

# IJM UK's Response to UK Government's **INTEGRATED REVIEW**

In early September 2020, [IJM](#) contributed to the Government's Integrated Review, to inform their Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. In considering the UK's role on the international stage, in both the short term and looking towards 2030, IJM believes it is essential that the UK Government prioritise ending the violence suffered by poor and marginalised communities. Below is a summary of IJM UK's submission to the Review.

## Increased risk of violence due to COVID-19

The global landscape has shifted due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, and it is clear the crisis has exacerbated vulnerabilities for many people around the world. The ongoing crisis coupled with the impunity enjoyed by many perpetrators of violence, pose a threat not only to vulnerable individuals, but to the UK's ambition for stability, development and an environment in which business can thrive.

### 1. MODERN SLAVERY

When lockdowns were implemented around the world, many migrant workers were left stranded and unable to return home. The economic impact of the crisis means many more workers have lost jobs and face great financial challenges. Around the world, people have struggled to access food or other essentials. Traffickers are known to take advantage of such vulnerability: making false offers of 'life-saving' employment opportunities.

### 2. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Women and children in abusive homes are likely to have been exposed to increased violence, as was highlighted by the [World Health Organisation](#), the [UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women](#) and [UNICEF](#). At the same time, access to vital services such as helplines, shelters, legal advice, and other forms of protection have been greatly reduced. It is essential to tackle this both in the UK and abroad, to ensure the long-term safety of vulnerable women and children.

### 3. ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Law enforcement agencies around the world, including the UK's [National Crime Agency](#), have highlighted the increased risk of the online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC), whereby sexual abuse of children is paid for, directed and live streamed by perpetrators often in Western countries, including the UK. According to the NCA, the UK is the third largest consumer of livestreamed abuse so urgent action is required to tackle the demand within the UK. Not only are British nationals posing a threat to children around the world, but there is a known connection between online abuse and contact abuse, therefore these predators likely pose a risk to British children too.

## Impunity

Organised and violent crime thrive where public justice systems are not equipped to respond proactively or effectively, allowing the perpetrators of violence to act with impunity. Not only does this harm the individual victims of those crimes, it hinders development and perpetuates poverty.

## 1. CREATES INSECURITY

The systematic failings and culture of impunity which allow modern slavery and other forms of violence to take place, also enable other organised crime and corruption to take hold. Along with negatively impacting the [livelihoods and quality of life](#) of ordinary citizens, this can undermine democracy and legitimate economies, creating instability and hindering development. Due to the cross-border nature of human trafficking and organised crime, this creates insecurity globally.

## 2. UNDERMINES DEVELOPMENT

Without the rule of law, the effectiveness of aid money and projects to enhance development or tackle modern slavery risk being diminished. Girls' educational initiatives or attempts to raise awareness of modern slavery will be undermined if the justice system cannot protect them from abuse or exploitation, and [communities may be destabilised](#). To achieve the SDGs by 2030 globally and in the UK, there needs to be an end to impunity so both perpetrators and victims know there will be consequences for crime and violence.

# Some of IJM's specific recommendations for the Integrated Review:

## 1. BUILD BACK BETTER FROM COVID-19

Millions of vulnerable men, women and children are now at increased risk of violence and exploitation due to the impact of economies crashing, millions of migrants stranded, and women and children on lockdown behind closed doors with their abusers. The World Bank estimates [49 million](#) more people will be forced into extreme poverty this year.

Responding to the crisis means not only providing immediate relief to meet health, economic, and other welfare needs of vulnerable communities. It requires providing protection from violence, and building sustainable, long-term capacity in local law enforcement and social service systems to stop abusers and restore survivors.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL MODERN SLAVERY PREVENTION STRATEGY

The UK is rightly considered a leader on the global stage, and the government is to be commended for its success in increasing international awareness and focus on preventing exploitation. However, this is still a significant issue both abroad and in the UK. It is estimated there are [100,000 victims](#) in the UK, and [40 million victims](#) around the world. As this work moves into a new phase, IJM recommends that greater emphasis is placed on strengthening the rule of law to maximise the effectiveness of those other initiatives to raise awareness and understanding of modern slavery.

The new FCDO must be bold in setting its objective to eradicate modern slavery and violence. Defining a new international modern slavery prevention strategy, including setting out a roadmap for how this will be achieved, can provide the impetus for the next phase of the global anti-slavery movement. IJM recommends that this strategy prioritise tackling impunity, listening to the experience of survivors, ensuring survivors receive trauma-informed support and strengthening international collaboration.

IJM also recommends the FCDO lead in establishing a dedicated cross-government modern slavery prevention fund. This ground-breaking move would demonstrate the UK's commitment tackling slavery, ensure consistency of approach across government, and lead the world in pioneering a holistic approach to the SDGs.

## 3. WORKING WITH BUSINESS TO TACKLE SLAVERY AT SOURCE

Thanks to the Modern Slavery Act, many businesses are proactively identifying areas of high risk within their supply chains and taking steps to introduce safeguards. However, it remains impossible for them to offer any guarantees that exploitation is not taking place, particularly in regions where workers' rights are not adequately protected, and laws are not enforced. [77% of British businesses](#) believe there is a likelihood of modern slavery in their supply chains.

IJM recommends British Embassies and High Commissions work with British businesses to advocate for and support an improved response from local government to modern slavery. The UK's presence in-country can prove pivotal, capitalising on their understanding of the local context and their capacity to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas.

IJM recommends the FCDO work collaboratively with the Department for International Trade to maximise the opportunity presented by the negotiation of new trade agreements to encourage greater action be taken by governments to strengthen the rule of law and protect workers from exploitation.





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Highlighted as one of 10 non-profits "making a difference" by U.S. News and World Report, IJM's innovative work has been featured by the *BBC*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *The Financial Times*, *Forbes*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Today Show*, *National Public Radio*, *CNN* and many other outlets.

*\*To protect IJM survivors, we have included photos that do not depict actual victims where appropriate. Consent gathered for all images*