



Take Action Against  
Modern Slavery

# Take Action against Modern Slavery

Use the power of the pen to  
urge our government to pass a  
Modern Slavery Act.

[www.signforfreedom.nz](http://www.signforfreedom.nz)

Website live 16 March 2021

Petition launch 25 March 2021

6 week campaign

Petition closing online 17 May 2021



# Modern Slavery Act FAQ's

## What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. Modern slavery is a human rights violation with exploitation at its heart. Forced labour, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and debt bondage are forms of modern slavery.

## Is there an legal definition for Modern Slavery?

There is no globally agreed definition of 'modern slavery'. The term is used to cover a range of exploitative practices including human trafficking, slavery, forced labour, child labour, forced marriage and slavery-like practices.

## Why we need a Modern Slavery Act

40 million people globally are in modern slavery, 25 million of these in forced labour. Unlike many other countries, New Zealand has no accountability legislation that addresses transparency in supply chains. This means that New Zealand companies could unknowingly be importing products or services by which people are exploited and enslaved.

## What would a Modern Slavery Act do?

Modern Slavery Acts require businesses to understand the risks of modern slavery in their purchasing, to report on those risks, and take action to address them. This helps prevent slavery through transparency and accountability. They give the business community guidance to undertake this work and provide a level playing field across businesses. Modern Slavery Acts enable consumers to expect slave-free products and services from companies.

## How can I help?

- Take Action against modern slavery. Sign the petition to urge the New Zealand government to pass a Modern Slavery Act. [Signforfreedom.nz](http://Signforfreedom.nz)
- Ask your family and friends to sign the petition.
- Share on social media and use the hashtag #ModernSlaveryActNZ
- Support brands that put people before profit, and businesses who know where their products come from.

## **I'm a business, church, NGO, school, university, media person, community organiser and I'd love to help get the word out. How can I help?**

- Share our petition on social media and use the hashtag #ModernSlaveryActNZ
- Go to [signforfreedom.nz](http://signforfreedom.nz) to get downloadable resources that you can use in your communications. These include social media assets, posters, a physical petition form, key messaging and campaign logos and branding. We'd love to see you talk about this key issue through your network and ask your audience to sign the petition.
- Promote the petition at any community events you might be involved with.

### **Get in touch directly:**

[www.signforfreedom.nz](http://www.signforfreedom.nz)

[info@signforfreedom.nz](mailto:info@signforfreedom.nz)

## **The facts in short**

Our main source for modern slavery data is the 2017 "Global estimates of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriage" report, published by International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), The UN Migration Agency. [Click here for the report.](#)

- 40 million people globally are in modern slavery.
- That's 1 in every 200 people.
- 10 million children are in modern slavery.
- 25% of the enslaved are children, that's 1 in 4.
- Almost three quarters (71%) are women and girls.
- Two thirds of all people in modern slavery live in Asia Pacific – the area New Zealand trades with extensively.
- 25 million people are in forced labour.
- \$354 billion at-risk products are imported by G20 countries.
- The number of modern slavery prosecutions is increasing within New Zealand, and recent reports on the vulnerabilities of temporary migrant labour within New Zealand indicate modern slavery is happening here in Aotearoa .
- New Zealand businesses currently have no obligation to understand the risks of modern slavery in their global or domestic supply chains.
- There is increasing global demand across the world for businesses and governments to act ethically. Australia, Europe and The United Kingdom are all in the process of drafting or strengthening their Modern Slavery Acts. We need to catch up or we will be left behind.

## **How has COVID-19 affected the situation of modern slavery?**

- Research from Walk Free and World Vision shows that COVID-19 has exacerbated the vulnerabilities for those in forced labour.
- With COVID-19 the risks of modern slavery are heightened. Life has become more difficult for people living in developing countries. The pandemic and lockdowns have led to millions

of people losing their jobs, unable to feed their families. People vulnerable and in desperate circumstances are in danger of being exploited.

- 8 million children have been pushed into child labour and begging as a result of COVID-19. [Click here for the report.](#)
- With the latest modern slavery statistics being from a 2017 report, the statistics do not include the impact of COVID-19. As a result we can expect the next official statistics on modern slavery to have increased.

### **The modern slavery risk in our region**

- The number of modern slavery prosecutions is increasing in New Zealand.
- Two thirds of all those enslaved live in Asia Pacific – the area New Zealand trades with extensively.
- New Zealand has no accountability legislation that addresses transparency in supply chains. This means that New Zealand companies could unknowingly be importing products or services that exploit and enslave people.
- We know modern slavery exists within the supply chains of New Zealand products. This means the goods you love may be made with slave labour. We need to change this.

### **Would this legislation cover cases of modern slavery in New Zealand?**

It is likely that legislation will cover modern slavery detected in domestic supply chains. Legislation will improve detection of illegal activity and help strengthen our current laws around forced labour and human trafficking.

### **Does this legislation cover sex trafficking?**

No, this legislation focuses on the supply chains of products. New Zealand already has laws around sex trafficking.

