



# **FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM 2022**

## **Forum report**

Enabling local engagement and global synergies for  
addressing modern slavery



Cover Photo: Survivors, speakers, organizations that were part of the Freedom from Slavery Africa Regional Forum 2022 in Kigali Rwanda

Presented to:  
Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime  
Avenue de France 23- Geneva CH-1202- Switzerland

***Prepared by:***

SMART TALK CAFE  
Andati Morris Shapwala  
KK225 St Kigali, Rwanda  
+250791697290  
[info@smarstalkcafe.or.ke](mailto:info@smarstalkcafe.or.ke)  
Smarstalkcafe.or.ke

***Special thanks to:***

Free the Slaves and Legal Aid Forum provided the photos that have been used in the report. The consent of the speakers, participants and survivors appearing in the photos were sought before taking of the photos. All key stakeholders who came to the forum and shared their key activities when it comes to human trafficking.

This report is issued for general distribution. All rights are reserved. Reproductions and translations are authorized, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

*\*Note: The primary objective of this official report is to undoubtedly bring about a favorable review of the existing structures when it comes to human trafficking in Africa, like policies and facilities for survivor integration and support as well as research. For better readability and simplicity, the term human trafficking or modern slavery will be used throughout the text, regardless of the status of the topic during the forum.*

## **List of abbreviation**

UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UK	United Kingdom
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
CenHTRO	Center on Human Trafficking Research & Outreach
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nation

## **Table of Content**

List of abbreviation .....	3
Summary .....	5
DISCUSSION METHODOLOGY .....	6
SURVIVOR INCLUSION AND ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT .....	6
POLICY AND RESEARCH .....	11
The powers of African government in regards to policy development .....	12
● Prevention of contemporary slavery .....	13
● Protection of the affected and afflicted .....	13
● Partnership .....	14
● Monitoring and assessment .....	14
Prevalence estimation and using best methods .....	14
Ratification of international tools on human trafficking .....	15
CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS .....	16
CHALLANGES .....	17
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	18
LAW REQUIREMENTS .....	18
Appendix 1 .....	20
1.1 Quote of the forum: .....	20
2.2 Speakers .....	21

## Summary

Africa has been plagued by several crises, including high unemployment, poverty, famine, corruption, and political and economic instability, to name a few. Tensions and insurrections, which have resulted in internal displacements, worsen these challenges. In the midst of these sociopolitical and economic difficulties, there has been an influx of migrants from one African nation to another, from one African area to another, and from Africa to other continents. While some migratory efforts are lawful, the majority are illicit. In the meantime, criminals routinely mislead migrants and trade them into a multidimensional world of exploitation. Although the actual numbers and demographics of trafficked Africans remain unclear, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides estimates in its publications. The majority of victims in Sub-Saharan Africa are females and children. They are then exploited in a number of industries, including agriculture, domestic labor, prostitution, and the military (e.g. child soldiers). An estimated 3.7 million Africans are enslaved or subjected to forced labor at any given time, generating yearly earnings of \$13.1 billion in this region alone. Many victims know their traffickers, including intimate family members, relatives, and acquaintances. Surprisingly, fifty percent of these traffickers in Africa are female, shattering the notion that this is a crime dominated by men. Involvement of highly organized criminal gangs has also been identified, which makes the trafficking operation more complex and risky. This brief summary demonstrates that human trafficking is prevalent and pervasive in Africa.

Through the forum, we undoubtedly realized survivors are key when it undoubtedly comes to development of solutions to the issue of human trafficking. Another key pointer was the focus on data driven programs and policies in Africa with a focus on pushing for good political will.

*“We need to look for a way to bring everyone on board so that we can remove the problem of tokenism and unsustainable solutions to anti-trafficking efforts in Africa” Hon. Dr. Emmanuel UGIRASHEBUJA The Minister of Justice/Attorney General*

## DISCUSSION METHODOLOGY

The presented report was carefully collected under the the **Freedom for Slavery Africa Regional Forum 2022** where there was an invitation of key stakeholders in the human trafficking sector in Africa and the Global North. The forum focused majorly on **enabling local engagements and global synergies for addressing modern slavery in Africa**. The forum brought together 37 speakers who are key stakeholders when it comes to, policy development, advocacy, research and work for international bodies when it comes to eradication of human trafficking. It was held on 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The prime focus of the extensive discussion was to look into how we can engage survivors and build necessary collaboration on research driven activities in Africa as we tackle the key problem of human trafficking.

