

Expert panel: How to break the chains of modern slavery?

On the 22nd of April, René Cassin organised an expert panel to discuss the implications of recent developments for the law of modern slavery, and where next for the movement to stamp out slavery in all its forms. René Cassin would like to thank our chair, Dr Rosa Freedman of Birmingham University and our two speakers; Parosha Chandran, a barrister with expertise in modern slavery law, and Dr Aidan McQuade, Director of Anti-Slavery International.



Martin Paisner of BLP introducing the panel

Parosha brought a depth of knowledge about the law of modern slavery derived from her experience in significant cases in the area. Her presentation discussed the intersection of international, European and domestic law in the prosecution of slavery and trafficking offences. She summarised the most salient points of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for the audience, and discussed its potential impacts.

As the Director of Anti-Slavery International, Aidan was able to complement the legal analysis of Parosha with the perspective of an NGO working on campaigning and advocacy. He emphasised the need to look at the problem outside of a criminal justice paradigm in order to fully comprehend the causes of modern slavery and assist victims.

Both Parosha and Aidan welcomed sections of the Modern Slavery Act and a consolidation of criminal offences, but agreed that there is more to be done. Parosha suggested that the movement to crush slavery would be best served by a provision that allowed civil action against perpetrators – crippling criminal organisations by taking the gains of exploitation out of their hands. Both speakers agreed that the practice of 'tied visas' for Overseas Domestic Workers fostered criminal and labour abuse.

The questions from the audience indicated a high degree of engagement, and we welcome the continuation of the vital discussion on how to end modern slavery. Many thanks also go to law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner for their valuable support in hosting the event, and we congratulate the speakers and audience for making the event a great success.