

# Human Trafficking: An Introduction



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## What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a crime and a human rights violation. It involves the recruitment, movement and exploitation of a person. The initial consent by a person will be irrelevant if it was obtained by means of fraud, deception or coercion. A child cannot consent to being trafficked. Transporting a child into exploitative conditions constitutes trafficking.

It is the trade in and exploitation of human beings for profit. Trafficking in persons should be understood as a process rather than as a single offence. Trafficking need not involve crossing of borders – it can occur within a country.

The **UN Palermo Protocol (2000)** provides a detailed definition of human trafficking which UN member states have agreed to, making a coordinated international response easier and more effective.

### Trafficking versus Smuggling

- Smuggling of migrants and human trafficking both involve moving human persons for profit.
- Smuggled persons are free on arrival at country of destination, but trafficked persons remain under the control of their traffickers.

### Different Forms of Human Trafficking:

- Sexual exploitation
- Forced labour
- Sale of human organs

## Today's Modern Day Slavery

It is very difficult to be exact about numbers, because of the clandestine nature of human trafficking. An estimated 27 million people are trafficked globally each year, with women and girls accounting for 75% of victims. In the EU, 76% of victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation. This form of trafficking makes almost \$100 billion each year for traffickers globally.

### Legislation

#### **Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008**

It is illegal for any person to benefit from the prostitution of another person, or to knowingly buy sex from a trafficked person. Penalties of up to life imprisonment apply in respect of these offences.

When there is sufficient evidence that a woman has been trafficked, 60 days for reflection and recovery are given by the state and during this time the person is provided accommodation by the state. Extension of time depends on cooperation with the police. A conviction depends on the person testifying in court in front of her alleged trafficker.

#### **POVERTY**

Makes people more desperate and vulnerable to exploitation.

#### **DEMAND**

For commercial sex in Ireland; 'sex tourism', often involving children, in other countries.

#### **PORNOGRAPHY**

Desensitises people to sexual objectification, dehumanises women, and distorts men's attitudes towards, and expectations of, sex.

### Why are people trafficked?

#### **PROFIT**

One of the most lucrative illegal trades, along with drugs and weapons.

#### **GENDER INEQUALITY**

Sexual objectification of women and girls in our society.

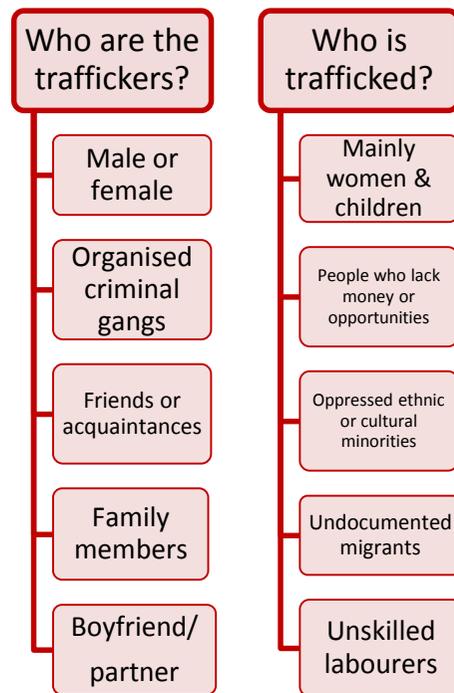
The 'girl-child' seen as less valuable in some cultures.

Selling of girls by parents.

## How are people trafficked?

Traffickers recruit through:

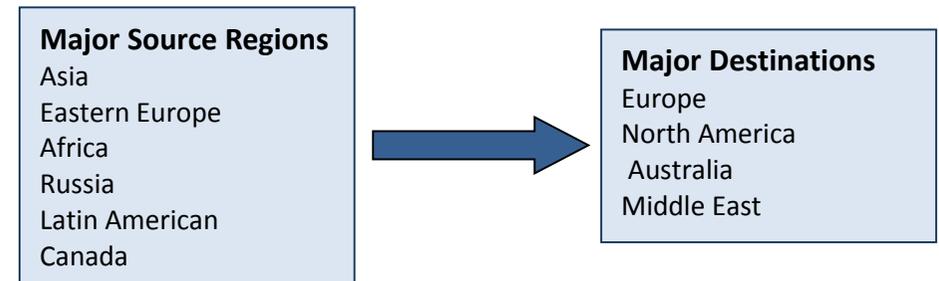
- Fake job offers, e.g.; care work, modelling, hairdressing, education, hotel/bar work, travel
- Casual acquaintance – friend of a friend introduces person to trafficker
- Family sell all they have to get their daughter a ‘good job’ so that she can send money back home



