

**International Development Committee**  
**Review of Effectiveness of UK Aid**  
**Written Evidence by International Justice Mission**  
**April 2020**

**About International Justice Mission**

International Justice Mission's global team of lawyers, social workers and investigators partner with governments and local authorities in 13 countries to help identify survivors of violence and exploitation, and ensure they receive the support and assistance they require, whilst also working with law enforcement and prosecutors to tackle impunity by making sure laws are enforced.

IJM has spent more than 20 years on the front lines fighting some of the worst forms of violence: land theft, slavery, online sexual exploitation of children, police abuse of power, and child sexual assault. To date we have supported local authorities to help more than 50,000 people out of slavery and oppression.

We have seen that when local justice systems are equipped to proactively identify survivors and hold traffickers to account then the prevalence of slavery falls dramatically, in some cases by as much as 86%.<sup>1</sup>

**Summary of Recommendations**

The UK Government is to be commended for leading crucial initiatives to tackle the worst forms of violence and exploitation around the world. The government has been proactive in their international advocacy and has dedicated substantial resource to address human rights abuses.

IJM has seen that strengthening public justice systems is essential to effectively and sustainably reduce the prevalence of violence. The UK government has acknowledged that strengthening the rule of law is part of meeting these challenges. However, as regards the funding of anti-slavery and anti-violence initiatives, the UK has not prioritised projects which would strengthen the rule of law and end the impunity which allows abuse and exploitation to thrive.

**Modern Slavery**

1. Develop and publish an International Modern Slavery Prevention Strategy, outlining clear objectives and the theory of change to reduce vulnerability to exploitation
2. Prioritise the funding of projects to strengthen public justice system responses to modern slavery
3. Develop and publish the means by which effectiveness and success will be measured
4. Ensure survivors are consulted when developing anti-slavery initiatives, projects and interventions
5. Commit to longer-term anti-slavery interventions, which allow systemic change to be embedded and improve sustainability
6. Ensure that funding to tackle modern slavery is commensurate with the scale of the problem, the seriousness of the criminal offence, and its impact upon survivors

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ijmuk.org/documents/studies/philippines-csec-program-evaluation.pdf>

## **Online Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Continue to support the Philippines Internet Crimes Against Children Centre through funding, sharing of resource, capacity, intelligence and expertise, and explore other opportunities for international law enforcement collaboration to tackle OSEC.

## **Violence Against Women and Children**

DFID should extend the “What Works to end violence against women and girls” approach to include justice, protection, and accountability for perpetrators of violence against women and girls and to invest in proven strategies thereafter.

# **1. Modern Slavery**

IJM commends the UK government for the focus which it has brought to the issue of modern slavery around the world. By identifying modern slavery as ‘the great human rights issue of our time’,<sup>2</sup> the government has led countries around the world to take action to tackle abuse and exploitation.

Despite undoubted progress in recent years, IJM believes that improvements can yet be made in order to increase the effectiveness of the UK Government’s efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 to end child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking.

### **1.1 Strategy and Metrics of Success**

The 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy details the ‘4 Ps’ which guide the Government’s response to modern slavery, domestically and internationally. The National Audit Office said of the Strategy that it ‘does not have a measure of success for its objectives nor a definition of what success looks like’ in addressing modern slavery *within the UK*.<sup>3</sup>

A similar observation can be made about the UK’s response to modern slavery *internationally*. It would be helpful to clarify the principles guiding the UK government’s international anti-slavery interventions, its theory of change, and how impact is to be measured and demonstrated.

**Recommendation:** In collaboration with NGOs with practical experience of tackling modern slavery around the world, develop and publish an International Modern Slavery Prevention Strategy, outlining clear objectives, the theory of change to reducing vulnerability and metrics of success.

### **1.2 Rule of Law in the UK’s response to Modern Slavery**

IJM have seen that where a local public justice system is trained and resourced to identify people in exploitation, to help them out of abuse and into aftercare, when laws are enforced and traffickers held to account, the prevalence of slavery falls dramatically.

