



## ANNEXURE D: KMUN2023 Topic Pack

**Simulation:** United Nations Security Council  
(UNSC)

**Topic:** Slave Trade in Africa-*Libya Slave Trade*

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## Introduction

*Britannica defines slavery as the “Condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons.” This dictionary definition utilizes the past tense to describe this phenomenon. However, slavery and slave trade are still a major issue today, specifically in Africa.*

*A misconception of slavery is that it is a relic of humanity’s grim history when, modern day slavery is rampant in various African states such as Libya, Chad, Nigeria and Morocco. It is said that more than three times as many people are captured and sold into slavery today than in the 350-year span of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Africa’s history is entrenched with slavery. The Atlantic Slave trade spanning formally from the 1400s to the 1800s has had a visceral impact on the continent and many others such as the Americas. The impact of this trade route has lasted till today. The utilization of slavery has promoted economic inequality, violence, racism, and lawlessness within African states. The main target for modern day slavery encompasses refugees and immigrants.*

*A video surfaced from Libya where it appeared to showcase a group of men being sold. The international response to this video ranged from shock to disbelief. Libya’s geographical position makes it a key state in the transit of slaves. Many member states*

*such as Germany, Chad, France, and Niger have made plans to evacuate the people in danger of slavery. The UN has also backed the Libyan Government to launch a formal investigation into the allegations.*

*Individuals that are entrapped into slave trade, often never return to their homelands and never live a financially independent life. It is the United Nations and Security Council's intention to see the end of slave trade, inhumane labor conditions, the trafficking of minors and forced migration.*

*Thus, this Virtual Model UN will focus on the historical and current aspects of the slave trade in Africa with special focus on the Libyan Slave Trade.*

## **Slavery in Africa: Past Practices**

### **How did the Slave Trade start in Africa?**

Slavery can be defined as indentured or forced servitude where people are forced to work without proper or any remuneration.<sup>1</sup>The transatlantic slave trade began in the 15th century when Europe began emerging onto African territory. Portugal and other European Kingdoms began to expand onto African soil and subsequently began importing slaves from Africa to their territories. “The Spanish took the first African captives to the Americas

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<sup>1</sup> Aryn Baker (2019). “It Was As if We Weren’t Human.” *Inside the Modern Slave Trade Trapping African Migrants*. [online] Time. Available at: <https://time.com/longform/african-slave-trade/>.

from Europe as early as 1503, and by 1518 the first captives were shipped directly from Africa to America. “<sup>2</sup>

“These individuals were forcibly removed from their Homelands. Furthermore, the conditions under which they were transported proved fatal to many aboard the European vessels. “A comprehensive database compiled in the late 1990s puts the figure at just over 11 million people. Of those, fewer than 9.6 million survived the so-called middle passage across the Atlantic, due to the inhuman conditions in which they were transported, and the violent suppression of any on-board resistance.”<sup>3</sup>

Manner of Enslavement	Percentage
Taken in a war	24.3%
Kidnapped or seized	40.3%
Sold/tricked by a relative, friend etc.	19.4%
Through a judicial process	16.0%

*The data is from Sigismund Koelle’s Linguistic Inventory. The sample consists of 144 informants, interviewed by Koelle, for which their means of enslavement is known.*

