

# Working Paper\*

## **Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflicts: Introducing the CSAC Dataset, 1989–2016**

Angharad Smith, MA  
*University of Nottingham*

Monti Narayan Datta, PhD  
*University of Richmond*

Kevin Bales, PhD  
*University of Nottingham*

### **Abstract**

We introduce a new dataset, Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflict (CSAC), coding instances and types of enslavement in armed conflicts from 1989 to 2016, building upon conflict data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. CSAC currently covers 171 armed conflicts from 1989 to 2016, with the primary unit of analysis being the conflict-year. We identify different types of enslavement within these conflicts, and find that 87% contained incidence of child soldiers, 32% included instances of sexual exploitation/forced marriage, 21% included forced labor, and 14% contained instances of human trafficking. We note that enslavement is likely to take place in internal armed conflicts more than other conflict types. Instances in which enslavement in armed conflicts is used to support strategic aims are identified, and found to occur in 16% of cases. Because this data coding exercise is novel, we highlight limitations and suggest areas for further research. We see the coding of slavery within conflict as a step toward generating more scholarship, debate, and understanding of when and how state and non-state actors use enslavement within armed conflicts, with the goal of learning how to mitigate and possibly eradicate slavery in warfare.

### **Keywords**

Contemporary slavery, enslavement, human trafficking, armed conflict, modern slavery, forced labor, child soldiers, forced marriage, Uppsala Conflict Data Program

---

\* To cite this Working Paper: Smith, A., Datta, M., Bales K. “Working Paper on Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflicts: Introducing the CSAC Dataset, 1989–2016”, *Rights Lab*, University of Nottingham, Sept. 2020.

## Introduction

An estimated 40 million persons are enslaved globally within many types of slavery, including debt bondage, state-sponsored forced labor, enslavement into commercial sexual exploitation, and forced marriage.<sup>†</sup> The breadth and size of this threat to human security, plus recent studies illuminating the extent and form of contemporary slavery (e.g., Bales & Trodd 2008, Bales 2012, Skinner 2008, Global Slavery Index 2016) has prompted public and private stakeholders to act. In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal/Target 8.7 calls upon all nations to “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”<sup>‡</sup>

Goal 8.7 demonstrates the need for scholarship into the intersection of modern slavery and armed conflicts. While child soldiers are a known factor in militarized disputes (e.g., Beber and Blattman 2013, Lasley and Thyne 2015, Gates and Reich 2010, Haer and Böhmelt 2017, Hoiskar 2001), it is less understood how much, and in what ways, other types of enslavement are exploited by combatants. When might combatants use enslavement as a tactic or to pursue a strategic aim in warfare? What predicts who is at risk of enslavement in conflict? What policies are appropriate to help protect those who are vulnerable? Once conflict ends, what happens to those who had been enslaved and how do they find ways to reclaim their lives? These are some of the questions that drive our interest and the creation of the Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflict (CSAC) dataset.

Among studies of forced sexual exploitation within armed conflicts (e.g., McAlpine, Hossain and Zimmerman 2016), or forced marriage in armed conflicts (e.g., O’Brien 2016), few data exist. Despite this lack, global interest has increased and highlighted issues such as forced brides in war.<sup>§</sup> The Norwegian Nobel Committee underlined this when they awarded the Peace Prize in 2018 to Nadia Murad, a member of the Yazidi minority in Northern Iraq. Murad had been captured, enslaved, tortured, and raped by forces of the Islamic State in 2014. After her escape, Murad became a UN Goodwill Ambassador speaking out against sexual assault and enslavement in war.

Given a growing interest in the nature and role of contemporary slavery within armed conflict, coupled with the paucity of academic research, the authors, operating within the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham\*\*, developed a coding process to identify when and how state and non-state actors have used enslavement within modern conflicts. The coding of enslavement began with an analysis of all armed conflicts from 1989 to 2016 in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). Using the UCDP data, the research team combed through a wide range of sources to find instances of enslavement, conflict-by-conflict, and year-by-year. This coding exercise is the first systematic and large-scale inquiry into various types of enslavement within modern armed conflicts. We share these data so that others may explore, analyse, and develop this area of inquiry. We invite suggestions as to how these data may be improved.

---

<sup>†</sup> <https://www.alliance87.org/about/>

<sup>‡</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=8&Target=8.7>

<sup>§</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/21/magazine/boko-haram-the-boys-from-baga.html>

\*\* This project was funded in part by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of the Antislavery Usable Past project (AH/M004430/1 and AH/M004430/2).

