



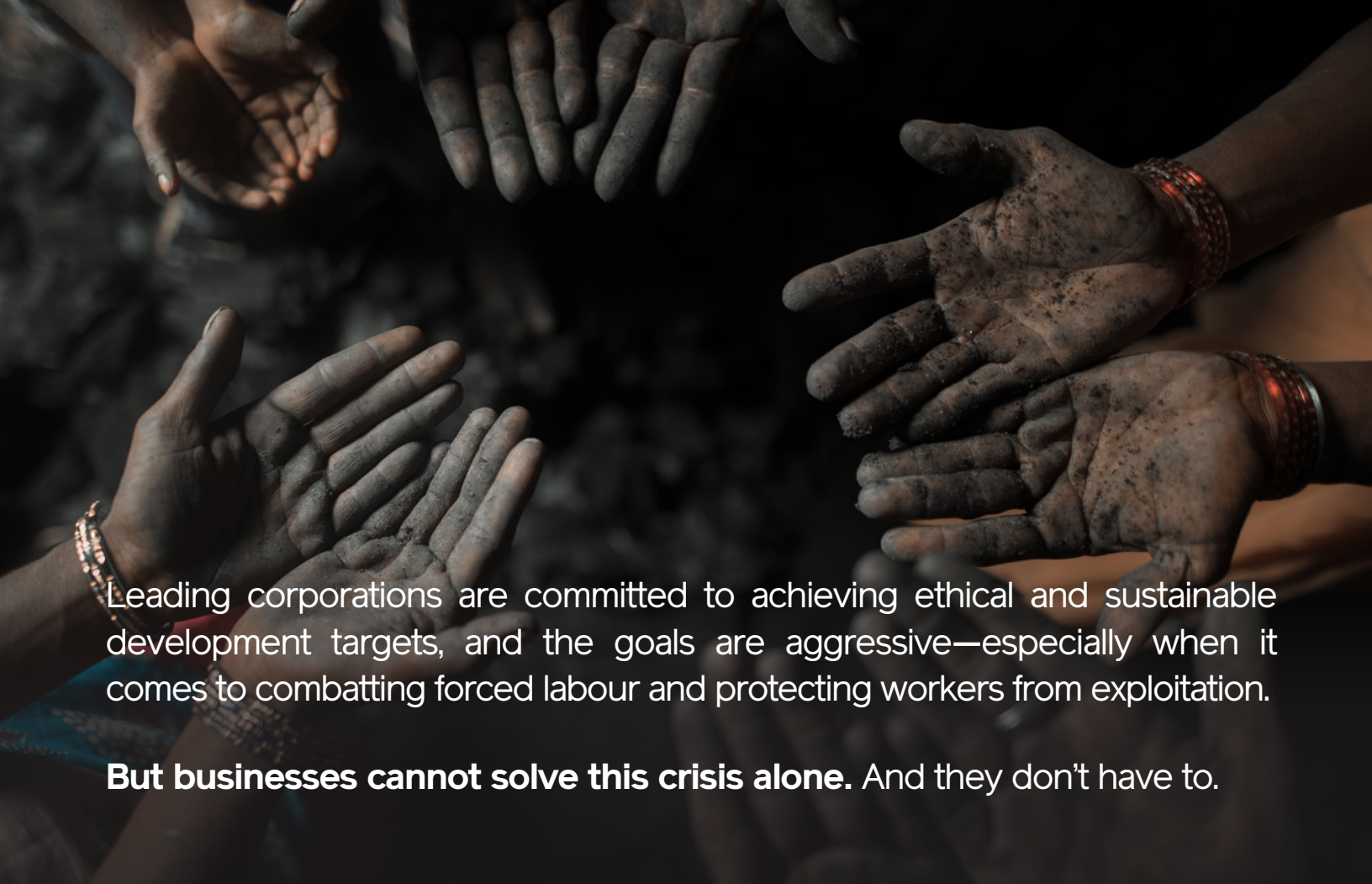
**IJM**

# **Corporate Investments to Eliminate Forced Labour Slavery in Supply Chains**

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*Strengthening Jurisdictions to Support Worker  
Protection and Prevent Labour Exploitation*





Leading corporations are committed to achieving ethical and sustainable development targets, and the goals are aggressive—especially when it comes to combatting forced labour and protecting workers from exploitation.

