



# Human Trafficking



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Human Trafficking is the illegal trade of humans for exploitation or commercial gain. It is a global problem that affects millions of people, especially women and children. This presentation will shed light on the issue and provide insight into the fight against it.



# What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the exploitation of people for profit. It can involve forced labor, sex trafficking, or other forms of coercion. It affects millions of people worldwide, often the most vulnerable, and is a serious violation of human rights.

# What is Human Trafficking?

## 1 Exploitation

In Pakistan, human trafficking is a major problem, with many victims being forced into prostitution or bonded labor. Children are particularly vulnerable, and may be sold by their families or kidnapped and then trafficked. Women are also at high risk, especially those from minority groups or low-income backgrounds.

## 2 Illegal Trade

Human trafficking is a lucrative business in Pakistan, with an estimated 200,000 victims being trafficked each year. Most victims are taken to countries in the Middle East or to Europe, where they are exploited for cheap labor or forced into prostitution. Traffickers often use violence, threats, or false promises to lure victims into their control.

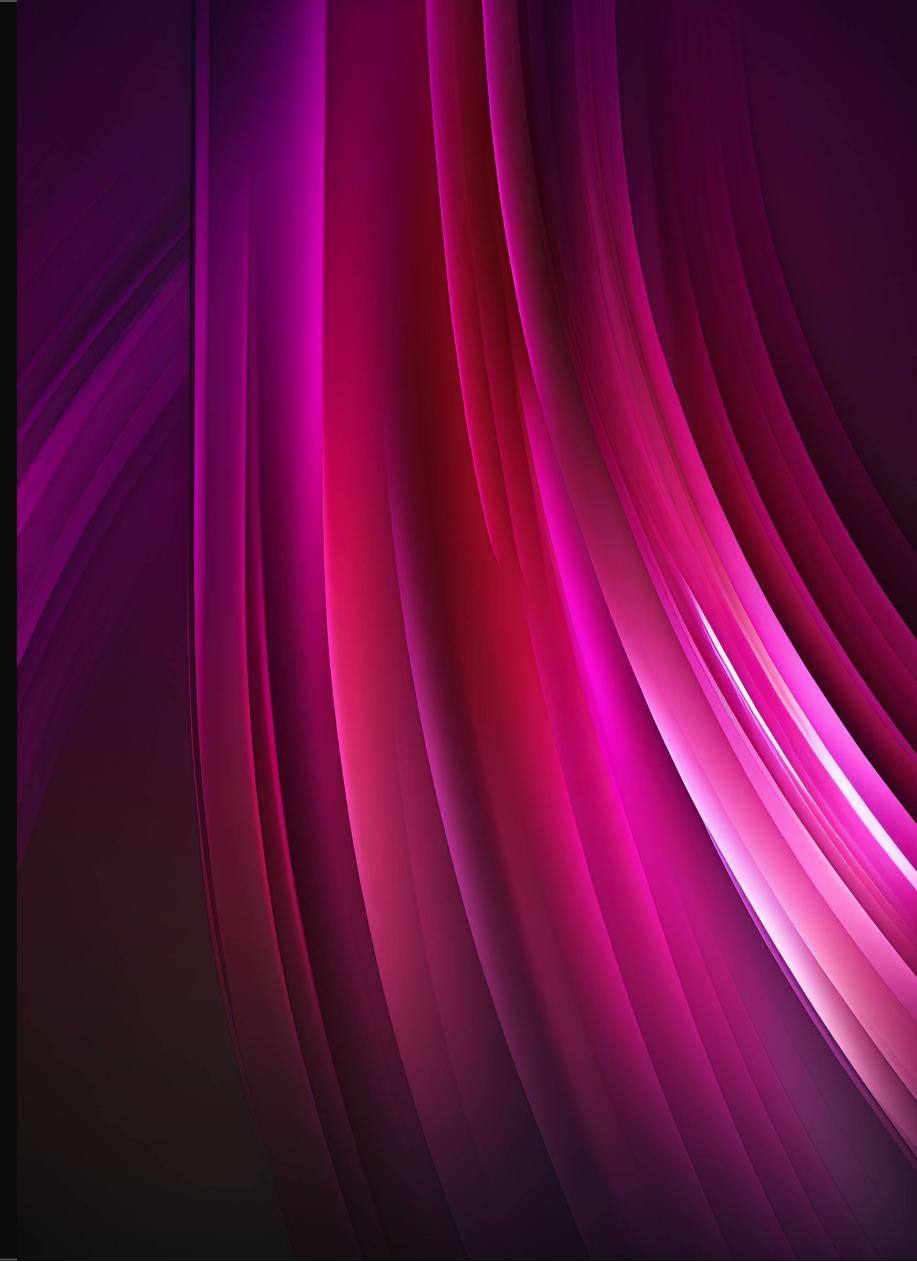
## 3 Routes

There are many routes used to transport victims of human trafficking in Pakistan. These may include road routes through Iran, Afghanistan, or India, or air travel to countries in the Middle East. Some victims are also transported by sea, usually to countries in the Persian Gulf.

# Human Trafficking: The Shocking Numbers

Human trafficking is a massive global problem, with millions of people being trafficked every year. According to the Global Slavery Index, there are an estimated 40.3 million people living in modern slavery today. In Pakistan, the situation is particularly dire, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) estimating 300,000 people being trafficked each year. It is a devastating problem that requires urgent attention and action.

Many victims are sold by their families or kidnapped and then trafficked, and are often unable to escape due to threats, violence, or other forms of coercion.



# Victims of Human Trafficking

## Women and Children

They are often the most vulnerable and frequently targeted groups, trafficked for forced labor, sex, and even organ harvesting.

## Migrants and Refugees

They are particularly susceptible and can fall prey to traffickers while attempting to cross borders illegally or seeking a better life in a foreign country.

## Youth and Runaways

They are lured into trafficking through false promises of love, fame, or fortune, and find themselves trapped in a nightmare.



# Trafficking of Children

Boys and girls are also bought, sold, rented, or kidnapped to work in organized, illegal begging rings, domestic servitude, prostitution, and in agriculture in bonded labor. Illegal labor agents charge high fees to parents with false promises of decent work for their children, who are later exploited and subject to forced labor in domestic servitude, unskilled labor, small shops and other sectors. Girls and women are also sold into forced marriages; in some cases their new "husbands" move them across Pakistani borders and force them into prostitution.

