

**Forum:** Human Rights Committee  
**Issue:** Combatting Child Trafficking in Southeast Asia  
**Student Officer:** Kelsey Fu  
**Position:** Chair of Human Rights Committee

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## Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the most widespread and fast-growing crimes in modern day society, which violates fundamental human rights. Likewise, human trafficking in Southeast Asia has long been a problem for the area and still is prevalent today. In addition, the most vulnerable victims of human trafficking are children. In Southeast Asia, child trafficking is widely regarded as interregional with laborers being collected from countries within the region and ultimately working within the region. Victims from Southeast Asia have also been found in many other countries around the globe. In Southeast Asia, child trafficking consists of forced sexual labor and forced labor which, in many countries in Southeast Asia, can lead to mixed forms of trafficking. For example, in Thailand and Malaysia, trafficking mainly takes the form of sexual exploitation, while in Indonesia forced labor is observed to be more prevalent, but both forms of sexual and forced labor can be found. It is estimated that 10,000 laborers are deceived or captured into forced labor annually in the region.

The main causes of child trafficking in Southeast Asia are universal factors such as poverty and globalization, which makes the possible victims more vulnerable and easily targeted. Keeping the above in mind, one reason that makes human trafficking such a widespread crime is the fact that it is very profitable for traffickers in two dimensions; it is characterized by lucrative profit and almost no risk of arrest. More specifically, human trafficking is often considered as an incognito industry, meaning that most traffickers and their activities are unknown to the authorities.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in their Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons document as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person

having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.” This definition applies to the harvesting of organs, slavery or forced labor, and sexual exploitation.

### **Blue Heart Campaign**

The Blue Heart Campaign is a campaign that was launched in March 2009 by the UNODC to fight human trafficking, to raise international public awareness of the issue, and to encourage involvement and inspire action. The campaign utilizes information and communication technology (ICT) to educate people about trafficking issues and impact, to engage in dialogue with others concerned about this issue, and to show solidarity with the victims of human trafficking by wearing the Blue Heart. The Blue Heart Campaign uses its website, as well as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr to communicate their goals, objectives, and news with the public.

### **Trafficking Protocol**

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, otherwise known as the Trafficking Protocol, was adopted by the United Nations in Palermo, Italy in 2000 and entered into force on December 25, 2003. As of September 2017, it has been ratified by over 172 parties. This protocol is one of the three Palermo protocols. Furthermore, it offers practical help to states with drafting laws, creating comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies and plans, and assisting with resources to implement them.

### **Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth that are under 18 years of age through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites. Other terms that are used to talk about sexual exploitation are “child prostitution” and “youth sex trade”.

### **Forced Labor**

Any form of “work or services” which are provided without the immediate volition of the person providing pre-mentioned “work or services” and is paired with the menace of any form of punitive measures.