## Definitions and Scope

Our coding draws upon the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)<sup>††</sup> and examines armed conflicts UCDP documented from 1989 to 2016 in which at least one side of the conflict was a nation-state. The UCDP defines a conflict as, “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.”<sup>‡‡</sup> In the sub-set we employed, there were 171 unique conflicts, some short in duration (1 year or less), others longer (a decade or more), altogether totaling 1,113 conflict-year observations. All conflicts had at least two sides: Side A (typically a nation-state), and Side B (sometimes a nation-state, other times one or more non-state actors, such as rebel groups, insurgents, or other sub-state actors). Because our approach also sought to examine variation in the extent to which enslavement might be used in these conflicts over time, the key unit of analysis is the *conflict-year* and instances of enslavement are coded by the conflict-year.

To code instances of enslavement based on the UCDP data from 1989 to 2016, we drew upon the Systematic Review Method, which “systematically search[es] for all available evidence, appraising the quality of all the included studies, and synthesizing the evidence into a usable form” (Mahatni et al 2018, 127). In searching for instances of contemporary enslavement in armed conflicts using this method, the research team drew upon online sources (e.g., Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reuters, media reports, as well as academic journals and government documents), conflict-by-conflict, using the key terms shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Key Search Terms for Identifying Slavery in Armed Conflict**

<i>slavery</i>	<i>human trafficking</i>
<i>modern slavery</i>	<i>child lab*r</i>
<i>forced lab*r</i>	<i>rape</i>
<i>slavery like practice</i>	<i>sale or exploitation of children</i>
<i>domestic servitude</i>	<i>use of child soldiers</i>
<i>forced marriage</i>	<i>female genital mutilation</i>
<i>servile marriage</i>	<i>logistic servitude</i>
<i>early marriage</i>	<i>conflict</i>
<i>child marriage</i>	<i>kidnapping</i>
<i>trafficking in persons</i>	

We focused on the following types of enslavement to include and code as new variables within the UCDP database: child soldiers, sexual slavery & forced marriage, forced labor, and human trafficking. At the outset, instances of ‘domestic servitude’ were found among the sources, but the textual evidence was mixed and several cases were found in which ‘domestic servitude’ was simply one part of more complex requirements within ‘forced labor’. Slavery is complex and heterogeneous: victims may suffer multiple forms of exploitation to different degrees at different times. In developing this dataset, we observed situations in which one kind of enslavement (typically domestic servitude) resulted from other types. In many cases, ‘domestic servitude’ was just the result of and a part of a more predominant form of enslavement such as sexual enslavement/forced marriage or human trafficking. For those reasons we folded instances of

<sup>††</sup> <http://ucdp.uu.se>

<sup>‡‡</sup> <http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/ucdpprio/ucdp-prio-acd-181.pdf>

‘domestic servitude’ within the category of ‘forced labor’, or where other categories predominated, as those categories.

Table 2 lists these types of enslavement along with the corresponding legal definitions from which researchers incorporated new variables onto the UCDP database:

<b>Table 2: Types of Enslavement and Their Definitions</b>		
<b>Type of Enslavement</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Relevant Convention/Protocol</b>
<i>Child Soldiers</i>	Under Article 8 of the Rome Statute, war crimes against child soldiers include conscripting or enlisting children under the ages of 15 years, or using them to participate actively in hostilities.	Rome Statute
<i>Sexual Exploitation / Forced Marriage</i>	According to the United Nations, this includes “Any institution or practice whereby: A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian family, or any other person or group; or The husband of a woman, his family or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.”	United Nations Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery <sup>§§</sup>
<i>Forced Labor</i>	According to the International Labor Organization, this includes “All work service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.” This excludes compulsory military service, normal civil obligations, penalties imposed by a court action taken in an emergency, and minor communal services.	ILO Forced Labour Convention <sup>***</sup> and Convention Concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour <sup>†††</sup>
<i>Human Trafficking</i>	According to the United Nations, this includes three steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons;</li> <li>2. By means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person;</li> <li>3. With the intent of exploiting that person through: prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery (or similar practices), servitude, and removal of organs. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve threat, use of force, or coercion.</li> </ol>	United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol <sup>†††</sup>

