practice that occurs to varying degrees across the PICs and involves payment to the bride's family in exchange for marriage. A 2011 study of women's lives and family relationships in Vanuatu found that over half the women surveyed believe a woman becomes a man's property if bride price is paid and a third believe that the man has the right to physically abuse his wife.<sup>135</sup> That bride price enshrines the practice of treating wives as property was also reported in a 2015 study in Solomon Islands, with participants citing bride price as increasing the vulnerability of women and girls to violence.<sup>136</sup> Bride price in Vanuatu is reported to be further exacerbated by natural disasters, which often result in families feeling pressured to marry off daughters to help remedy financial



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*The female traditional dance group 'Faeni' who are part of the Solomon Islands Cultural Group wear handmade traditional costumes during a rehearsal on October 11, 2019 in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Across the focus countries, the traditional practices of bride price and informal adoption were reported to create vulnerability to modern slavery, particularly among girls and women. Photo credit: Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images.*

hardship. The Vanuatu government has taken steps to address some of the issues associated with bride price, one of which was the inclusion of provisions within the 2008 Family Protection Act that bride price cannot be an excuse for perpetrating violence against a spouse.<sup>137</sup> Traditional leaders have also encouraged people to avoid monetary means for bride price but rather pay in cultural items, such as pigs, mats, and cava. Despite this, money still does change hands, illustrating the challenges faced in tackling ingrained cultural practices in a context of poverty and economic hardship. In Solomon Islands, bride price when paid by loggers was seen by focus group participants in the 2015 study by Save the Children as legitimising a relationship and improving the likelihood the girl would be

looked after. The study's authors note, however, that loggers who enter into such relationships often do not view the marriage as a legitimate one, rather as temporary.<sup>138</sup> In Solomon Islands, chiefs and community leaders have enforced a rule against foreign loggers, whereby they are required to pay SBD \$5,000 to the parents of the girls they wish to commence a relationship with, with the intention of deterring loggers from seeking out girls.<sup>139</sup>

Traditional child-rearing in Pacific countries involves the entire extended family, thereby ensuring that those who are vulnerable will be cared for. This system has resulted in more than 22 percent of children being informally adopted or living with extended families.<sup>140</sup> Recently, however, urbanisation and increasing rates of poverty have condensed this network

to the immediate family, with the result that informal adoption in this context has sometimes led to exploitative practices.<sup>141</sup> In Solomon Islands, children are sold through the informal adoption processes by their families to pay off financial debts. The children are subsequently faced with labour and/or sexual exploitation.<sup>142</sup> Informal or customary adoption was reported to increase the vulnerability of girls to sexual exploitation and forced labour as domestic workers. This has previously been established in a 2015 study by Save the Children which found that, based on stakeholder interviews, trafficking of children for informal adoption is a concern in Solomon Islands and heightens the vulnerability of children to exploitation and violence.<sup>143</sup>

Respondents of this study indicated that, as a result of poverty and distance from schools, biological parents may feel forced to informally adopt children out to extended family members in order to give children better education outcomes. Respondents reported that culturally ingrained obligation to family members means that adoptive families without the financial means to care for additional children often agree to the arrangement, but children may be pulled out of school and forced to work to help support the family. A Fiji-based respondent reported that this led to risks of informally adopted

children ending up in situations akin to domestic servitude. In Fiji, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea, economic insecurity is linked to customary or informal adoption, with families who are unable to afford to raise children or living too far from schools sending their children to live with and be cared for by extended family. In Papua New Guinea, bride price was reported to drive vulnerability to modern slavery among the girls or women involved in the practice, with underage girls sometimes married off as a result.

In Vanuatu, child swapping was also reported by respondents as a practice that can create vulnerability to modern slavery. Child swapping may occur to pay a debt or bond, or to bring two families closer together. These children are at heightened risk of domestic servitude as “house girls” or “house boys,” as well as sexual exploitation.

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**You mix a society where sexual abuse is highly prevalent as are children being separated from their family, it's a worrying situation.**

(Respondent, Vanuatu)

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*School children reading books in Funafuti, Tuvalu. Respondents of this study indicated that, as a result of poverty and distance from schools, biological parents may feel forced to informally adopt children out to extended family members in order to give children better education outcomes. Photo credit: Stephanie Rabemiafara via Getty Images.*



