

# Modern Slavery - Brazil

No Identity, No Protection: I work like a slave



**Freedom Fund  
Modern Slavery  
Credits**

*Brazil*

*Produced with research from*

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There are a number of communities in Brazil who are vulnerable to modern slavery because they lack documentation.



Brazil experiences both internal and international migration, and it is often these communities who are most at risk of economic exploitation.



They are affected by bureaucratic inefficiencies in issuing identity and citizenship documents...



...Inefficiencies compounded by unfair application of the law.

Members of Brazil's own population are internally displaced, primarily from the poorer, agricultural, north eastern states...



...into the more economically prosperous metropolitan areas. Even with documents, they are still highly vulnerable to exploitation. Without them, the high rate of poverty and low trust in the authorities magnifies the risks.





The attitudes of the different communities within Brazil vary greatly and are, in part, a result of Brazil's history and experience of colonisation.



For example, there is a growing Haitian community who have left their home country as a result of the sociopolitical instability caused by systemic violence, predatory elites, and the collapse of the rule of law and security institutions there.



Racism can impact the chances of gaining documentation and exacerbate the risk of modern slavery for these Haitian migrants.



People from Bolivia also form one of the international communities at risk of modern slavery.



Bolivians have a long tradition of migration into Brazil. This has led to the establishment of tight knit Bolivian communities, built up around sweatshops.



Here, economic exploitation often comes from within their own community.







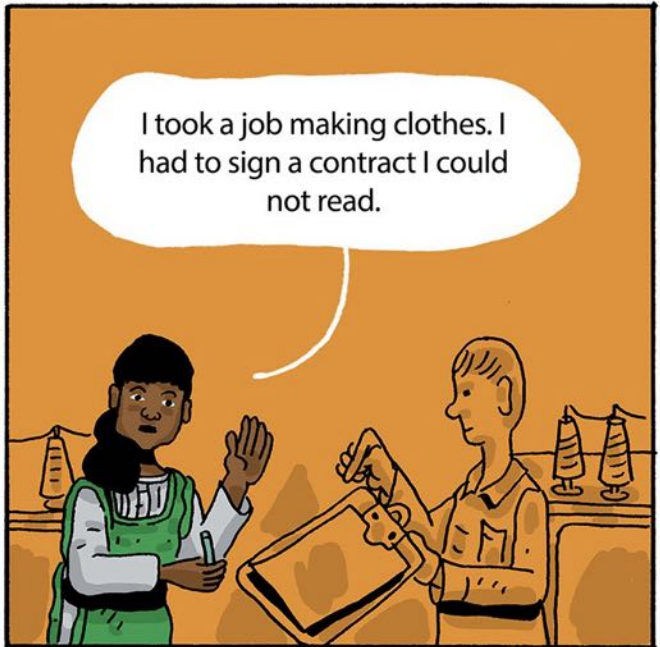
I was born in Bolivia.



Like other members of my family, I came to Brazil in search of work.



We had links with someone from my country that owns a factory in Rio de Janeiro.



I took a job making clothes. I had to sign a contract I could not read.



I am a skilled tailor, I am good with my hands.



The factory is not run well. The hours are long and I am poorly paid.



Sometimes I am threatened and forced to stay and work even though it's the end of the day. They say it's in my contract, but I can not read it to know for sure.



I do not know anyone I could go to for help.



I feel stuck as I have no other opportunities in this country. I feel that the Brazilians I meet look down on me.



If I go to the authorities to report the way I am treated, I worry that they will not believe me, put me in jail, or deport me.



**TRAPPED**  
in a cycle  
of poverty,  
no social network  
poor trust in government  
institutions

The factory owner has taken away my Bolivian documents and I have no documents from the Brazilian authorities. I have no way of proving who I am. And no way to ask for help.





I am Brazilian, I came here from Nordeste.



In my home state, there is a lot of poverty. There, you must work on the land.



I came here to find work and make better money.



I work cleaning people's homes, and sometimes I work as a domestic cook.



