

New study to review COVID's impact on modern slavery survivors

5 August 2020



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Experts from the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham are conducting an urgent review into how modern slavery survivors and victims are being impacted by COVID-19.

The research, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to COVID-19, will analyze how measures in place for victims and survivors of modern slavery are being affected and will subsequently offer recommendations for mitigation.

Trafficking experts have previously stated that they expect COVID-19 to cause spikes in slavery as previous natural disasters have. Using state-of-the-art risk assessment, combining real-time data, [survivor](#) insights, web-monitoring tools and analysis of risks and responses during previous disasters, researchers will identify areas for action to protect those at risk from new exploitation or re-trafficking.

Since lockdown began, the Rights Lab has documented 77 substantive observations by

international governments and non-government organizations (NGOs) about the potential consequences of COVID for modern slavery. Building on this work, the Rights Lab, collaborating with researchers from across the University of Nottingham and the University of Sheffield, will work with the Survivor Alliance—a global NGO and network of modern slavery survivors—and other NGO partners to gather and assess the risks, impacts and mitigation responses for survivors and victims of modern slavery, to then draw up urgent recommendations for protection measures.

Project lead Vicky Brotherton, of the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab, said: "COVID has produced a very complex risk environment which could impede anti-slavery mitigation unless risks can be assessed in an efficient way. There is an increasing number of risks being articulated across the anti-slavery sector, and this research will allow governments and civil society organizations to understand and effectively respond to these risks, in order to ensure that COVID-19 does not increase the number of people in modern slavery and jeopardize survivors' recovery."

The UN has warned that inaction could lead to a sharp rise in the number of people being pushed into slavery because of COVID-19. The Rights Lab says that COVID-19 risk factors include non-detection for slavery victims and re-trafficking for slavery survivors; limited access to shelters and other key support services; and with economic contraction and resource reallocation, more individuals forced into precarious employment and at risk of becoming trapped in situations of modern [slavery](#).

Provided by University of Nottingham

APA citation: New study to review COVID's impact on modern slavery survivors (2020, August 5) retrieved 17 September 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-08-covid-impact-modern-slavery-survivors.html>

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