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## **SUMMARY: VULNERABILITY TO MODERN SLAVERY IN THE PACIFIC**

- Economic insecurity is a well-established driver of modern slavery and drives much vulnerability to modern slavery in the Pacific region.
- In Pacific Island countries, vulnerability to sexual exploitation of children is thought to be driven by poverty and traditional views of women and girls.
- In Australia, vulnerability to forced marriage is driven by desires to maintain cultural ties and the promise of migration opportunities in Australia.
- Migration and displacement drives vulnerability across the region, with migrants working in at-risk sectors characterised by low-skilled work and a high proportion of migrant workers particularly vulnerable to forced labour. This includes migrant workers on labour mobility schemes. This vulnerability is exacerbated by disconnection from social and formal supports, stemming from physical isolation and low literacy and education.
- Mobility resulting from climate events is thought to drive vulnerability by disrupting livelihoods and increasing competition for arable land. This vulnerability can be exacerbated by traditional practices around land acquisition and conflict between existing and relocated communities.
- Families of workers in labour mobility schemes are vulnerable to modern slavery as a result of breakdown of the family unit when family members work overseas for long periods of time. Impacts on the financial situation of families are becoming increasingly visible, with communities calling on greater supports for families and more research into the social impacts of labour mobility schemes.
- Cultural norms exhibited across the region allow a permissive environment for discrimination and violence against women. Social norms in terms of traditional roles of women put in place barriers to victims, their families, and community members who report modern slavery and seek help. Such cultural norms lead to the abuse of cultural practices, such as bride price and informal adoption, which leave girls and children vulnerable to CSEC and child marriage.

# GAPS IN RESPONSES TO MODERN SLAVERY



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*Helena Iesul searches for vegetables to collect with her son Albea Watt in their family garden on December 05, 2019 in Tanna, Vanuatu. She said an extended dry season had affected her plants. She said, 'We cannot plant anything now, the sun is too strong.' Vanuatu's economy is primarily based on subsistence and small-scale agriculture which provides a living for 65 percent of its people. Climate change is predicted to impact the rain-fed agriculture which is susceptible to drought or prolonged rainfall. Twenty-five percent of Vanuatu's 276,000 citizens lost their homes when Cyclone Pam devastated the South Pacific archipelago of 83 islands while wiping out two-thirds of its GDP. Scientists have forecast that the strength of South Pacific cyclones will increase because of global warming. Satellite data show sea level has risen about 6mm per year around Vanuatu since 1993, a rate nearly twice the global average. Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images*





This section highlights opportunities to strengthen the response to modern slavery across the Pacific region and to address the factors that drive it, such as poverty, susceptibility to climate change, and violence against women.

Findings are based on respondents' reports of key gaps in addressing modern slavery across the focus countries, despite a multitude of efforts, and is supplemented by Walk Free's 2019 global assessment of government responses to modern slavery.<sup>144</sup> Walk Free's framework for a strong government response to modern slavery includes:

- 1.** The identification of victims of modern slavery and provision of support for victims to exit and remain out of modern slavery.
- 2.** Criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery.
- 3.** Coordination occurs at the national level and across borders, and governments are held to account for their response.
- 4.** Risk factors, such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed.
- 5.** Governments and businesses stop sourcing goods and services produced with forced labour.

Critically a strong and effective response, particularly in resource constrained nations, requires involvement from all sections of society: government, business, civil society, and faith communities alike.

Key gaps in the response to modern slavery reported by respondents included:

- Awareness of what modern slavery is, how to identify it, and where to report it.
- Availability and access to modern slavery reporting mechanisms.
- Monitoring and enforcement of existing laws.
- Addressing drivers of vulnerability.
- Lack of research.

The challenges of operating in resource constrained contexts were raised in all of the interviews that are the basis for this study, and were identified as principal reasons for existing gaps in the response to modern slavery. In PICs, this largely reflects governments' limited resources and the competing priorities they face.

## VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY ARE IDENTIFIED AND SUPPORTED TO EXIT AND REMAIN OUT OF MODERN SLAVERY

### Awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking among the public

Key gaps exist in victim identification and support across the region. Respondents in all eight of the focus countries indicated lack of understanding of modern slavery among the general public, authorities, and first responders as the main reason for this. While awareness of modern slavery was reported to be gradually increasing across the region, respondents described gaps in understanding of what modern slavery is and how to identify it. Limited knowledge and understanding of the problem presented a barrier to victims and community members coming forward to report modern slavery. This is reflected in Walk Free's MAF report, which found that limited action was being taken across

the region to educate the public, with only Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand having implemented national campaigns on how to identify victims of modern slavery and report suspected cases. Respondents highlighted the need for more systematic public education campaigns to effectively increase understanding, yet available information suggests that only Australia has distributed this type of information systematically. The benefits of systematic implementation of such initiatives have been demonstrated in Australia, which saw an increase in reports of modern slavery by the public as a result.

One Fiji-based respondent indicated that remote communities approached by tourists offering money to marry local girls did not perceive risks to the girls' safety until they participated in awareness raising activities run by a local civil society organisation in their village. Similar anecdotes were relayed by other respondents across PICs. With regard to labour mobility schemes, reports suggest that there is much more to be done in

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*Kids play in the rain in a school building heavily damaged by Cyclone Pam on December 06, 2019 in Tanna, Vanuatu. Support services for boys and men that are victims of modern slavery are scarce across the region. Photo credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images*



both sending and receiving countries on educating workers and their families on how to seek support. Lack of public awareness of modern slavery legislation, including regarding forced marriage, was reported to be a gap in both Australia's and Solomon Islands' response to modern slavery. In Solomon Islands, one respondent noted that there is minimal awareness of existing laws relating to minimum age of marriage and human trafficking, and therefore little disincentive to parents facilitating the marriage of their underage children.



