

## 2.9 million trapped in modern-day slavery in China, 30 million worldwide

Foundation's study finds 2.9 million Chinese and 14 million Indians are modern-day slaves, though problem is most prevalent in Africa.

[AFP](#)

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Two child slave workers are rescued from a factory in Dongguan, China. Photo: Reuters

An estimated 30 million people worldwide are living in modern-day slavery, according to the inaugural Global Slavery Index published yesterday.

The index, compiled by the Walk Free Foundation, said that while India had by far the largest number of enslaved people, the problem was most prevalent in the West African nation of Mauritania, where 4 per cent of the population was deemed to be held in slavery.

The estimated 2.9 million people in modern slavery in China "includes the forced labour of men, women and children in many parts of the economy, including domestic servitude and forced begging, the sexual exploitation of women and children, and forced marriage", said the report.

The foundation hopes the annual index will help governments to monitor and tackle what it calls a "hidden crime".

"A lot of governments won't like hearing what we have to say," chief executive Nick Grono said. "Those governments that want to engage with us, we will be very open to engaging and looking at ways in which we can better measure the issue of modern slavery."

Established in May last year, the WFF is a 20-strong team based in Perth, Australia, founded by philanthropists Andrew Forrest - chairman of Fortescue Metals - and his wife, Nicola.

It has the backing of former US secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton, Britain's ex-prime minister Tony Blair, current Australian leader Tony Abbott and philanthropists Bill Gates, Richard Branson and Mo Ibrahim.

The foundation's definition of modern slavery includes slavery itself, plus slavery-like practices - such as debt bondage, forced marriage and the sale or exploitation of children - human trafficking and forced labour.

"A lot of people are very surprised to hear that slavery still exists," said Grono, explaining how many people assumed it ended when the Atlantic slave trade was abolished in the 1800s.

"What modern slavery is is a situation that reflects all of the characteristics of slavery of past centuries.

"People are controlled by violence. They are tricked or they are forced into jobs or situations where they are economically exploited. They live on no pay or base subsistence pay and they're not free to leave."

The foundation has pulled together experts in the field, data from respected outside sources and its own analysis to compile the 162-country index.

"It is tough because slavery is a hidden crime, so it's difficult to get data. It's a bit like trying to measure domestic violence or drug trafficking," Grono said.

"We've very conscious that it's very hard to measure this."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1333894/29-million-trapped-modern-day-slavery-china-30-million-worldwide>