**The Philippines:** in the cities of Cebu, Manila and Pampanga, we saw the number of children available for exploitation reduced by up to 79%, 75% and 86% respectively.<sup>4</sup>

**Cambodia:** From 2012 to 2015, the prevalence of commercial sexual exploitation of children fell by 73% across the three areas in which we worked, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48593081>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Reducing-Modern-Slavery.pdf> page 18

<sup>4</sup> You can read a thorough evaluation of the impact of IJM’s work in the Philippines here: <https://www.ijmuk.org/documents/studies/philippines-csec-program-evaluation.pdf>

We were delighted that the UK Government recognised the importance of the rule of law to preventing modern slavery in the 2017 Call the Action on modern slavery which includes a commitment to ‘*Strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice responses in order to rapidly enhance capacity to identify, investigate, and disrupt criminal activity...*’<sup>6</sup> We also commend initiatives such as that in Nigeria where the National Crime Agency and Crown Prosecution Service have provided training and support to local authorities.

We would, however, suggest that the UK Government could do more to tackle impunity and strengthen the rule of law through its anti-slavery aid provision.

For example, IJM is pleased that the UK Government has shown leadership in providing substantial funding to the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery from its inception. However, in the recent round of funding from GFEMS, provided by DFID, it is our understanding that projects aimed at strengthening the rule of law were excluded, despite this being one of the key pillars of GFEMS funding strategy.

If GFEMS is to maximise impact it must support initiatives which provide a comprehensive solution, including strengthening the rule of law, without which other interventions are likely to be less effective.

IJM is again pleased that the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund (MSIF), ODA funding administered by the Home Office, included Objective 4: *Improve Law, Legislation and Policy*. Projects funded by the MSIF have primarily focused on other aspects of the response to modern slavery.

IJM is concerned that government-funded initiatives with great potential may be undermined if the local public justice system cannot meaningfully protect the rights of the most vulnerable.

**Recommendation:** In order to maximise the effectiveness of anti-slavery interventions, the UK government ought to prioritise funding projects which strengthen public justice system responses to modern slavery, training and equipping local law enforcement to identify, investigate and prosecute those who exploit and abuse others.

### **1.3 Reducing Prevalence: Measuring Impact**

Education and awareness raising are essential. However, although one can measure the number of people trained and educated, it is difficult to say how many of them will not be trafficked in the future (especially if adequate protections of their rights and welfare cannot be guaranteed). By recording the number of people who have been helped out of slavery, the number of arrests, prosecutions and convictions supported internationally, it is possible to demonstrate a project’s tangible impact.

It is also possible to determine a project’s effectiveness in reducing the prevalence of exploitation by conducting baseline and endline studies. In the Philippines researchers measured various factors including the number of children available for commercial sexual exploitation, the length of time it took to find a child being sold, and the number of establishments with confirmed presence of minors available for commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The full report on IJM’s work tackling commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia between 2004-2014 can be found here: <https://www.ijmuk.org/documents/studies/2015-Evaluation-of-IJM-CSEC-Program-in-Cambodia-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-call-to-action-to-end-forced-labour-modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking>

<sup>7</sup> Read more detail of methodology here: <https://www.ijmuk.org/documents/studies/Cebu-Project-Lantern->

**Recommendation:** In collaboration with those with expertise in tackling modern slavery and in monitoring and evaluation, develop and publish the means by which effectiveness and success will be measured, including the number of people who have been taken out of slavery; number of arrests and successful prosecutions; and the prevalence of slavery in the project area before and after any project.

#### **1.4 Survivor Voice**

Survivors are uniquely placed to understand the conditions and systemic problems which led to their abuse, and what needs to happen to rectify those faults. The government would benefit from consulting groups such as the Global Survivor Network when developing international anti-slavery policies and projects.