**We are speaking to people who, for them, human trafficking is something they've never heard of.**

(Respondent, Fiji)

### Awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking among first responders

Respondents across the region reported the need for greater awareness among general duties law enforcement and authorities from front-line regulatory bodies, such as border guards and immigration and labour inspectors, and non-regulatory bodies such as hospital staff, airport workers, council worker, and taxi drivers. In Fiji, labour inspectors reportedly had limited understanding of forced labour and, as a result, victims of forced labour in the construction sector were not being identified. The MAF report highlighted that training is provided to front-line regulatory bodies in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Solomon Islands; however, only Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea carried out training for non-regulatory workers. In Australia, respondents reported low understanding by authorities of how to identify forced labour and, as a result, victims had not been identified and referred to services or had been treated as criminals for activities they engaged in while under the direction of traffickers. The need for more systematic training is supported by the MAF report. Despite evidence of training for law enforcement in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and

Tonga, there is evidence that police in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga had not identified victims of modern slavery. High staff turnover hampers identification efforts in Papua New Guinea, while Australia and New Zealand were the only countries in the region to have delivered systematic training.

### Access to reporting mechanisms

Across the focus countries, government-supported reporting mechanisms were identified by the MAF report in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. These reporting mechanisms were found to be relatively accessible, being free to access, available to men, women, and child victims, operating around the clock and, in Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand, available in multiple languages. Where reporting mechanisms do exist in PICs, they are often centralised telephone hotlines or websites that are not accessible in more remote parts of PICs that have limited or no telecommunication services. Taking advantage of strong community ties and embedding community focal points who are trained to identify modern slavery and know where to refer potential victims could increase identification rates. The community-led approach to reporting mechanisms would be strengthened by the involvement of other community leaders, including church leaders, and women and youth leaders. Such reporting mechanisms are not without their challenges, with one respondent reporting that when using a community-led approach to implementing awareness raising and reporting mechanisms, a community educator in Solomon Islands who had reported against local parents complicit in CSEC had been threatened to have their house burnt down. Such unintended consequences must be considered in community-led monitoring and reporting.



**You can get the chiefs involved as watchdogs and get reporting systems to emerge and start from the grassroots level.**

(Respondent, Vanuatu)

### Access to victim support services

Victim support services specific to modern slavery are significantly limited across the region. The MAF report assessed that Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, and Tonga have support services available to modern slavery victims that are sufficiently resourced by government; however, support services are not available for all victims in Solomon Islands and Tonga, and in Tonga there was evidence that no one had accessed the services. Across the focus countries, respondents were aware of few organisations that worked specifically on the issue of modern slavery and indicated they suspected that victims were most likely to be identified through hospitals, women's shelters, and other front-line service providers that focus on gender-based violence. While respondents suggested that integration of modern slavery victim support into existing gender-based violence services is the best method to address competing priorities and maximise already stretched resources, this is unlikely to address the gaps in service provision for male victims. Support services for male victims of modern slavery are scarce across the region. This was particularly obvious in Vanuatu, where 101 Bangladeshi trafficking victims were housed in holiday accommodation at great expense to the government and without suitable victim support services, due to a lack of crisis accommodation for male victims. Limited resources explain these gaps, with respondents reporting that lack of dedicated services for victims of human trafficking in Vanuatu led to immigration officials having to forgo fuel for their cars as a result of funds being diverted to victim assistance, while law enforcement officers were providing social work services to the victims to fill the void in available services.

In Australia, fear of police presents a barrier to victims accessing services, as admittance to the government-funded Support for Trafficked People Program currently requires screening and referral by the Australian Federal Police. While respondents acknowledged the importance of the role of the federal police, including ensuring the safety of victims, fear of or reluctance to speak with the police was reported to impede help seeking by some victims. Some of the reasons for this include concerns

about getting family in trouble, particularly in forced marriage cases, and a history of negative experiences with police in Australia or in other countries, particularly where corruption and poor treatment by police has caused legitimate fear.



**I think it's also important to keep in mind, in terms of service provision, there's really nothing right now if a number of trafficking victims are identified.**

(Respondent, Solomon Islands)

Long term victim support, though not commonly seen across the region, is an essential component of a strong and victim-centred response to modern slavery. It not only helps victims to reintegrate and reduce chances of revictimisation, but it also adds potential benefits for a positive criminal justice outcome. The MAF report assessed that only Australia and New Zealand provide long term reintegration support, although options for victims to remain or be resettled in the country of exploitation are available in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tonga.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY TO PREVENT MODERN SLAVERY**

#### Legislation exists to protect victims of modern slavery

Despite progress in the ratification of international instruments concerning modern slavery and in efforts to meet these requirements through the development of domestic legislation, key gaps remain at the country and regional levels. Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea are yet to sign and ratify the United Nations 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, the international

instrument that calls for states to commit to the abolition of debt bondage, serfdom, exploitation of children, and forced marriage. Across the region, only three countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Vanuatu have criminalised forced marriage. Tonga is the only country in the region yet to criminalise child prostitution. Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu are yet to sign the Palermo Protocol,<sup>145</sup> however Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea do have domestic legislation criminalising human trafficking in line with international definitions of trafficking in persons. No country in the Pacific region has signed the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga are also without domestic legislation criminalising forced labour. Tonga and Palau are two of only seven countries globally that have not signed and/or ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>146</sup> Where countries do criminalise forms of modern slavery in domestic legislation, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Samoa, and Tonga prescribe penalties that are disproportionate to the severity of the crime.