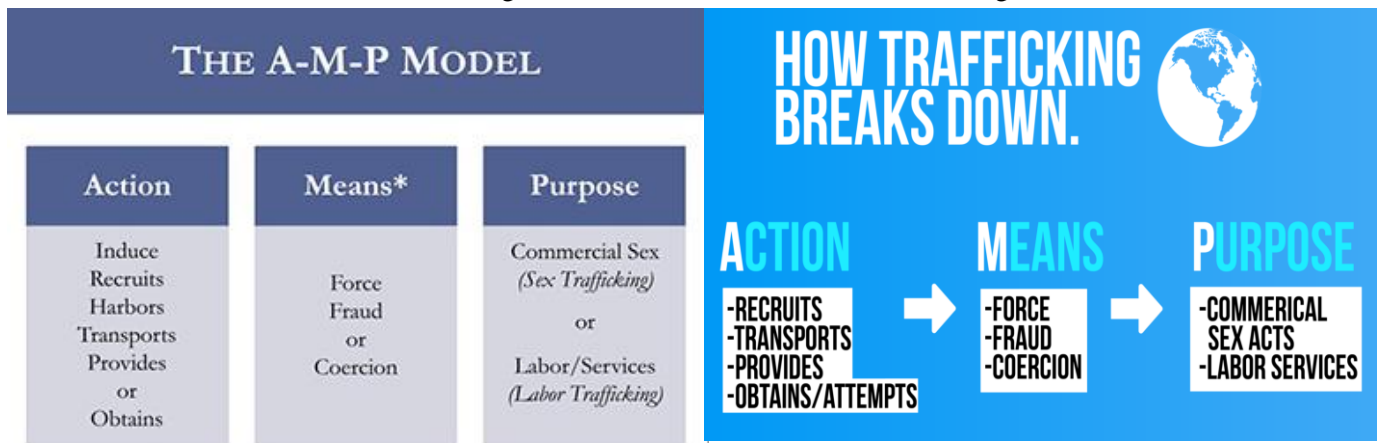
### **Enslavement**

The condition of one being coerced as a slave to a person who is less vulnerable and more powerful than the enslaved person. Enslavement is also commonly known as “servitude”.

## General Overview

### The three elements of human trafficking (A-M-P Model)

The Protocol to Prevent and Suppress Human Trafficking states that human trafficking includes three core elements: the act of human trafficking, the means of human trafficking and the purpose of human trafficking (A-M-P). The act of human trafficking is generally based on the idea of what acts have been done by the trafficker towards the victim such as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons. Additionally, the means of human trafficking revolves around the way aforementioned activities are done. As been mentioned before, the means of human trafficking involve the use of brutal force, the threatening of victims, abduction and so on. Thus, the trafficker is taking advantage of the vulnerability of the victim receiving beneficial economic profit from the trafficking process. Lastly, the purposes of human trafficking are the result of the two other key elements. It can be described as the form of human trafficking and the reasons behind human trafficking.



*A-M-P models created by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center*

### Traffickers

Although experts have distinguished some similarities between traffickers, there is no exact profile which can help us distinguish victims. First and foremost, the number of male human traffickers is disproportional to the number of female traffickers, who represent a smaller number but are still present.

Moreover, we are able to categorize human traffickers into two categories. The first being the individual human traffickers and human traffickers who are part of extensive criminal networks. Some common examples are family operations and small businesses such as fake massage businesses in which the victim is most usually drugged and forced into sexual intercourse. Moreover, it is usual that traffickers and their victims share similar backgrounds (nationality, ethnic, cultural etc.) since the above creates better conditions for traffickers to understand the vulnerabilities of their victim.

### Forced labor

Forced labor is the second most common form of human trafficking. As mentioned above, forced labor is any form of services or work given by the victim most of the time without their volition. It is therefore clear that under the general idea of "Forced Labor" there are certain forms one can distinguish. Firstly, the most widespread form of forced labor is bonded labor. Bonded labor occurs when a trafficker tricks the victim into offering their services with little or no pay with the pretext of the victim repaying for a loan he/she had previously taken from the trafficker. Specifically, victims sometimes live under the traffickers' surveillance and are threatened by them so as to ensure that they will stay. This method of forced labor has been used for years since it is commonly transferred through the generations.

Other forms of forced labor are domestic servitude in which victims offer services within their traffickers' household.

Forced labor most commonly occurs in the private sector; however, it is shocking that 2.2 million victims are involved in state-imposed forms of forced labor. In the private section, it most often occurs in agriculture, such as cocoa and coffee production as well as hunting forestry and fishing activities. It also occurs in the industrial sector such as mining and manufacturing.

### *Child labor*

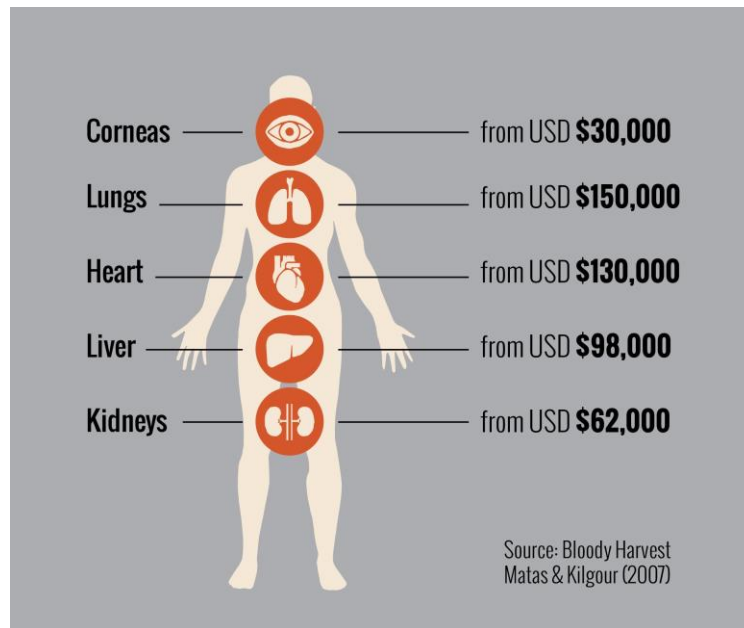
Child labor does not refer to any work that is done by children that do not interfere with their education, personal development, and health. With that being said, child labor refers to services or any form of work that deprives children from their education (being obligated by traffickers not to attend or even to leave school prematurely), their potential and dignity (being socially, physically or/and morally dangerous to the children) and is also harmful to their mental and physical development.

