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The 8.7 Quarterly Commonwealth 8.7 Network Spring 2025

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network Newsletter! Here you will find news about the 8.7 Network, the impact of our work across all regions, useful resources and tools, as well as our latest updates and activities. @CMW87network www.commonwealth-87.org Commonwealth 8.7 Network LinkedIn Commonwealth 8.7 Network Facebook

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About the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network is an international, member-driven network of over 100 national and local civil society organisations and individuals united by a common vision to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking.

Our members work on diverse issues including survivor advocacy, direct assistance and vocational training for survivors, child protection, women's rights, migrants' rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and human rights due diligence for businesses. Founded by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the Commonwealth 8.7 Network is

named after the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7. The Network serves as a knowledge-sharing platform working collaboratively to raise awareness, build capacity, and advocate for legal and policy change.

In 2019, the Commonwealth 8.7 Network received the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Award for Innovation for Sustainable Development. Join us today and let's work together to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking!

https://www.commonwealth-87.org/become-a-member

Message from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Secretariat to the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Dear 8.7 Network Members and Friends,

We are pleased to share the Spring edition of The 8.7 Quarterly Newsletter, which highlights a persistent yet often hidden form of modern slavery:domestic servitude—forced labour in private homes.

Domestic workers, especially migrant women and girls, often work behind closed doors with little to no protection. Many endure long



hours, withheld wages, restricted movement, and abuse. Legal and immigration frameworks in many countries continue to exclude domestic workers from labour protections, leaving them especially vulnerable to exploitation.

With the global demand for live-in domestic labour rising-driven by demographic shifts, inequality, and displacement—the risks of exploitation are increasing. Urgent action must strengthen legal safeguards, ensure access to justice, and reform tied visa regimes. Survivor experiences and grassroots efforts should guide our collective response.

In 2021, CHRI published a report on <u>domestic work in the Commonwealth</u> which sheds light on the blurred lines between decent work and conditions that amount to servitude. The findings remain relevant in understanding how legal gaps and lack of oversight continue to enable hidden exploitation.

We must continue to amplify hidden voices, push for stronger protections, and collaborate across borders to ensure no one is left behind-especially those whose work remains unseen. Sincerely,