**But businesses cannot solve this crisis alone.** And they don't have to.

## A Modern Crisis



### 50 Million

The number of people worldwide living in modern slavery today (ILO, Walk Free & IOM, 2022)



### Migrant Workers

The largest population represented in Asia Pacific's 11M people living in modern slavery (ILO, 2022, Walk Free, 2018)



### 28 Million

People subjected to forced labour slavery in private sector industries and supply chains such as construction, agriculture, fishing or domestic work (ILO, Walk Free & IOM, 2022)



### \$150 Billion

Estimated annual revenue in USD generated from human trafficking globally (ILO, 2014)

## Indicators of Forced Labour

*According to the ILO*

Abuse of Vulnerability  
Deception  
Restriction of Movement  
Isolation

Physical and Sexual Violence  
Intimidation and Threats  
Retention of Identity Documents  
Withholding of Wages

Debt Bondage  
Abusive Working and Living Conditions  
Excessive Overtime

**Millions of workers are vulnerable to forced labour**—not because protective laws don't exist, but because they're not enforced.

Human rights due diligence policies and practices can only succeed in an **environment that supports their effectiveness and allows them to function and thrive** without criminal interference.

An estimated 5 billion people live in a “justice gap” without the protection and benefits of the law (World Justice Project, 2019).

Lurking in global supply chains, forced labour slavery is hidden and enabled by weak governance and regulations, a lack of transparency and poor rule of law. It is coercive, often violent, and always profitable for those able to commit the crime with impunity; that is, without real consequences.

In many nations, law enforcement and labour inspectors are underfunded and poorly trained. Oversight is weak, inter-ministry collaboration is lacking, and corruption is too often left unchecked. Many government actors tasked with helping workers lack training in crisis interventions, trauma-informed care and victim-centered procedures. Where authorities are not effective

or trusted, worker voice mechanisms may not result in meaningful victim identification, criminal accountability or systemic solutions.

Corporations are working to mitigate human rights abuses, but, **without a supportive rule of law environment, existing solutions are easily undermined by criminal actors**—thus falling short of building real worker protection in supply chains and along recruiting corridors.

#### **Positive Initiatives to Address Forced Labour**

- Codes of Conduct
- Audits
- Corrective Action Plans
- No-Fee Recruitment Policies
- Pre-Departure Trainings
- Worker Grievance Mechanisms and Restitution Programs

## **The Hidden Impact of Modern Slavery on the Environment**

Research shows that the cost of impunity on people and climate change go hand in hand: where forced labour thrives, so does the destruction of natural resources. Slavery is at the root of much of the world's environmental destruction, such as illegal deforestation of palm oil, cocoa harvesting, natural resource extraction, manufacturing, brick-making and strip mining. It is estimated that if the industry of modern slavery were a country itself, it would emit the third largest amount of carbon emissions in the world.

Without addressing the employers forcing millions of people to engage in work that destroys natural resources and wipes out protected species—all by skirting existing laws and regulations—the world will never be able to adequately address either crisis. The complex and destructive cycle between modern slavery and environmental harm will only continue, undeterred.

*Bales, Kevin and Sovacool, Benjamin (2021). From Forests to Factories: How Modern Slavery Deepens the Crisis of Climate Change.*





## “I was sold.” Forced Labour at Sea

Dom\* has few sources of income in his rural Cambodian village and struggles to earn enough for his family to survive. Years ago, Dom followed a recruiter to Thailand with the promise of a lucrative job working on fishing vessels, where he could make more money than he could ever hope to earn in Cambodia. After a long journey, he was handed over to a boat captain. Dom didn't realize at first, but later came to understand: he had been sold.

Days were long with no rest, Dom only received a fraction of the wages he was promised, and simple mistakes resulted in men being beaten, thrown overboard and left for dead. After six years at sea, Indonesian authorities seized his vessel and sent him home, where he found one of his sons was gone—trafficked onto Thai boats by the same recruiters. IJM and Cambodian police uncovered and convicted the network of traffickers that had been operating for nearly a decade, luring hundreds of men like Dom and his son into forced labour. Dom chose to testify in court, and he and his son are now back home, safe from exploitation.

