



Archbishop Justin and Patriarch Bartholomew sign a joint declaration on modern slavery, Istanbul, Turkey, 7 February 2017.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness Bartholomew of Constantinople, have issued a joint declaration condemning modern slavery, which has gained the support of the UK Prime Minister.

The Declaration, agreed at the ‘Sins Before Our Eyes’ forum in Istanbul, pledged to:

- Condemn all forms of human enslavement
- Commend the efforts of the international community
- Pray for all victims
- Repent for not doing enough to curb modern day slavery
- Appeal to governments to implement strict modern day slavery laws
- Urge members of the Orthodox Church and Church of England to become educated, raise awareness and take action
- Commit to establish a joint taskforce for modern day slavery, looking at ways for how the Orthodox Church and the Church of England can work together

In his speech at the forum, Archbishop Justin outlined that slavery is more rampant today than any other time in human history, and called it an “abomination to human dignity”.

Estimates by the International Labour Organisation and the Global Slavery Index suggest that between 20.9 and 45.8 million lives globally are caught up in slavery.

The Archbishop praised the Church of England for establishing the Clewer Initiative against Modern Day Slavery, which aims to help dioceses detect instances of modern day slavery and provide care to victims.

“There is no religious basis or justification for a practice that commodifies human beings,” he said. “All religious leaders need to speak out against such a practice and challenge those false prophets that seek to corrupt sacred texts to justify their warped behaviour.”

The UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, welcomed the joint declaration.

“Modern slavery is one of the great human rights issues of our time, subjecting people around the world to experiences that are horrifying in their inhumanity,” she said. “We have a duty, as human beings and as Christians, to bring it to an end.”

“The UK is leading the way in helping to tackle this vile and barbaric crime. However, governments alone will not be able to stop it. It is vital that all parts of society do their part.

“That is why I so warmly welcome the vital work that faith communities are doing to shine a light on the evils of modern slavery and encourage the steps that must be taken to address it.”

[Read the Archbishop's speech at the Sins Before Our Eyes forum](#)

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