



Comboni Missionary Sisters
Justice & Peace

For the End of Slavery, Without Chains

"Slavery is illegal all over the world, but there are slaves in every country in the world!" It's difficult to believe, that nowadays there are more than 45 million of people in slavery. There are more slaves today than at any time in history!!" Every time when we start our awareness meetings with these words people remains speechless... slaves...today?

Slavery didn't disappear in XIX century, it just evolved; it is illegal everywhere, and in every there are slaves.

It seems incredible that in this century there are more slaves than in any other time in the human history. And there are still people who ask if is it true that slavery is real nowadays! Indeed this is not surprising because Trafficking in Persons is in fact a hidden crime, the victims are everywhere but we don't see them and the chains are more subtle and fierce.

I live in South Africa since 2010 and the principal activity in which I am working is in the prevention of Human Trafficking, specifically in creating awareness about this scourge that Pope Francis has called "Crime against Humanity". I am also volunteer in a shelter for victims of human trafficking and domestic abuse, there I've met women of every race and nationality with their own history, so sad to tell and so difficult to forget.



South Africa is a country of source, transit for trafficked people but also is the destination for many from Sub-Saharan Africa. It's the big temptation for people from many African countries. It is the country of 'gold and diamonds' and so, people from Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Malawi come here with fake job offers ending up in sexual exploitation, domestic

servitude, in the farms, mines, in the building industry and hospitality industry, in the streets and even in force marriages. There are also many people from the rural area coming to the cities like Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, looking for a



Comboni Missionary Sisters **Justice & Peace**

job and ending up in slavery. Even many children are trafficked from rural areas to the cities and from neighbor countries to South Africa.

Traffickers use the mass media to recruit their victims, with very attractive advertisements, job offers, bursaries; they even go around the schools to catch victims! Facebook is one of the main instruments for recruitment with fake profiles, they contact the people even via WhatsApp. But, sadly most of the victims are sold by people who knows them: friends, relatives, teachers, neighbors and even parents!

It is very important for people to be aware when something is too good to be true! For this reason, the team Without Chains, in which I belong, was created, to create awareness, to inform people about this scourge that destroy our communities.



Without Chains, with the slogan “for the End of Slavery” is a team of 9 volunteers, mostly young people, that works in creating awareness and inform people about what is human trafficking and how can we prevent it. We go to schools, churches, clinics, marches, concerts, groups, and wherever we are invited in order to pass the message.

We created our own facebook page(www.facebook.com/WithoutChainsSA) to inform people about this topic and to share with them about our activities. It is interesting that everywhere we have been there is always someone that after hearing our information they realize that actually they saw “something strange once when...”. Many people after receiving the formation invite us to go to their places or to organize more workshops for other people they know. Even some people has informed us that thanks to our talks they managed to stop members of their families who were almost accepting job offers or studies bursaries without verifying the source of these companies, only to find that there were fake ones.

Since August 2015 there is the law against Trafficking in Persons in South Africa, but laws are not enough, is not enough to criminalize, it is necessary to educate, to form about the dignity of the person, of the work and of the common good. It is necessary to form and inform, to go to schools, churches, peripheries, communities, etc. We have also to ask ourselves where is the humanity of the traffickers? And of all those who feed the



Comboni Missionary Sisters **Justice & Peace**

demand that make this business go ahead and grow? It is interesting that some victims of sexual slavery have been helped by their clients once they realized they were working against their will!

We must educate, form, inform... together!



We as Without Chains Team dream with a world more committed for the end of any kind of slavery, where in every community exists a group of people prepared and working for the end of this evil, a world where people is treated and respected as human beings not as mere commodities and merchandise to the profit of others, a world where people don't have to accept inhuman conditions of work because of the situation that they are living.

I finish with the words of William Wilberforce, English abolitionist of XIX century: "You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."

Sr. Clara Torres Acevedo
Comboni Missionary Sister