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*Sunday is a day of family and church on August 15, 2018 in Funafuti, Tuvalu. It is important that anti-modern slavery actors consult, inform, and build trust among Pacific Island communities. Photo credit: Fiona Goodall/Getty Images for Lumix.*

Gaps also exist in the availability and access to services that allow victims to access justice. Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji are the only countries in the region (assessed by the MAF report) with free legal services for victims of modern slavery, victim and witness protection mechanisms inside and outside the court, and child friendly services during the criminal justice process.

Respondents noted the importance of addressing misinformation stemming from mistrust by some sections of the community regarding international organisations' motivations, particularly given that these can have significant impacts on the progress of anti-slavery legislation. For instance, a 2015 article by the Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre reported distrust of United Nations organisations among some sections of the community, stemming from perceptions that they held anti-Christian views. This misperception was highlighted in the wake of the community backlash against the Tonga government's plans to ratify the UN's CEDAW, which was misinterpreted by some as opening the door to legal abortion and same sex marriage in Tonga.<sup>147</sup>





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*A little girl sitting in a floating cooler box after her village was flooded by the sea. The people of Kiribati are under pressure to relocate due to sea level rise. It is necessary that responses to modern slavery address factors that drive vulnerability. While Pacific Island governments have demonstrated strong leadership in driving solutions to climate change, building climate change resilience in PICs and managing the unavoidable climate change-induced migration requires greater efforts from countries to reduce carbon emissions and contributing neighbours with the capacity to do more. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzner/LightRocket via Getty Images.*

### Monitoring and enforcement of existing laws and policies

Respondents reported that a lack of or limited monitoring and enforcement of legislation is an evident gap in the response to modern slavery across the region. Often, in Pacific countries where legislation has been passed, the laws are not enforced, observed, or otherwise put into practice.<sup>148</sup> For example, despite Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu having legislation that specifies that victims should not be treated as criminals for conduct that occurred while under the control of criminals, evidence suggests that both Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands had cases where victims were in fact treated as criminals.

There are also practical barriers to enforcement and monitoring in the Pacific, with the length of coastline and limited resources presenting substantial barriers to patrolling the coastline for would-be traffickers or fishing vessels engaging in labour exploitation. In the rural parts of Australia and New Zealand there was reported to be very little monitoring and enforcement of labour laws, thereby putting migrant workers, including Pacific peoples participating in labour mobility schemes, at risk of exploitation and modern slavery. Not only the remote parts of Australia but the remoteness of communities in the PICs can present practical challenges to monitoring. There is also a lack of monitoring in high-risk settings such as the logging and construction industries, with some respondents attributing this in part to a lack of political will stemming from concerns about scaring off the much-needed investment brought in through these sectors.

### COORDINATION OCCURS AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Across the region, only Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea had National Action Plans (NAPs) on modern slavery and human trafficking. While this is commendable, none of those countries had fully funded their NAPs. While Australia has committed to report annually against activities in its NAP, the Interdepartmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery has not produced an annual report on its activities since June 2016. Only three countries assessed in the Pacific – Australia, Solomon Islands, and

Papua New Guinea – were found to have a national coordinating body involving both government and civil society. Overall the region falls far short on coordinating national responses to modern slavery.

The countries of the Pacific region are involved in several regional bodies that serve to address (in whole or in part) modern slavery in their jurisdictions. For example, eleven Pacific governments are members of the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, which promotes business involvement in providing solutions to addressing modern slavery, and the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), which collects data on human trafficking that are circulated among members to strengthen and better coordinate action on modern slavery. Civil society organisations also work to bring together regional stakeholders to improve responses to modern slavery. Regardless, respondents indicated a need to increase regional coordination, including on legislation, enforcement, service provision, and protection. Respondents called for a regional mandate on modern slavery to better align the responses of governments, faith, and civil society in the region. They also emphasised the importance of using existing infrastructure to enhance regional coordination of policing across borders, for example, through the Pacific Transitional Crime Network and Transnational Crime Unit. Only Australia and Solomon Islands were assessed in the MAF report to have agreements with origin or destination countries of victims of modern slavery to collaborate on modern slavery issues.

### RISK FACTORS THAT ENABLE MODERN SLAVERY ARE ADDRESSED

It is necessary that responses to modern slavery address factors that drive vulnerability. While Pacific Island governments have demonstrated strong leadership in driving solutions to climate change, building climate change resilience in the Pacific Island countries and managing the unavoidable climate change-induced migration requires greater efforts from countries to reduce carbon emissions and contributing neighbours with the capacity to do more, namely Australia, New Zealand, China, and the US.