NGOs and police reported markets in Pakistan where girls and women are bought and sold for sex and labor. The militants often sexually and physically abuse the children and use psychological coercion to convince the children that the acts they commit are justified.

# Migrants and Refugees

Many Pakistani women and men migrate voluntarily to the Persian Gulf States, China, Indonesia, Norway, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and other European countries for low-skilled employment such as domestic work, driving or construction work; once abroad, some become victims of labor trafficking.

Employers abroad use practices including restrictions on movement, non-payment of wages, threats, and physical or sexual abuse. Travel and identification documents are often seized to force Pakistani women and girls into prostitution in the Middle East and Europe.



# How People Become Victims of Human Trafficking

A real challenge for the country is internal trafficking, especially forced or bonded labor.

## Case Study of Internal Trafficking

Around 13 years ago, Dania was married to a daily wage worker. She ran a beauty parlor at her home and lived peacefully with her husband and four children. One day, Dania went to a client's house with her underage son to provide at-home services. She was offered tea, and on drinking it, fell unconscious. When she woke up, she had been taken captive. Dania was sold to different people in Larkana as well as Sukkur. Ultimately, she managed to escape and sought help from the police, after which she was taken to a women's shelter for refuge.

# **False promises of Employment**

Irsa and her sister were promised that they would be provided jobs in Karachi if they accompanied a certain man to the city. Afterwards, they found out that their aunt had sold them to the man who, on arriving in Karachi, forced them into prostitution. Somehow, Irsa managed to contact a journalist who recorded their story and called the police. The perpetrator was arrested and Irsa, who had contracted Covid-19 at the time, was rescued.

# Militancy

Trafficking victims are also smuggled to conflict ridden areas, such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where they are made to be soldiers.

## **Case Study:**

Seven-year-old Affan, who was kidnapped by his madrassah teacher in Gujranwala and transported to a village in K-P. Here, he was shown his first weapon and also given extensive training on suicide missions. “I was scared that one day I would be killed in a suicide attack and my family would never even know what happened to me,” says Affan. “I always prayed for a miracle.” Even though he was rescued by one of his uncles 25 days later, the family had to relocate in order to avoid being found or killed at the hands of extremists.

# Bonded Labor

In Sindh and Punjab, bonded labor is a common form of modern slavery, centered on brick kilns, carpet making, agriculture, fishing, mining, leather tanning, and production of glass bangles. The Asian Development Bank estimates that 1.8 million people, constituting almost 1 percent of Pakistan's population, work as bonded laborers.