If a member of the research team identified any of the types of enslavement listed in Table 2 in source material for any of the specific conflicts within the UCDP database, they coded that instance, conflict-by-conflict. This led to the construction of the following new variables: “Child Soldiers,” “Sexual Exploitation/Forced Marriage,” “Forced Labor,” and “Human Trafficking.” If the researcher identified an affirmative instance of any of these types of enslavement, they coded this variable as a “1”: [this sub-type of enslavement] *was used in the conflict*. If there was no evidence

<sup>§§</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/supplementaryconventionabolitionofslavery.aspx>

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C029](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029)

<sup>†††</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C105](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C105)

<sup>†††</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>

available to support any claims of enslavement, then they coded that instance as a “0”: *it is unknown if [this sub-type of enslavement] had been used in the conflict in question*. If limited evidence existed from which the researcher could infer the presence of enslavement, then they coded this as a “2”: *an educated guess that [this sub-type of enslavement] had occurred, based on evidentiary reports, but without a specified date*. Making an educated guess reflects one of the limitations in this study and the difficulty in delineating when enslavement occurs based exclusively on an analysis of research reports. Often NGO reports, which made up a significant part of our sources, did not specify exact dates or years of enslavement in armed conflicts. Our aim, therefore, was always to err on the side of a conservative assessment of the materials analysed.

In addition to coding what types of enslavement were used, the researcher also highlighted which “side” of the conflict within the UCDP Database (identified as “Side A” or “Side B”, as described above) used that form of enslavement. Any documents that reported incidents of slavery were annotated by the researcher and then saved onto the online citation database *Mendeley*,<sup>§§§</sup> as well as categorized by country for each conflict.

### Questions of Terminology

There are ongoing debates in academic and policy circles about how best to define contemporary slavery, as well as how to define any type of enslavement. Variation in the use and understanding of key terms like “modern slavery” and “human trafficking” vary due to cultural, social, and political differences. In the United States, for example, policy and law makers regularly use the term “human trafficking” as the catch-all term for enslavement, whereas in the United Kingdom the government has legally specified the overarching term is “modern slavery”<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>.

While these differences may seem academic, they often have legal foundations that required consideration as we developed our coding. In the matter of identifying and coding Child Soldiering, for instance, we considered a variety of definitions: the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*<sup>††††</sup> as well as the *Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*.<sup>‡‡‡‡</sup> In the latter convention, the phrase “worst forms of child labour” includes forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. However, we also considered an expanded definition, the Cape Town Principles, commonly used among child protection agencies, non-governmental and UN agencies, including UNICEF. This definition explains that child soldiers include, “Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The Cape Town Principles definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage” (Cape Town Principles, 1997). Clearly, there are several activities (carrying a weapon, being sexually assaulted, preparing food and other logistical tasks) which an enslaved person might be forced to do by combatant forces. In these data we have tried to disaggregate these activities as far as possible, while recognizing that they can be fluid and overlapping. When one activity seemed to predominate, it became the primary coded activity.

---

§§§ <https://www.mendeley.com/newsfeed/>

\*\*\*\* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

†††† <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opaccrc.aspx>

‡‡‡‡ [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C182](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182)

### ***Strategic Enslavement within Conflict***

All forms of enslavement utilised by combatants are fundamentally tactical, but throughout history, as well as today, slavery has also been used to serve strategic aims as well – on both sides of the American Civil War, and as part of the larger strategy of genocide perpetrated by German/Axis forces in World War 2. More recently, ISIS in the establishment of its Caliphate in Northern Iraq made enslavement a component of its strategy to extirpate the Yazidi people (Al-Dayel, Mumford, and Bales 2020).

Strategic enslavement in conflict is closely linked to genocide and the concept and practice of ‘ethnic cleansing’. It differs from tactical enslavement in ways that are both subtle and profound. Tactical enslavement is based upon a classification, often implicit rather than formally specified, of who is ‘eligible’ for enslavement and the subsequent exploitation of that group of people. In strategic enslavement, that assumption or classification often specifies who is ‘eligible’ for extermination (although any form of slavery may terminate in death). In order to pursue a strategic aim, enslavement and exploitation become a stage in a process of genocide.

The one non-lethal form of strategic enslavement we have identified has to do with ethnic cleansing through rape. In this situation a woman who has been deemed eligible for extermination is enslaved, but used initially, possibly primarily, to produce offspring for the group that controls her. In the case of ISIS, this strategic enslavement involved impregnating a woman from a group marked for extermination. Pregnancy was thought to erase her genocidal status and replace it with a functional religious ethnicity by virtue of the sperm and foetus forced upon her. In any of these forms of strategic enslavement, as in the assessment of genocide, there is a clearly understood ‘target group’, which has been marked as eligible for both enslavement and extermination.