## SURVIVOR INCLUSION AND ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT

*“I thank Free The Slaves for giving me a chance and other survivors a chance to be part of these discussions and I wish more survivors are included in solution making when it comes to issues to do with human trafficking.” Miss. Wanja Kimani.*

When discussing the creation of human trafficking remedies, it is crucial to involve survivors at all levels. This results in contextualized solutions due to the fact that the majority of survivors comprehend the dynamics of vulnerabilities at the community level as well as the locations where they were victims. With the increase in number of victims of labor and sex trafficking within Africa and also out of the continent it seems one of the key solutions is having survivors be at the discussion table when formulating key laws and policies that affect all sectors involved in labor, migration, social and economic well being of citizens and not forgetting anti-trafficking policies and laws. This not only affects internal laws and

policies but also at international labour laws and regional anti-trafficking efforts.

Running anti-trafficking activities with a strong emphasis on tokenism, since it leads to significant reliance among survivors on both the state and groups against human trafficking, is a major issue we must also examine. This has led to inadequate execution of national response plans and organizations taking advantage of those impacted.

One of the challenges that this creates is that the remedies that will be produced either by the government or the organizations will not be: Survivor led, survivor informed and survivor centered. There is no sustainable environment for the survivors, especially in terms of their social and economic inclusion and their independence.

*“Despite my accomplishments as a human rights activist, I am still stigmatized and often referred to as a secondhand goods in my community”*  
*Awa Mbuli, Survivor Network Cameroon*



Awa Mbuli

When examining some of the major human trafficking routes in Africa Poverty and tradition are the primary drivers of labor trafficking and sex trafficking in Africa. Along with unethical employers and a lack of governmental capacity or regulatory failure, we must include survivors in the solution-finding process to develop root-level remedies to these issues. Let us not forget that coercion and exploitation continue to play a key role in contemporary society. There is a strong possibility that this scenario may deteriorate.

This implies that when examining anti-trafficking efforts, we must build ally relationships with survivors with the goal of maximizing their benefit. This can be achieved through survivors' genuine participation in the development and implementation of solutions, as well as by forming partnerships with organizations led by survivors.

All of this may occur at the level of policy development, as we require both insights and the growth of their competence in policy development methods. We will be able to create confidence between survivors and key players in the action groups if we have really robust monitoring and assessment processes when it comes to implementation levels, particularly in light of the many gaps in government interactions.



*Joanne Ewart-James*

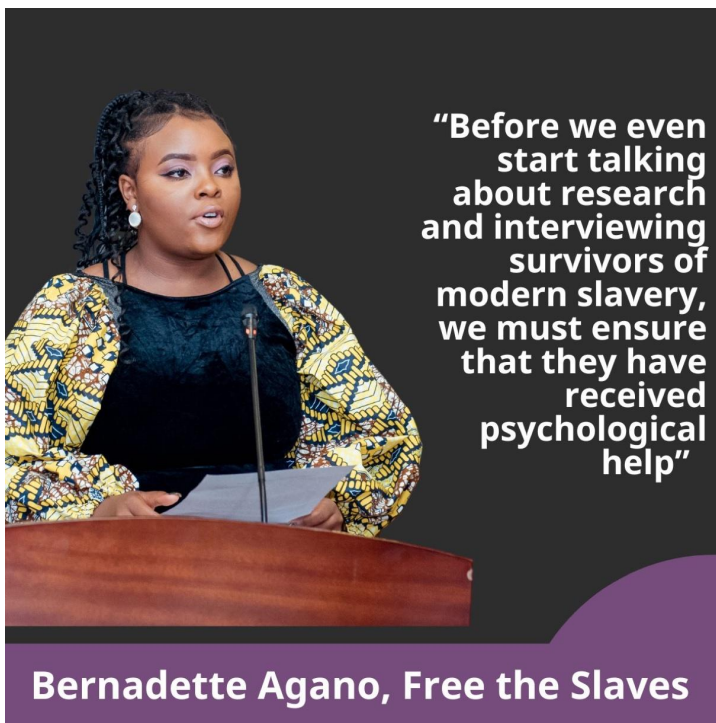
*“Effective ally ship looks different in different contexts but it must always recognize and support the inherent rights and power within people who’ve experienced modern slavery”*

