



## ***Anti-Slavery Day Bill***

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This note provides an overview of the [Anti-Slavery Day Bill](#), Bill 20 of 2009-10, which was presented in the House of Commons on 16 December 2009 and is due to have its second reading on 5 February 2010. The Bill is a Private Member's Bill introduced by Anthony Steen, founder of the [All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking](#), who drew sixth place in the 2009-10 ballot for Private Members' Bills.

The Bill would require the Secretary of State to designate a date for an annual "Anti-Slavery Day", which would be used to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of modern-day slavery and human trafficking. The Bill extends to England and Wales.

Related House of Commons Library publications include:

- SN/HA/4324 [Human trafficking: UK responses](#)
- SN/HA/3753 [Human trafficking: international responses](#)

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 Trafficking: an overview

A detailed overview of human trafficking and the UK responses to this issue is available in Library Standard Note SN/HA/4324 [Human trafficking: UK responses](#). The Home Office has described trafficking in the following terms:

### **What is human Trafficking?**

In summary, human trafficking occurs when a person is coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited. It consists in a combination of 3 basic components – an action (eg recruitment); by a means (e.g. threat of force, or fraud); for the purpose of exploitation.

The Council of Europe definition of trafficking is:

“Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or the use of force or other forms of coercion, or abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practises similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

(...)

### **Is there any difference between smuggling, illegal migration and human trafficking?**

Trafficking shouldn't be confused with illegal migration and people smuggling. They're not the same. Migration can be by legal or illegal means, either forcibly or voluntarily. By far the vast majority of people entering the UK illegally are smuggled voluntarily rather than trafficked. Human Trafficking tends to occur when there are inequalities of power; with individuals exerting control over the actions of another for their own benefit. It is a criminal offence that usually involves a violation of human rights. Victims can be subjected to multiple 'crimes' including intimidation, kidnapping, violence and sexual abuse in a bid to coerce or force them into activity against their freewill. Human Trafficking is often linked to organised crime but can also occur where vulnerable individuals are working within a 'domestic' setting and isolated from the rest of society (for example domestic servitude).<sup>1</sup>

There are still no robust estimates of the number of people – adults or children - trafficked to the UK for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation. However, various estimates do exist. A Home Office estimate of the scale of trafficking in the UK is set out in its Regulatory Impact Assessment regarding ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*:

### **Scale of Human Trafficking**

The UK is primarily a destination country for trafficked men, women, and children. The overall scale of human trafficking remains unclear although internal research

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office, [Trafficking Questions and Answers](#), April 2009

conducted in 2003 suggests that at any one time there were approximately 4,000 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the UK. More recent intelligence estimates from the police led Operation Pentameter 2 are consistent with the earlier research findings, suggesting that the scale of this form of trafficking has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years.

There are no reliable estimates of the number of those trafficked to the UK for the purposes of forced labour, although there are limited findings from Operation Tolerance, a pilot conducted over four months in targeted geographical and employment areas.<sup>2</sup>

During 2008 and 2009 the Home Affairs Committee conducted an inquiry into human trafficking in the UK; its report, published in May 2009, highlighted the lack of accurate statistical information and estimated that there are at least 5,000 trafficking victims in the UK:

28. Neither the NGOs nor government agencies were willing even to guess the total number of trafficking victims in the UK. Chief Constable Maxwell, Programme Director of the UKHTC, one of whose main responsibilities is to obtain accurate information about the scale of the problem, admitted “at the minute I do not think we have got a real handle on what the figures are”. The same few statistical studies in specific areas (the Poppy Project’s analysis of information provided by victims of sexual exploitation who had been referred to it, Kalayaan’s analysis of responses from its migrant domestic worker clients, ECPAT UK’s research on child victims in three UK regions) were cited to us time and again. The nearest we came to an overall total was when we added up the result of these studies and suggested to Anti-Slavery International that they implied that there were more than 5000 victims in the UK; Anti-Slavery International concurred.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Existing anti-slavery days

A number of anti-slavery remembrance days are currently observed, although the focus of these tends to be on commemorating the historical abolition of the transatlantic slave trade as opposed to raising awareness of modern-day slavery and trafficking.

### ***United Nations remembrance days***

#### **25 March**

On 28 November 2006, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly designated 25 March 2007 as an International Day for the Commemoration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.<sup>4</sup> This date marked two hundred years since the UK Parliament passed the [Abolition of the Slave Trade Act](#).