Our coding for Strategic Slavery aims to clarify what type of strategic enslavement was used. We assigned a code of 0 (not present) if no evidence of strategic enslavement could be found. A code of 1 was assigned if “Target group members are enslaved and exploited in ways that support tactical aims, including within the strategic genocidal process, but with the assumption that they will be worked to death or disposed of when desired.” Put another way: this code reflects short-term utilitarian exploitation of labour from people marked for death. A code of 2 was assigned when female target group members will be/were isolated, aborted if pregnant, then forcibly impregnated in order to a) remove them from the ‘target’ group through possession and use; and b) generate non-target group offspring; with the possible outcome of c) being killed when no longer fertile/useful. A code of 3 was assigned if the conditions specified in both categories 1 and 2 obtained. Using this coding, we determined that strategic enslavement occurred in 178 of the 1,113 conflict-years.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Data presented in this section reflect our coding instances of contemporary slavery in armed conflicts, from 1989 to 2016, drawing upon data from the UCDP Armed Conflict database. Replication data files as well as documentation of instances of enslavement can be found on the CSAC website.

After creating and coding new variables for these types of enslavement with the UCDP data, a preliminary analysis found that of the 1,113 conflicts recorded by the UCDP for the period 1989 to 2016, enslavement was pervasive, as seen in Table 3.

Child Soldiers	970 of all conflict-years (87.15%)
Sexual Exploitation/Forced Marriage	382 of all conflict-years (32.25%)
Forced Labour	262 of all conflict-years (20.93%)
Human Trafficking	185 of all conflict-years (14.28%)

Among the conflicts we investigated, we found that 87% contained incidence of child soldiers, 32% included instances of sexual exploitation/forced marriage, 21% forced labor, and 14% instances of human trafficking.

### **Child Soldiers**

Most armed conflicts from the end of the Cold War to 2016 involved the enslavement of child soldiers. This comes as no surprise, given that most academic research and policy discussions that examine slavery and conflict focus on child soldiers (e.g., Roos and Bohmelt 2017, Harding and Kershner 2018, Coundouriotis 2010).

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum.</i>
No evidence of enslavement	140	12.58	12.58
Enslavement solely by Side A	27	2.43	15.00
Enslavement on Both Sides	473	42.50	57.50
Enslavement solely by Side B	473	42.50	100.00
Total	1,113	100.00	

Table 4 sheds light into the use of child soldiers as a tactic of state and non-state actors in armed conflicts. Table 4, and the others to follow, list the frequency of cases pertaining to the type of enslavement in question as well as the percent of these cases and their cumulative percent. Among the 1,113 unique conflict-years we coded, only 140 cases had no instances of enslavement on the part of either Side A or Side B. Side A (typically consisting of a nation-state) was the lone/sole offender in only 27 instances, for the governments of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, and Myanmar (Burma).

When Side B is the lone offender, child soldiering occurred in 473 cases, about 43% of the conflicts. This occurred across a number of non-state actors, too many to list here, but documented online via the CSAC website. In about 43% of the cases both sides of the conflict, Side A and Side B, used child soldiers.

It may seem surprising that our analysis finds such a high incidence of child soldiers in the conflicts listed in the UCDP dataset. This demonstrates that enslavement is a part of modern warfare and thus a current and real threat to human security. Our data on the incidence of child soldiers in conflicts (we were not the first to do so, see Roos 2019) points to a need in the field of global

governance to find ways to address the underlying causes of this particularly egregious form of exploitation.

### ***Sexual Exploitation/Forced Marriage***

Sexual exploitation/forced marriage occurs in roughly one-third of all conflicts we observed, as Table 5 illustrates.