\* A pseudonym

# Criminal Accountability

When governments prioritize investments in law enforcement and survivor services that end impunity for criminal actors, **the space for abuse gets smaller**. Addressing criminal impunity is the missing piece of the puzzle.

Forced labour slavery is a crime—and there is no substitute for accountability when attempting to address criminal activity.

Functioning and aligned criminal justice, labour and migrant worker protection and social service systems protect everyone, and set a standard for ethical working conditions in a way that corporations alone cannot.



Photo by Esther Havens

When criminals are held accountable and see their nation's laws consistently enforced at the local level, most choose to stop. However, when justice systems are unsupported and underdeveloped, an environment of impunity is created. This absence of rule of law then undermines education, audits and restitution initiatives, which are not enough to stop criminals from exploiting the most vulnerable in essentially lawless environments.

But relatively **small increases** in detection and prosecution can result in a **disproportionate and accelerated impact** on reducing crime.



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# Eliminating Forced Labour

## in Global Supply Chains

International Justice Mission has pioneered a groundbreaking model that reduces business risk by preventing forced labour and creating an ecosystem that protects workers across supply chains from exploitation.



- As trustworthy law enforcement increases, it shifts how survivors, offenders and communities perceive and engage with the justice system as a protective mechanism.
- As criminals see arrests and convictions made, they weigh the risk of being caught and choose to stop illegal activity.
- As violence drops and trauma-informed services increase, communities engage with the system more, sustaining the strength of the justice system.

### Short-Term Outcomes

Improved capacity to identify victims and refer them to justice and social service systems.

Trauma-informed practices improve crisis care and empower survivors.

Coordinated domestic and cross-border investigations, leading to an increased number of prosecutions.

### Mid-Term Outcomes

Increased worker remediation through public justice and social service mechanisms.

Higher rate of convictions holding illegal operators and recruiting networks accountable.

Decreasing rate of forced labour crimes.

### Long-Term Outcomes

Vulnerable workers increasingly trust and rely on public justice systems for protection.

Reduced risk along supply chains and recruiting corridors in strategic sourcing areas.

## KEY OBJECTIVES



### ENFORCE LAWS

Help governments enforce laws by holding forced labour perpetrators accountable for their crimes through prosecution.



### IMPROVE NATIONAL SYSTEMS

Build an aligned response between the labour, justice and social service sectors to combat forced labour.



### SUPPORT SURVIVORS

Support and empower survivors of forced labour by providing trauma-informed care and tools to prevent re-exploitation.



### PROTECT WORKERS

Protect workers and prevent exploitation by changing the ecosystem in which businesses operate.



# Industries Affected

by Forced Labour



## AGRICULTURE

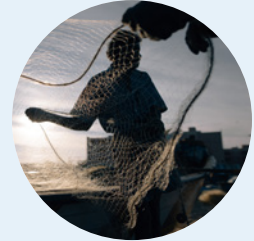
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## CONSTRUCTION



## ELECTRONICS



## FISHING AND SEAFOOD



## HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



## MANUFACTURING



## MINING



## TEXTILES AND GARMENTS



## Global Expertise

International Justice Mission has over 25 years of experience strengthening justice systems — meaning stronger worker protections, increased accountability for criminal actors and empowerment of survivors. These positive changes foster greater rule of law and improved access to justice in the communities where supply chains operate.

IJM subscribes to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and our approach supports nations in their duty to protect worker rights and facilitate access to formal remedy.



A Case Study:

# Combating Forced Labour in the Thai Fishing Industry

IJM's partnership with Walmart has brought about tremendous advances in measuring and combatting trafficking and abuse in the Thai fishing industry.

Prior to the Walmart Foundation's engagement with IJM, there was no baseline study to determine the prevalence of trafficking on Thai fishing boats. A lack of proactive investigations and meaningful prosecutions meant traffickers faced little risk of being caught, and migrant victims were more likely to be detained than provided real protection and trauma-informed services.

Thailand is home to one of the largest fishing industries in the world. For years, workers—typically men from neighbouring Cambodia and Myanmar—have been lured by traffickers who promise good pay and consistent work on boats in and around the Gulf of Thailand.

