INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion-dollar form of international organized crime which affects every region in the world. Human trafficking victims are recruited and trafficked between countries and regions using deception, threats or force. Typically, the victims are unwilling participants. It is a crime under international law and many national and regional legal systems.

▶ MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

INTERPOL offers tools, training and operational support to disrupt the organized criminal groups that engage in various forms of this modern-day slavery, including:

- **Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation** – Women and children are lured by promises of decent employment and forced into sexual slavery.
- **Trafficking for forced labour** – Victims are held in conditions of slavery in a variety of jobs, including agricultural, fisheries and construction work, domestic servitude and other labour-intensive jobs.
- **Commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism** – Apparent in Asia, Africa and Latin America, predators are attracted by the relatively low risk of prohibition or prosecution in these destinations for engaging in sexual relations with minors.
- **Trafficking in organs** – Trafficking in humans for the purpose of using their organs, tissue and cells, in particular kidneys, is a complex and wide field of criminal activity.

Though there are many forms of trafficking, one consistent aspect is the abuse of the vulnerability of the victims.

▶ OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING

INTERPOL supports national police in tactical deployments in the field, aimed at breaking up the criminal networks behind trafficking in human beings. Operations are preceded by training workshops to ensure that officers on the ground are trained in a range of skills, including specialist interview techniques. Partnerships with local social services or relevant IGO's and NGOs are established to ensure that all victims are cared for and receive support so as to encourage reintegration.

- **Operation Akoma:** More than 75 children, aged between five and 16, were rescued and 25 people arrested following two operations that targeted child trafficking and exploitation in West Africa, focusing on the agricultural and trade sectors in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Ongoing 2015).
- **Operation Nawa:** Police in Côte d'Ivoire rescued 76 children who had been trafficked from across West Africa to work in cacao fields and illegal gold mines. The February 2014 operation also led to the arrest and sentencing of eight traffickers.
- **Operation Tuy:** In October 2012, police in Burkina Faso rescued 400 children who had been trafficked from the region to work as forced labour in illegally-operated gold mines and cotton fields. Officials arrested 73 individuals during the operation.

Training local authorities to detect and prevent human trafficking is also imperative. In conjunction with local police, INTERPOL organizes training courses at the basic and advanced levels that are tailored to the specific circumstances in each particular region.

▶ INTERPOL'S RESOURCES

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

- **INTERPOL's notices and diffusions system** enables global cooperation between its member countries in tracking criminals and suspects, locating missing persons or collecting information. Especially relevant is the Green Notice – through which countries issue warnings regarding known child-sex offender and other criminals.
- **MIND/FIND technical solutions** enable frontline law enforcement agencies 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 the early stages.
- **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.
- **Crime Incident response teams (IRTs)** can be deployed at the request of a member country in order to provide the specific expertise, investigative support and training backed by the Expert Working Group.

▶ INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

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 and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

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▶ **CONTACT INFORMATION:**
Contact us via our web site. For matters relating to specific crime cases, please contact your local police or the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in your country.