



## Trafficking in human beings

According to the United Nations: “Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force (...), for the purpose of exploitation” (Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Palermo 2000)

Trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion-dollar form of international organized crime, constituting modern-day slavery. Recent estimates by the International Labour Organization place its value at USD 39 billion each year. Victims are recruited and trafficked between countries and regions using deception or coercion. They are stripped of their autonomy, freedom of movement and choice, and face various forms of physical and mental abuse. Trafficking in human beings is a crime under international law and many national and regional legal systems.

There are many forms of trafficking but one consistent aspect is the abuse of the inherent vulnerability of the victims.

***Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation*** – This prevalent form of trafficking affects every region in the world, either as a source, transit or destination country. Women and children from developing countries, and from vulnerable parts of society in developed countries, are lured by promises of decent employment into leaving their homes and travelling to what they consider will be a better life. Victims are often provided with false travel documents and an organized network is used to transport them to the destination country, where they find themselves forced into sexual slavery and held in inhumane conditions and constant fear.

***Trafficking for forced labour*** – Victims of this equally widespread form of trafficking come primarily from developing countries. They are recruited and trafficked using deception and coercion and find themselves held in conditions of slavery in a variety of jobs. Men, women and children are engaged in agricultural and construction work, domestic servitude and other labour-intensive jobs.

***Commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism*** – This crime type has been apparent in Asia for many years and has now taken hold in Africa as well as Central and South America. The phenomenon is promoted by the growth of inexpensive air travel and the relatively low risk of prohibition and prosecution in these destinations for engaging in sexual relations with minors.

***Trafficking in organs*** – Trafficking in humans for the purpose of using their organs, in particular kidneys, is a rapidly growing field of criminal activity. In many countries, waiting lists for transplants are very long, and criminals have seized this opportunity to exploit the desperation of patients and potential donors. Victims’ health, even life, is at risk as operations may be carried out in clandestine conditions with no medical follow-up. An ageing population and increased incidence of diabetes in many developed countries is likely to increase the requirement for organ transplants and make this crime even more lucrative.

# INTERPOL



### ***INTERPOL's resources***

Trafficking in human beings is a sophisticated crime that requires international law enforcement co-operation. INTERPOL provides a number of tools and services to the world's police, as follows:

- On an operational level, INTERPOL offers assistance to member countries with training and support in tactical operations. Operation BIA in June 2009 saw the participation of 300 officers in Côte d'Ivoire, the rescue of more than 50 child workers and the arrest of eight people in connection with the illegal recruitment of children.
- The INTERPOL Expert Working Group on Trafficking in Human Beings meets annually to raise awareness of emerging issues, promote prevention programmes and initiate specialized training.
- Project Childhood, addresses the issue of sex tourism in a trafficking context and aims to develop partnerships with police authorities and other stakeholders in Asia, in order to promote the prosecution of abusers and the rescue of victims.
- INTERPOL 's Notices and Diffusions system enables global co-operation between its member countries in tracking criminals and suspects, as well as locating missing persons or collecting information. Especially relevant is the Green Notice – through which countries can warn other member states if a known child-sex offender is travelling to their territory or region.
- The Organization's Human Smuggling and Trafficking message (HST) provides a standardized format for reporting cases of trafficking between member countries and to INTERPOL's database.
- MIND/FIND technical solutions enable frontline law enforcement agencies, such as border police or immigration authorities, to receive instant responses for queries on stolen or lost travel documents, stolen motor vehicles and wanted criminals. These databases are accessible to authorized users of INTERPOL's I-24/7 global police communications system and are useful in detecting cases of trafficking in human beings at the early stage of entry into a country.

### ***International co-ordination***

INTERPOL works closely with other key bodies involved in the fight against human trafficking, including Eurojust, Europol, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as non-governmental organizations active in this field.



[www.interpol.int](http://www.interpol.int)

#### ***Contact information***

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*For matters relating to specific crime cases, please contact your local police or the Interpol National Central Bureau in your country.*