*Joanne Ewart-James, Executive Director, Freedom United, UK*

With all the main stakeholders supporting and involving survivors is vital to look at survivor integration strategies that clearly promote the positive integration at community level. This includes having the correct policies that address the health sector, the labor sector, and the migration sector, as well as having strong laws and rules that may aid in assisting the survivors. Having enough facilities that can assist with mental health support, survivor education not only for survivors but also for those who support them, and national action plans that collaborate with survivor-led organizations, the private sector, and civil society are the greatest challenges in Africa when it comes to the integration of survivors.



Without the above we have witnessed so many survivors being trapped at the entrance level and are still prone to slip into the human trafficking trap. We need to look at health and legal help for survivors, economic support for survivors through refuge and safe places and community training through education. Organizations like the Survivor Network Cameroon are crucial when it comes to giving such services although there is a little bit of a difficulty between working with government and the rebel groups they are able to produce extremely key survivor led programs. Haart Kenya and Trace Kenya play significant roles in East Africa, particularly in terms of survivor management, identification of victims abroad, and reintegration of survivors in Kenya.



At the national level, we must provide civic education on current policies and also consider the regional level. Even though Kenya's Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010 criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, Uganda's National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons will be launched in 2020, and Rwanda's anti-trafficking law was passed in 2018, the number of people being trafficked continues to rise in East Africa. This is largely due to poor implementation of migration laws and policies.

With a rise in poverty in these regions, an increase in the number of young people, and an increase in the use of technology in recruiting, the nations within the region must seek ways to establish an anti-trafficking task force that would bring together all regional players.

*Discussion on research policy gaps in East Africa*



## **POLICY AND RESEARCH**

It is abundantly clear that there is a significant problem with policy engagement in the human trafficking space, as so many countries lack a human trafficking act or law, as well as a policy to guide the engagement of various government institutions in anti-trafficking efforts. When it comes to research, there is a lack of participation, but not only in Africa but also in other regions.


However, with the growth in human trafficking concerns, there has been a sluggish development in research, which is exacerbated by a lack of documentation. Numerous organizations involved in the elimination of human trafficking do not keep statistics on the effect, reach, and possibilities of collaboration with the government in their operations. This implies that documentation is required for many actions in order to have a data-driven industry.

Regarding the eradication of human trafficking, we require substantial public engagement and participation in the African context, thus looking at policy formulation and execution, facilitated by civil society and government institutions. This will bring up the social and cultural concerns that are driving the Agenda of human trafficking ahead and might be crucial in building sustainable strategies for the creation of policies in various nations. This may be accomplished by including the community, particularly survivors, in the establishment of these policies, since they understand the community context and gaps that led to their being victims of human trafficking.

The issue of human slavery in Africa is a political one that threatens to affect the existing policies, rights, and communities in Africa. Providing a rationale for all African nations to concentrate on tackling the problem at the national level. We must seek channels to involve the political class in order for them to advocate for the establishment, funding, and execution of anti-

human trafficking measures in these nations. This is because they have the authority to formulate and implement these policies.

The lack of knowledge has slowed the development of policies by governments, but also has led to the emergence of several movements. With so many individuals seeking employment and a better life, there is a need for study and collaboration among so many players to assist identify gaps and aid the government in its efforts to combat human trafficking. Now activists have a purpose to get together and consider how they might involve the public in solution-making in these areas.