Research can enable a better understanding of the issue and driving factors and allow governments and other anti-slavery stakeholders to track progress and identify promising practices. Only the Australian and New Zealand governments were assessed by the MAF report as having funded research on the nature or prevalence of modern slavery.

The need for greater understanding of the extent of modern slavery was widely reported by respondents across the focus countries, particularly in high risk sector, such as fishing and construction. There were also calls for a greater understanding of the nature of modern slavery in high-risk sectors. A need for research on the social impacts of labour mobility schemes in labour sending countries was also reported, as relatively little attention has been given to this issue thus far. There also remains much uncertainty across the region regarding the nature and extent of forced sexual exploitation experienced by men and boys.

Gaps also exist in the provision of social protections and safety nets for vulnerable populations. For instance, only Australia and New Zealand were assessed in the MAF report as providing accessible healthcare to all. The region fared slightly better in terms of government provision of public education for all children regardless of ethno-cultural or religious background, with universal access to public education observed in Australia, New Zealand, Palau, Tuvalu, and Tonga. Reliable registration of births and marriages allows for an accurate record of the prevalence of child marriage within the Pacific region, yet only the Australian and New Zealand governments fund birth registration systems that cover the entire population.

Safety nets for migrant workers is also limited across the region. In New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu, labour laws extend to everyone, including migrant workers, domestic workers, and those in the fishing and construction sectors. The MAF report indicates that only the governments of Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea conducted labour inspections in both the informal and formal sectors. Only New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu have in place laws or policies which state that private recruitment fees are paid by the employer

and not the employee and solely New Zealand has suitable systems in place to allow asylum seekers to seek protection.

Stigma and taboos around sex were reported as barriers to reporting cases of modern slavery in the PICs, particularly in Vanuatu and Tonga. One respondent spoke of the impact of stigma for not only the victims who may fear fallout within families and communities, but also for victims' families who may not want to report the abuse of family members or be associated with abuse. Concerns about speaking openly about sex also prevented reporting of cases, particularly where sex is used as the means of coercion or form of exploitation. In order to effectively identify and support victims of modern slavery in the Pacific region, it is necessary to implement programs that break down such barriers.



...one girl we talked to was angry and disappointed because everyone in the house knew what was going on, but no one said anything. There is a lot of denial because of the stigma related to these issues.

(Respondent, Tonga)

## **GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS STOP SOURCING GOODS PRODUCED WITH FORCED LABOUR**

While Australia is the only country in the region which has made significant strides in stemming the sourcing of goods and services produced with forced labour by both business and government, gaps remain. For instance, there currently exist no policy or guidance for public procurement officials, including on remediation for victims of modern slavery where they are identified. While other governments across the region can do much to improve their response to the sourcing of goods and produced with forced labour, New Zealand is one of the few countries with the capacity to take greater action.



## SUMMARY: GAPS IN RESPONDING TO MODERN SLAVERY IN THE PACIFIC

- Gaps in responses to modern slavery in the Pacific region were most frequently discussed by respondents in terms of victim identification and support.
- Low awareness of modern slavery among the general public and among law enforcement, first responders, and civil society was widely reported by respondents. This was the case region-wide, in PICs and in Australia and New Zealand.
- Lack of reporting mechanisms and monitoring of modern slavery was perceived as a significant gap, with concerns especially for lack of reporting options and monitoring in remote parts of the PICs and in remote parts of Australia and New Zealand where a large number of migrants work in the agriculture and horticulture sectors.
- Respondents reported lack of victim support services for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, particularly in remote parts of the region's countries and especially for male victims and migrants.
- Gaps in the criminal justice response were evident in terms of ratification of international instruments and domestic legislation. Several countries in the region have not criminalised trafficking in persons, forced labour, or forced marriage.
- Gaps were reported to exist where traditional or customary law does not align with domestic legislation, for example, the minimum age of marriage.
- Coordination at the national level fell short across the region, with National Action Plans on modern slavery or human trafficking existing for very few countries, and for those that do have NAPs, none were fully funded. Most countries are also without a national coordinating body involving both government and civil society.
- Respondents reported that greater regional coordination was required in order to share best practice and maximise the limited resources available to direct towards initiatives addressing modern slavery.
- Gaps in addressing risk factors for modern slavery persist in the Pacific region. Evidence on the extent of modern slavery across PICs is lacking, as is the understanding of the labour conditions of migrant workers in at-risk sectors in PICs, including construction, logging, and fishing. Social protections and safety nets for migrant workers are limited across the region and, in PICs, also limited among the general population.



