



Joint Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 63rd Session

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on slavery and trafficking in persons

11 September 2026

Delivered by Janet Epp Buckingham

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance with its anti-trafficking initiative, the World Freedom Network, and the Salvation Army warmly welcome Ms. Schwarz to this new mandate and thank her for this important report.

We welcome the Rapporteur's call to hear from grassroots and survivor-led organizations. They see changing realities first and know where systems fail. We also welcome her emphasis on coordination across sectors and stronger implementation of existing laws and policies.

Our experience is that the gap is often not commitment, but connection: between sectors, between policy and practice, and between vulnerable people and the systems intended to protect them.

Victim identification exposes this gap. States may have strong laws, referral mechanisms and victim protections, but those systems cannot protect people who are never identified.

People experiencing trafficking often first encounter civil society actors rather than specialist authorities. Greater attention is needed to pathways connecting community recognition and referral with formal identification, protection and remedy.

Identification is not simply about finding more victims. It is about ensuring that people experiencing trafficking can access the rights and protections States have established for them.

We stand ready to contribute to these shared priorities.

Thank you.