**"Good intentions alone are not enough. Our good intentions should aim to do the very best for those we care for. Accurate and reliable data is perhaps the best way to inform and design the best programs for both survivors and victims."**

**Prof. David Okech, @CenHTRO**

## **The powers of African government in regards to policy development**

West Africa has very high levels of human trafficking with 80% of the total amount being subjected to forced labour and 75% of that being young children. In light of the fact that nations in West Africa have enormous young populations, this poses a significant concern. To combat the growth in the above-mentioned numbers, there is a need for substantial government and community involvement in the creation of appropriate migration and labor market regulations. Mauritania is one of the countries that have established crucial anti-modern slavery tactics. We also have Sierra Leone which has the anti-human trafficking and modern slavery act. However, even in such nations, many African activists engaged in the battle against contemporary slavery have been imprisoned. With the cooperation of the United Nations, however, aid channels have been developed and the battle

against modern slavery has been bolstered. Among the techniques established in Mauritania was the infiltration of activists inside the administration, where they were able to demonstrate why it is crucial for the government to combat modern slavery.

To decrease the occurrence of contemporary slavery, we must engage the whole population, as well as the political sphere, the regional council, and even the continent. We require community leadership to educate community members, as a result. It will be crucial for the government to adopt ways to eliminate aspects of slavery by utilizing its own instruments, such as regulations and the legislation, as well as its influence over cultural and social development.

There is a need for support and implementation of human trafficking research results in order to have contextualized policies that lead to sustainable action plans and the enhancement of current legislation. The engagement of social aspects, such as cultural perspectives in various communities, which provide a pathway to modern slavery, such as labor trafficking and sex trafficking, is another area of emphasis. The government must therefore consider incorporating these perspectives into newly developed anti-trafficking strategies.

There must be a link between research, community development, and policy in order to aid in the creation of effective solutions to contemporary slavery. The following pillars might be very beneficial when discussing research and the eradication of modern slavery:

- **Prevention of contemporary slavery**

There is need to examine the evolution of community-based research and initiatives this will allow us to comprehend the problem we are fixing in depth. Thus looking for physical proofs with an aim of letting the impacted communities work on their own solutions (Survivors)

- **Protection of the affected and afflicted**

There is need for the creation of lasting measures to prevent survivors from

falling victim to the same issue. This is through investigating economic, social, and political structures that brought up the problem and solving those problems.

- **Partnership**

There is need to examine methods in which different groups might collaborate depending on the varied sectors in which they are involved in the fight against modern slavery, ranging from the government to civil society.

- **Monitoring and assessment**

There is a need to investigate the following steps when it comes to rehabilitation of the individuals affected. The government and lawmakers must be committed to exposing the culprits with the aim of assisting those harmed. In so many nations, there is no law against modern slavery, resulting in inadequate or no punishment for the criminals. All parties must participate in monitoring newly enacted policies, legislation, and parliamentary acts.<sup>1</sup>

## **Prevalence estimation and using best methods**

*“We need to have a collaborative impact approach when it comes to dealing with research because its lacking in Africa leading to data that is not survivor centered, trauma informed, culturally rooted and evidence informed” Prof. David Oketch, CenHTRO*



*Research components discussion*

When conducting research, it is essential to place an emphasis on the production of data pertaining to the estimation of prevalence among survivors, as well as rates of policy acceptance among the various stakeholders in each of the various nations. The data on the prevalence study investigate comprehension:



Understanding Scope	The key target groups
Define the problem	Is it policy? Is it survivor engagement?
Create a baseline for evidence	Who, where, what, and numbers
Matching resources	What are the available resources, finance, people, policies, data

By evaluating the aforementioned factors, we are able to gain an understanding of the policy environment regarding human trafficking, the policy makers and the financing organizations regarding the important activities, and finally, we are able to track the implementation status of human trafficking in Africa. Research is already being conducted in several countries in West Africa by organizations such as CenHTRO, which is looking into survivor interactions and the achievement of important policy implementation objectives.

## **Ratification of international tools on human trafficking**

There is a key need for AU to push countries across the continent to ratify the key international laws, and tools when it comes to improving their key action plans towards anti-trafficking strategies. Some countries have been able to shape their national response to human trafficking, through adopting these international legal instruments that recognize and protect different categories of human beings from any forms of human trafficking. These include;

1. The UNTOC and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children,
2. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others,
3. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989,
4. ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)

5. Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography
6. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
7. The UNODC's Model Law against Trafficking in Persons (UNODC, 2009)

However some countries do not even have any particular law and it high time through research and policy we have key actors pushing these countries to adopt and improve these instruments in context of their countries.

