

# International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

## March 25<sup>th</sup> 2022

In 2007, the United Nations designated the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, to be observed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March every year.

The date was first observed in 2008, to honour and remember the more than 15 million men, women and children who were brutalized under a slavery system that endured for more than 400 years. The legacy of the inhumane forced migration – 96 per cent of captives arrived in South America and the Caribbean islands – represents the large population of people of African descent in the Americas. The port city of Portobelo, Panama, is a significant marker of the transatlantic slave trade as the entry point for enslaved Africans who, having survived perilous ocean journeys, were then taken to different places.

**Slavery and enslavement** are both the state and the condition of being a **slave**. The enslaved individual is forbidden to quit their service for another person (an enslaver). The enslaved lost their freedom of choice or action, while those who enslaved them treated them as their property. The enslaved person is forced to perform some form of work while also having their location dictated by the enslaver. The duration of their enslavement might be for life, or for a fixed period of time after which their freedom was granted. The enslaved often were caught in cycle, and even those who were granted their freedom, were relegated into enslavement through coercion or force. In the course of human history, slavery was a typical feature of civilization, and legal in most societies, but it is now outlawed in all countries of the world, except as punishment for crime.

In 2019, approximately 40 million people, of whom 26 percent were children, were enslaved throughout the world despite laws meant to protect against this illegal practice. In the modern world, more than 50 percent of enslaved people provide forced labour, usually in the factories and sweatshops of the private sector of a country's economy. In industrialised countries, human trafficking is the most prevalent form of enslavement; in non-industrialized countries, enslavement by debt bondage is a common form of enslaving a person, such as captive domestic servants, forced marriage, and child soldiers.

With the aim of permanently honouring the victims of the Transatlantic slave trade, a monument has been created at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which is named the “ark of return”. It was created by Rodney Leon, an American architect of Haitian origin. The monument invites people to contemplate the legacy of the slave trade and to fight against racism and prejudice today. The sculpture represents **the spirit of the men, women and children who lost their lives in the transatlantic slave trade**. Please join the EDI committee in acknowledging this day. For more information please visit:

<https://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/2022/events.shtml>