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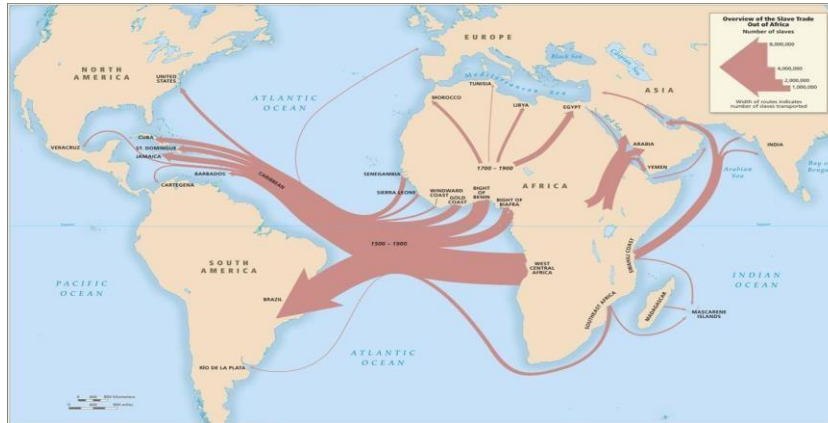
<sup>2</sup> Adi, H. (2012). *BBC - History - British History in depth: Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. [online] Bbc.co.uk. Available at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa\\_article\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml).

<sup>3</sup> Adi, H. (2012). *BBC - History - British History in depth: Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. [online] Bbc.co.uk. Available at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa\\_article\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml).



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*The National Endowment for the Humanities. (n.d.). Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database . [online] Available at: <https://www.neh.gov/news/voyages-the-transatlantic-slave-trade->*

The slaves were forced to work under almost no protective legal or humanitarian conditions, and almost none of them were allowed to return home to their homeland of origin. Africa remains to this day the only continent that has experienced a massive loss in population and subsequently economic underdevelopment due to slave trade.

“Between 1400 and 1900, the African continent experienced four simultaneous slave trades. The largest and most well-known is the trans-Atlantic slave trade where, beginning in the fifteenth century, slaves were shipped from West Africa, West-Central Africa, and

Eastern Africa to the European colonies in the New World. “<sup>4</sup>

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The UN has declared that in light of this history that “In commemoration of the memory of the victims, the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/122 of 17 December 2007, declared 25 March the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, to be observed annually.”<sup>5</sup> The implementation of this resolution additionally aims to mobilize educational institutions, civil society and further organizations to keep this history inculcated within the generations, to prevent future occurrences and learn from the past.

## Slavery in Libya

After the removal of the dictator, Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya was plunged into sociopolitical, socio-economic, and humanitarian turmoil as the power vacuum made way for the establishing of gangs and militia groups that creating various human trafficking syndicates. The militia groups created an illegal immigration path from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. This instability in Libya created a breeding ground for the trading of human cargo.

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<sup>4</sup> Nunn, N., 2008. The long-term effects of Africa's slave trades. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(1), pp.139-176.

<sup>5</sup> Nations, U. (n.d.). *Slave Trade*. [online] United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/slave-trade>.

Migrant labourers fell victim to practices of this slave trade. Many migrants who were fleeing from poverty, civil war, famine, and religious persecution and who are in search of opportunity and a better life for themselves and their families. Despite the inhumane conditions of the facilities that the migrants are held in, the cycle continues as a 2019

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report states that there were as many as 800 000 migrants in Libya<sup>6</sup>. Many of the migrants that are captured by these Libyan militia groups and slave traders are subject to unhygienic and unsanitary living conditions. Which has raised alarm with the development of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those who manage to make it to Europe are often faced with 'Draconian laws' that are aimed at curbing the influx of African migrants. Many of the migrants end up in European farms and factories where they are underpaid and underfed. The production of many household goods can be traced back to these factories and farms. Items such as tomatoes grown in Italy, jewelry and canned fruit.

### **What has the UN done to address this problem?**

On the 7 November 2017, the UN Security Council came up with the following resolutions regarding the Libyan slave trade:

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<sup>6</sup> BORGEM. (2020). *Slavery and Human Trafficking in Libya*. [online] Available at: <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/slavery-and-human-trafficking-in-libya/>.





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- The Libyan Presidency Council of the Government National Accord condemns and denounces all human trafficking and declared it a crime against humanity.
- The African Union calls for an immediate end to all practices of human trafficking in and outside of Libya.