Sneh Aurora Director, CHRI UK

Spotlight

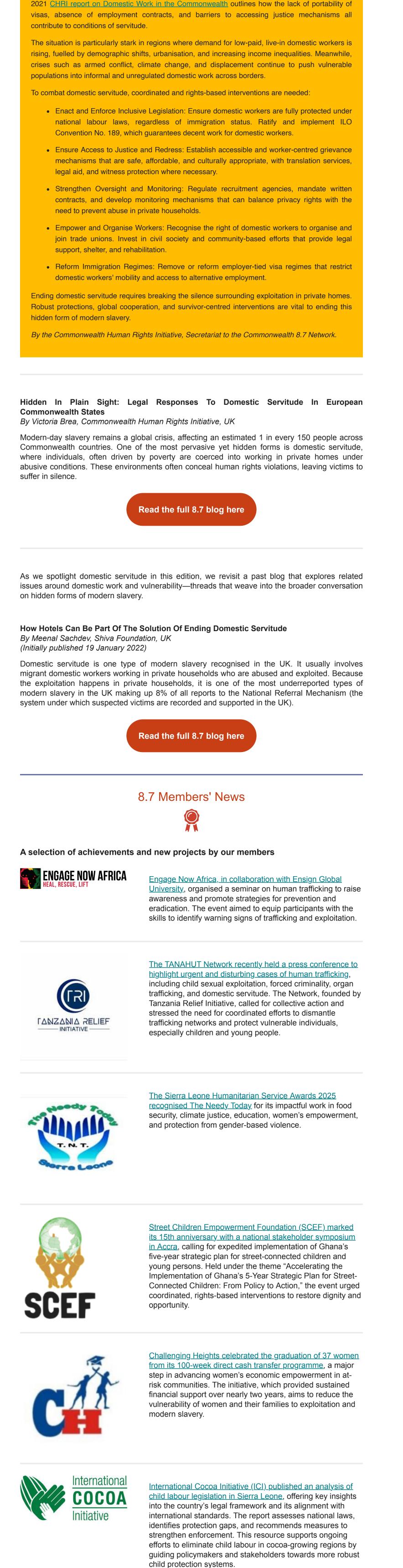


On Behind Closed Doors: Forced Labour in Private Homes

Forced labour in private homes-commonly known as domestic servitude-remains one of the most hidden and persistent forms of modern slavery worldwide. Victims, often women and girls from impoverished or marginalised communities, are trafficked or coerced into situations where they work long hours for little or no pay, under threat, manipulation, or deception. Deprived of freedom, contact with the outside world, and often access to basic rights, they are trapped in exploitative working and living conditions behind closed doors.

According to the International Labour Organisation, there is an estimated <u>75.6 million people</u> in the domestic work sector as of 2021-over 76% of whom are women. Many endure multiple and intersecting forms of abuse: physical violence, sexual exploitation, withheld wages, restricted movement, and threats of deportation, especially when their immigration status is tied to their employer.

The hidden nature of domestic settings makes this form of exploitation particularly difficult to detect and address. Migrant domestic workers-especially those on tied visa schemes-face even greater risks. In many countries, legal frameworks exclude domestic workers from labour protections, further reinforcing their vulnerability. Without regular labour inspections, grievance mechanisms, or social protection, those trapped in domestic servitude find few avenues for escape or justice. The





HAART Kenya received the Silver Award in the Human Rights & Equitable Livelihoods category at the inaugural Warriors for Good Awards. The recognition celebrates its tireless efforts to combat human trafficking and promote equitable livelihoods across the country.

KIWOHEDE omen Health and ment Organization

KIWOHEDE, Tanzania, through its Youth Ready Project, held graduation ceremonies for young people who completed vocational training in various fields. The initiative equips youth with skills and knowledge for employment and independent living, marking a significant step toward economic empowerment.



Empower People hosted a State Executive Meeting of the Survivors Collective in Panipat, India, under its Activating Survivor's Advocacy Program (ASAP). The event brought together survivors, community leaders, and advocates to strengthen grassroots efforts against bride trafficking, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. The session featured powerful testimonies, strategic discussions, and the drafting of a survivor-led Demand Charter outlining priorities

for reform, support, and justice.



Snehalaya proudly announced that Rui Chhattishi village has become the first child marriage-free village in Ahilyanagar district. Snehalaya's dedicated team achieved this milestone by working closely with the local community. Their aim is working toward ending child marriage district-wide by 2027.



Hope for Justice shared the story of a trafficking survivor in Ethiopia who, thanks to sustained support, has avoided reexploitation. After returning from domestic servitude in Saudi Arabia, she faced severe emotional and physical trauma. The Hope for Justice team and their local partners provided counselling, medical care, and reintegration support. This case underscores the importance of survivor-centred, longterm assistance in breaking the cycle of exploitation and enabling lasting recovery.



Justice and Care, in partnership with the City of London Sheriff, recently hosted a high-level event to strengthen efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking. The gathering brought together law enforcement officials,

policymakers, and civil society actors to explore collaborative approaches to victim support and justice delivery. The organisation showcased its pioneering work in supporting survivors, disrupting trafficking networks, and advocating for systemic reforms that centre victims in anti-trafficking responses.

Events for your calendars



ATLEU Training Programme 2025

May-October 2025

ATLEU ANTI TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR EXPLOITATION UNIT

Find more information here.

accommodation.

Slavery Past, Present & Future: Conference hosted by 26 - 28 June 2025

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Aimed at legal and support professionals working with

trafficking and slavery survivors, the sessions will cover legal evidence, National Referral Mechanism reconsideration

requests, appeals, judicial reviews, legal representation, and

This interdisciplinary conference aims to explore the multifaceted nature of slavery and enslavement across history and in contemporary contexts. Participants will engage in discussions on topics such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade, modern forms of exploitation, and the legacies of slavery. The conference seeks to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue and insights into the persistence of various forms of exploitation.