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum.</i>
No evidence of enslavement	731	65.68	65.68
Enslavement solely by Side A	110	9.88	75.56
Enslavement on Both Sides	137	12.31	87.87
Enslavement solely by Side B	135	12.13	100.00
Total	1,113	100.00	

There is a relatively even distribution in the practice of sexual exploitation and forced marriage across the sides within a conflict. When only Side A is involved, this type of enslavement occurs in 110 instances, or about 10% of the time. When only Side B is involved, there are 135 instances, or about 12% of cases; and when both Sides A & B are involved, there 137 instances, or about 12% of cases. This is in contrast to the use of child soldiers in armed conflicts, in which case Side A is rarely the offender. Thus, although nation-states are less likely to enslave children as soldiers, they are more likely to engage in other forms of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

Forced marriage has become a global issue, particularly after the discovery that more than 6,500 Yazidi girls and women were captured and sold, or forced into ‘marriages’, by the Islamic State.<sup>§§§§</sup> Nobel Laureate Nadia Murad laments the fate of more than 3,000 of these women and children are unaccounted for, and likely still in the grip of ISIS.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Murad’s work speaks to broader questions that might be explored using these data: how can we liberate persons enslaved in forced marriage? What can the international community do to help mitigate, and in time eradicate this crime? To what extent are the lives of women and young girls valuable in the eyes of the global community?

### ***Human Trafficking in Armed Conflict***

Table 5 shows the results of human trafficking, meaning the onward sale of enslaved persons, in armed conflicts. Compared to child soldiers and sexual exploitation/forced marriage, there are fewer instances of human trafficking. Side A is the offender in only 8 instances, less than one-percent of all cases. This compares with Side B as the sole offender, in which there are 165 instances, 15% of all cases.

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum.</i>
No evidence of enslavement	928	83.38	83.83
Enslavement solely by Side A	8	0.72	84.10
Enslavement on Both Sides	12	1.08	85.18

<sup>§§§§</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-islamic-state-yazidi-sex-slaves-genocide-sinjar-death-toll-number-kidnapped-study-un-lse-a7726991.html>

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/murad/55705-nadia-murad-nobel-lecture-2/>



Enslavement solely by Side B	165	14.82	100.00
Total	1,113	100.00	

### ***Forced Labor in Armed Conflict***

Forced labor is overall more frequent than human trafficking in armed conflict, with Side A being the sole offender on 9% of cases, and Side B being the sole offender in about 7% of cases.

**Table 6: Frequency Distribution  
Of Forced Labor in Armed Conflicts**

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum.</i>
No evidence of enslavement	851	76.46	76.46
Enslavement solely by Side A	106	9.52	85.98
Enslavement on Both Sides	71	6.38	92.36
Enslavement solely by Side B	85	7.64	100.00
Total	1,113	100.00	

### ***Strategic Enslavement in Armed Conflict***

**Table 7: Frequency Distribution  
Of Forced Labor in Armed Conflicts**

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum.</i>
No evidence of strategic enslavement	935	84.01	84.01
Strategic enslavement solely by Side A	41	3.68	87.69
Strategic enslavement on Both Sides	42	3.77	91.46
Strategic enslavement solely by Side B	95	8.54	100.00
Total	1,113	100.00	

Table 7 shows data on instances of strategic enslavement in armed conflicts. Although strategic enslavement is not common (occurring in only about 16% of all cases), note that Side B is twice as likely to employ strategic enslavement than Side A. Nation-states may employ strategic enslavement (about 4% of the time), but not nearly as much as non-state actors.

### **Cross Tabulations**

We note that enslavement occurs with regularity across armed conflicts in a variety of ways--child soldiers, sexual exploitation and forced marriage, as well as in the form of human trafficking and forced labor. Moreover, we note that a person may be enslaved in different ways at different times (for example, a child soldier might also be a victim of sexual exploitation). Given that our database is preliminary, we hesitate to perform inferential statistical analysis. Beyond descriptive statistical analysis at this point, we look forward to discovering if these data might be used, through multivariate models, to explain the causes of different types of enslavement in armed conflict. We note that there are several measures of conflict embedded within the UCDP Armed Conflict Database. In this section, we offer a series of cross tabulations, looking at the different types of enslavement and their intersection with the following UCDP variables: *Incompatibility*, *Intensity Level*, and *Type of Conflict*.

### ***Incompatibility***

The variable *Incompatibility* identifies what drove factions toward an armed conflict: (1) a territorial dispute; (2) a governmental dispute; or (3) both. Table 8 cross-tabulates our coded

measures of enslavement with these three types of conflict incompatibility. Side A rarely enslaved children on its own for any justification. This occurred in just 16 disputes. Side B, on the other hand, was often the sole offender, enslaving children in 252 disputes over territory and 221 disputes over governmental issues. When Side A and Side B both enslaved children, 190 instances were over territory, and 282 were due to governmental disputes.

