



ANNUAL COMMONWEALTH DAY WESTMINSTER SEMINAR

Half of the world's victims of slavery live in the Commonwealth: What can be done about it?

Date: 9 March 2020 • **Time:** 10:30 to 12:30
Venue: Committee Room G, Palace of Westminster

Speaker: *Dame Sara Thornton DBE, QPM Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner*
Chair: *The Rt Hon Baroness Prashar of Runnymede CBE*

While a third of the world's population are Commonwealth citizens, according to the Global Slavery Index a staggering 55% of those currently enslaved reside in Commonwealth countries. This means that the Commonwealth is in a unique position to help significantly reduce slavery in the world.

As the statistics show, no country is exempt from the risks and incidence of modern slavery. Yet, it thrives in countries where governments fail to protect children, women and men from discrimination, exploitation and abuse, and allow businesses – however unscrupulous – to operate with impunity. All countries are bound by international law to make forced and child labour illegal.

But we should expect more of Commonwealth countries. They have subscribed to a model of democratic governance that must not only look like they take human rights seriously, but that translates their commitments into demonstrable action. Tackling modern slavery is no longer merely a human rights issue. It is a political, economic and social imperative.

Slavery is a defining problem of our age, but has obvious antecedents in our national history and psyche. Dame Sara Thornton is the UK's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Her appointment in 2019 was an indicator of the Government's determination to scrutinise the issue of slavery and to hold accountable those responsible for it, but, with the problem extending far beyond our own country, Dame Sara will consider how the Commonwealth can face up to the challenge in its midst. Is a tough attitude enough?



Dame Sara Thornton is the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner responsible for encouraging good practice in the prevention and detection of modern slavery and the identification of victims. She was the first Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council from 2015 to 2019.

Dame Sara joined the Metropolitan Police Service in 1986 and in 2000 transferred to Thames Valley Police on promotion to Assistant Chief Constable. Following four years as Deputy Chief Constable she was appointed Chief Constable in 2007. She contributed significantly to national policing during this time and was the national lead on intelligence, Vice-Chair of ACPO Terrorism and Allied Matters, Director of the Police National Assessment Centre and ACPO Vice-President.

Dame Sara is Chair of the National Leadership Centre's Advisory Board. She is a member of the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Advisory Board for the Oxford University Centre for Criminology and a trustee and board member of the Police Foundation.

Dame Sara is a graduate of Durham University, also holding a Master of Studies (MSt) degree in Applied Criminology and Police Management from Cambridge University alongside honorary doctorates from Oxford Brookes University and Buckinghamshire New University.

Dame Sara was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 2006 and made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2011. She was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2019. She has also been recognised with a Career Achievement Award from the Police Training Authority Trustees and the Sir Robert Peel Medal for Outstanding Leadership in Evidence-Based Policing. She is an honorary Air Commodore in the Royal Air Force supporting the work of the auxiliary police squadron.

There will be a high demand for places.
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or email us on secretariat@cecomm.org.uk

We have a small favour to ask.

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If everyone who attends our events, who likes it, could make a small voluntary contribution of £20, this would enable us to organise more such events.

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Arrival: Please arrive **AT LEAST 30 minutes** in advance as the security queues can be very busy if a lot is going on within the Palace of Westminster that evening. Bring your invitation with you.

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