



Human Trafficking

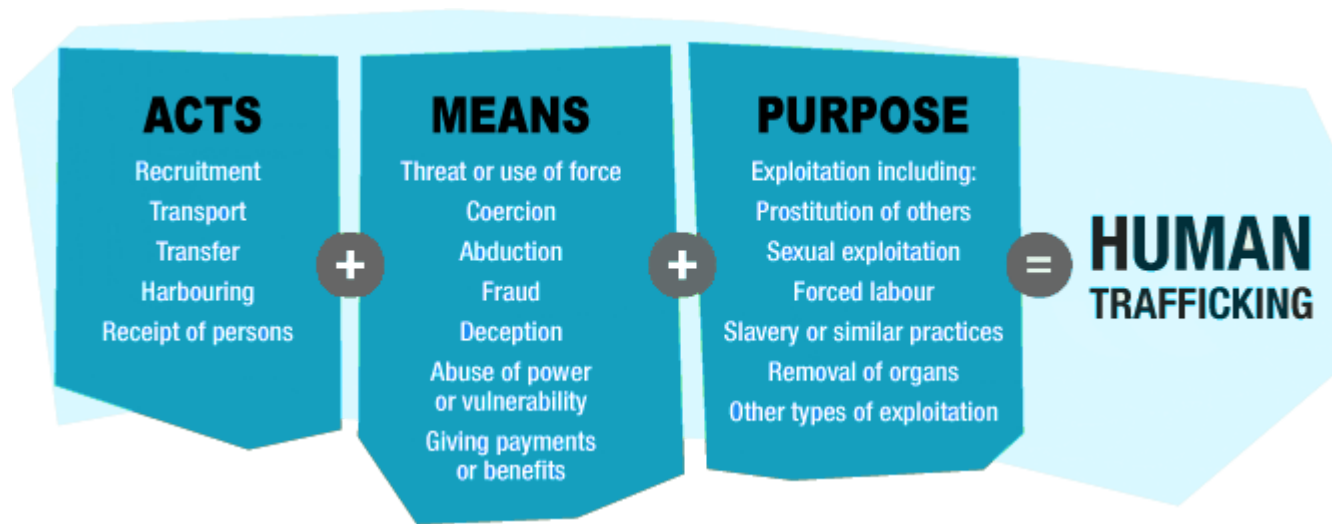


Human trafficking as an international concern

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon, a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights ([UNODC](#)). The [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children](#) defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation".

According to the Protocol, human trafficking occurs when the perpetrator takes any one of the enumerated actions, and employs the means of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of compelling the victim to provide commercial sex acts or labour or services ([National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)). Three core elements must be present to amount to a crime of human trafficking:

1. The action (what is done) of trafficking means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.
2. The means (how it is done) of trafficking which includes the threat of or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim.
3. The purpose (why it is done) of trafficking which is always exploitation ([UNODC](#)).



Source: [Traffick ACTS](#)

Notwithstanding the institutional approach, trade in persons should not be understood as a legal concept but a de-localized process that affects victims of any age, race, gender, or nationality. It circumvents controls of every kind and uses force, fraud, coercion, violence, manipulation and false promises to obtain a personal gain.

