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STRENGTHENING MEASURES AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Forum: Economic and Social Council

INTRODUCTION

Thought by many to be an abrogated issue, slavery continues to exist in today's societies under the form of human trafficking. According to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, human trafficking is the “acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them.”ⁱ According to the statistics published by the International Labor Organisation (ILO) in September 2017, there are an estimated 24.9 million adults and children trapped in forced labor, bonded labor, and commercial sexual servitude, making human trafficking the first largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world. Human trafficking is mostly concerned with the exploitation of humans for purposes such as the ones mentioned above — forced labor, bonded labor, and commercial sexual exploitation — as well as organ removal.

We must keep in mind that human trafficking is nothing less but a global issue. With the victim count being depicted in millions from all around the world, this issue must be one of the top priorities of the international community. All countries are affected by human trafficking due to the fact that they serve as, either solely or combined, countries of origin, transit or destination.

What makes human trafficking such an ambitious task to resolve is the obscurity surrounding it. This is one of the leading causes of its fast-growing popularity, as it poses little to no risk of getting caught. Knowing that usually human trafficking is referred to as an incognito industry, with a vast amount of the traffickers being unknown to the authorities, it is rather difficult to collect very precise data and information that could help cease this process.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Human Trafficking

As defined by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (The Protocol) it is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of 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.”

Forced Labour

Forced labour refers to situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.

Bonded Labour

Bonded labour occurs when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. They are tricked into working for little or no pay, with no control over their debt. Most or all of the money they earn goes to pay off their loan. The value of their work invariably becomes greater than the original sum of money they borrowed.

Sexual Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

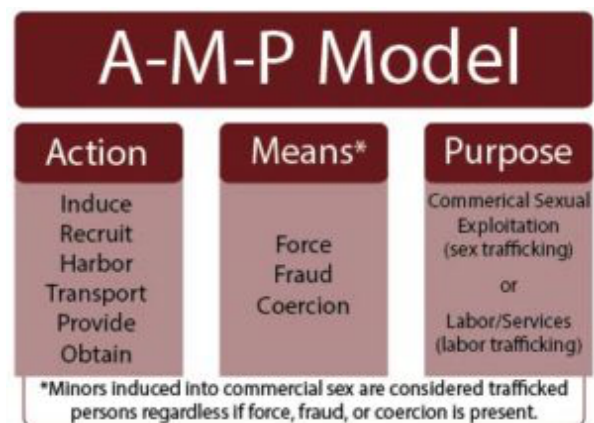
GENERAL OVERVIEW

Just like any other issue at hand, it is essential to fully comprehend its dimensions in order to attempt to solve it. The Protocol to prevent and Suppress Human Trafficking identifies the three core elements of human trafficking as follows: the act of human trafficking, the means of human trafficking, and the purpose of human trafficking (A-M-P Model).

When referring to the act of human trafficking, the most prominent aspects to consider are “the recruitment of the victim, the transportation, the transfer, harbouring and the receipt” of persons.

The means of human trafficking refer to the manner

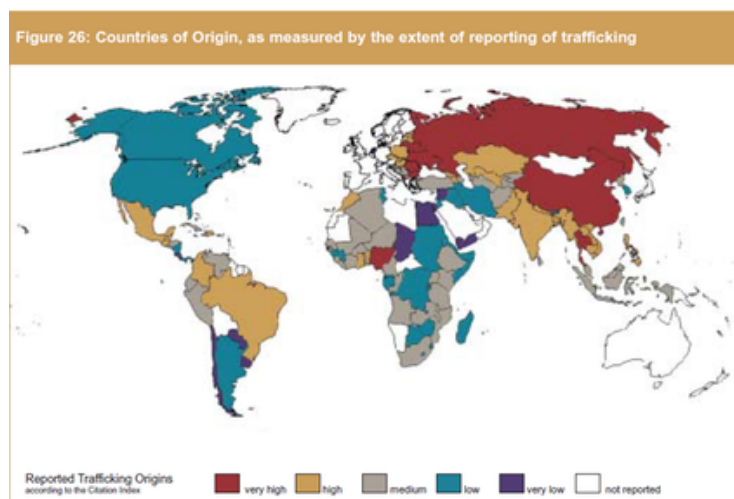
the above-mentioned acts are being conducted. This may include threatening of victims, use of force, abduction, fraud, and the trafficker taking advantage of the victim’s vulnerability, to name a few. The purpose of human trafficking can be described as a result of the two previous discussed



core elements. As mentioned above, the reasons behind human trafficking usually consists of the exploitation of a vulnerable person, including but not limited to: forced labor, sexual exploitation/prostitution, and organ removal.)