Table 8 also speaks to the intersection of sexual exploitation/forced marriage and conflict incompatibility. When there was a dispute over territory, Side A was the sole offender in 88 cases, more than double when Side B, or both sides, was involved. But in governmental disputes, a mirror image appears. In such instances, Side B was the sole offender in 110 cases, five times more than Side A. Moreover, in those armed conflicts in which human trafficking occurred, Side B was the sole offender most of the time be it over territory or governmental disputes. In those conflicts in which forced labor took place, Side A was more often the offender in territorial disputes, and Side B was more often the offender in governmental disputes.

<b>Table 8: Contemporary Slavery and Incompatibility</b>				
	<b>Territory</b>	<b>Governmental Disputes</b>	<b>Governmental Disputes &amp; Territory</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Child Soldiers</i>				
No evidence of enslavement	96	44	0	140
Enslavement on Side A	16	11	0	27
Enslavement on Both Sides	190	282	1	473
Enslavement on Side B	252	221	0	473
Total	554	558	1	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 41.5441 Pr = 0.000				
<i>Sexual Exploitation / Forced Marriage</i>				
No evidence of enslavement	417	313	1	731
Enslavement on Side A	88	22	0	110
Enslavement on Both Sides	24	113	0	137
Enslavement on Side B	25	110	0	135
Total	554	558	1	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 166.3910 Pr = 0.000				
<i>Human Trafficking</i>				
No evidence of enslavement	507	420	1	928
Enslavement on Side A	2	6	0	8
Enslavement on Both Sides	1	11	0	12
Enslavement on Side B	44	121	0	165
Total	554	558	1	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 54.6570 Pr = 0.000				
<i>Forced Labour</i>				
No evidence of enslavement	410	441	0	851
Enslavement on Side A	99	7	0	106
Enslavement on Both Sides	18	53	0	71
Enslavement on Side B	27	57	1	85
Total	554	558	1	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 121.0125 Pr = 0.000				

### ***Intensity Level***

The UCDP database also measures the intensity level of a conflict: (1) a *minor dispute*, if the armed conflict resulted in less than 1,000 battle-related deaths in a given year; and (2) *war*, if there were at least 1,000 battle-related deaths. Table 9 provides cross-tabulations and reveals several observations. 874 instances of child soldiering took place during minor disputes, compared to 239 instances in major disputes. This tells us that contemporary slavery is less likely occur in major wars. However, given that in the post-Cold War era “low intensity” conflicts are predominate they are also likely to involve the use of child soldiers.

Table 9 also reveals that when Side A is the lone offender, it is far more likely to commit acts of sexual exploitation/forced marriage in minor rather than major disputes, whereas Side B is equally likely to commit such acts in minor as in major disputes. Table 9 also shows that when instances of human trafficking are involved, it will almost always be perpetrated by Side B. With forced labour, Side A is likely to be the lone offender in minor disputes, as compared with Side B which is about as likely to employ forced labor in major or minor conflicts.

<b>Table 9: Contemporary Slavery and Conflict Intensity</b>			
	<b>Minor Dispute</b>	<b>War</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><i>Child Soldiers</i></b>			
No evidence of enslavement	132	8	140
Enslavement on Side A	18	9	27
Enslavement on Both Sides	345	128	473
Enslavement on Side B	379	94	473
Total	874	239	1,113
Pearson chi2(3) = 32.3485 Pr = 0.000			
<b><i>Sexual Exploitation / Forced Marriage</i></b>			
No evidence of enslavement	623	108	731
Enslavement on Side A	98	12	110
Enslavement on Both Sides	83	54	137
Enslavement on Side B	70	65	135
Total	874	239	1,113
Pearson chi2(3) = 109.8577 Pr = 0.000			
<b><i>Human Trafficking</i></b>			
No evidence of enslavement	772	156	928
Enslavement on Side A	2	6	8
Enslavement on Both Sides	3	9	12
Enslavement on Side B	97	68	165
Total	874	239	1,113
Pearson chi2(3) = 84.0731 Pr = 0.000			
<b><i>Forced Labour</i></b>			
No evidence of enslavement	697	154	851
Enslavement on Side A	98	8	106
Enslavement on Both Sides	39	32	71
Enslavement on Side B	40	45	85
Total	874	239	1,113
Pearson chi2(3) = 91.3072 Pr = 0.000			

### ***Type of Conflict***

The next cross-tabulation examines contemporary slavery and conflict type. This is based on another measure in the UCDP database, Type of Conflict, with four potential attributes. First, a conflict might be *extrasystemic* if it “occurs between a state and a non-state group outside its own territory.” Second, a conflict could be *interstate* if it “occurs between two or more states.” Third, a conflict could be *internal* if it “occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) without intervention from other states.” Fourth, a conflict can be *internationalized* if it “occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides.”