It is important to understand that child labor is not a form of human trafficking in itself. Child labor includes both methods of sexual exploitation as well as forced labor. However, the distinction is that it happens to underage people. To be more specific, according to the International Labor Organization, forms of child labor include any form of activity or practices which have similarities to slavery such as the transferring of children, the use of children for sexual purposes such as prostitution, forced labor of children, the use of children for illegitimate activities such as drug dealing, child marriage and lastly any form of work which is harmful to the health, social and moral development of children.

### *Organ removal*

Trafficking in organs is a form of human trafficking. It can take different forms. In some cases, the victim is compelled into giving up an organ. In other cases, the victim agrees to sell an organ in exchange for money/goods. However, in this occasion traffickers betray victims since they either pay the victims less or not at all for the organ. Finally, the victim may have the organ removed without the victim's knowledge (usually when the victim is treated for another medical problem/illness – real or orchestrated problem/illness). Migrant workers, homeless persons, and illiterate persons are particularly vulnerable to this form of exploitation. Trafficking in organ trade often

seeks kidneys. Trafficking in organs is a lucrative trade because in many countries the waiting lists for patients who need transplants are very long.



*Illustration created by Matas and Kilgour explaining the different values of the human body*

## Philippines

Being a Southeast Asian country, the Philippines is ranked under Tier 2 Watch List in the 2009 Trafficking in Persons Report due to the Philippine government's alleged failure to show evidence of progress in convicting trafficking offenders, particularly those responsible for labor trafficking. Furthermore, A 1997 report put the number of child victims of prostitution at 90,000 in the Philippines with the number increasing rapidly weekly.

It was estimated in 2015 that the Philippines was the fourth country with the most number of children forced into prostitution, and authorities have identified an increase in child molesters traveling to the Philippines.

According to UNICEF, it was estimated that 60,000 to 100,000 children in the Philippines were involved in prostitution rings. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) about 100,000 children were involved in prostitution as of 2009. is a high incidence of child prostitution in tourist areas. An undetermined number of children are forced into exploitative labor operations.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies stated in 2003 that there were more than 1.5 million street children in the Philippines and many end up in prostitution and drug trafficking in places such as Manila and Angeles City.



*Photo taken by CNN reporters when a trafficked child was discovered after several days of torture in May, 2017*

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

### The United Nations children's fund (UNICEF)

The UNICEF policy regarding trafficking is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The strategy for addressing child trafficking focuses on raising awareness about the problem, providing economic support to families, improving access to and quality of education, and advocating for the rights of the child. UNICEF has no regional project on child trafficking, but has supported and implemented studies on the issue in several countries and has been involved in building national and local capacity in the region. UNICEF also participates in the Regional Working Group on Child Labor. Furthermore, UNICEF is a partner in a number of projects in the Asia and the Pacific Region, such as the Mekong Regional Law Center project described above, the ESCAP project, the ILO-IPEC project, the UNDP project and the IOM Return and Reintegration project.

### UNHCHR

The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights has encouraged the National Human Rights Commissions of the Asia-Pacific region to take up the issue of trafficking. Discussions with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) resulted in a working paper and the recommendation to all member-institutions to appoint someone as the focal point on the issue of trafficking. The focus of UNHCHR is on legal and policy development, thereby trying to be a catalyst and a support for the work of others. In December 1999, the High Commissioner appointed a Special

Representative on trafficking. The Special Representative is based in Cambodia and has a key role in supporting national and regional anti-trafficking initiatives.