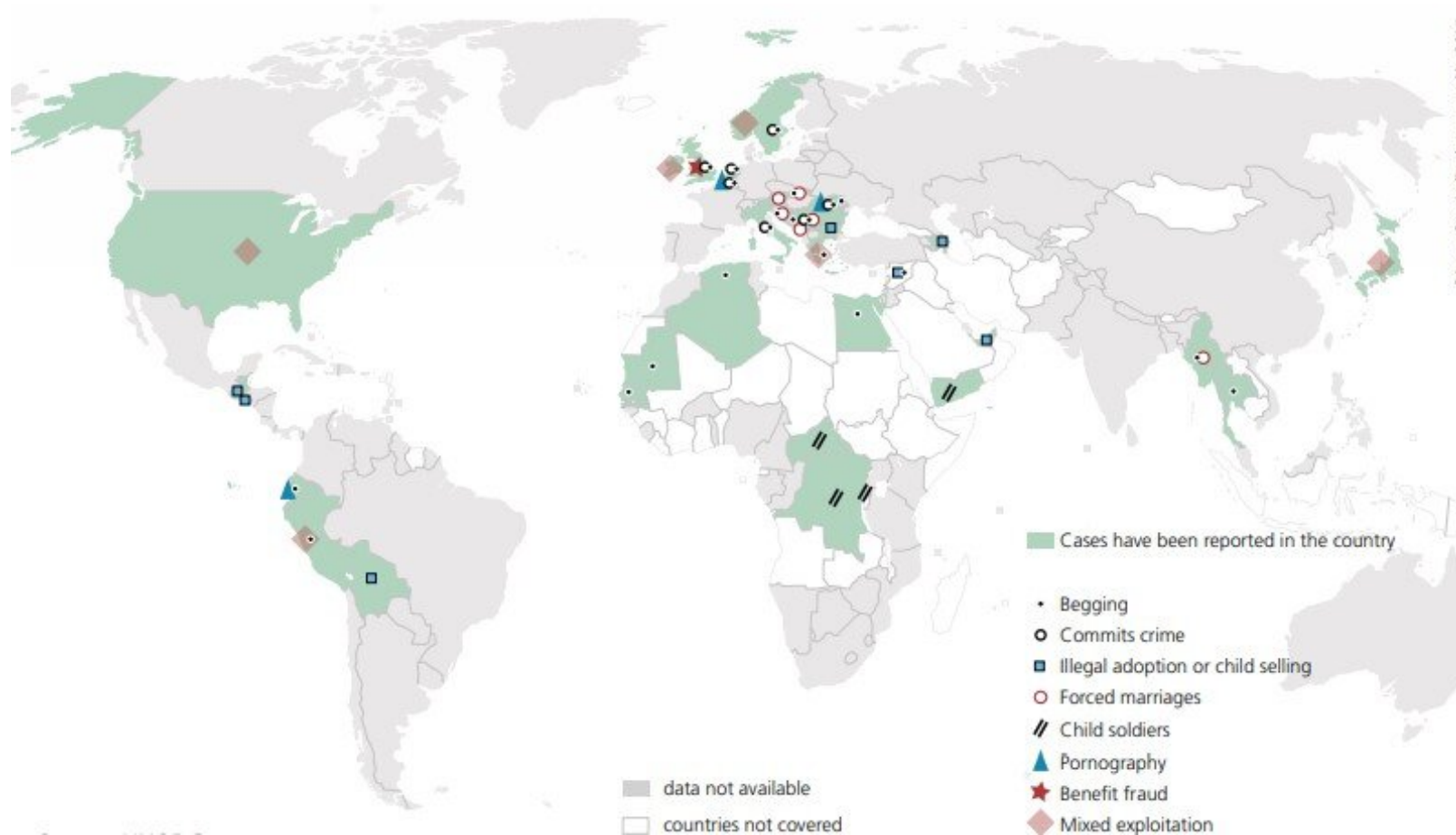
Typologies of human trafficking

Exploitation in human trafficking may take on a wide range of forms. Forced labour and sexual exploitation are identified as the most common practices. To learn more about human trafficking, [click here](#).

- **Forced Labor.** It includes manufacturing, cleaning, construction, textile production, catering and domestic servitude, among many other sectors ([UNODC](#)).

- Sexual exploitation. It refers to non-consensual abuse or exploitation for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose” ([SHARE](#)).

Additional practices such as organ removal, domestic servitude, forced begging, forced criminality or the use of child soldiers are conceived as modern forms of slavery ([Anti-slavery, The Human Trafficking Center](#)).



Countries that report forms of exploitation other than forced labour, sexual exploitation or organ removal (2010-2012)

Source: [UNODC](#)

The scope of human trafficking

Due to its clandestine nature, the real scope of human trafficking remains unknown. Estimations by the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggested that 40,3 million people were victims of [modern slavery](#) in 2017, including 24,9 million in forced labour and 15,4 million in forced marriage ([ILO and Walk Free Foundation](#)).

There are neither age nor gender specifications when it comes to human exploitation, nonetheless, female victims are disproportionately affected. Women and girls account for 71% of trafficking victims around the world, and children under the age of 18 represent the 25% of the total figure ([Stop the traffik](#)).

