Q75 – What group of people was taken and sold as slaves?

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
Africans were once taken from their homelands and sold as slaves in this country and many others. Slavery is among mankind's worst institutions. Yet throughout history, it has been widely practiced and accepted. Nearly every ancient civilization embraced slavery. Ancient Egypt, Persia, China, and Greece all thrived on slavery. The Romans enslaved so many Slavic people, they gave us the word "slave." The Aztecs and Incas enslaved prisoners of wars – and even sacrificed them to their gods.

Across the centuries, North African pirates enslaved more than a million Europeans. In the early 1800's, we fought two wars against pirate nations that seized Americans as slaves. Some African tribes built empires on slavery. They raided rival tribes, captured prisoners of war, and sold them to traders from Europe and Arabia. Perhaps half of all those captives died before reaching a slave ship -- of hunger, exhaustion, or suicide. Historians estimate that up to 11 million Africans were taken as slaves to the Americas. Perhaps five percent of those ended up in what's now the United States. The other 95% were shipped to the Caribbean or Latin America. Over the course of a thousand years, perhaps 17 million Africans were sold in Arab slave markets. Today, it's estimated that more than 40 million people are being held against their will – from slave laborers to sex slaves – primarily in Africa and Asia. In fact, North Korea has the highest prevalence of slaves of any country.