Table 10 reveals a pattern across contemporary enslavement and armed conflict. Regardless of the type of enslavement, it is most likely to take place in internal armed conflicts than any other conflict type. There were only 9 cases of child soldiers and only 2 cases of forced labor in interstate armed conflicts, making the incidence of contemporary slavery in this type of armed conflict extremely rare. Although there are instances of enslavement in internationalized internal armed conflicts, they are less common than in internal armed conflicts. Among armed conflicts involving the use of child soldiers, for instance, there were 910 internal armed conflicts compared to 174 internationalized internal armed conflicts. The same patterns apply to conflicts containing sexual exploitation/forced marriage, human trafficking, and forced labor.

<b>Table 10: Contemporary Slavery and Conflict Type</b>				
	<b>Interstate armed conflict</b>	<b>Internal armed conflict</b>	<b>Internationalized internal armed conflict</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><i>Child Soldiers</i></b>				
No evidence of enslavement	20	104	16	140
Enslavement on Side A	7	20	0	27
Enslavement on Both Sides	2	361	110	473
Enslavement on Side B	0	425	48	473
Total	29	910	174	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 189.7692 Pr = 0.000				
<b><i>Sexual Exploitation / Forced Marriage</i></b>				
No evidence of enslavement	29	652	50	731
Enslavement on Side A	0	107	3	110
Enslavement on Both Sides	0	103	34	137
Enslavement on Side B	0	48	87	135
Total	29	910	174	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 320.3129 Pr = 0.000				
<b><i>Human Trafficking</i></b>				
No evidence of enslavement	29	806	93	928
Enslavement on Side A	0	6	2	8
Enslavement on Both Sides	0	12	2	12
Enslavement on Side B	0	86	79	165
Total	29	910	174	1,113
Pearson chi2(6) = 157.7459 Pr = 0.000				
<b><i>Forced Labour</i></b>				
No evidence of enslavement	27	702	122	851
Enslavement on Side A	2	101	3	106

Enslavement on Both Sides	0	53	18	71
Enslavement on Side B	0	54	31	85
Total	29	910	174	1,113

Pearson chi2(6) = 51.5739 Pr = 0.000

### ***Strategic Enslavement***

Our last series of cross tabulations examines those instances of strategic enslavement with armed conflict incompatibility, conflict intensity, and conflict type. Although strategic enslavement is rare, when it does occur, Side B is most often the lone offender during armed conflicts due to governmental disputes. In minor disputes, both Side A and Side B are about as likely to engage in strategic enslavement, but in major disputes Side B is more often the culprit. Interestingly, with regard to internal armed conflicts, Side A and Side B are about evenly matched in terms of strategic enslavement, but with respect to internationalized internal conflicts, Side B is once again most likely the lone offender.

**Table 11: Strategic Enslavement**

<b><i>Conflict Incompatibility</i></b>	<b>Territory</b>	<b>Governmental Disputes</b>	<b>Governmental Disputes &amp; Territory</b>	<b>Total</b>
No evidence of Strategic Slavery	504	430	1	935
Strategic Enslavement on Side A	37	4	0	41
Strategic Enslavement A&B Sides	4	38	0	42
Strategic Enslavement on Side B	9	86	0	95
Total	554	558	1	1,113

Pearson chi2(6) = 122.6392 Pr = 0.000

  

<b><i>Conflict Intensity</i></b>	<b>Minor Dispute</b>	<b>War</b>	<b>Total</b>
No evidence of Strategic Slavery	782	153	935
Strategic Enslavement on Side A	36	5	41
Strategic Enslavement A&B Sides	13	29	42
Strategic Enslavement on Side B	43	52	95
Total	874	239	1,113

Pearson chi2(3) = 135.2800 Pr = 0.000

  

<b><i>Conflict Type</i></b>	<b>Interstate armed conflict</b>	<b>Internal armed conflict</b>	<b>Internationalized internal armed conflict</b>	<b>Total</b>
No evidence of Strategic Slavery	28	791	116	935
Strategic Enslavement on Side A	0	40	1	41
Strategic Enslavement A&B Sides	0	35	7	42
Strategic Enslavement on Side B	1	44	50	95
Total	29	910	174	1,113

