



Joint Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 59th Session

Agenda Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

23 June 2025

Delivered by Janet Epp Buckingham

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance, its initiative the World Freedom Network, and the Salvation Army welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur.

We affirm the urgent need to reframe how labour exploitation in domestic work is understood and addressed.

What we see across multiple regions is not merely bad labour practices, it is modern slavery. Migrant women are confined in private homes, stripped of legal identity through forged documents, and denied wages, rest, and communication. These are not isolated cases; they are systemic, embedded in how domestic work is structured and sustained. In one study, 87% of domestic workers in Uganda experienced conditions meeting the Palermo Protocol threshold for human trafficking. This is the norm.

Yet very few of these cases are ever identified as trafficking, and these victims receive neither aid nor justice. Within this space are hundreds of thousands of trafficking victims, numbered alongside the millions globally who are never identified. Governments must be held accountable to increase identification of human trafficking and slave-like practices masquerading as work.

In addition, we urge States to ratify and implement ILO Convention 189, to criminalize the confiscation of communication tools, and to regulate recruitment chains in both origin and destination countries.

Recognition without enforcement sustains impunity. Justice must not be optional.

Thank you.