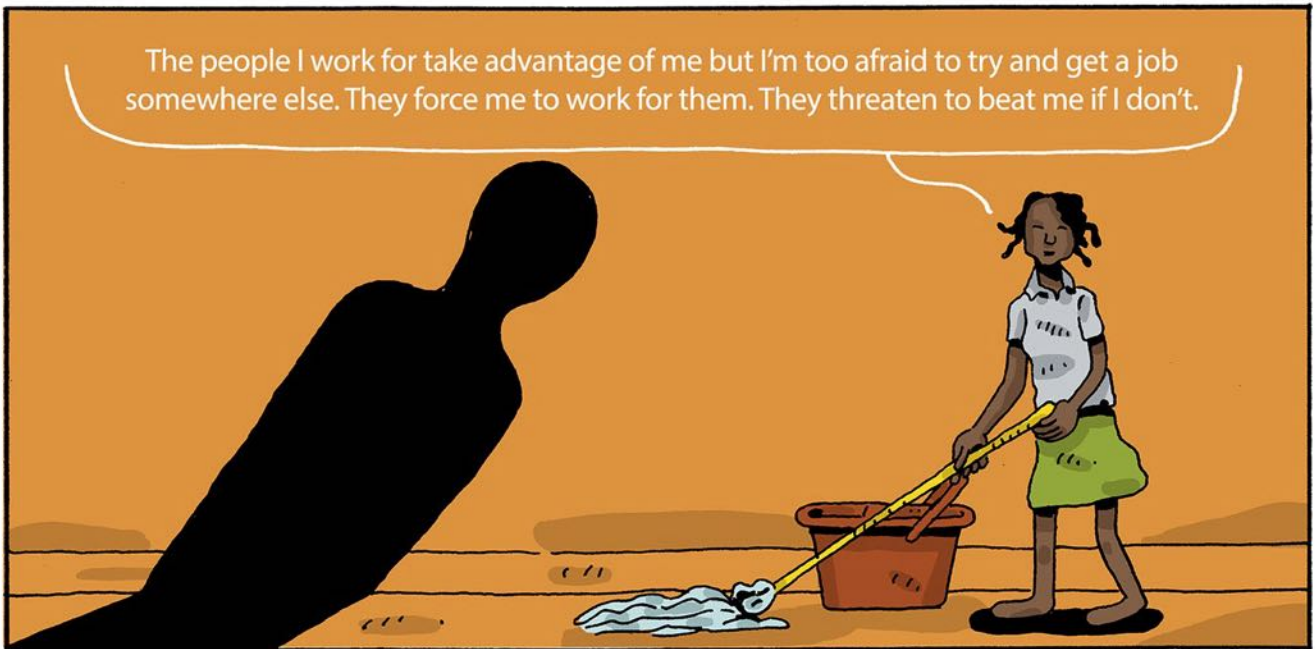
I am not treated well. I work very hard for them, but they often don't pay me. They give excuses to not pay, sometimes giving me food instead and telling me the money will be paid next month.



People look down on my situation. They call me a thief and do not trust me. With my lack of documentation, lack of minimum rights, I experience maximum exploitation, I work like a slave.









The families I work for offer me no support. They expect me to work whenever they want me to and don't think anything of me.



I know no one in this city, so I have no choice but to do what the people I work for want me to do.



