

# Rotarian Action Group against Slavery

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Website: [www.ragas.online](http://www.ragas.online)

29 September 2017

Issue No 78

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Above: Kailash Satyarthi

Below: UK PM Theresa May addressing world leaders at the UN General Assembly



"The world is a dangerous place, not because of people who do evil, but because of good people who look on and do nothing "

(Albert Einstein)



## Tacking Slavery – The USA

The US Department of State announced last month (14<sup>th</sup> Sept) a \$25 million award to the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery "for transformational programs around the world to reduce the prevalence of modern slavery". This EMSI Fund is a non-profit 501 ©(3) organization with a mission to create a public-private partnership to

dramatically expand resources and develop focused coherent strategies across countries and industries to tackle the problem of modern slavery.

The legislation to create the fund was initiated by US Senator Bob Corker (Tennessee) in early 2015 and was eventually included in the National

Defense Authorization Act of 2017 which was overwhelmingly passed by the Senate in December 2016. The legislation was signed into law by the US President on 23rd December. The initiative seeks to raise \$1.5 billion in total to be used for combating human trafficking and slavery.

## Tackling Slavery – India

On the 11<sup>th</sup> September, India's Nobel Peace Prize winner, Kailash Satyarthi, launched a 11,000 kilometres (6,835 miles) march from Kanyakumari on India's southern tip to New Delhi (touching all corners of India) to raise global awareness of the exploitation and abuse of India's children. He intends to arrive in Delhi

on 16 October. He hopes to get more than a million people involved in various stages of the march.

According to Satyarthi "two children are sexually abused every hour. One child goes missing every eight minutes in India and they are not disappearing into thin air. These children are trafficked then

*sold and bought like animals, sometimes at lesser prices than animals. If our children are not safe in India, if our children are not safe in schools, then we have to change it. We cannot just wait and watch. One cannot be a silent spectator"*

## Tackling Slavery – UK and other countries

On 19<sup>th</sup> September the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May hosted an event at the United Nations General Assembly during which 37 governments committed to a [Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#) and the next day the UK Government agreed to commit £20 million (\$27 million) to the Global Fund. Clicking on the link above will confirm that the most significant exclusion from the list of 37 committed to end slavery by 2030, is India, ie the country with the most significant problem.



## A new RAGAS Coordinator for Italy



*PDG Maria Rita Acciardi –RC of Corigliano-Rossana Sybaris*



*Dr Laura Dryjanska*

Maria Rita Acciardi has recently become the new RAGAS Coordinator for Italy, after being a Charter Member since 2015. As a member of the Rotary Club of Corigliano-Rossana Sybaris and the Past District Governor (2013-2014) of Rotary District 2100 (Calabria and Campagna Regions of Italy), she has been particularly sensitive to various challenges faced by women and girls, as well as refugees.

An extremely active Rotarian for 17 years, Maria Rita is an honorary member of forty Rotary clubs across Italy. So she is in a unique position to reach out to Rotarians nationwide in order to raise awareness about modern slavery. She has spoken at dozens of Rotary institutes, seminars and workshops, both national and international. Among numerous PHF recognitions and diverse leadership roles, her current position of the Rotary District 2100 International Service Coordinator stands out as particularly appropriate to

promote and support projects aimed at fighting human trafficking. Maria Rita certainly is a very busy and active Rotarian, with an ability to delegate, surround herself with worthwhile collaborators, and ignite passion for the causes supported by the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery. During her governorship, she founded six Rotary Clubs, seven Rotaract Clubs and five Interact Clubs, which testifies to her efficient communication skills whilst involving all generations. Maria Rita established and runs the national Facebook page for Rotarians in Italy, and she will certainly manage very well and enlarge the scope of RAGAS, taking full advantage of social media.

As a renowned architect and a former city mayor, Maria Rita's professional experiences and contacts can be an added value to her leadership position in RAGAS, which is likely to increase the number of active members in Italy.

Editor's Note: Maria Rita's

predecessor as RAGAS Coordinator for Italy is Laura Dryjanska who was previously a member of the Rotary Club of Roma Centenario. Laura has recently moved to California to work as a Professor at the Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. She has already connected with the nearby Rotary Club of La Mirada and various anti-trafficking organizations that are making a difference on local and national levels.

