



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING



University of Waterloo  
Model United Nations

Winter 2019  
In-House 2

# INFORMATION

## BACKGROUND

Having grown up in Nigeria and seeing little opportunity for growth, Faith long dreamt of an outing. So when offered a job in Italy, she did not hesitate to take it. Upon arrival she found herself greeted not with a stable life, but with traffickers who would force her into prostitution and threaten her with death if she disobeyed. Unfortunately, Faith's story is just one of over 40 million belonging to victims of human trafficking. This \$150 billion industry subjects its victims primarily to sexual exploitation, forced labour, and organ removal and represents one of the most egregious violations of human rights.

### **What Causes It?**

The reasons why human trafficking is so pervasive are countless. For many, the prospect of escaping poverty's shackles drives them to make desperation-fueled, often unthinking decisions. They fall victim to the extravagant lies of traffickers promising a better quality of life. Only when they arrive to their destination do they realize they were deceived. Political instability and civil unrest are also contributing factors. With governments in a state of limbo and authorities preoccupied with demonstrators, populations are left scattered and unattended, and thus more vulnerable to the wills of traffickers. Above all else, as John Richmond of the Human Trafficking Institute said, "the root cause of human trafficking is traffickers".

### **Who Is Affected by It?**

The most recent data on human trafficking victims reveals that an overwhelming majority (roughly 70%) are women or girls, with the former comprising 49% of victims and the latter accounting for 21%. Men similarly make up a fifth of victims while boys make up a mere 7%. The data also reveals geographic variances and differences in the forms of exploitation that victims are subjected to. For instance, over half of all victims in Sub-Saharan Africa are children, whereas women make up the majority across Europe and the Americas. Also, while 83% of women and 72% of girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation, 82% of men and 50% of boys are put instead into forced labour.

### **Prevention Strategies**

Naturally, an issue as intricate as human trafficking has no one-size-fits-all remedy. Where some countries have been fervent in their attempts to stop it, others have lagged behind and are now plagued by traffickers. For the most part, prevention strategies focus on social and economic development to make people less vulnerable. Additionally, they can entail improving public education, securing borders, and mitigating corruption among elected officials.

## **Libya**

Libya was catapulted to the forefront of the human trafficking discussion – and the mainstream consciousness at large – after video footage was published in November 2017 of African migrants being sold as slaves in the country. Since then, Libya has come to be recognized as a hub of human trafficking, namely in the form of migrants seeking to cross the Mediterranean and using Libya as their departure point. In more recent news, the UN took the unprecedented step of sanctioning 6 leaders of human trafficking rings based out of Libya.

## **Equatorial Guinea**

Equatorial Guinea is one of 4 countries – the others being Eritrea, Iran, and North Korea – that has been placed on the Tier 3 list of the USDS Trafficking in Persons Report every year since 2011. This is to say that these nations have not met the minimum standards for combatting human trafficking and have made little effort to improve in the past 8 years.

It is recognized as a prime source for women and girls to be sex trafficked and a destination for forced labour. It also has the dishonourable distinction of having never convicted a trafficker under its 2004 anti-trafficking law.

## **India**

India is among the nations with the most human trafficking by sheer volume of victims, having upwards of 18 million people living in modern slavery. India's problem is largely internal, with 90% of victims being Indian citizens, many of whom come from economically depressed backgrounds. Forced labour constitutes the fate of most victims in India, but there is also a significant population of women and children who are sex trafficked.

## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

Responsible for publishing The Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the OSCE has long been a champion of preventing human trafficking. Their framework is meant to help nations deal with their trafficking issues and consists of measures relating to data collection, border security, economic & social stimulation, awareness-raising, and legislation. They provide a comprehensive guide for both countries from which a large volume of victims originate as well as countries where those victims end up.

## TO CONSIDER

1. Are some nations more vulnerable to human trafficking? If so, why? What can be done?
2. What are the best methods to limit human trafficking?
  - a. Catching the perpetrators?
  - b. Protecting those at risk?
  - c. Reducing demand/stopping those willing to pay?
3. What are the ways by which people become enslaved and/or trafficked?
4. What are some ways to identify trafficking victims across borders?
5. What kinds of trafficking is most common, and in which places? E.g. labour vs. sex.

# FURTHER READING

1. <https://www.traffickinginstitute.org/the-root-cause-of-trafficking-is-traffickers/>
2. [http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit-files/08-58296\\_tool\\_9-2.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit-files/08-58296_tool_9-2.pdf)
3. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP\\_2018\\_BOOK\\_web\\_small.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP_2018_BOOK_web_small.pdf)
4. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282798.pdf>
5. <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/282572.htm>
6. <https://humantraffickingcenter.org/problem/>
7. <https://www.globallaveryindex.org/2018/findings/country-studies/india/>