

The Arab Muslim Slave Trade Of Africans, The Untold Story

by originalpeople.org

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African Slaves In The Arab World

Over 28 Million Africans have been enslaved in the Muslim world during the past 14 centuries. While much has been written concerning the Transatlantic slave trade, surprisingly little attention has been given to the Islamic slave trade across the Sahara, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

While the European involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade to the Americas lasted for just over three centuries, the Arab involvement in the slave trade has lasted fourteen centuries, and in some parts of the Muslim world is still continuing to this day. A comparison of the Muslim slave trade to the American slave trade reveals some interesting contrasts.

While two out of every three slaves shipped across the Atlantic were men, the proportions were reversed in the Muslim slave trade. Two women for every man were enslaved by the Muslims.

While the mortality rate for slaves being transported across the Atlantic was as high as 10%, the percentage of slaves dying in transit in the Transsahara and East African slave trade was between 80 and 90%!

While almost all the slaves shipped across the Atlantic were for agricultural work, most of the slaves destined for the Muslim Middle East were for sexual exploitation as concubines, in harems, and for military service.

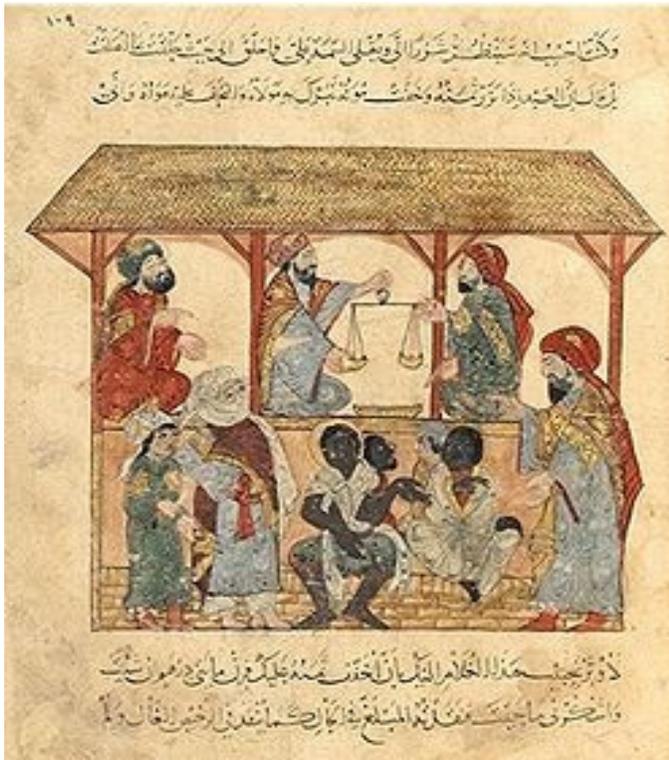
While many children were born to slaves in the Americas, and millions of their descendants are citizens in Brazil and the USA to this day, very few descendants of the slaves that ended up in the Middle East survive.

While most slaves who went to the Americas could marry and have families, most of the male slaves destined for the Middle East were castrated, and most of the children born to the women were killed at birth.

It is estimated that possibly as many as 11 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic (95% of which went to South and Central America, mainly to Portuguese, Spanish and French possessions. Only 5% of the slaves went to the United States).

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While Christian Reformers spearheaded the antislavery abolitionist movements in Europe and North America, and Great Britain mobilized her Navy, throughout most of the 19th Century, to intercept slave ships and set the captives free, there was no comparable opposition to slavery within the Muslim world.

Even after Britain outlawed the slave trade in 1807 and Europe abolished the slave trade in 1815, Muslim slave traders enslaved a further 2 million Africans. This despite vigorous British Naval activity and military intervention to limit the Muslim slave trade.

By some calculations the number of victims of the 14 centuries of Muslim slave trade could exceed 180 million. Nearly 100 years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in America, and 130 years after all slaves within the British Empire were set free by parliamentary decree, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, in 1962, and Mauritania in 1980, begrudgingly removed legalized slavery from their statute books.

And this only after international pressure was brought to bear. Today numerous international organizations document that slavery still continues in some Muslim countries.

Reports on slavery in Sudan, Mauritania for instance needs looking into. Recently, a former slave from the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, Mende Nazer, had her autobiography: "Slave: My True Story" published. Mende Nazer was an alleged slave in Sudan. She was made famous by her transfer to England to serve a diplomatic family.

Mende Nazer reports that she was abducted and sold into slavery in Sudan when she was a child of twelve or thirteen (she doesn't know when she was born). She lived in a village of the Karko Nuba in the Nuba mountains of Sudan with her family. The village was attacked one night. Mende fled with her

family into the mountains.

She became separated from her family, and when a man caught her and told her he would protect her, she believed him. She had already seen people killed in front of her. The man told her to stay with a group of children.

Later, the raiders came and took all of the children to the town of Dilling, there the children were taken by families to serve as servants.

Mende also reports that she was taken by a woman from Khartoum whom she served

for six or seven years. She had to do all the hard work of the household, and sleep on the floor of the garden shed.

She was never paid anything for her labor, and was frequently beaten. She wanted to leave, but had no money and nowhere to go, and was afraid to go to the police. The woman of the house said that she owned Mende, and called Mende her 'Abda', or slave.

Eventually Mende was sent to London to work as a domestic. After several months Mende escaped and claimed asylum. At first, the Home Office rejected her claim in October 2002. In November, the Home Office overturned its decision and granted Mende asylum.

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