Yet another aspect of human trafficking that requires a profound understanding is represented by the victims, or in other words the population that is the most liable to be targeted by the traffickers. With an approximate 24.9 million people being currently trapped in exploitation as a result of human trafficking, the backgrounds as well as the socio-economic standing of the victims vary tremendously. While trafficking victims can be individuals of both genders, the majority of victims are women and girls. According to the United Nations Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2016), 51 percent of victims are women while another 20 percent are girls, accounting for 71 percent of victims. The population from conflict zones as well as impoverished regions are also more likely to be targeted as traffickers can very easily deceive them by promising opportunities such as advantageous work places.

According to the International Labor Organisation (ILO), out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million persons in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities. These numbers serve to better depict the distribution of the human trafficking victims throughout the sectors of our communities.

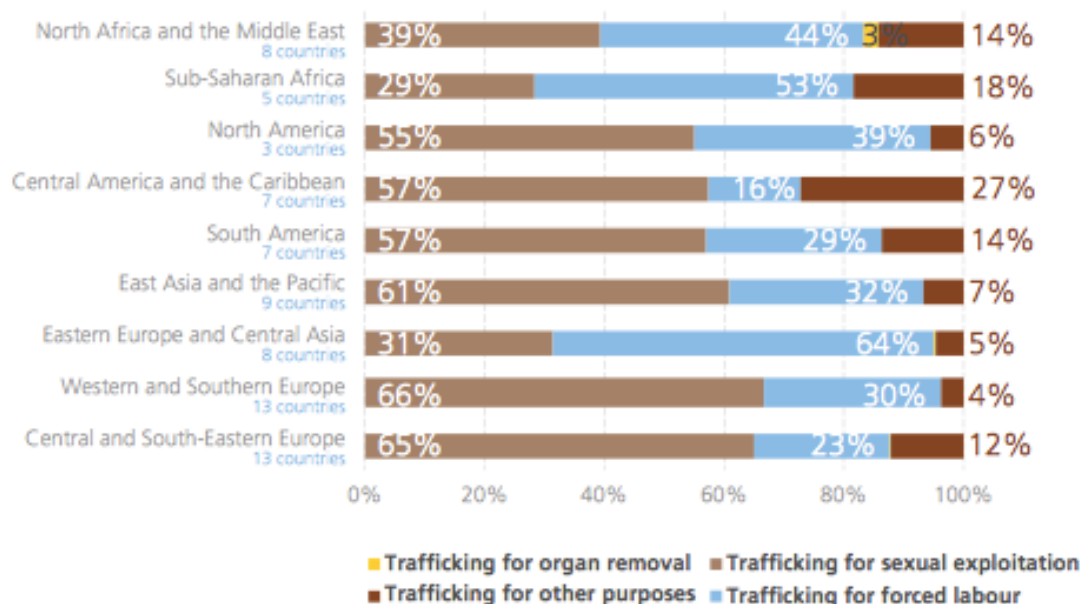


As illustrated in the following map, the victims of human trafficking originate from all over the world, but further emphasis shall be put on the Asian region, more specifically on the countries of Russia and China. The increased population that can be found in this region indirectly enables the act of human trafficking, making it much harder to collect the needed data.

Although trafficking seems to imply people moving across continents, most exploitation takes place close to home. Data from the UNODC report concerning human trafficking show that intra-regional and domestic trafficking are the major forms of trafficking in persons. These statistics should serve

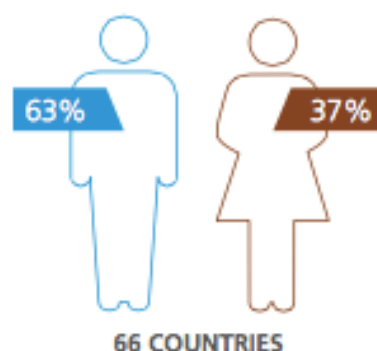
as an indicator as to how each country needs to approach this issue according to its most prominent features within the given region.

The most common form of human trafficking is sexual exploitation, making up 54 percent of the forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims (2014). The second most common form that human trafficking undertakes is forced labour with 38 percent as for 2014.