## **Case Study of Bonded Labor:**

Farhat originally lived with her two sisters and parents in Afghanistan, where her father worked with the local police. Thirteen years ago, a group of people came to their home and forced her father into their car. His dead body was found nearby some days later—he may have been the victim of an extrajudicial killing. The incident took a heavy toll on Farhat's mother, who became unable to cope and was committed to an asylum. As law and order in Afghanistan worsened, Farhat's family migrated to Balochistan, Pakistan, with her maternal uncle. Some months later, her uncle told Farhat that he could no longer afford to support her. Farhat, who is illiterate, was sold into marriage without her consent in Kuchlak, near Quetta. Her uncle said that the money he received for her would be used to support her two sisters and mother. In fact, she was sold into domestic servitude and was not allowed to maintain any further contact with her family. At present, she has no idea where her family is—or even if they are still in Pakistan.

# Forced Begging

A significant number of women and children in Pakistan are considered to be trafficked for forced begging. Traffickers might kidnap children and train them as beggars and/or identify vulnerable families and pay them a certain amount to rent their babies for the purpose of begging. The media has also reported cases of women and children trafficked from Pakistan to other countries for forced begging.

## **Case Study:**

Six years ago in Jacobabad, Sindh, Maha's family forced her to marry a man in exchange for money from his family. She was told—after she was married—that she could not visit or return to her family, nor did her family bother to check whether she was well looked after. Maha, who is illiterate, was then taken to Quetta where she discovered that her in-laws earned their living through professional begging—a sordid and deceptive line of work that leaves people vulnerable to abuse. For example, to elicit sympathy, babies from poor families are bought to accompany the beggars. Maha's in-laws coerced her into becoming a beggar as well. Given her lack of resources and support, Maha had no choice but to acquiesce.



# Child Labor

In Pakistan, a large number of children are trafficked as child domestic labor, primarily due to lack of education, poverty and unemployment. They face exploitation, physical and sexual abuse, and confinement and separation from their parents. Young boys around hotels, bus stations and truck stops are sexually exploited. Children and young ones are also kidnapped for the organ harvesting trade, where vital organs such as kidneys are removed and sold at very high prices. Newborn children are sold to couples who are unable to have a baby.

According to a report by Al Jazeera, approximately 2 million children work in Pakistan's brick kiln industry, living in slave-like conditions, where they <sup>13</sup> are forced to work for 14 hours a day, six days a week, and lack basic rights as workers and access to social security.

# Child Labor

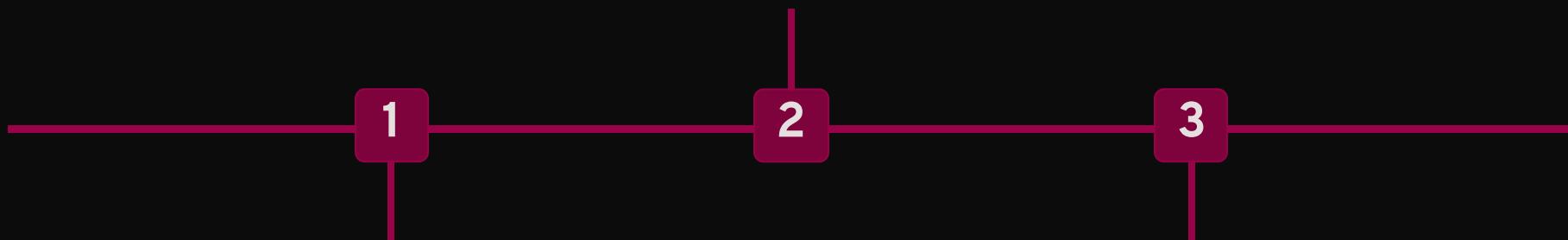
## Case Study:

Shanzay belonged to a poor, lower-caste family in Kasur, Punjab, with nine other siblings. Her family had never owned a house; they sometimes slept on roadsides, in huts or in small rooms on other people's agricultural lands. When Shanzay was around 5, her father, who was a drug addict, sold her to a rich family in exchange for a large sum of money, after which she worked as a child domestic labourer for the past 10-11 years. If ever she made a mistake, the family she worked for would beat her. Her father would only visit to collect her monthly wages (a paltry amount) directly from the family; she never received a single rupee of her wages. At around the age of 11, Shanzay attempted to run away, but her father found her and beat her for leaving. Forced to return, she was then brutally tortured by her owners. Her father is now on the lookout to marry her off in exchange for money, an arrangement which Shanzay considers shameful as it would sanction her torture for the rest of her life.