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- The UN security council reaffirms its support for the UN action to address this issue.
  - The UNSC aims to boost efforts to coordinate the mismanaged and largely unfacilitated migration movements in Libya.
  - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) pledges humanitarian assistance to displaced migrants in Libya.
  - The UNSC stresses the need to transfer detainees to the designated authorities.

## **The Current Situation in Libya**

Migrant labourers from African states such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Gambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo make their way through dangerous terrain to reach Libya to find economic advancement only to be met with an even worse situation than they were escaping. Over the past 5 years, an estimated 650 000 men and women have been known to cross the Sahara Desert in search of a better life for themselves and their families only to be met with imprisonment, forced labour and in many women's cases prostitution.

Modern day slavery is seen as a lucrative enterprise for human traffickers and extortionists. The European Union's inhumane migrant labour laws are aimed at curbing the influx of unskilled migrant labourers to help perpetuate these inhumane working and living conditions. If the migrants make it out of the Libyan migrant prisons, they are often faced with the equally grim fate of being an underpaid labourer on an Italian farm.

Italy plays an integral role in this neo-slavery relationship due to its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea which essentially tunnels in immigrants from Africa into Italy. An Italian gang-based system called Caporalato allows for unsuspecting immigrants to essentially be 'sold' to Italian farmers at unbelievably low prices. The farmers do this to avoid payroll taxes, safety requirements and minimum wage policies. An indicator of caporalato products is extremely low market prices. Many domestic products such as pet food, canned tomatoes and jewelry can be linked to modern day slavery which means consumers around the world are unknowingly contributing to this exploitative process.

Although there have been numerous humanitarian actions such as the French president, Emmanuel Macron calling for the military rescue of the immigrants in Libya and the European Union's calling for "swift action against this heinous humanitarian crisis"<sup>7</sup> The issue of the inhumane living and working conditions in Libya and further in Europe still prevails. Limited media coverage of the crisis aides the continuation of it. The coronavirus pandemic has also taken great precedent in the media and public focus. While the pandemic is a very pressing and urgent issue, other humanitarian issues such as this

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<sup>7</sup> International Labour Organization (2019). *International Labour Organization*. [online] ilo.org. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm>.

contemporary slave trade still require great attention and action from organisations such as the United Nations Human Rights Council.



www.aa.com.tr. (n.d.). *UN Security Council to discuss Libya slave trade*. [online] Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/un-security-council-to-discuss-libya-slave-trade/981077> [Accessed 17 Jul. 2021].

The High Contracting Parties undertake, each in respect of the territories placed under its sovereignty, jurisdiction, protection, suzerainty or tutelage, so far as they have not already taken the necessary steps:

- To prevent and suppress the slave trade;
- To bring about, progressively, and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms.”<sup>8</sup>

## Impact on Development in Africa

“The largest and best-known was the trans-Atlantic slave trade where, beginning in the 15th century, slaves were shipped from West Africa, West Central Africa, and Eastern Africa to the European colonies in the New World.”<sup>9</sup> The 1400 to 1800s saw the peak of the Atlantic Slave Trade yet it has caused lasting hindrances on modern African development. This operation affected the African continent and continues to devastate Africa economically, sociologically, and culturally.

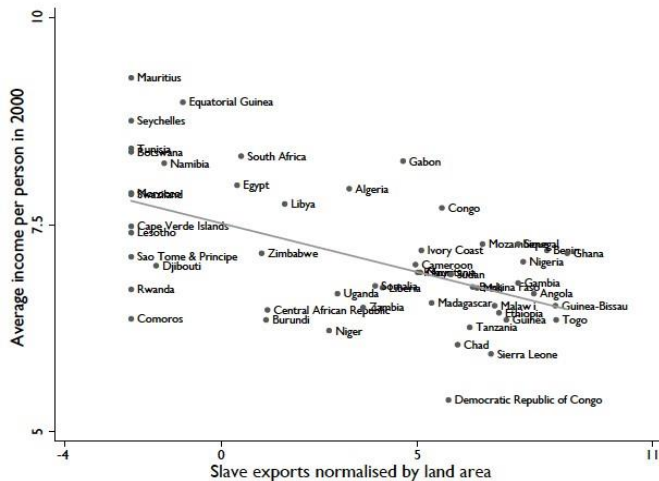
The Afro-Atlantic slave trade was not the first of its kind as history since African slaves were traded across the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the trans-Saharan prior to the Atlantic slave trade. However, the legacy of the slave trades in Africa - especially the Atlantic slave

