



The Freedom from Slavery Forum Resilience and Resistance to Modern Slavery: Key Priorities for MENA

What is the Forum?

Since 2014, the Freedom from Slavery Forum has provided a place for leaders of the global anti-human trafficking and anti-slavery movement to come together, share and discuss best practices and lessons learned, identify gaps in the field, brainstorm new ideas, build relationships with one another, and strengthen the cohesion of the movement. Each year, delegates from civil society organizations, academics, and governments around the world gather at the Forum, one of the anti-slavery movement's premiere thought-leadership convenings.

How is this year different?

This year's MENA Regional Forum will highlight and discuss issues most pertinent to the continent as well as infuse new, grassroots voices into the global fight against modern slavery and bring together individuals and groups whose work may not otherwise intersect but are equally invaluable in the fight against modern slavery. It will be the first of five regional Forums held before a global convening in December of 2021.

This year's virtual MENA Forum will be an opportunity to increase participation, interaction, networking, learning and sharing with an emphasis on regional priorities, ensuring that MENA grassroots ideas and voices are instrumental in and foundational to the movement as a whole. It will ensure that MENA organizations will have greater access to the global movement and more opportunities to share their experiences and discuss solutions.

Who will be participating in the Forum?

The Forum is a space for the anti-slavery movement to gather, discuss ideas, and generate solutions. To achieve the best outcomes, we believe that it is necessary to engage with multiple stakeholders. Participants will come from diverse backgrounds and organizations, and will include activists, civil society organizations, business owners, academics, local and national government representatives, and Arab League and UN officials. The Forum is a space for grassroots advocates and high-level policy makers to interact and learn from one another.

What will I gain from the Forum?

The theme of this year's Forum is *Resilience and Resistance to Modern Slavery: Key Priorities for MENA*. With all of the tumultuous changes that have occurred within the last 1.5 years, the Forum will act as space to take stock of the pandemic's effects, assess new priorities, and create a collective roadmap for the future of the movement.

After attending all days of the MENA Regional Forum, participants will be re-inspired to tackle modern slavery from multiple angles and in new innovative ways. Participants will leave the

Forum with increased knowledge about how COVID-19, poverty, climate change, migration, cultural norms and practices and new technologies are directly affecting root causes of slavery in MENA, possible solutions, and new partnerships to put those ideas into action.

What is the format of the Forum?

Each day will involve 2.5 hours of programming. Each day will focus on a specific facet of the anti-slavery movement and will ensure that the Forum's theme is woven throughout each individual session. Day 1 will discuss "Impact of Covid-19 on vulnerability to modern slavery and migration." Day 2 will focus on "Ending the cycle of exploitation and strengthening the modern slavery movement through innovation."

During Panel discussions participants will hear from experts, survivors, politicians, and government officials. They will discuss and debate topics such as emerging trends in migration, exploitative labor practices and ineffective legal frameworks, how COVID has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, and how to foster survivor leadership in programming and advocacy.

Through the Forum's workshop, participants will build relationships with each other, discuss obstacles in their work as well as possible solutions, and prioritize actions in areas such as advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and collaboration with other sectors. Additionally, the Forum will connect civil society organizations not only to each other but also to potential donors, global coalitions, bodies such as Alliance 8.7 and the Arab League.

What happens after the Forum?

The MENA Regional Forum is the first of five regional Freedom from Slavery Forums this year. After all five of the regional forums take place, a high-level, in-person convening will take place from December 5-8, 2021 in Marrakesh, Morocco. The goal of this convening is to elevate the regional agendas and make connections with the larger global agenda.

In the final Forum session, participants will work together to draft a regional list of priorities that will be shared at the global convening. This interactive workshop session will also be a space where the MENA arm of the anti-slavery movement can reflect outward. Modern slavery in MENA does not exist in a vacuum, and this session will allow for participants to think about how other regional movements intersect and ways in which they can work together going forward.

What will be the next steps?

The Executive Director of Free the Slaves will deliver a thank you message at the end of the 2nd day and will outline the next steps.

Where can I find more information on past Freedom from Slavery events?

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about previous Forums, view recordings, and read reports.