**Recommendation:** Ensure survivors are consulted when developing anti-slavery initiatives, projects and interventions

#### **1.5 Long-term Commitment**

Many projects which the UK Government has funded have been relatively short-term: often funded for 2 years, in practice operating for a shorter period due to administrative delays. This is insufficient time in which to implement sustainable systemic change and reduce vulnerability. IJM has seen systemic change over the course of 4-5 years, however in many situations it may require even longer commitment.

**Recommendation:** Commit to longer-term anti-slavery interventions, which allow systemic change to be embedded and improve sustainability.

#### **1.6 Increase funding for international anti-slavery projects**

The UK Government must be applauded for the resources which it has so far allocated, in excess of £200 million, to tackling modern slavery around the world. However, as this is the great human rights issue of our time, a serious organised crime which inflicts physical and psychological violence on an estimated 40 million victims, greater resource and investment is required from the UK government.

Rectifying the systemic and institutional failings which leave individuals vulnerable to slavery will require increased funding. However, IJM has seen that when local authorities are adequately equipped to tackle the problem themselves, they need not be supported long-term.

**Recommendation:** Increase funding to tackle modern slavery to ensure it is commensurate with the scale of the problem, the seriousness of the criminal offence, and its impact upon survivors.

## **2. Tackling Online Sexual Exploitation of Children**

In the Philippines, IJM works in partnership with local and international law enforcement to tackle 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.

In February 2019, IJM Philippines partnered with Philippine, Australian and UK law enforcement (the National Crime Agency, with funding from the UK FCO) to establish the [Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center](#) (PICACC). This collaborative international effort is a significant step forward

in efforts to combat online exploitation of children. The PICACC has already proven effective in helping to secure the conviction of Europol's former most wanted [criminal](#).

In its first year, the PICACC had 41 operations which led to the rescue of 136 victims and children-at-risk of OSEC and the arrest of 41 suspected OSEC local traffickers. 3 traffickers have been convicted and 36 have ongoing adjudication.

In addition to exchanging intelligence which has enabled arrests to be made in both the UK and the Philippines, the NCA has contributed vital surveillance equipment and vehicle resourcing to PICACC, as well as essential forensic training and tools. Such practical assistance is critical to ensuring that those who sexually exploit children can be brought to justice.

IJM applauds the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for funding the NCA to enable this international collaboration, sharing of intelligence and good practice to occur and bear fruit. IJM hopes that this support will continue and that further opportunities for collaboration will be possible in the future.

The UK Government is also to be commended for the work of the Home Office-led WePROTECT Global Alliance which has increased understanding through the Global Threat Assessment and driven good practice through the promotion of a Model National Response and the Fund to End Violence Against Children.

**Recommendation:** the UK Government should continue to support PICACC through funding, sharing of resource, capacity, intelligence and expertise, and explore other opportunities for international law enforcement collaboration to tackle OSEC.

### **3. What works to end violence against women and girls**

IJM would like to commend the DFID-funded global research initiative, "What Works to End Violence Against Women and Girls"<sup>8</sup> and recommend that this project be supported and expanded.

"What Works," provides essential information to government officials, health and human rights practitioners, scholars, and policy makers seeking to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. It seeks to identify and analyse effective, evidence-based approaches and disseminate those learnings globally. Through "What Works," DFID has funded multiple reviews of evidence from programmes around the world and made recommendations for design and implementation of investments to counter violence against women and girls in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

For example, the 2019 Global Evidence Review of Interventions to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls evaluates a large number of approaches, including norm change activities with men and boys, economic interventions, school-based initiatives, addressing alcohol and substance abuse.<sup>9</sup> The evidence review is building excellence and effectiveness in DFID's and other aid agencies' investments by rigorously evaluating interventions.

#### **3.1 Rule of Law in tackling Violence Against Women and Children**

IJM believes, based on the work that we do, that key improvements in criminal justice over time can reduce violence against women and children. Access to justice and perpetrator accountability are

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.whatworks.co.za/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/374-evidence-reviewfweb/file>

named in INSPIRE, RESPECT, and the UN Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence as critical interventions, but specific investments in this sector has not been studied for “What Works.”