On 17 December 2007, the UN General Assembly resolved that 25 March should continue to be marked in subsequent years as an annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, beginning in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the annual remembrance day is:

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<sup>2</sup> Home Office, [Regulatory Impact Assessment of ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#), 6 October 2008

<sup>3</sup> Home Affairs Committee, [The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK](#), 6 May 2009, HC23-I 2008-09, para 28

<sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/61/19, [Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade](#), 28 November 2006

<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/122, [Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade](#), 17 December 2007

... to honour the memory of those who died as a result of slavery as well as those who have been exposed to the horrors of the middle passage and have fought for freedom from enslavement. In addition, it is a day to discuss the causes, consequences, and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade in order to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to commemorating the abolition of slavery, the day is also intended to serve as:

a reminder that contemporary forms of slavery – such as human trafficking, forced prostitution, child soldiers, forced and bonded labour and the use of children in the international drug trade – are still flourishing today, largely as a result of vulnerability exacerbated by poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.<sup>7</sup>

## 23 August

On 12 November 1997, the General Conference of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted a resolution proclaiming 23 August as an annual International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.<sup>8</sup> This date commemorates the anniversary of an uprising by slaves on the island of Santo Domingo (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic):

This date symbolises the fact that slaves were the principal actors of their freedom. Effectively, the insurrection that occurred in Saint Domingue (today Republic of Haiti and Dominican Republic), in the night of 22 to 23 August 1791, irremediably affected slavery system. This revolt was the start point to the transatlantic slave trade abolition process. Besides, this date pays tribute to the historic resistance that led to the creation of the first black independent State, the Republic of Haiti.<sup>9</sup>

UNESCO describes the purpose of the annual commemoration in the following terms:

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with the goals of the intercultural project "The Slave Route", it should offer an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, the methods and the consequences of this tragedy, and for an analysis of the interactions to which it has given rise between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.<sup>10</sup>

## 2 December

On 2 December 1949, the UN General Assembly adopted the *UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others*.<sup>11</sup> The anniversary of this date is commemorated each year as the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. In a message issued on 2 December 2009, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said:

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<sup>6</sup> UN website, [International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Background Information](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>7</sup> UN website, [International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Factsheet: Slavery Today](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO Resolution 29 C/40, *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition*, 12 November 1997

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO website, [Commemorations](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO website, [23 August: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and of its Abolition](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]. For further details on the "Slave Route" project, see the UNESCO website, [The Slave Route](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>11</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 317(IV), *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others*, 2 December 1949

On the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, we express our commitment to the complete eradication of slavery and slavery-like practices.

Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”. Yet slavery remains a grave and unresolved problem. This is true in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe.

(...)

Combating slavery means not only its direct prohibition by law but also fighting against poverty, illiteracy, economic and social disparities, gender discrimination and violence against women and children. We need to enforce laws against slavery; create mechanisms to combat such practices; reinforce bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including with non-governmental organizations that assist victims; and launch awareness-raising campaigns.

On this International Day, let us renew our pledge to assist and protect the victims and to do our utmost to ensure the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.<sup>12</sup>

### ***UK remembrance day***

During a March 2007 adjournment debate on the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, the then Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott said the Government was:

... encouraging a debate about how we can commemorate the anniversary as a national event in the future. Should we have a national day of commemoration every year, and if so, when? The House may be aware that the European Commission supports 11 June as the European day against human trafficking. That day could be a candidate for an annual commemorative event, but I leave that for discussion.<sup>13</sup>

The issue of a remembrance day was revisited in a parliamentary question later that month:

### **Slavery Remembrance Day**

**Ms Butler:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to implement a slavery remembrance day. [129790]

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** As I said in the House on 20 March 2007, Official Report, column 688, the Government are encouraging a debate about how we can commemorate the slave trade in the future. We are aware of the strong calls for a national day for the remembrance of the slave trade and its abolition as well as highlighting the problem of modern day slavery, and are actively considering the issue.

As the House is aware, events and activities are taking place throughout this bicentenary year but with a special focus on both 25 March (the date Royal Assent was given to the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807) and 23 August (the UNESCO international day for the remembrance of the slave trade and its abolition). The House will be aware, however, that other dates have been suggested: the European Commission, for example, supports 11 June as a possible European day against human trafficking. As I made clear in the House on 20 March 2007, Official Report, column 722, we are approaching the issue from a very positive perspective and Ministers are keen to listen to the views of our local communities as this year

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<sup>12</sup> UN website, [International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: Message of the Secretary-General for 2009](#) [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>13</sup> [HC Deb 20 March 2007 c688](#)

progresses on whether there should be a remembrance day and, if so, on what date it should fall.<sup>14</sup>

