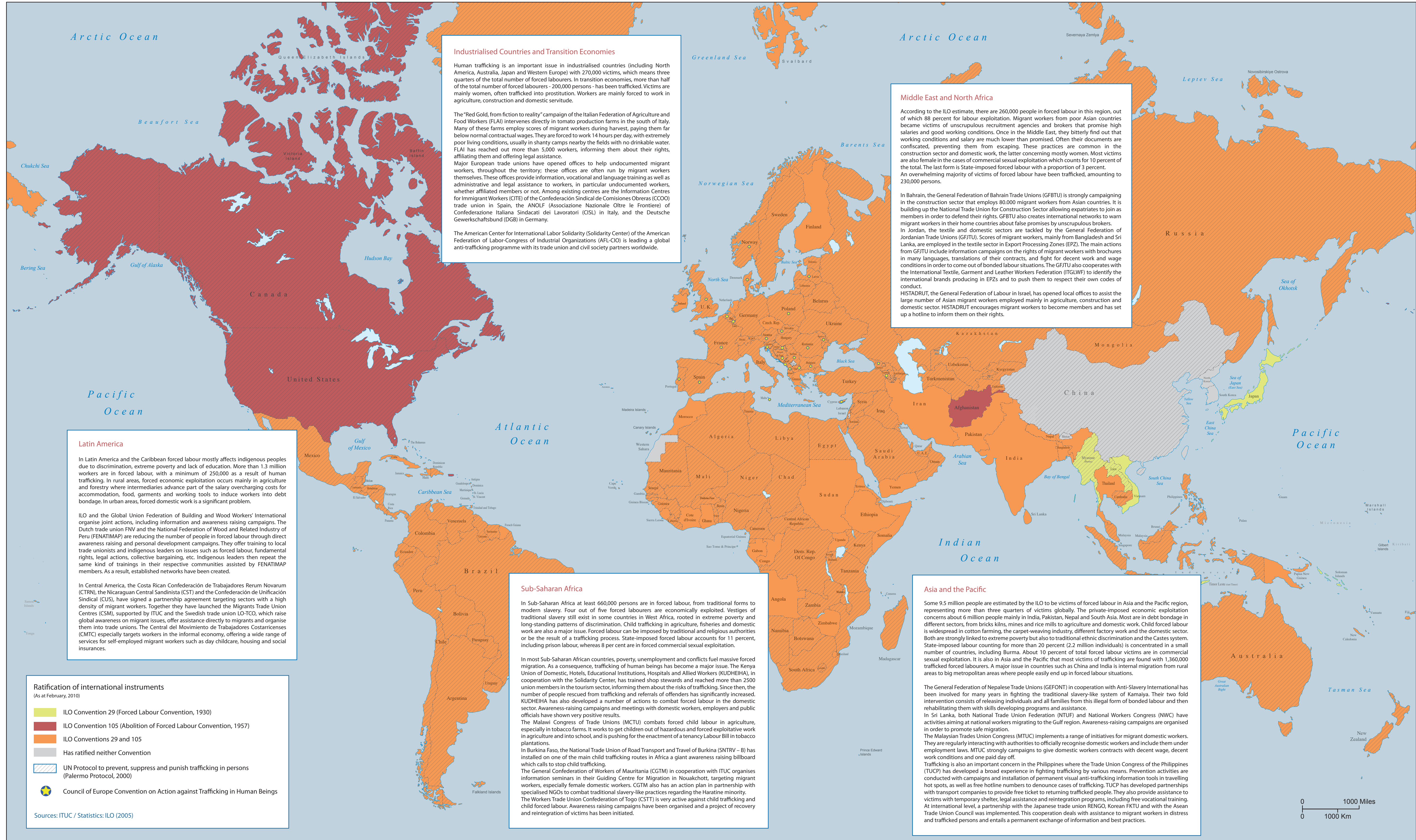


Workers' Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking



What is forced labour?

Forced labour is « All work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily » ILO *Forced Labour Convention, 1930* (No. 29).

In practice, forced labour is a situation where a person is not free to leave his or her work because of threats, debts, or other forms of physical or psychological coercion.

Forced labour is a global problem, affecting almost all countries of the world. There are at least 12.3 million persons in forced labour nowadays, including 2.45 million victims of trafficking. Most victims are poverty-stricken people in Asia, Latin America and Africa, whose vulnerability is exploited by others for profit.

Yet over 350,000 women and men are also in forced labour in industrialized countries, trafficked for either labour or sexual exploitation. Half of forced labourers are children.

In 2009, the ILO estimated that the total cost of coercion to the victims of forced labour - excluding those in commercial sexual exploitation - amounts to US\$ 21 billion. This represents underpayment of wages to them (including wage deductions made for food and other essentials, unpaid excessive overtime) and recruitment fees.

For more information on forced labour and trafficking, visit the website of the [ILO Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour](http://www.ilo.org/forcedlabour) www.ilo.org/forcedlabour

Global Trade Union Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking

Trade unions have been instrumental in fighting slavery and forced labour since the 19th century and need to continue to do so in the 21st. While some forced labour is exacted by State authorities, such as that imposed in Burma or in China, most victims of forced labour are found in the private economy.

Modern forms of forced labour are suffered by informal and migrant workers, in construction, domestic work, agriculture or forestry, through more subtle forms of coercion such as debt manipulation, withholding of wages or identity documents, threats of violence or denunciation.

These demand innovative approaches of the trade union movement to appropriately reach out to and extend workers' solidarity to these modern slaves.

Increasing numbers of trade unions are joining the global alliance, together with a range of expert NGOs, by stepping up their activism and increasing cooperation to combat and prevent new forms of forced labour, including human trafficking, while promoting traditional trade union organising of target group workers for their sustainable empowerment.

Join the alliance! Check out the website www.ituc-csi.org/forcedlabour or send an email to forcedlabour@ituc-csi.org.

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