This semester, Laura will teach classes on human trafficking, offered for the first time to Biola undergraduate students. She continues scientific research in this area, which should result in two academic publications in the near future. There is a growing interest among young people in learning more about modern slavery, with a clear intention to apply the knowledge that they gain. Future psychologists certainly have much to offer to victims and local communities

## Global slavery numbers in 2016

Revised data released a couple of weeks ago at the United Nations meeting by the International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation estimate that 40.3 million people were in slavery in 2016.

Fiona David from Walk Free Foundation has stated that "its difficult or even impossible to do research in areas of high conflict". In fact David explained that Syria and northern Nigeria were not even included in the study, so the 40.3 million estimate is likely to be too low.

These new estimates bring together previously disparate numbers published by the Walk Free Foundation, through the Global Slavery Index and the ILO, the UN agency that sets labour standards and works to end forced labour.



## Editorial

The US State Department's announcement of allocating \$25 million to the Global Fund is to be welcomed, but achieving a reduction in the prevalence of modern slavery globally will only happen through shared effort. In other words all countries and major companies must provide their fair share of the targeted fund of \$1.5 billion. However it transpires that this has been covered by Senator Bob Corker.

According to the Senator's website budget, the fund seeks \$250 million from the US Taxpayers, \$500 million from foreign governments and \$750 million in private funding. It is intended that the fund will be used to invest in projects that align with the "3Ps" of the global anti-trafficking framework: ie prosecution, protection and prevention. The programme also seeks to ensure that survivor voices are integrated throughout project design and implementation. It will be interesting to see which countries contribute to the target of \$500 million and how much.



Above: Senator Bob Corker

Kailash Satyarthi's energy seems boundless. In 1998, at the age of 44, he organized the Global March against Child Labour. That initiative began with a 80,000 km long physical march when thousands marched together jointly proclaiming the message against child labour. The campaign, which started on 17 January 1998 covered 103 countries, built immense awareness and led to high levels of participation from the masses. Over 7 million people offered their solidarity for the cause and many world leaders expressed their support. The march finally culminated in Geneva on 1 June 1998 while the ILO Conference was in session. It became one of the largest social movements ever held on behalf of exploited children.

Below: Kailash Satyarthi with Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan at the "Bharat Yatra" rally in Kanyakumari

Now at the age of 63 he is at it again walking 11,000 kms all around India in order to raise awareness about the plight of children, in India and elsewhere. What energy, what enthusiasm, what commitment. When we formed the Action Group of Rotarians against Child Slavery, we were mindful of Satyarthi's efforts in India, the work of his NGO, Bachpan Bachao Andolan and Kofi Annan's plea in 2000 that "*there is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children*".



And yet in spite of the exhortations of Kailash Satyarthi and Kofi Annan, children around the world continued to be preyed upon. According to a 2016 World Health Organization Report, one in every four adults was sexually abused as a child. A 2007 Indian Government study found that 53% of children in India faced some sort of sexual abuse. And human trafficking of children is a booming business. According to Satyarthi, every 8 minutes, a girl goes missing - trafficked for sexual abuse, prostitution, forced labour or child marriage. No wonder he says "one cannot be a silent spectator"

It is great that PDG Maria Rita is joining us as a RAGAS Coordinator for Italy. A major problem she and other activists will be facing is the rapid growth in the numbers being trafficked into Italy. According to the 2014 Global Slavery Index, the total numbers estimated to be enslaved in Italy was 11,400, but in the 2016 Index the figure was reported as 129,600 making Italy the European country with a) the highest growth in slave numbers and b) the second highest number of exploited victims, with Poland being the country with the most number of slaves.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that the rapid increase mentioned above reflected a dramatic rise in the overall numbers of Nigerian men, women and children being registered at landing points in Italy. According to the agency's latest figures, 37,500 of the 180,000 migrants arriving in Italy by sea last year were Nigerian, the first time they have eclipsed Eritreans as the largest national group. The total number for 2015 was 22,000.