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*Damaged roads due to the flooding in Kiribati - Tarawa's single paved road has collapsed because of the flooding from the sea. Development partners must expand support to Pacific Island countries and territories to strengthen climate change resilience and address vulnerability to modern slavery. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzer/ LightRocket via Getty Images.*



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON MODERN SLAVERY

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## IMPROVE VICTIM IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

- Implement evidence-based and culturally specific public campaigns that raise awareness of modern slavery and how to report it. These campaigns should involve local stakeholders where possible, including faith groups, and be available in local languages, distributed systematically, and adapted where necessary to ensure that messages reach remote parts of the country.
- Fund and implement targeted awareness raising and education initiatives in high-risk areas, including remote parts of the country that may not be reached through conventional campaign channels.
- Provide comprehensive and systematic training on victim identification and victim-centred responses to police, prosecutors, judiciary, immigration officials, and non-traditional first responders, such as emergency workers, transport workers, and hotel staff.
- Develop and implement national guidelines for the identification of victims of modern slavery, including setting out the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Develop and implement national reporting mechanisms to enable reporting of modern slavery cases to criminal justice authorities. Ensure the reporting mechanism is accessible to all members of the public by making it available in local languages, free to access, and operating 24/7.
- Involve traditional leaders in the education, monitoring, and reporting of modern slavery to address the limitations faced by the centralised nature of support services and a lack of resources to maintain services in remote parts of the country.
- Increase access and strengthen victim support services, while providing emergency care and long-term reintegration support to all victims of modern slavery, including men and migrant workers. Where possible, they should leverage existing programs such as building the capacity of gender-based violence services to ensure they can suitably identify and support female and child victims of modern slavery. Provide victims with alternative pathways to publicly funded support services that allow screening without engaging with police in the first instance.
- Establish a National Referral Mechanism for victims of modern slavery and ensure that the mechanism is actively being used to direct victims to support services.
- Improve victim assistance programming by hosting meetings and capacity building workshops for civil society organisations, especially those that work with victims, and government representatives to share good practices and learnings, with an additional focus on the efficacy of longer-term reintegration programs aimed at breaking the cycle of exploitation.
- Bolster victims' access to justice mechanisms by ensuring their inclusion in existing laws. Mechanisms such as free legal aid, translation services, child specific services, and witness protection schemes should be extended to cover all modern slavery victims.

## STRENGTHEN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE

- The governments of all countries in the Pacific should ratify or accede to the UN Trafficking Protocol of 2000, ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which will also help strengthen protections for migrant workers.
- Enact legislation, or strengthen existing legislation, to ensure that all forms of exploitation are criminalised and penalties for crimes associated with human trafficking, child exploitation, forced labour, and modern slavery are appropriate for the severity of the crime. Ensure that national legislation is consistent with the requirements of relevant international conventions and align national legislation across the region.

In particular:

- Criminalise human trafficking, in line with international standards, in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- Criminalise forced labour, in line with international standards, in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga.
- Criminalise forced marriage, in line with international standards, in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands.
- Criminalise child prostitution, in line with international standards, in Tonga.
- Establish and fund services that enable victims to access justice, including free legal services, victim and witness protection mechanisms inside and outside the court, and child friendly services during the criminal process.
- Establishing training programs on modern slavery legislation, conducting modern slavery investigations, and promoting victim-centred approaches, drawing on existing model curricula and standard operating procedures, for police, prosecutors, judges, and defence attorneys. Where suitable, imbed training on modern slavery offences within relevant existing training programs, for example, those already addressing gender-based violence.



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Members of Parliament are sworn-in at the opening session of parliament in Honiara, Solomon Islands, 24 April 2006. Photo credit: William West/AFP via Getty Images.

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## STRENGTHEN COORDINATION AND TRANSPARENCY

- Establish and fund a national coordination body on modern slavery that includes stakeholders from government, civil society, and faith communities.
- Governments of labour sending countries should cooperate with one another to advocate common standards for the protection of migrant workers and their families. Countries should work together to improve migration governance by developing standard migration agreements, including those that holistically protect migrant workers and that ensure repatriation is voluntary.
- Governments of labour sending and receiving countries cooperate in establishing effective mechanisms to monitor the recruitment and employment of migrant workers.
- Governments develop their own National Action Plans or strategies, with clear indicators and allocation of responsibilities, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, that are based on research and data on the nature and trends of human trafficking and child exploitation. Where necessary, this should involve the mapping of service providers, including those that operate informally.
- Pacific countries establish and implement a regional response by including modern slavery on the agenda of existing regional bodies, for example, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
- Countries in the Pacific region should work to develop, establish, and implement a region wide agreement to address modern slavery as a priority, beginning by including it on the agenda of existing regional bodies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
- Each country should establish and fund a national coordination body on modern slavery that includes stakeholders from government, civil society, and faith communities.
- Governments of labour sending countries should cooperate with one another to advocate common standards for the protection of migrant workers and their families.
- Governments of sending and receiving countries should cooperate in establishing effective mechanisms to monitor the recruitment and employment of migrant workers.
- Governments should develop their own National Action Plans or strategies, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, that are based on research and data on the nature and trends of human trafficking and child exploitation. National Action Plans should have clear indicators and allocation of responsibilities coordinate responses to modern slavery.
- Countries should work together to improve migration governance by developing standard form migration agreements, including those that holistically protect migrant workers and that ensure repatriation is voluntary.