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<sup>8</sup> Slavery Convention Signed at Geneva on 25 September 1926. (n.d.). [online]. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/slavery.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Nunn, N. (2017). *Understanding the long-run effects of Africa’s slave trades* | VOX, CEPR Policy Portal. [online] Voxeu.org. Available at: <https://voxeu.org/article/understanding-long-run-effects-africa-s-slavetrades>.

trade - persists in contemporary society since the Sub-Saharan East Africa is still referred to as the “Slave Coast”.



**Graph 1** The relationship between slave exports (normalised by a country’s land area) and real per capita GDP in 2000. Both variables are measured on a log scale

Experts have long speculated that the states most affected by the trans-Atlantic slave trade are the most economically underdeveloped today. In **Graph 1** researched by Nunn (2008), the trend between states impacted by the slave trade and the average income in the year 2000 was investigated and a direct correlation was found between the African

states that were most affected by the slave trade and economic underdevelopment. This correlation is still argued to date, some suggesting that the states whereby the slaves were exported were initially the most underdeveloped. It is additionally important to note that collecting data about the slave trade relies heavily on estimates.

Green (2013), also proposed a theory for ethnic fractionalisation. Ethnic fractionalisation is defined as “*Ethnic fractionalization* (EF) deals with the number, sizes, socioeconomic distribution, and geographical location of distinct cultural groups, usually in a state or some otherwise delineated territory”<sup>10</sup> According to Green’s data the contrast and difference between Africa and the remainder of the world can be explained by the TransAtlantic Slave Trade.<sup>11</sup>

Over the years there have been many studies undertaken that investigate the cultural effects of the Slave Trade. “Research by Edlund and Ku (2011), Dalton and Leung (2014), and Bertocchi and Dimico (2015) found that the trans-Atlantic slave trade resulted in a long-term increase in the prevalence of polygyny (i.e., the practice of men having multiple wives).”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> www.encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). *Ethnic Fractionalization* | *Encyclopedia.com*. [online] Available at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/ethnicfractionalization> [Accessed 19 Jul. 2021].

<sup>11</sup> Nunn, N. (2017). *Understanding the long-run effects of Africa’s slave trades* | VOX, CEPR Policy Portal. [online] Voxeu.org. Available at: <https://voxeu.org/article/understanding-long-run-effects-africa-s-slavetrades>.

<sup>12</sup> Nunn, N. (2017). *Understanding the long-run effects of Africa’s slave trades* | VOX, CEPR Policy Portal. [online] Voxeu.org. Available at: <https://voxeu.org/article/understanding-long-run-effects-africa-s-slavetrades>.

Other cultural implications of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade can be summed up as the following:

- Familial/Relationship Fragmentation
- Depopulation and Displacement

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- Restrictions on trade development
  - Psychological Damages to the persons
  - Dehumanization of African citizens

## **The impact of slave trade on African states**

Human trafficking rates in many regions of Africa have risen significantly because of capability limitations in the management of sub-regional economic cooperation and regional integration projects among African states. This scenario prompted various actions by policymakers and other stakeholders at the continental, regional, and national levels. Many African states have found it difficult to combat human trafficking because of ineffective policies and capabilities, although legislations are in place. The integration of a lack of political will, political and institutional corruption, and a variety of other underlying persistent socioeconomic problems that these governments face have made the battle against human trafficking nearly impossible<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Paul O. Bello and Adewale A. Olutola (February 25th, 2020). The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Jane Reeves, IntechOpen, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.83820. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/70938>