# Perpetrators of Human Trafficking

## Corrupt Officials

Some high-ranking officials aid and abet traffickers in exchange for bribes and other incentives.



## Organized Crime

Large criminal organizations often engage in human trafficking for financial gain.

## Individuals

Some people become involved in trafficking due to financial desperation, greed, or a distorted sense of power.

# Human Trafficking, the Land Route

The land route has many variations. The first one runs from Karachi to Taftan border, using the RCD highway, from where it crosses into Zahedan in Iran and then goes onward to Turkey and Europe. The second land route runs from Karachi to Lasbela and Kech districts to reach the Iranian border. The third route runs through Quetta and western Balochistan to reach the border towns of Taftan, Mashkel and Rajay, which are smugglers' gateways into Iran and onwards to Turkey and Europe.

# Human Trafficking, the Sea Route

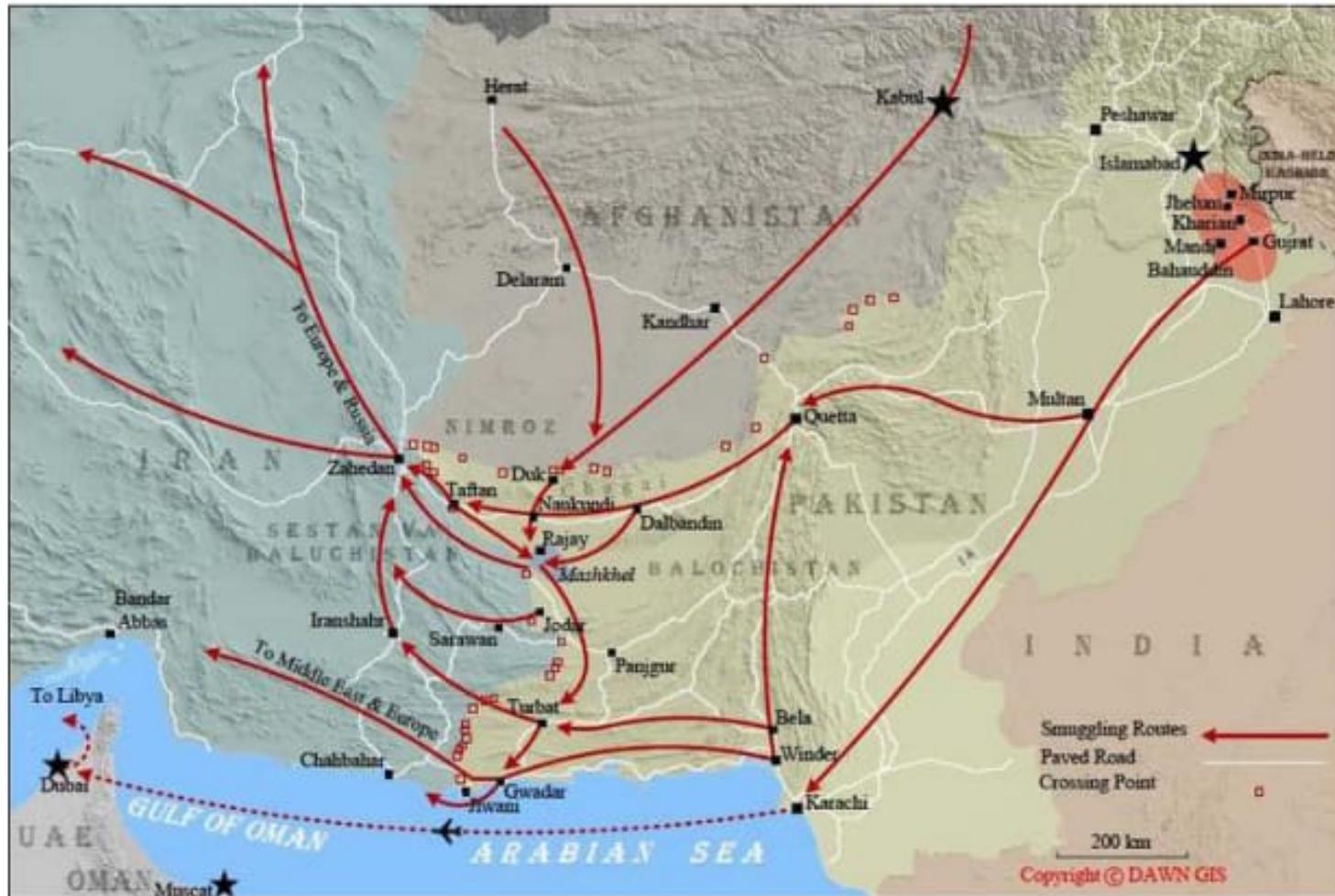
The sea route originates from the port of Gwadar; the Coastal Highway connects Karachi with Gwadar. Human ‘cargo’ is put on boats from Pasni, Jiwani, Pishukan or Surbandan.<sup>14</sup> The boats take the ‘migrants’ through Gulf of Oman and they reach Iran. The journey continues from there onwards to Turkey overland to Europe