IJM encourages DFID to include in “What Works” monitoring and evaluation of programmes to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement, courts, and social welfare systems in lower-to-middle income countries. The role of criminal justice systems to address violence against women and girls has been neglected within development circles, perhaps because they function so poorly – particularly with respect to vulnerable populations – that few believe that progress is possible. Those who abuse women and girls – through domestic violence, sexual assault, online sexual exploitation – do so with near complete impunity in many lower-income countries.

Yet through IJM’s experience working within the criminal justice sector to combat violence against women and girls over the past twenty years, we have found that progress is possible.

In Guatemala, for example, where IJM has collaborated with police, prosecutors and courts to investigate and prosecute sexual assault of children (SVAC), an IJM-conducted baseline and endline study of criminal justice capacity showed significant improvement in the Guatemalan Government’s response to cases of SVAC. The baseline review of included cases of SVAC over a 4-year period, 2008-2012. An endline study of the period 2012-2016 revealed the following:

- the number of SVAC complaints filed increased by 136% increase (which suggests increased public confidence in the local justice system)
- the number of SVAC indictments increased by 157%
- the number of SVAC cases reaching verdict nearly tripled during the project period (980 cases at baseline vs. 2,912 cases at endline)
- victim-friendly spaces for gathering victims’ testimonies were uncommon at baseline (30% of cases), it became nearly universal at endline (98% of cases)
- At endline, 80% of indictments fulfilled all the requirements of the law (Article 332 Bis), compared with 28% at baseline.

In Uganda, when IJM first began work in Uganda in 2004, [over a third of widows reported](#) that they had experienced attempts to take their land. A review of police files found that [37.8% of documented land grabbing](#) cases in that area also included a charge of violent assault. 20% of women who had experienced land grabbing had experienced attempts on their lives or their children’s lives from the perpetrator. However, in 2017, a study was conducted which found nearly a 50% reduction in the prevalence of land theft and an increased knowledge among widows of their inheritance rights.<sup>10</sup>

Violence against women and children is recognized by the UN General Assembly as an impediment to development and human flourishing. The Sustainable Development Goals include Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, and Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice.

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<sup>10</sup> Read the full review of IJM’s work in Uganda here: <https://www.ijm.org/documents/studies/Uganda-Endline-Study.pdf>

Read more about IJM’s work to tackle violence against women and children here: <https://www.ijm.org/documents/IJM-JusticeReview2019-compressed.pdf>

Moreover, UN agencies have developed detailed and excellent recommendations for investigating and prosecuting violence against women and girls, including the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls subject to violence<sup>11</sup> and the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice<sup>12</sup>

However, few donors have invested in capacity-building for police, prosecutors, and courts in lower-income countries to implement these standards when they address crimes against women and girls. The UK Government, for example, is a leader in funding foreign assistance programmes aimed at increasing economic advancement for women and girls; however developing functioning criminal justice systems that investigate and prosecute perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic violence does not appear to have been a priority.

We believe that once successful, evidence-based strategies are identified and developed, national governments and major donor governments will invest in capacity-building initiatives to provide justice and protection for women and girls and accountability for perpetrators of crimes against them. DFID's "What Works" initiative could play an important role in researching, evaluating, and disseminating such initiatives, just as it has done for violence prevention initiatives.

IJM see a desperate need for innovation in the development field to address the near total-impunity that perpetrators of violence against women and girls enjoy. There are few evidence-based approaches for criminal justice improvement, which discourages investment in that sector.

**Recommendation:** DFID should extend the "What Works" approach to include justice, protection, and accountability for perpetrators of violence against women and girls and to invest in proven strategies thereafter.

For more information contact: euan.fraser@ijmuk.org

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/14-08451\\_Strategy\\_eBook.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/14-08451_Strategy_eBook.pdf).