## **CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS**

In addition to stronger legislation and victim participation, one of the most important takeaways from the Africa Regional Freedom for Slavery Forum is the importance of government-to-civil-society-to-private-sector cooperation in the fight against human trafficking.

This investigation focuses on labor and migration rights, particularly as they pertain to policy experts and the government, using examples such as Legal Aid Forum and Smart Talk Cafe in Rwanda, which are dedicated to assisting with research, training, and support for driving policy discussions and assisting survivors with legal representation. When it comes to the battle against human trafficking in Rwanda, we also need people who contribute to the compilation of national reports that aid in resource allocation.

Developing a universal peer reporting mechanism that can aid in the collecting and storage of data, with an emphasis on having the proper resources and assistance, particularly in terms of finance, is the last step. This is by taking advantage the key research organizations and international tool kits. Which institutions, such as Right Lab at the University of Nottingham, Alliance 8.7, and international organizations, such as the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, the International



# Enabling Local Engagements and Global Synergies for Addressing Modern Slavery

Kigali, Rwanda - 21-24 November, 2022

Freedom  
Africa Re



Organization for Migration, Free The Slaves, and Freedom United, enable us to combat human trafficking in Africa?

## CHALLENGES

- Some countries who are members of Alliance 8.7, a global alliance focused on achieving SDG target 8.7) and are pathfinders are not sharing reports when it comes to human trafficking in their countries.
- Lack of enough data on human trafficking in Africa.
- Lack of commitment in countries when it comes to policies, development of country strategies and working with community organizations.
- Lack of awareness among communities and civil society on the existing strategies being developed by the governments for example Rwanda in the repatriation and support of those affected.
- Low demand for research when it comes to policy makers in Africa.
- Its difficult to develop research components when it comes to human trafficking in Africa.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Building capacity of research networks in Africa.
- There is need for change when it comes to project developments and this is should be research driven.
- Drive collaborations with research organizations and also have data from implementing actors at a point of having drive key activities in the sector.
- We need to have policy that are driven by research and data collection.
- Looking into having partnerships with research driven organizations when it comes to application.
- Inclusion of survivors when it comes to solution development in the human trafficking sector.
- Effective collaboration between university in Africa and the global North when it comes to research and funding of experts.
- Funding of research partners and institutions within Africa not forgetting research individuals.
- Having better political will when it comes to development of anti-slavery polices and laws across Africa.
- Regional anti-trafficking action groups.
- Open avenues of survivor led strategies

## **LAW REQUIREMENTS**

- Structured punishment or genuine punishment when it comes to the perpetrators.
- Have short procedures when it comes to prosecution.
- Setting minimum labor standards in countries and also externally.
- Minimum wage in countries to affect labor standards in all countries.
- Little to know prosecution to survivors in relation to being forced into criminal activities.
- Have regional labor laws to help cub unsupervised movement and gaps when it comes to recruitment.

- Compensation of the survivors to be clear in the legal framework.
- Have clear stipulation when it comes to social protection for those affected.

We need data-driven or data-informed ideas, especially for the establishment of initiatives and programs related to human trafficking; this will lead to an emphasis on identifying key data gaps when formulating policy and action plans.

There is an urgent need to study the role of politics in the creation of public policy and the mechanisms by which data and community participation may become the major drivers of policy..



## **Appendix 1**

### **1.1 Quote of the forum:**

**"ALWAYS ASK A SURVIVOR HOW THEY WISH TO BE ADDRESSED. REFERRING TO SOMEONE AS A SURVIVOR, EXPERT DUE TO THEIR EXPERIENCE OR SOMETHING ELSE MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE ACCEPTABLE TO EVERYONE."**



**PATRICIAH WANJA KIMANI, HAART  
KENYA**



## 2.2 Speakers

### Africa Regional Forum 2022 Speakers



**Special Thanks for sponsoring and supporting:**