# Human Trafficking, the Air Route

The air route is more interesting and is used by illegal immigrants with better means or resources. They also use valid passports and visas to an extent and are better educated. One of such routes runs from Karachi to Dubai and onwards to Libya. Libya is the staging post from where the Libyan traffickers, having taken their share of the money, take the group in sea faring boats and leave them on smaller boats (often a rubber dinghy) with dubious quality life jackets, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. The secondary boats are left on the mercy of currents and winds or the chance of Italian Coast Guards' interception. The most tragic accidents of drowning have occurred along this route.

# Visualization of the Routes

Figure 2: International human smuggling routes



(Source: M. Akbar Notezai and Waseem Ashraf Butt, "Human smuggling: a thriving racket," *Dawn*, April 24, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1403202>)

# Sociological Impact of Human Trafficking



## Health Effects

Victims suffer physical, psychological, and emotional trauma that may last a lifetime.



## Community Response

It erodes social structures and undermines security, leading to public outcry and activism.



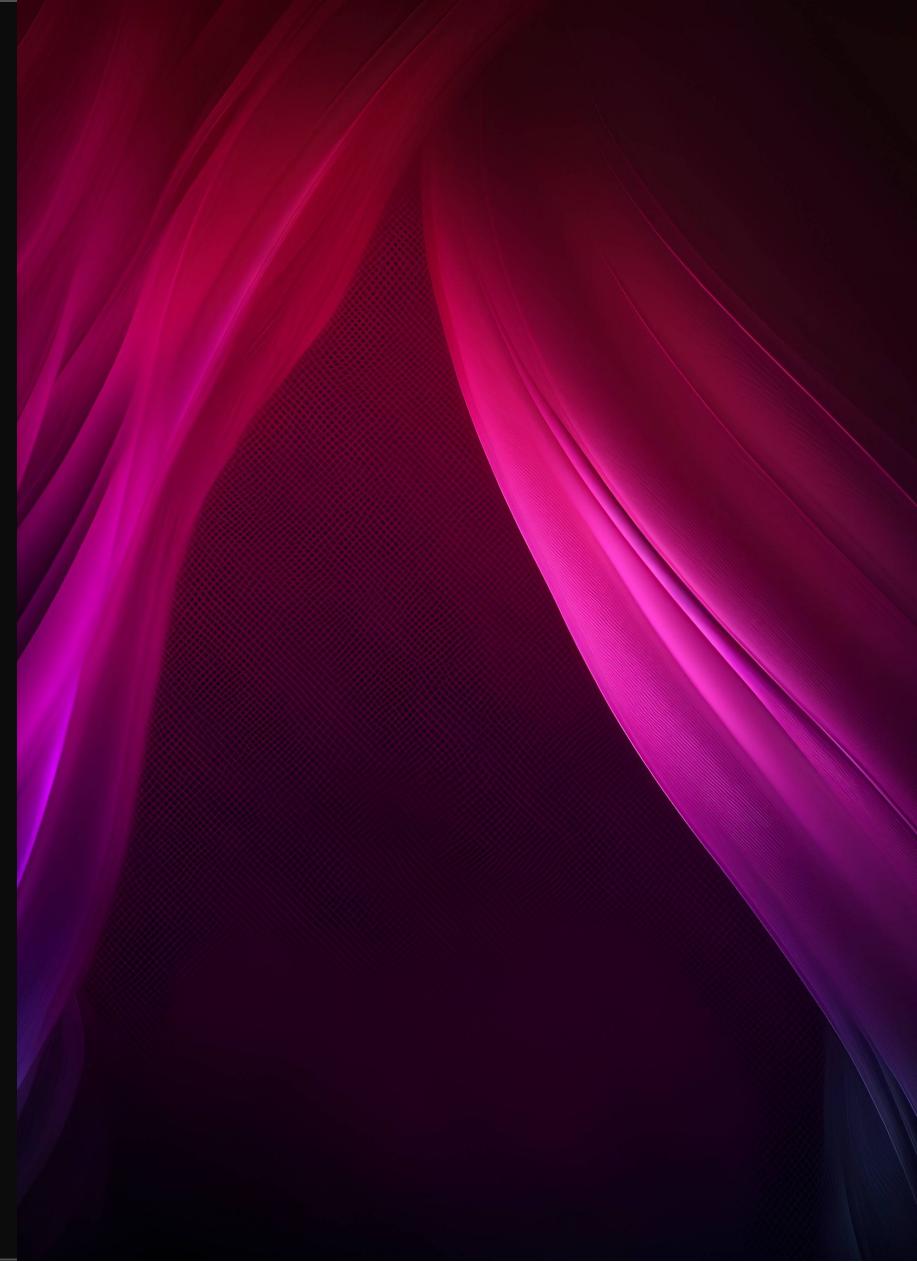