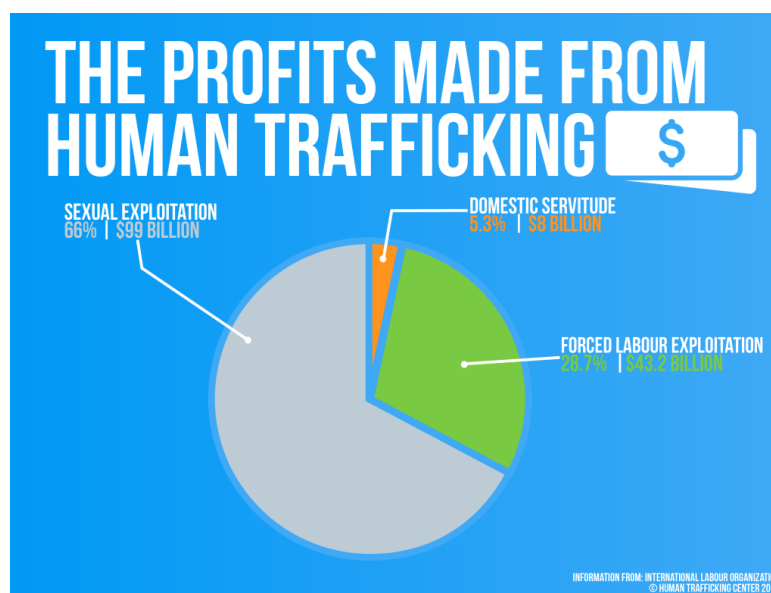
Presented in the diagram above is the more detailed breakdown of the forms of human trafficking on a global scale broken down according to regions. Moreover, it shows how the region of North Africa and the Middle East is the leading source of victims for organ removal with 3 percent.

The profile of a human trafficker is rather hard to determine in great detail due to the ambiguity surrounding these figures. There is a clear predominance of male figures convicted of human trafficking with an estimated 63 percent. Although the majority of offenders are male, the detected female involvement in the crime of trafficking in persons is remarkably high, compared to other crimes.



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Yet another reason why the issue of human trafficking has underwent such a vast expansion is its constant financial profits. The International Labour Organisation approximates the total sum of money generated by human trafficking to be around \$150.2 billion each year. Forced labour exploitation generates more than one-third of these profits, while sexual exploitation provides for the remaining two-thirds. The highest profits have been identified in Asia and in developed economies due to the increased number of victims in the Asia-Pacific region (11.7 million) and the high profit per victim within the developed economies (\$34,800 per victim). The victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation provide the highest profit for the traffickers, with a global average of \$21,800 per victim.



MAJOR PARTIES AND THEIR VIEWS

Asia

There are not enough labour laws implemented throughout many Asian countries that could protect people from exploitation. Despite the highly developed industry, the growing wealth isn't fairly distributed, leaving many in a state of great poverty. Moreover, the demand for cheap labour within the region is very high is further encouraging the act of human trafficking. Unfortunately, awareness regarding the problem is generally low resulting in rather weak laws that don't provide enough protection for the victims of trans-border trafficking. As a result, 34 percent of the global profit generated by forced labour comes from the Asia-Pacific region. The crucial role that the commercial sex industry plays in many Asian economies shall not be neglected, as an increased amount of children are being subjected to such acts.

Middle East

Due to the stigma surrounding the topic of sexual exploitation, many Middle Eastern countries have failed to address the issue properly. Many of these countries view as a very serious crime not only prostitution, but promiscuity as well, due to their highly religious governments. As many of the governments within the region haven't taken enough or any action at all to solve the problem, NGOs are nearly alone in combatting the issue in the Middle East.

Eastern Europe

Many Eastern European countries are still recovering after the fall of the communist regimes, which could also be related to the the existence of significant organised criminal activity. Nevertheless, these two factors have provided for an ideal environment for human trafficking. Despite many governments in the region taking action regarding this issue, such as public campaigns of awareness, the problem is still escalating. Many countries have attempted to provide a better outline for the idea of human trafficking within their national legalisations, as well as strengthen their sanctions, yet the root of the issue fails to be properly addressed.

Western Europe and North America

With the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005) adopted in Europe and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) adopted in the United States, the Western countries have clearly stated their strong stance against the act of human trafficking. Furthermore, they clearly outline the rights of the victims as well as the punishment for the traffickers. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the sovereignty that each European nation is provided with the convention mentioned above fails to be completely implemented resulting in an inconsistent enforcement of the rights granted to trafficking victims.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Unfortunately, this region is deeply affected by the problem at hand. Many countries within this region suffer from human trafficking mainly for reasons such as forced labour, sexual exploitation and child soldiers. These states provide mostly the victims, but they also often serve as transit points for Asian victims. In 2016, the U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report listed 27 countries as Tier 3 (countries whose governments, according to American standards, do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so). Both internal and external fac-

tors contribute to the human trafficking within the region. Internal risk factors include poverty, unemployment, membership in an indigenous group, illiteracy, a history of physical or sexual abuse, homelessness, drug use, and gang membership. Outside factors include the high global demand for cheap labor, political and social crises, natural disasters, political corruption, and limited opportunities for women.