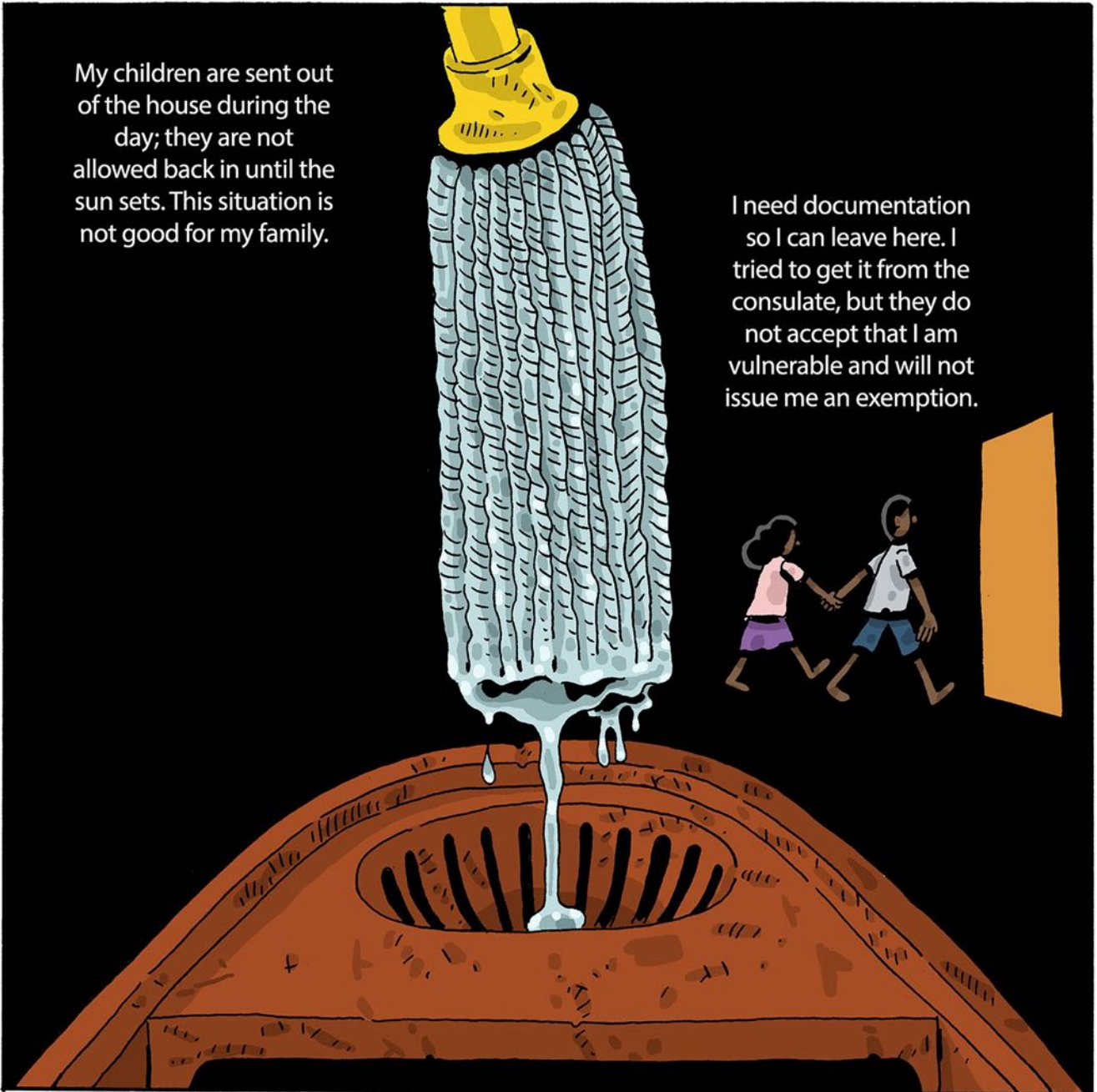
I am stuck. I feel afraid. I have no choice and no one to help me. Without documents, I cannot go to the authorities for help.





My children are sent out of the house during the day; they are not allowed back in until the sun sets. This situation is not good for my family.

I need documentation so I can leave here. I tried to get it from the consulate, but they do not accept that I am vulnerable and will not issue me an exemption.



I had such high hopes when we packed up our lives and headed for Brazil, dreaming of a better life. Have I trapped my children in a cycle of hardship and opportunities? Have I failed them as a mother?





This comic has been illustrated by **Daniel Locke** and produced by **PositiveNegatives** from research undertaken by **INURED** and **United Nations University Centre for Policy Research**, in partnership with the **Freedom Fund**.

The research in Brazil focused on the increased risk of modern slavery among migrants due to a lack of official documentation despite the existence of laws intended to facilitate access. In particular, it details obstacles that migrants from Haiti, Bolivia, and Venezuela encounter in securing essential documentation.

The research shows how a lack of access to official implementation undermines access to services and rights and increases vulnerability to modern slavery and proposes actions to reduce the risks of modern slavery.

*You can learn more about the findings of the research in the full report entitled "No Identity No Protection: How lack of documentation drives modern slavery."*