On 13 December 2007, the Department for Communities and Local Government confirmed that:

...the 23 August - UNESCO's day for the International Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition - will be adopted as the focal date for national commemorations in the years to come.<sup>15</sup>

23 August 2008 marked the first year of national observance of this date. There were a series of events around the UK, particularly in port cities such as London, Bristol and Liverpool, organised by local authorities, community groups and cultural institutions. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund both funded community-based projects aimed at promoting greater understanding of the slave trade and its legacies. The Heritage Lottery Fund also funded a number of exhibitions, galleries and museums, including the [International Slavery Museum](#) in Liverpool, the “[London, Sugar & Slavery](#)” gallery at the Museum of London Docklands, the “[Breaking the Chains](#)” exhibition at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol and the [Wilberforce House Museum](#) in Hull.<sup>16</sup> Similar commemorative events took place on 23 August 2009.<sup>17</sup>

## 2 The Bill

The Bill would require the Secretary of State to specify a date to be observed annually as “Anti-Slavery Day”. The main focus of the date would be to highlight the problem of modern-day slavery rather than to commemorate the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, as set out in clause 1(2) of the Bill:

- (2) The purpose of Anti-Slavery day shall be to -
- (a) acknowledge that modern-day slavery is taking the place of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and that millions of men, women and children continue to be victims of modern-day slavery, depriving them of basic human dignity and freedom;
  - (b) raise awareness amongst young people and others of the dangers and consequences of modern-day slavery, human trafficking and exploitation and encourage them to be proactive in the fight against it;
  - (c) draw attention to –
    - (i) the progress made by government and those working to combat all forms of modern-day slavery, human trafficking and exploitation, and
    - (ii) what more needs to be done.

Clause 1(3) of the Bill defines “modern-day slavery” to include sex trafficking, child trafficking, trafficking for forced labour and domestic servitude.

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<sup>14</sup> [HC Deb 23 March 2007, cc1172-1173W](#)

<sup>15</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government news release, [Abolition to be remembered in future years](#), 13 December 2007

<sup>16</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government/Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [UNESCO International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition](#), 23 August 2008

Speaking in a Westminster Hall debate on human trafficking on 20 January 2010, Anthony Steen outlined the purpose of the Bill:

My private Member's Bill, the Anti-Slavery Day Bill, is to have its Second Reading on 5 February. I want to introduce a national anti-slavery day to reinforce the focus and the understanding of the general public. Such a day would continue to draw attention to the evils of human trafficking post-Wilberforce, and to how that is displaying itself in British society. An anti-slavery day would cost the taxpayer nothing, but could do a great deal of good. I hope that the Minister will say how he feels about that. I hope that all parties in Parliament will support me on 5 February and help me to get my Bill through the Commons quickly.<sup>18</sup>

On 27 January 2010, Mr Steen asked for the Government's views on the establishment of an Anti-Slavery Day and received the following response:

### Anti-Slavery Day

Q13. [313314] **Mr. Anthony Steen (Totnes) (Con):** If he will make it his policy to support the establishment of an Anti-Slavery Day in the UK to raise awareness of human trafficking.

**Ms Harman:** The Government are determined to combat human trafficking. We are considering the hon. Gentleman's proposal for the establishment of an awareness day, and will respond to him in due course.

**Mr. Steen:** We need that day even more now. Before the earthquake in Haiti, many of the 200 orphanages there were actually fronts for child trafficking. Since the earthquake, we have a new problem: 380,000 children at risk. Will the right hon. and learned Lady speak to her international aid contacts this afternoon and establish a network for children at risk, so that they have somewhere safe to be until they can trace their family or until there is time to set up some kind of arrangement to ensure their safety? The traffickers are circling. We need to make sure they do not catch the children.

**Ms Harman:** I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman for his work on the issue, which he has consistently and intelligently raised in the House. I agree that there is work to be done by the police and prosecutors internationally. There is also the work of voluntary organisations, which I know he supports, helping to bring the message warning people of the dangers of trafficking, and protecting those victims. I congratulate him on his suggestion. We will look into it.<sup>19</sup>

The Bill is due to have its second reading in the House of Commons on 5 February 2010. Information on the Bill's progress can be found on the [Parliament website](#).

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, International Slavery Museum website, *Slavery Remembrance Day Festival: 21 to 23 August 2009* [accessed 3 February 2010] and Parliament website, *Commemorative quilt on display* [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>18</sup> [HC Deb 20 January 2010 c111WH](#)

<sup>19</sup> [HC Deb 27 January 2010 c810](#)