### **What does this mean for business?**

Modern Slavery Acts require businesses to understand the risks of modern slavery in their purchasing, to report on those risks, and take action to address them.

Supply chain legislation is being considered by many countries around the world, and business is leading this charge with their voices propelling government to action. Consumer demand is increasing to buy ethical products. Globally businesses are realising that dealing with modern slavery can be a point of competitive advantage, and that competing on sub-standard ethical practices is not good business practice.

Modern Slavery Acts are deliberately designed to encourage business to proactively look for and address modern slavery. If they find it, rather than shame or blame, sectors can instead collaborate to find creative, commercial and long-lasting solutions.

There are benefits to businesses playing an active role to eradicate modern slavery, including but not limited to improved risk assessment, improved management of suppliers, improved investor relations, improved consumer relations in the face of mounting public pressure, and an increasingly ethically conscious market.

The prevalence of supply chain legislation globally reflects an increasing demand from businesses and governments to act ethically and ensure their supply chains are free from modern slavery. Businesses are realising that creating sustainable supply chains can positively contribute towards economic growth, improve competition, provide job opportunities and bring families out of poverty.

### **Isn't this just more red tape for businesses?**

Globally businesses are realising that transparency within supply chains is the desired future for all business. This is why we have seen businesses leading the charge for legislation, with their voices propelling government to action.

Although many of the world's smaller businesses are already working towards supply chain transparency, Modern Slavery Acts globally have large revenue thresholds and only legislate for big business.

### **What other countries already have supply chain legislation?**

We are seeing an increasing global demand across the world for businesses and governments to act ethically. These include California – Transparency in Supply Chains Act (2010), United Kingdom – Modern Slavery Act (2015), Netherlands – Child Labour Due Diligence Law (2017), France – Corporate Duty of Diligence Law (2017), Australia – Modern Slavery Act (2018), Germany – Due Diligence Act 2020, EU-wide – Proposed Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence Legislation (2021).

### **Is the New Zealand business community behind this?**

Yes, a wide range of New Zealand businesses have demonstrated their support in an Open Letter presented to the New Zealand government on 16 March 2021. This letter asks our government for an inquiry into whether New Zealand needs a Modern Slavery Act.

### **Why are you focusing on a modern slavery act during COVID-19 epidemic when business is already struggling?**

Many New Zealand businesses are already working on supply chain transparency at different levels. Others are aware they need to place more importance on this work. Gaining supply chain

legislation provides guidance for businesses and tools and resources to help them progress this work. The support that New Zealand businesses have shown through the open letter suggests that legislation will support the way they currently want to be working, rather than add to their current burdens.

Internationally, as many other countries enforce supply chain transparency legislation, New Zealand businesses will also be required to meet the same standards. Our exporting companies are already aware of these expectations, so creating a level playing field supports New Zealand businesses on this journey.

The COVID-19 epidemic has escalated modern slavery. As we globally recover, this is our opportunity to #buildbackbetter.

### **What is a supply chain?**

The world is small and interconnected. Every time we purchase a product there is a chain reaction felt around the world. The supply chain is the network between companies and suppliers to produce and distribute specific products. Companies develop supply chains so they can obtain raw materials or get products made, and to reduce their costs and remain competitive in the business landscape.

### **Why are supply chains at risk of modern slavery?**

By solely focusing on lowering costs throughout their supply chains, companies can ignore the potential impact created by lowering prices at the production end of the process. Pressure on prices increases the risk of forced labour and modern slavery being used to reduce the costs of production in this process. In Aotearoa, people want to buy ethical goods, and support companies to be sustainable, successful businesses that are good, green and fair.

### **Our Partnership. Why we're working together.**

Trade Aid and World Vision New Zealand share a vision of fairness for all people – a world where modern slavery doesn't exist. We've joined together to bring modern slavery out of the shadows. Kiwis lead from the front and we do the right thing. We've connected with New Zealand business in issuing an Open Letter requesting an inquiry to the government and a petition to the public asking for a Modern Slavery Act.

Since 1973, Trade Aid has pioneered fair trade products that are good, green and fair. They've used the power of fair trade to support strong, sustainable communities around the globe. They have a proven sustainable business model that showcases businesses that can produce ethical goods without modern slavery in the supply chains.

World Vision has been at the forefront of the fight against poverty and injustice for over 70 years. Their vision is for life in all its fullness for everyone - and this means doing all they can to end violence and exploitation for the world's most vulnerable children and their families. By standing with Trade Aid and calling on the New Zealand Government for a Modern Slavery Act, World Vision is taking another step towards ending slavery, right here at home.

**Useful links to reports for more detailed information:**

- [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575479.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf)
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-products>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods>
- <https://www.walkfree.org/reports/stacked-odds/> - The impact on women
- [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Out%20of%20Time\\_Covid19%20Aftershocks%20-%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Out%20of%20Time_Covid19%20Aftershocks%20-%20FINAL.pdf) - Covid impact