**'There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want, and that they can grow up in peace.'**  
~ Kofi Annan

~ KEYSTONE CREATIONS ~  
Educational Songs





## Editorial (Cont'd)

The IOM believes that approximately 80% of the 14,000 Nigerian women and girls registered at landing points in Sicily in 2016 were trafficked and will go on to live a life of forced prostitution in Italy and other countries in Europe. Nigerian girls are promised jobs as babysitters and hairdressers when they arrive but instead end up selling themselves on the streets, terrified into submission by threats of gang rape and voodoo curses.

According to Italian investigative journalist and author Anna Pozzi, teenage girls, some as young as 13, 14 and 15, and young women sitting in laybys are a common sight on the periphery of Italy's major cities, and even along country lanes. The girls live in terror of their madams as well as Nigerian criminals who organize the trade with Italian criminal networks. The girls are told that they must pay £27,000 or more to win back their freedom and sell themselves for as little as 10 Euros (£8.90) a time.

I had an email from Deryk Norton (RC of Edmonton Northeast, Canada) who sent me a link about a horrific slavery case in the UK which he says is an example for Rotarians to see "how slavery occurs in western countries as mentioned by Gary Haugen of IJM". So prompted by Deryk, I have briefly outlined the case below.

Included on the next page is a copy of a blog by Dr Aidan McQuade, Director of Anti-Slavery International, written on 6<sup>th</sup> July when he introduced his organization's [Anti-Slavery Charter](#). You will see at the end of the Charter a whole list of anti-slavery organizations (including RAGAS) which has signed a commitment "to using our power, whatever it may be, to empower those vulnerable to slavery, to advance emancipation and to promote access to decent work"

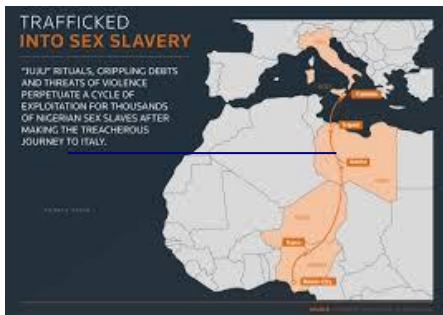
Sadly after 11 years, Aidan has announced that he is stepping down as Director to pursue international policy, advocacy and consultancy work. Happily he has agreed to continue in a Special Advisory role with Anti-Slavery.

## Slavery is rife in the UK

Eleven members of a Lincolnshire family were recently convicted of a series of modern slavery offences after forcing at least 18 victims – including homeless people and some with learning disabilities – to work for little or no pay and to live in squalid conditions for up to 26 years.

The Nottingham Crown Court heard that the Rooney family, who were based on Traveller sites in Lincolnshire, targeted vulnerable people, including some with alcohol or drug addiction, and deliberately looked for potential captives on the streets. The impact of the forced labour on the mental and physical health of the victims had been severe, with some being malnourished, threatened and subjected to repeated beatings. One of the victims was found to have been working for the family for 26 years.

Prosecutors said that the Rooneys lured in their captives with offers of work and accommodation but once they accepted, they were allocated dilapidated caravans mostly with no heating, water or toilet facilities. Some victims reported having to use rudimentary toilets in the woods nearby. One victim was ordered to dig his own grave and told "that's where you're going" if he did not sign a bogus work contract



*Above: One of the caravans used by the slavery victims in Lincolnshire, England*

*Below: Inside the caravan*



## Aidan McQuade's Blog – Anti-Slavery Charter

Anti-Slavery International exists to end slavery, so the [Anti-Slavery Charter](#) we publish today (6<sup>th</sup> July 2017) touches on the essence of everything we do.

Slavery is a political issue: in a very fundamental way it is about power, or, more precisely, the exclusion from power of groups of people so that they can be enslaved.

It is sometimes a result of the cataclysm of armed conflicts as we see in the tragic histories of Sudan, Syria and Nigeria. But slavery also exists because of the way we have chosen to establish national and international laws, policies and customs relating to development, employment, trade and business. It is in the opportunities provided by these systems that slavery flourishes.