### **United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC)**

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime is an office that was created in 1997 by the merging of two past United Nations bodies: The United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. It is the only United Nations active entity that focuses on crimes such as human trafficking. As far as the UNODC budget is concerned, it mainly depends on the voluntary donations from the UNODC that establishes the security of human trafficking victims after their rescue, aids in the review of human trafficking legislation and trains criminal justice work people on the proper protection of human trafficking victims.

### **United Nations global initiative to fight child trafficking**

Established with the aim of supporting the fight against human trafficking by achieving partnerships between governments. It was launched in March 2007 under the scope of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with the financial aid of the United Arab Emirates. Its primary objective is based on the idea that human trafficking is a crime which cannot be dealt with by individual governments; thus governments should “build bridges” so as to ensure that the fight against human trafficking is effective. The main functioning committee of the UN.GIFT.HUB is the Steering Committee, which consists of the six primary organizations who take part in the anti-trafficking initiative.

### **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children**

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children was signed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 under the scope of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. It came into force in 2003 and has been signed by 167 member states. Furthermore, it is the first legally binding protocol that successfully gives a definition of human trafficking with the aim of aiding governments into creating frameworks and international crime offenses against human trafficking.

### **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons**

In August 2010 resolution A/RES/64/293 was adopted, which went hand in hand with the Fund. The Fund was created so as for governments, organizations and individuals to aid financially the fight against child trafficking. The income provided by the donations is handled by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.



## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1997	Creation of the UNODC
2000	The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children was signed by the United Nations General Assembly
December 25, 2003	The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children came into force in 2003 and has been signed by 167 member states
2007	The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children came into force in 2003 and has been signed by 167 member states.
March 2007	United Nations global initiative o fight child trafficking launched
March 2007	United Nations global initiative to fight child trafficking launched
December 13, 2007	China expresses its national plan of action on combating trafficking in Women and Children in Southeast Asia
March 2009	Blue Heart Campaign launched
August 2010	Resolution A/RES/64/293 was adopted, which went hand in hand with the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons China
2011	Vietnam was ranked as a Tier 2 Watch List country in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report due to its severity in the human trafficking crisis
May 2017	Blue  The Association of Southeast Asian Nations hosted the Conference on Legal Issues of Regional Important in Singapore, convened by the Asia Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Department of State

## Possible Solutions

It is crucial to understand that different forms of human trafficking call for different actions. As far as forced labor is concerned, there needs to be a larger amount of monitoring and stabilized security. Specifically, authorities from each member state should annually hold investigations into each stage of factories production lines as well as agricultural areas.

Another crucial step against human trafficking is reporting cases of human trafficking. For example, hotlines could be created so as for both victims to be able to get in touch with authorities who might rescue them as well as people who witness a case of human trafficking. However, for hotlines to be effective it needs to be ensured that victims have phone access.

Although these are crucial steps to resolving the issue, the 2 solutions mentioned above can be both ineffective and difficult to carry out. For instance, areas with greater suspicions of child trafficking (such as black markets and personal businesses relating to the illegal acts of child trafficking) are unable to be easily identified. Therefore, it is



extremely difficult to directly monitor and track the illegal actions made by businesses related to child trafficking. Thus, making the goal of stabilizing security systems difficult to achieve amongst southeast Asian nations. Likewise, only 40 % of the population of Southeast Asia have access to phones because most parts of the countries of the Southeast Asian region are classified as “in poverty”. It is also extremely hard to completely track down the victim and trafficker because the reporter will most likely only be able to describe the general event and the physical traits of both the trafficker and the victim.

Action concerning, rescuing victims is crucial. Victim rescue is described by specialists as one of the most complex processes of rehabilitation into society (compared to the majority of international crime). Their rescue requires multidimensional forms of help, which include emergency, social and legal services. Firstly, their rescue needs to include emergency services such medical approaches which meet their psychological needs (counseling meetings with psychologists) as well as medical examinations and pharmaceutical therapy if required. Additionally, a series of basic needs are required to be met immediately such as shelter, food, and clothing. Secondly, their rescue requires social services such as infrastructure, which will be used as the shelter. Finally, there will need to be legal services that will help them rehabilitate into society.

Furthermore, plans for the economic development of the original states as well as the increase of educational and employment opportunities for youth. Conclusively, campaigns and informational propagandas should be created to raise awareness within societies. If citizens are educated about human trafficking it will be more difficult for traffickers to lure them into this serious crime.

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