The difficulties and challenges of slave trade frequently revolve around the desire for cheap labour and exploitation, including the willingness to satisfy fundamental economic necessities for existence. Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Senegal are all transit and destination states for trafficking women and children. Trafficking in young females from rural parts of Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Ghana to work in cocoa plantations in

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urban Côte d'Ivoire. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) 2017 report, children made up more than a quarter of all discovered trafficking victims worldwide, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 64%<sup>14</sup>. This statistic is likely to have risen in recent years due to the ongoing political and economic problems in Sub-Saharan Africa, which have driven many individuals, especially women and children, to flee their homes in search of fresh possibilities in neighboring states<sup>15</sup>.

Southern Africa is plagued with human trafficking. South Africa is a main staple for human commodity trade. Political instability, insurgencies, poverty, hunger, unemployment, abduction, and terrorism, among other things, have made South Africa an attraction for migration flows from other African states. Ugandan and Kenyan women are trafficked for prostitution in the Gulf States along the East African axis. Along with Uganda's ongoing conflicts, rebel commanders have been able to kidnap children, young girls, and women

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<sup>14</sup> UNODC. Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; 2006

<sup>15</sup> Paul O. Bello and Adewale A. Olutola (February 25th 2020). The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Jane Reeves, IntechOpen, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.83820. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/70938>



from opposition camps. While girls, young ladies, and women are forced into prostitution in Uganda, boys and men work in agriculture, construction, and other labour - intensive sectors. Furthermore, Kenya acts as a source, transit, and destination state for young girls and women trafficked to and from Europe<sup>16</sup>.

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Undocumented migrants from Mali, Niger, Cameroon, and Nigeria are targeted by traffickers in Africa's Sub-Saharan area due to their unlawful status and linguistic limitations. These types of migrants are subjected to various types of exploitation by traffickers, who frequently deceive them in order to fill open positions in the labour and sexual trafficking sectors. Illegal migrants frequently fall prey to traffickers in North Africa, while attempting to breach the borders of some of the region's governments enroute to Europe in the hope of improving their lives. Due to the long distance they must cover, and the cost of transportation, these illegal migrants often run out of money, seek avenues to survive. As a result of the enormous distances, they must travel and the high expense of transportation, these illegal migrants frequently run out of money and look for other ways to live<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Paul O. Bello and Adewale A. Olutola (February 25th, 2020). The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Jane Reeves, IntechOpen, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.83820. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/70938>



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<sup>18</sup> Figure 1: Human Trafficking Tier map

<sup>17</sup> Paul O. Bello and Adewale A. Olutola (February 25th, 2020). The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Jane Reeves, IntechOpen, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.83820. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/70938>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.asec-sldi.org/news/current/human-trafficking-sub-saharan-africa/>

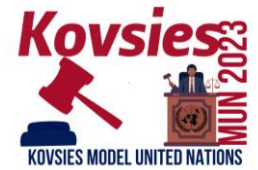
## Topic Questions to Consider

1. Do institutions covertly fund/support slave trade and if so in what specific industries is slave trade the most lucrative?
2. How does slave trade affect civil society?
3. Is human trafficking distinguishable from slave trade?
4. Is there a viable long term/final solution for slave trade?
5. Is slavery more prevalent in certain states/areas?
6. Does civil society's lack of awareness around slave trade contribute to slave trade?
7. What does slavery look like in certain member states i.e., child labor, contract slavery, sex trafficking, forced marriages, child soldiers etc.?



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8. What is the government's role regarding the slave trade and how can citizens be protected from the slave trade?
9. Why have previous measures to combat the slave trade proved to be unsuccessful?
10. How does slave trade contribute to the sociopolitical climate of states?