

Factsheet on Human Trafficking

Scope of the problem globally

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 2.4 million people throughout the world who are lured into forced labour (ILO, A Global Alliance against Forced Labour, 2005)
- According to UNODC, which bases its estimates on the national statistics, 22,000 victims were detected globally in 2006.
- The United Nations estimates the total market value of illicit human trafficking at 32 billion US dollars (ILO, 2005).

Trends reported in UNODC Report on Trafficking in Persons to Europe for Sexual Exploitation (June 2010)

- The UNODC report *Trafficking in persons to Europe for sexual exploitation* shows that this is one of the most lucrative illicit businesses in Europe, where criminals are making around 2.5 billion per year through sexual exploitation and forced labour.
- At any one time, over 140,000 victims are trapped in this vicious cycle of violence, abuse and degradation across Europe with no clear sign of the overall number of victims decreasing. Up to 70,000 additional victims are exploited every year.
- In Europe over half of the victims come from the Balkans (32 per cent) and the former Soviet Union (19 per cent), with 13 per cent originating in South America, seven per cent in Central Europe, five per cent in Africa and three per cent in East Asia.
- Although victims from Eastern Europe tend to be found throughout Europe, victims from South America tend to be concentrated in several European countries. East Asian victims have also been increasingly detected in many European countries and in some countries are the group most exploited.

Trends reported in UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2006 and 2009)

- Human trafficking affects every country of the world, as country of origin, transit or destination Victims from at least 127 countries have been found to be exploited in 137 States.
- Human trafficking has many faces: forced or bonded labor; domestic servitude and forced marriage; organ removal; and the exploitation of children in begging, the sex trade, and warfare. However, probably due to statistical bias and national legislation, sexual exploitation (79%) is by far the most commonly identified form of trafficking in persons, followed by forced labor (18%).
- Women are disproportionately involved in human trafficking, as victims (2/3 of the reported victims). Nevertheless, the majority of traffickers are male.
- Recruitment is often carried out by nationals of the same country as the victims.
- In most reported cases, victims were moved over international borders, but the flows often remain intra-regional. Trans-regional trafficking, though still significant, is relatively less frequent.
- The number of convictions for human trafficking and related offences is rising, but most convictions take place in a handful of countries. Most countries' conviction rates rarely exceed 1.5 per 100,000 (below the level normally recorded for rare crimes like kidnapping in Western Europe). As of 2007/08, two out of every five countries covered by the UNODC Report had not recorded a single conviction.
- The Protocol has inspired a widespread legislative response: the number of countries having anti-trafficking legislation more than doubled between 2003 and 2008; more than half of the responding States have established an anti-human trafficking police unit; and many have launched a national action plan.

Recognition of the crime needs to be enhanced

There are many reasons why human trafficking-related information is difficult to obtain,

- The clandestine nature of human trafficking makes it difficult to arrive at authentic numbers. A first step in obtaining trafficking data, however, is to realize that trafficking not only exists, not only with severe impact on the victims, but also on society as a whole.
- In some countries there is either no specific anti-trafficking legislation or the definition of human trafficking does not comply with the Trafficking Protocol.
- Victims of human trafficking are also very often not identified as victims of a crime, but rather considered as persons who have violated migration, labour and/or prostitution laws. To identify victims of trafficking requires special knowledge by

law enforcement officials, such as the ability to distinguish trafficking from migrant smuggling, and knowledge of trafficking indicators.

The Protocol and UNODC

- UNODC is the guardian of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, which entered into force on 25 December 2003 and supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The purpose of this Protocol is to combat and prevent trafficking in persons, to assist victims and to promote international cooperation.
- The Protocol provides the first internationally agreed definition of trafficking in persons.
- As of 2010 there were 117 state signatories to the Protocol and 141 parties.

For information on the UNODC Blue Heart Campaign against human trafficking, visit www.unodc.org/blueheart