## The Road to Recovery

Recovery efforts by non-profits and governments aim to provide services to survivors, restore their dignity, and integrate them back into society.

# Trauma and Health Effects of Human Trafficking

The physical and psychological torture of trafficking victims results in serious medical and emotional trauma. For example, malnutrition and starvation can lead to serious weight loss, as in Affan's case, who lost 4kgs in 25 days. Other common injuries include broken bones, concussions and burns.

Women, in particular, suffer from reproductive health issues due to sexual assault and may even end up with sexually transmitted diseases.



# Psychological Effects

Victims of trafficking experience feelings of helplessness, guilt, self-blame, shame, humiliation, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. In some cases, victims also resort to substance abuse to curb their depression which exacerbates the problem.

At times, trafficking victims also experience the ‘flat effect’, a sense of numbness and detachment and a disassociation from the physical and emotional trauma. In rare cases, they may also suffer from ‘trauma bonding’ and begin to identify with the trafficker, despite being subjected to repeated abuse. This can potentially be the most dangerous outcome.

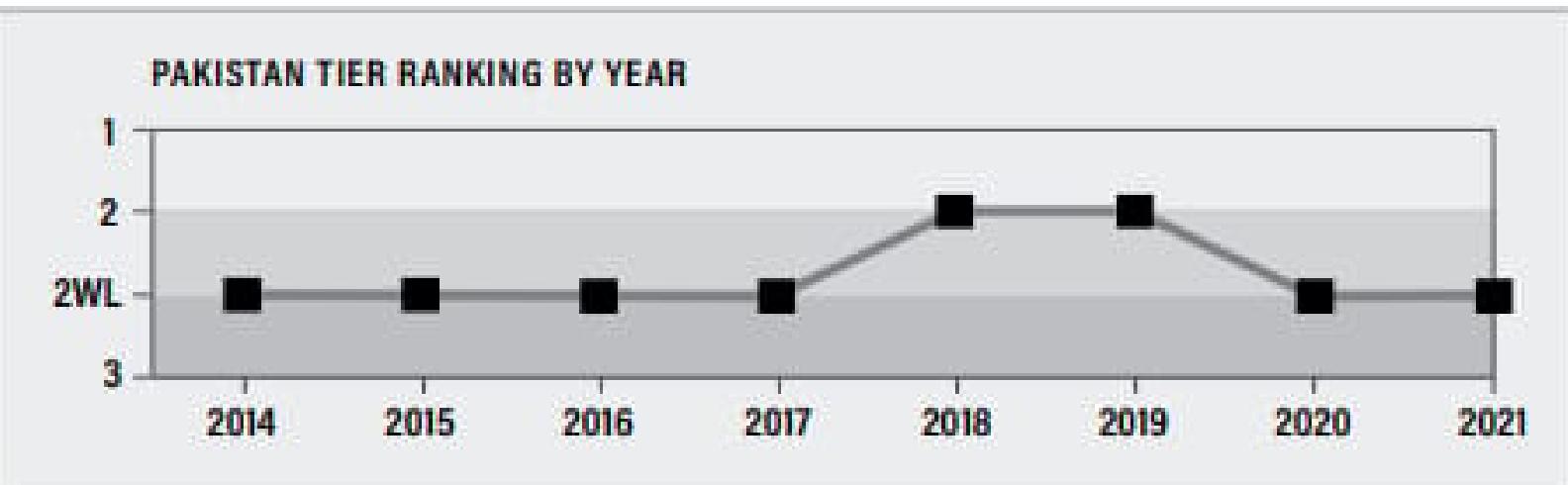
# What is Pakistan doing?