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*Flags from the Pacific Islands countries being displayed in Yaren on the last day of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) on September 5, 2018. PIF members on September 5 signed a security agreement promoting cooperation on issues such as trans-national crime, illegal fishing and cyber-crime. The agreement, called the Boe Declaration, also recognised the need for joint action on "non-traditional" threats, primarily climate change. Countries in the Pacific region should work to develop, establish, and implement a regionwide agreement to address modern slavery as a priority, beginning by including it on the agenda of existing regional bodies. Photo credit: Mike Leyral/AFP via Getty Images.*



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## ADDRESS RISK FACTORS

- Tackle the root causes of climate change to ease pressure on the people vulnerable to climate-induced migration by making meaningful reductions in carbon emissions according to internationally recognised timelines.
- Development partners and neighbouring countries to the Pacific Islands must support safe, orderly, dignified migration pathways by providing greater opportunities for seasonal or permanent work for migrants and expanding opportunities to women. Such opportunities must be accompanied by strong, well informed supports in place to reduce the risks of exploitation of workers and their families, as well as their home communities.
- Development partners must expand support to Pacific Island countries and territories to strengthen climate change resilience and address vulnerability to modern slavery
- Implement comprehensive mandatory pre-departure training for workers on labour mobility schemes and their families, addressing financial literacy, labour law, and avenues to seek support in destination countries, as well as strategies to support families and mitigate family breakdown. Educate migrant workers on their employment and residency rights, as well as provide current information on how to access help and seek redress for exploitation.
- Challenge the culture of silence and taboo around sex to facilitate reporting and help-seeking, particularly in tight-knit communities; for example, by developing and implementing behaviour change programs to address stigma regarding sex and victimisation. Encourage, train, and support faith leaders to advocate for change on these issues. Develop and implement programs to address stigma regarding sex and victimisation.
- Educate workers on their employment and residency rights, as well as provide current information on how to access help and seek redress for exploitation.
- Enact legislation to protect labour rights of all workers in both the formal and informal economies, including the rights of migrants regardless of whether their entry was legal. Labour laws should be expanded in all countries in the region to ensure that all migrant workers are protected and that laws or policies state that private recruitment fees are paid by the employer, not the employee.
- Fund labour inspections that are conducted with specific intent of finding modern slavery victims in the informal sector, including in sex work, agriculture, horticulture, construction, logging, mining, fishing, and domestic work. Implement and increase the frequency of monitoring of high-risk sites to identify modern slavery, sexual exploitation, and flouting of labour laws.
- Monitor local recruitment agencies for deceptive recruitment practices, such as substituting contracts and charging excessive recruitment fees, and enforce national laws to ensure compliance.
- Mainstream women's rights into national strategies and invest in community programs to empower women and girls, while supporting and advancing policies and programs that ensure access to education for all and address gender discrimination with regard to land rights.
- Extend programs that engage with communities through human rights-based education and other community empowerment models that address social issues related to modern slavery such as violence against women, child protection, and early marriage.
- Support the strengthening of social protection floors by establishing public employment programs, health, maternity, and unemployment protections, as well as disability benefits and income security in old age.
- Fund and support research that addresses gaps in knowledge on modern slavery, including prevalence of modern slavery's multiple forms and at-risk sectors, as well as often neglected issues such as vulnerabilities among boys.



- Fund and support longitudinal research on the social impacts of labour mobility schemes in labour sending countries within the Pacific and incorporate findings into updates to these schemes.
- Strengthen national and regional data collection capacity and reporting.
- Strengthen data sharing between countries within the region to inform policy responses and learn from the experience of others across the region and beyond.
- Investigate all allegations of government complicity in modern slavery crimes.

### ERADICATE MODERN SLAVERY FROM THE ECONOMY

- Using collaborative platforms such as the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, governments and stakeholders should facilitate opportunities for business and government partnerships that strengthen ethical recruitment, promote supply chain transparency, develop incentives to combat modern slavery, and ensure that safeguards and redress exist for vulnerable workers.



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 A woman displays local hand-made bags known as bilums for sale on a street in Mount Hagen in the highlands of Papua New Guinea on November 19, 2018. Photo credit: Peter Parks/AFP via Getty Images.

# CONCLUSION



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*Funafuti, Tuvalu,  
23 November, 2019.  
Players embrace during  
a group prayer before  
a soccer match.  
Photo credit: Mario  
Tama/Getty Images.*



Prior research has shed light on the nature of some forms of modern slavery in parts of the Pacific region. This study sought to bring together and build on this literature to update and address gaps in understanding of modern slavery in the Pacific.

The methodology used to assess the nature of modern slavery in the Pacific region involved capturing local knowledge on modern slavery through semi-structured interviews with 28 stakeholders across eight focus countries, including Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Interviews revealed that modern slavery in all its forms occurs throughout the Pacific region in both developed and developing countries.

Despite the rich and diverse cultures, geographies, and identities that exist across the Pacific, this research demonstrates that similarities in forms of modern slavery, vulnerabilities to modern slavery, and gaps in responses provide an opportunity for shared strategies to address this problem more comprehensively and effectively. This is vital in not only ending the suffering of those who have fallen victim to modern slavery in the region, but in making genuine progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, the eradication of modern slavery in all its forms.

# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: ABOUT WALK FREE

Walk Free, powered by Minderoo Foundation is an independent, privately funded international human rights organisation based in Australia. We are working to end all forms of modern slavery in our generation.