Instead, many of these men boarded the boats only to find that they had been tricked—and they endured brutal exploitation, little to no pay, and were sometimes even murdered at sea.

**Slavery thrives in this brutal and isolated environment where criminal justice systems struggle to enforce existing anti-trafficking laws that hold criminals accountable.**

An initial grant from the Walmart Foundation in 2015 funded a baseline prevalence study to measure the rates of trafficking and abuse among migrant fishermen from Cambodia and Myanmar. This groundbreaking research showed the massive scale of labour trafficking of migrant fishermen, the common patterns of abuse across the industry, and the historical ineffectiveness of the justice systems to deliver real results for victims or to end impunity for traffickers.

### PREVALENCE STUDY RESULTS

37.9%

FISHERMAN TRAFFICKED

49.2%

SUSPECTED TRAFFICKED

76.2%

ACCRUED DEBT PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT START

14.1%

PHYSICALLY ABUSED

49.2%

WITNESSED A CREWMATE ABUSED AT SEA

*Isaara Institute & International Justice Mission (2017). Not in the Same Boat: Prevalence & Patterns of Labour Abuse Across Thailand's Diverse Fishing Industry.*

## Thai Fishing Industry Recruiting Corridors

Based on these findings, IJM designed coordinated programs aimed at improving the capacity of criminal justice system agencies in both countries of origin and industry to respond to forced labour by identifying victims, investigating and prosecuting criminal offenders and supporting survivors.

Focusing on the key recruiting corridors feeding into the Thai fishing industry through expert teams and authorities in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, IJM staff are supporting Thai authorities to implement and enforce laws that target forced labour trafficking, and to provide care to survivors. This includes taking on criminal cases to hold traffickers accountable as well as working to repatriate survivors and empowering them to stay free from exploitation.



## Markers of Progress

IJM's partnership with the Walmart Foundation **enabled authorities to apprehend transnational criminal networks** that had been profiting off forced labour for over a decade, ensnaring hundreds—if not thousands—of workers in their web of exploitation.

The partnership generated breakthroughs in some of the first cases in which source and destination countries have collaborated on cross-border trafficking, and higher success rates were seen in criminal convictions concerning exploitation on fishing vessels. Survivors are being empowered for the first time through state-provided financial compensation after they've left Thailand and returned to their home communities.

As more justice system officials understand the experiences and behaviors indicative of trauma, and as survivors speak directly into this learning,





authorities are able to respond to the needs of survivors in a way that minimizes re-traumatization, encourages participation in justice system processes and empowers survivors towards recovery.

**The IJM-Walmart program shows that formal systems to increase worker protection can prevent crimes and help restore survivors.**

Investment is required in systems that are struggling to effectively prevent crime and protect workers.

**Without this continued investment, progress will not be sustained.**

The impact made thus far demonstrates a clear path forward toward solving this crisis. With additional funding from the Walmart Foundation, IJM is conducting further research to identify the gaps that remain and tailor our programs to address the most urgent needs across sectors in these recruiting corridors.

IJM continues its collaborative work to strengthen government responses throughout the region, focusing on building stronger protections for workers everywhere, particularly as COVID-19 continues to place vulnerable people at risk.



IJM is a global team of experts working on the frontlines to **end forced labour slavery**. Through partnership with IJM, corporations can mitigate supply chain risk through the following powerful, data-driven interventions:

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### **Safe Recruitment Corridors**

A collaborative, multi-country program to address and prevent trafficking and abuse of low-paid migrant workers across country borders, addressing exploitation in both source and destination countries.

### **Reporting**

Developing prevalence research and in-depth annual reports demonstrating the connection between global supply chains and functioning justice systems—showing the way forward and measuring results as corporations engage with government actors.

### **Safe Sourcing Zones**

A high impact partnership between corporations, IJM and a host country government to reduce the risk of forced labour in a targeted jurisdiction, helping bring lasting safety and security to workers and their families.

### **Consultancy**

Working with businesses to develop an actionable, measurable, field-ready plan tailored to meet specific business and supply chain needs—including addressing the nexus between climate change and forced labour for their ESG commitments.



**IJM**

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