**Anyone of any gender, age, nationality, race, or socio-economic background can be trafficked.**

## Traffickers use various techniques to keep victims enslaved.

- Some are kept under lock and key
- Passports, visas and/or identification documents are confiscated
- Some have violent acts carried out on them - they can be raped or beaten in order to force them to comply
- Threats and blackmail are threatened against their families back home
- Debt bondage/financial obligations – victims are told that they are honour bound to repay debt
- Witchcraft/Hex/Ju Ju
- Victims are told they will be imprisoned or deported for immigration violations if they contact authorities



***Ireland is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking.***

## Impacts of sex trafficking on victim:

- Lack of trust; anger; sadness; fear; insecurity; shame; guilt; confusion; depression; terror; sense of helplessness; PTSD – flashbacks, reminders, poor sleep patterns, etc.
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy

## What can we do?

- Become informed.
- Distribute information on trafficking.
- Report any suspicious events/happenings in your local area to the law enforcement agencies i.e. a lot of comings and goings by men to a particular apartment, regular changeover of women/girls in an apartment.
- Talk with young people and encourage them to talk to each other about this horrendous phenomenon.
- Never accept violence - watch out for violence against women.
- Promote attitudes of respect, equal treatment of men and women.
- Organise a speaker to your youth and other forms of groups.
- Promote fair trade.
- Check retailers' supply chains.
- Sign petitions e.g. Turn Off the Red Light.
- Network with countries of origin to form a strategic alliance.
- Education is critical – incorporate information on human trafficking into the school curriculum.
- Be aware and alert – large gatherings of people, e.g. sporting events, conventions, often coincide with an increase in sex trafficking.
- 18<sup>th</sup> October is Europe's Anti-Human Trafficking Day – is there anything you can do to raise awareness?

**Human Trafficking affects women, men and children in their deepest being. It strikes at what is most precious in them – their dignity and their values as individual.**

## Why should we care?

*Human trafficking is one of the gravest forms of human rights abuse. It is modern day slavery. It is happening here, today. It could happen to someone **YOU** know.*

## Know the signs

People who have been trafficked may:

- Be of any age, although the age may vary according to the location of the market
- Move from one brothel to the next or work in various locations
- Be escorted whenever they go to and/or return from work and other outside activities
- Have tattoos or other marks indicating 'ownership' by their exploiters
- Work long hours or have few if any days off
- Sleep where they work
- Live or travel in a group, sometimes with other women who do not speak the same language
- Have very few items of clothing
- Have clothes that are mostly the kind typically worn for doing sex work
- Only know how to say sex-related words in the local language or in the language of the client group
- Have no cash of their own
- Be unable to show an identity document.

## Mind-set of trafficking victims – frequently:

- Victims do not speak English and are unfamiliar with culture of destination
- They may distrust outsiders, especially law enforcement agents e.g. Gardaí – fear of deportation
- They often blame themselves for their situation
- Although many victims have been beaten and/or raped, their current situation may still be preferable to where they came from
- Victims may be unaware of rights or may have been intentionally misinformed about rights in the country in which they find themselves
- They fear for safety of families in their home countries, who are often threatened by traffickers

## Resources

### Ireland

[www.aptireland.org](http://www.aptireland.org)

[www.ruhama.ie](http://www.ruhama.ie)

[www.blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie)

[www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)

[www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)

[www.turnofftheredlight.ie](http://www.turnofftheredlight.ie)

### International Organisations

[www.coatnet.org](http://www.coatnet.org)

[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

[www.gaatw.net](http://www.gaatw.net)

[www.catinternational.org](http://www.catinternational.org)

[www.renate.org](http://www.renate.org)

[www.ungift.org](http://www.ungift.org)

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