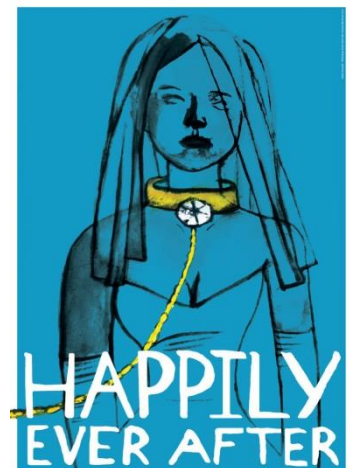
For example, we see this when we consider the experiences of women exploited as domestic workers in the UK as a result of visas that are effectively tied to unscrupulous employers. In other words UK visa regulations directly facilitate enslavement. We also see this in states such as Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, where the exploitation enabled by tied visas is compounded by restrictions on forming democratic trades unions that could fight for decent work for the tens of thousands of South Asians in construction and domestic work there.

Of course those states that enact measures that allow the enslavement of others would likely deny vehemently that the consequences are slavery. Slavery flourishes particularly well when it is not called slavery. For example, when it is conducted under the guise of marriage. This is a form of slavery that overwhelmingly affects girls and young women, and because it affects girls and women this is a form of slavery that is poorly acknowledged as such.

But the toleration of forced child marriage represents such a fundamental denial of the rights of millions of girls that it provides a fertile ground for the evolution of yet more egregious abuses such as the misogynistic depredations of Boko Haram and Islamic State. Ending forced child marriage is critical to advancing and promoting the rights of women and girls, and hence in ending slavery.

Of course, the corollary of the insight that slavery is about power and exclusion from power is that those approaches that are most likely to successfully reduce slavery are ones that empower those most vulnerable to it. Education is fundamental. One of the reasons we see so much child labour, for example, in the agricultural sector of the Global South is that there are not enough schools, and where there are schools the quality of the education they provide is poor

Hence there must be a paradigm shift in the provision of education in particular to slavery vulnerable communities, such as the Dalits and Adivasi of South Asia. Girls' rights must become central to education policy and practice in a way that they have never been, both in the provision of infrastructure, including separate, safe, sanitation facilities for girls, and in the curriculum. Human rights education must be foundational to break down the prejudices which contribute to the exploitation and violence that women and girls face every day. Girls and boys, should be provided with vocational and entrepreneurial education so that it provides greater opportunities for economic empowerment once they leave formal schooling.



## Aidan McQuade's Blog – Anti-Slavery Charter (Cont'd)

Given the political nature of slavery a major part of the work of Anti-Slavery International is about challenging governments to change the ways they govern, businesses to change the ways they operate, and development and humanitarian policy makers and practitioners to recognise slavery as the fundamental issue of poverty that it is.

Too frequently efforts against slavery are narrowly focused, for example, simply on passing legislation, or on its criminal justice aspects. But the causes of slavery are broader than these, and without proper understanding of this, anti-slavery efforts can be woefully inadequate.

Hence Anti-Slavery has drafted a new Charter, based on our decades of research and work against slavery, forced and child labour. The Charter highlights some of the most fundamental measures that must be enacted in order to end the sorts of slavery abuses described above.

The Charter is broadly focused to respond to the wide range of processes that render people vulnerable to slavery across the world today. Consequently we believe it provides a blueprint for effective and comprehensive anti-slavery action.

We invite other NGOs, trades unions, businesses, governments and international organisations to endorse this Charter as a first step in a renewed effort to end slavery. And we challenge all those who claim to be concerned with the enslavement of so many millions across the world to match their words with urgent action.

Together, we can end slavery once and for all.

## Anti-Slavery Day in the UK – 18 October

Anti-Slavery Day 18<sup>th</sup> October, provides an opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery and encourages government, local authorities, companies, charities and individuals to do what they can to address the problem. It was created by the Anti-Slavery Day, a Private Members Bill introduced by Anthony Steen CBE, now Chair of the Human Trafficking Foundation.

Each year more and more charities, individuals, local authorities and police forces take action to mark the day. The Human Trafficking Foundation hosts Anti-Slavery Day Awards to recognize journalists, filmmakers and broadcasters who have exposed issues of modern slavery, and to celebrate organizations and individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the fight against modern slavery.




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*“We could eradicate slavery. The laws are in place. The multi-nationals, the World Trade organizations, the UN, they could end slavery, but they’re not going to do it, until and unless we demand it”*

*(Kevin Bales)*



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