Africa

According to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 130,000 people in sub-Saharan countries and 230,000 in the Middle East and Northern Africa are in forced labor, including sexual exploitation, as a result of human trafficking. Despite numerous efforts to raise awareness regarding this issue (especially from NGOs), many nations within Africa still need to implement proper legalisations in order to combat human trafficking.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

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| - 2000: The United Nations passes the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons as part of the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. |
| - 2001: The countries of the Economic Community of Western African States agree on an action plan to tackle slavery and human trafficking in the region. |
| - 2004: The United Nations appoints a Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking. |
| - 2005: The International Labour Organisation's first Global Report on Forced Labour outs the number of slaves worldwide at 12.3 million. |
| - 2013: The first Global Slavery Index is released by the Walk Free Foundation. 2015 |
| - 2014: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publish the first Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. |
| - 2015: The United Nations adopts 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including a target of ending slavery and eradicating forced labour and human trafficking. |
| - 2016: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publish the second Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. |

PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

United Nations Global Initiative to fight Human Trafficking

Established in March 2007, with the scope of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the financial support of the United Arab Emirates, aims to strengthen the collaboration among governments to fight human trafficking. The mission emphasises the fact that human trafficking is a serious crime which can not be dealt with by individual governments, but rather through a cooperation of the nations. With multiple functioning organs, its main committee is the Steering Committee which consists of six primary organisations who actively try to eradicate the issue of human trafficking.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

This is the principal organ of the U.N. that is responsible for dealing with such an issue. Just like any other U.N. entity, this office receives its funding from donations from the willing member states. Amongst many other aspects this office is dealing with — such as drug trafficking, corruption, and terrorism — they are also the ones that need to help nations tackle the problem of human trafficking. Based on data collected from 155 countries, UNODC has released multiple reports concerning this topic, with the latest one being released in 2016. These reports truly provide a better insight and understanding of the affair as a whole and its roots.

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons

The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was established in 2010 within the U.N. Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. This is the first global legally binding instrument meant to assist and protect the victims of human trafficking.

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

One of the first actions taken by the U.N. which came into power in 2003 (signed in 2000 by 167 member states), aims to provide a clear definition of human trafficking. Furthermore, this pro-

Protocol also serves as framework as to how to aid governments in the fight against human trafficking, as well as how to properly help victims recover and charge traffickers.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER

As mentioned earlier, human trafficking is a transitional crime, meaning that throughout the process multiple countries are involved. As a result, delegates need to understand that international cooperation is a key factor into combating this problem. Nations should either adopt or properly implant already existing legislations based on the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons in order to effectively fight human trafficking. Furthermore, borders shall be strengthened in order to lessen the amount of people being transferred from country to country.

Human trafficking is a rather complex issue with multiple highly different components that have to be dealt with. The most efficient way to combating human trafficking is dealing with each of its forms accordingly. For example, in order to eliminate forced labour, nations should monitor the activity of factories and industries that are known for using cheap labor and not respecting the basic human rights of their employees. Unfortunately the commercial sex aspect of human trafficking is probably the hardest to resolve as it's rather difficult to properly implant legislations on sex workers and brothels. Nevertheless, countries can still expand on their already existing legislations in order to tighten the gap the traffickers are using.

The international community needs to further comprehend the root of the problem, which is the extremely low standards of living some people are being faced with. Minimal work opportunities (for women especially), people living in conflict shattered zones, as well as poor standards of living (health and education predominantly) are just a few of the factors that directly encourage human trafficking. People living in such conditions are much more vulnerable to become victims of traffickers, and so by attempting to improve these conditions the number of victims could drop significantly.

APPENDIX

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016:

http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf

United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (resolution A/RES/64/293):

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/479/41/PDF/N0947941.pdf?OpenElement>

International Labour Organisation Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage:

https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_575479/lang--en/index.htm

World Health Organisation Human Trafficking: Understanding and addressing violence against women:

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77394/>

[WHO_RHR_12.42_eng.pdf;jsessionid=E438A33F2796111FB8CE49FDDE0BAFB1?sequence=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77394/WHO_RHR_12.42_eng.pdf;jsessionid=E438A33F2796111FB8CE49FDDE0BAFB1?sequence=1)

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10. Human Trafficking Centre,
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12. Congressional Research Service,
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13. Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking,
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14. United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking,
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking-fund.html>