

Human trafficking: A modern day slavery

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Ade Teshome.

A pioneering Ethiopian lawyer and academic is hoping to turn the spotlight on his country and raise awareness about human trafficking.

Monash PhD student and research assistant Aderajew (Ade) Teshome is the first Ethiopian to study law at Monash University and is currently writing his thesis on his country's response to human trafficking.

Anecdotal evidence suggests human trafficking is the fastest growing crime and the third most lucrative criminal activity after drugs and arms trafficking.

"Due to the clandestine nature of the problem obtaining data on the exact estimate of the victims of human trafficking is very difficult, nonetheless, estimates of the global trafficking victims range from four to 20.9 million," Ade said.

"The 2012 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report indicates that 136 different nationalities were trafficked and a recent International Labour Organisation report has given an estimated global annual profit to be \$32 billion. Human trafficking is an organised crime and gangs are interconnected throughout the world," Ade said.

Ade said technology has made it easier for recruiters to grow their illicit business and since the 1990s there has been significant growth in the number of Ethiopian women subjected to human trafficking, also referred to as 'modern slavery'.

"These women are deceptively recruited into leaving Ethiopia under the guise of employment as domestic workers in the Middle East. While some are forced to leave, most are sold a story of a better life. However, when these women arrive in the Middle East, their dream turns into a nightmare," Ade said.

Ade has been researching human trafficking in Ethiopia for the past three years. Prior to immigrating to Australia in 2008, he worked as a lecturer at Gondar University, and before this as a [public prosecutor](#) in Ethiopia.

He hopes his research will offer workable recommendations to enable the Ethiopian government to effectively criminalise the problem, prosecute and punish traffickers, support and protect victims and cooperate with other governments and organisations.

"After closely assessing the Ethiopian Criminal Code and Employment

Exchange Proclamation, I found the Ethiopian government has not complied with the international standards in combating trafficking in persons," Ade said.

"The Ethiopian government has an international obligation to combat human trafficking, including protecting the victims. I will highlight how the laws should be amended to criminalise a wide range of trafficking offences that are not covered under the existing domestic legislation.

"Human trafficking in Ethiopia, and indeed globally, will become a much bigger problem unless the international community takes serious action through tougher penalties against traffickers and provides better assistance and protection for victims."

In addition to his research on Ethiopia, Ade has recently published an article on Australia's response to [human trafficking](#) in a peer reviewed journal *Tasmania Law Review* and presented at conferences on this issue.

Provided by Monash University

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