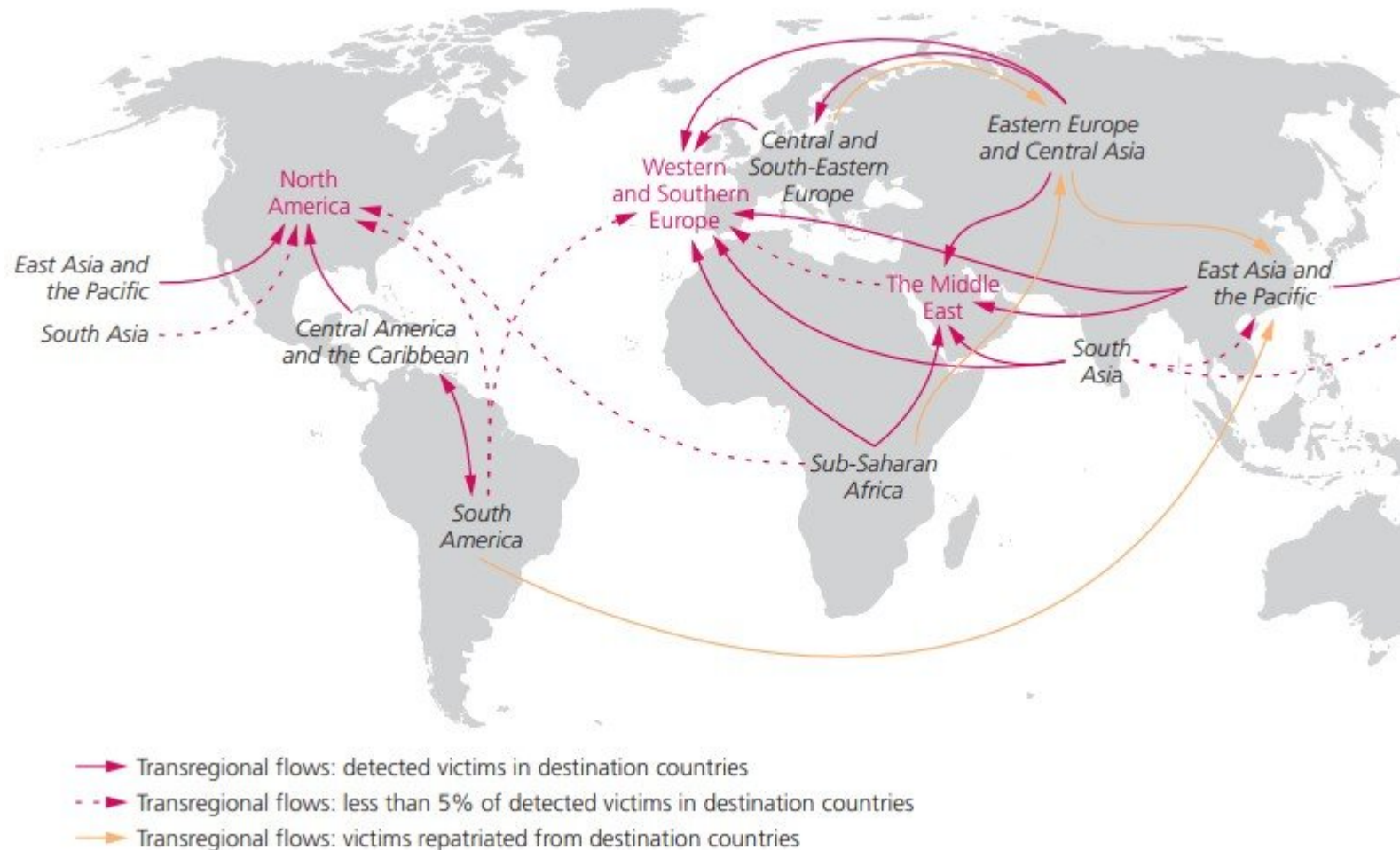
Facts and figures

- One in four victims of modern slavery are children.
- Women and girls account for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry.
- 15,4 million people were living in a forced marriage to which they had not consented.
- In the past five years, 89 million people experienced some form of modern slavery for periods of time ranging from a few days to the whole five years.

Source: [ILO](#), [Walk Free Foundation](#)

The ILO estimates that human trafficking generates 150,2 billion USD in illegal profits each year ([Human Trafficking Center](#)). No region in the world is untouched by human trafficking, either as country of origin, transit or destination. Western and Southern Europe, the Middle East and North America are destinations with significant levels of inbound trafficking from

other regions. Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa and are, among others, regions of destination for victims of human trade ([UNODC](#)).



Main detected transregional trafficking flows, 2014-2017

Source: [UNODC](#)

What does influence the rise of human trafficking?

Scholars have identified the drivers of human trafficking as follows:

- Economic globalization and its accompanying policies, what shifts labour opportunities from the Global South to the northern countries.
- Increasing inequalities and poverty within countries creates a marginalized population in high levels of vulnerability.
- The demand for the practice of human trafficking, especially when it comes to sex trafficking and other forms of forced labour.
- Gender inequality. Due to gender discrimination in the labour market, female victims are often excluded from regulated forms of work and concentrated in the informal economy.

The drivers of human trafficking still need further investigation, however, the intersecting inequalities as a means of political and economic causes seem to be key elements to understand the conditions that lead to trafficking in persons (Limoncelli, 2014).

What is the impact of human trafficking?

Human trafficking has become a world-wide industry whose effects affect countries of origin and destination alike ([UNODC](#)). Their implications are compelling and extend to:

- Society. Human trafficking victimizes individuals affected in all areas of their lives: it undermines family ties and leads to societal stigmatization.
- Policy. As it involves transnational movement, human trafficking relates directly to debates on migration policy and human rights

- Economy. Trafficking in persons results in loss of human resources, reductions in tax revenue, and the disruption of the licit cycle of the economy from migrants and their families, to traffickers and their associates.
- Rule of law. As a criminal act, trafficking violates the rule of law, threatening national jurisdictions and international law.

Human trafficking is, therefore, a global phenomenon that evidences the dark side of globalization. As the scope of human trafficking is recognized, a plethora of initiatives is created to counter fight this practice. Anti-trafficking strategies include initiatives from governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations and, as a common ground, they aim to “prevent potential victims from falling prey to traffickers, protecting those who do, and punishing the criminals involved” ([UNODC](#)). As strategies are implemented, greater awareness of human trafficking may lead to a greater protection of victims.

References

Limoncelli, S. (2017). *Legal Limits: Ending Human Trafficking in Supply Chains*. *World Policy Journal*, 34(1), 119-123

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