Pearson chi2(6) = 114.3733 Pr = 0.000

### **Conclusion**

A lack of data has meant that the use of enslavement within armed conflicts is little understood. In this paper, we have introduced a new dataset, Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflicts (CSAC),

coding instances of slavery within conflicts that occurred from 1989 to 2016, building upon the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. This includes distinct codes for instances of child soldiers, sexual exploitation/forced marriage, human trafficking, and forced labor, as well as the presence of enslavement practiced within conflict to pursue a strategic aim. The data show variation in the use of enslavement in conflict across a number of co-variables. Broadly, we find that contemporary slavery occurs in about 87% of armed conflicts, and that state and non-state actors use enslavement in support of strategic aims about 16% of the time. This dataset is a step toward developing a broader conversation about the intersection of slavery in armed conflicts.

Moving forward, in addition to building more robust, longitudinal datasets going back to the Second World War and extending the data into the present, there are a number of important questions we should consider. What are the reasons/predictors for tactical enslavement, and for strategic enslavement? Do geographical contexts of each conflict affect the type of enslavement used? How might post-conflict environments create risk of further exploitation of enslavement? How can policymakers, NGO's, and practitioners best uncover and understand the reasons for enslavement within conflicts to prevent perpetrators from enslaving others? How might we best help survivors who have suffered these abuses within conflict situations? What are the unique effects of enslavement in conflicts on the victims and perpetrators? These are but a handful of questions we are considering at The Rights Lab as we move forward with this research agenda – and we invite consultation, collaboration, and cooperation.

### **Replication Data**

[www.CSAC.org.uk](http://www.CSAC.org.uk)

### **Acknowledgements**

Gabriel Bales provided important editorial support.

### **Funding**

We are grateful for the support of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and specifically for direct support arising from the **Antislavery Usable Past** project (AH/M004430/1 and AH/M004430/2); and from the UK Economic and Social Research Council as part of the **Modern Slavery: Meaning and Measurement** project (ES/P001491/). The Partnership for Conflict, Crime, and Security Research (PaCCS) also contributed support.

### **Bibliography**

Al-Dayel, Nadia, Andrew Mumford and Kevin Bales 2020 “Not Yet Dead: The Establishment and Regulation of Slavery by the Islamic State,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1711590

Bales, Kevin and Zoe Trodd. 2008. *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today's Slaves*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bales, Kevin. 2012. *Disposable People: New Slavery In the Global Economy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Beber, Bernd Beber and Christopher Blattman. "The Logic of Child Soldiering and Coercion." *International Organization*. Vol.67(1):65-104

Coundouriotis, Eleni. 2010. "The Child Soldier Narrative and the Problem of Arrested Historicization." *Journal of Human Rights*. Vol.9(2)

Gates, Scott and Simon Reich. 2010. *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*. University of Pittsburg Press.

Haer, Roos and Tobias Böhmelt. 2017. "Could Rebel Child Soldiers Prolong Civil Wars?" *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 52(3) 332–359.

Haer, Roos 2019. "Children and armed conflict: looking at the future and learning from the past." *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 40(1):

Harding, S; Kershner, S. 2018. "A borderline issue: Are there child soldiers in the United States?" *Journal of Human Rights*. Vol.17(3):

Hoiskar, Astri Halsan. 2001. "Underage and Under Fire: An enquiry into the use of child soldiers 1994–8." *Childhood*. SAGE Press. Vol. 8(3): 340–360

Lasley, Trace and Clayton Thyne. 2015. "Secession, Legitimacy and The Use of Child Soldiers." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. Vol. 32(3) 289-308.

Mahtani KR, Jefferson T, Heneghan C, *et al.* 2018. "What is a complex systematic review? Criteria, definition, and examples," *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*. Vol. 23(4): 127-130.

McAlpine, Alys, Mazedra Hossain and Cathy Zimmerman. 2016. "Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation in settings affected by armed conflicts in Africa, Asia and the Middle East: systematic review." *BMC International Health and Human Rights*. Vol. 16, Issue 34.

O'Brien, Melanie. 2016. "Don't Kill Them, Let's Choose Them as Wives: The Development of the Crimes of Forced Marriage, Sexual Slavery and Enforced Prostitution in International Criminal Law." *The International Journal of Human Rights*. Vol. 20, Issue 3, pp. 386-406.

Skinner, Benjamin. 2008. *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-Day Slavery*. Free Press.

Von Plato, Alexander, Almut Leh, and Christoph Tonfield. 2010. *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe*. Berghahn Books.