Since 2001, the US State Department's **Trafficking in Persons** (TIP) Report has been providing country narratives that briefly explain the nature and magnitude of trafficking in each country and the efforts of the government to combat trafficking. Pakistan is currently on the Tier 2 Watch List category, meaning:

**Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's (Trafficking Victim's Protection Act) minimum standards but are making significant efforts to comply with those standards.**

# Pakistan's Ranking explained

A review of Pakistan's last eight years' TIP ranking unveils that the country has not been taking enough measures to address trafficking in persons in accordance with the TVPA's minimum standards. With the promulgation of the **Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018** and **Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018**, the ranking of the country was improved to Tier 2 in 2018 and 2019. However, due to lack of efforts to prosecute cases of sex trafficking and forced labor, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, and allocation of inadequate resources for victim care, in 2021 the country was placed on the Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.



# The 2018 Act

The laws are considered effective measures for preventing and combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Pakistan as there are separate laws now to address both the issues. Persons trafficked to Pakistan from other parts of the world or persons trafficked for exploitation within Pakistan are now considered as victims of trafficking under the new legislation.

The Act further specifies the punishment of the traffickers that the person(s) involved in trafficking in persons ‘shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to seven-year or with fine which may extend to one million rupees or with both’, whereas if the offense was committed against a child or a woman ‘the person who commits the offense shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to ten years and which shall not be less than two years or with fine which may extend to one million rupees or with both.’

The Act further explains that if the crime involves a serious injury, life threats, illness or death, organized crime, confiscation, or destruction of the travel documents and repetition of the offense, the perpetrators shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to 14 years and which shall not be less than three years and fine which may extend to two million rupees.

# The National Action Plan

The FIA is now mainly responsible to deal with the issue of cross-border trafficking whereas provincial governments and police are responsible for cases of internal trafficking. However, as things stand, the police do not have the capacity and understanding of human trafficking.

In addition to the new anti-trafficking legislation, the FIA has developed a five-year National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling (2021-25). Under the National Action Plan, FIA seeks cooperation with government institutions and the UN to:

- Strengthen legislation,
- Increase participation of women in institutions made to combat human trafficking,
- Collect data with higher accuracy
- increase awareness of Human Trafficking crimes,
- Enhance cooperation on national, regional and international levels.

# Pakistan's Efforts

The government currently runs approximately 44 shelters for rehabilitating women including various Darul Amans. Organisations such as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Ansar Burney Trust, Sahil, Rozan, Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gah and Madadgar have also been working actively to combat the practice and help out those who have gone through human trafficking.

International organisations such as the USAID, The Canadian International Development Agency, The Department for International Development, United Nations Development Program and The European Commission have also played an important role by launching several advocacy and capacity-building programmes in the country.

# Non-Profits and Government Working Together

Non-profit organizations and government agencies are teaming up to fight human trafficking. These partnerships bring together the resources and expertise of both sectors to raise awareness, provide support to victims, and prosecute traffickers. Non-profits offer services such as counseling, shelter, and job training, while government agencies investigate and prosecute traffickers and provide funding for anti-trafficking efforts. By working together, these organizations can make a significant impact in the fight against human trafficking.

## Examples of Non-Profits in Pakistan

- The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)
- The Aurat Foundation
- The Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)
- The Edhi Foundation
- Society for Human Rights and Prisoners (SHARP)

# Getting Help in Pakistan

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking in Pakistan, there are resources available to help. The National Response Centre for Cyber Crimes (NR3C) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) both have dedicated helplines for reporting human trafficking. The FIA can be reached at 111-345-786, and the NR3C can be reached at 0800-39393. These helplines can provide support, resources, and information to those affected by human trafficking.



# Conclusion

Human trafficking is a complex and pervasive problem that requires a concerted effort from all of us to eradicate it. By raising awareness, supporting survivors, and collaborating, we can make a difference and help create a world where human trafficking no longer exists.