Walk Free uses modern slavery as an umbrella term covering a set of specific legal concepts with a common element – the inability to refuse or leave a situation of exploitation because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. Modern slavery includes forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking.



*A young boy sitting on a tree branch as the tide comes in with the waves beneath him in Eita, Tarawa, Kiribati on 30 September 2015. Photo credit: Jonas Gratzner/LightRocket via Getty Images*

## We work towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals 8.7, 5.3 and 16.2

We believe a strong, multifaceted, global approach is needed to end modern slavery in all its forms. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 seeks to end modern slavery, SDG 5.3 seeks to eliminate child, early, and forced marriage, and SDG 16.2 seeks to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against children. Our approach to achieving these SDGs involves building a robust knowledge base to inform action and driving legislative change in key countries in partnership with faiths, businesses, academics, NGOs, and governments around the world. Through these partnerships, as well as through direct implementation and grassroots community engagement, we believe we can end modern slavery.



## We produce comprehensive research.

Walk Free's Global Slavery Index provides world-leading measurement of the size and scale of modern slavery, and assesses country-level vulnerability and governmental responses to the problem. Building on this research, Walk Free partnered with International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to develop the joint Global Estimates of Modern Slavery. Published in 2017, the Global Estimates marked the world's first collaborative estimate on the scale of modern slavery. These estimates set a baseline against which progress towards the SDGs can be assessed and help inform policy, interventions, and the allocation of resources.

## We campaign for our cause.

Walk Free is the Secretariat for the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, which runs alongside the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime to champion business sector engagement in this regional forum. We are strong advocates for all leading global economies to enact laws that require organisations to take proactive steps to identify and remove modern slavery from their supply chains and to be held accountable for their response.

Engagement with faith leaders has been a key pillar of Walk Free since the establishment of the Global Freedom Network (GFN) in December 2014. The GFN is committed to delivering systemic change by engaging and uniting faith leaders around the world to take spiritual and practical action to end modern slavery.

## We partner directly with stakeholders to liberate people and drive systemic change.

In partnership with The Freedom Fund, Walk Free is scaling effective front-line anti-slavery responses. One of these is Freedom United, a Walk Free seed-funded global activist movement that now has a community of eight million supporters campaigning for change.

At Walk Free, we pioneer new approaches, invest in important projects, and carry out research that reinforces the need for change. But we can't do it alone. Our research and advocacy explain to others how they themselves can make the greatest impact. We believe nothing is more important than human life. We can, and must, work together to do everything in our power to end modern slavery.

## **APPENDIX 2: TERMINOLOGY**

### **MODERN SLAVERY**

In the context of this report, modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking.

Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. For example, their passport might be taken away if they are in a foreign country, they might experience or be threatened with violence, or their family might be threatened.

Different countries use different terminologies to describe modern slavery, including the term slavery itself, but also other concepts such as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale or exploitation of children. These terms are defined in various international agreements (treaties), which many countries have voluntarily signed on and agreed to. The following are the key definitions to which most governments have agreed, thereby committing themselves to prohibit these crimes through their national laws and policies.

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Human trafficking is defined in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol as involving three steps:

- 1.** Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons.
- 2.** By means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.
- 3.** With the intent of exploiting that person through: prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery (or similar practices), servitude, and removal of organs.

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve threat, use of force, or coercion.

### **FORCED LABOUR**

Forced labour is defined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Forced Labour, 1930 (No. 29) as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.” This excludes compulsory military service, normal civil obligations, penalties imposed by a court action taken in an emergency, and minor communal services.

### **SLAVERY AND SLAVERY-LIKE PRACTICES**

Slavery is defined in the 1926 Slavery Convention as the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. In a later treaty, States agreed that there are also certain “slavery-like practices”: debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, sale or exploitation of children (including in armed conflict), and descent-based slavery.

### **DEBT BONDAGE**

Debt bondage is a status or condition where one person has pledged his or her labour or service (or that of someone under his or her control) in circumstances where the fair value of that labour or service is not reasonably applied to reducing the debt or length of debt, or the length and nature of the service is not limited or defined.

## FORCED OR SERVILE MARRIAGE

The following are defined as practices “similar to slavery” in the 1956 Slavery Convention. Any institution or practice whereby:

- A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or
- The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or
- A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.

More recent interpretations of forced marriage are broader than the practices defined in the 1956 Slavery Convention. In 2006, the United Nations Secretary-General noted that “a forced marriage is one lacking the free and valid consent of at least one of the parties.” Forced marriage therefore refers to any situations in which persons, regardless of their age, have been forced to marry without their consent.

Child, early, and forced marriages are terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. Some child marriages, particularly those involving children under the age of 16 years, are considered a form of forced marriage, given that one and or/both parties have not expressed full, free, and informed consent (as noted in the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women). It is important to note that in many countries 16 and 17-year-olds who wish to marry are legally able to do so following a judicial ruling or parental consent.

## WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

Drawing on the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the term “worst forms of child labour” comprises:

- a.** all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- b.** the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances;
- c.** the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
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