Find more information here



Domestic Work is Work

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

This report underscores the vulnerability of domestic workers to contemporary forms of slavery, including human trafficking, forced labour, and debt bondage. It advocates for the ratification and implementation of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), highlighting case studies from countries like India, Uganda, South Africa, and Jamaica. The report emphasises the need for legal recognition, social protections, and the empowerment of domestic workers through unionisation and policy reforms.

Read the report here.



Achilles UK Ethical Business Report 2025 Achilles UK

This report reveals frontline insights into modern slavery risks across construction sites, and offers practical guidance to help the industry strengthen ethical labour practices. Based on data collected through Achilles' Ethical Business Programme, the report draws from on-theground interviews with 9,834 workers representing 102 nationalities, across hundreds of sites in the UK and Ireland. These frontline insights provide a detailed view into the conditions facing those most at risk of exploitation.

Read the report <u>here</u>.

Global Commission on Modern Slavery No Country is Immune: Together to end modern slavery & Human Trafficking and human trafficking Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

> We live in a world grappling with unprecedented challenges climate change, mass migration, and conflict – all contributing to a surge in modern slavery and human trafficking. This report reveals the stark reality of this hidden crime, affecting millions worldwide. It's a call for urgent, collaborative action, offering concrete recommendations to governments, businesses, and civil society to eradicate this pervasive violation of human rights.

Read the report here.

Effectiveness of Forced Labour Import Bans



Modern Slavery PEC

This policy briefing examines the growing use of forced labour import bans and their potential to address labour exploitation in global supply chains. It discusses how such bans can drive corporate accountability while highlighting implementation challenges and the risk of unintended consequences for workers.

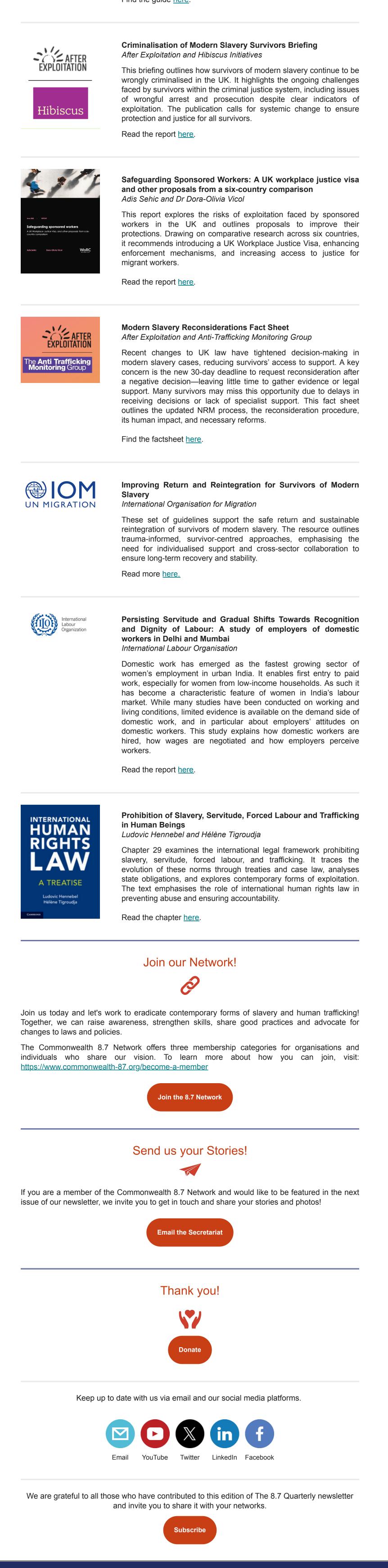
Read the briefing <u>here</u>.



Slavery and Human Trafficking in Supply Chains: Guidance for businesses UK Government

This guide offers practical advice for businesses on how to meet the transparency requirements under the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015. It outlines steps to identify and address risks of modern slavery in supply chains, covering areas such as risk assessment, due diligence, and reporting. The guide aims to support ethical business

practices and improve corporate accountability. Find the guide <u>here</u>.



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