LLPO LAW FIRM

The Law Firm Network
FAR - REACHING LEGAL SOLUTIONS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ITS UNWAVERING EXISTENCE

by Irene Afxentiou | Junior Associate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The crime of Human Trafficking has always been a great obstacle to our society. Despite several efforts to tackle it, this heinous crime continues to exist by violating and exploiting the rights of various individuals from any background. The precise magnitude of this crime is uncertain because of its complexity, but this does not mean that it is not in existence. The objective of this paper is for the reader to understand why the crime of Human Trafficking continues to be a problem in our society, and the ways in which it can be tackled. By breaking down its forms, causes, and definitions, individuals will be able to form a better understanding of who can be a victim and a trafficker, as well as know how they can help minimise its impact and consequences. Moreover, the paper will address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the role technology plays in this crime. Hence, the paper will conclude with the most reasonable solutions that our society is ready to adapt to and simultaneously, emphasise the need for further research.

I. INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought about how different your life is compared to someone else's? For example, your typical day could start by waking up, getting dressed, going to work or work remotely, going to the gym, and enjoying hobbies. While you go about your daily routine you will pass by many people thinking that they share the same lifestyle and experiences as you. But is your typical day the same as everyone else's? If not, how much and to what extent can it differ?

Well, the answer is that for some people enjoying a pleasant day is far from reality. Nowadays, some people don't even have a home and unfortunately, they blame themselves for it. Regardless of the efforts of these people to have a normal everyday life, they do not have the means to actually do so. The worst part is that most of these people have a very difficult time making their voices and needs heard. The mechanisms and institutions that are supposed to help also have a hard time with the reality such people face.

The international crime of Human Trafficking is what causes our lifestyles to differ from one another. Despite the fact that this is not a new crime, its complexity, and threat to our society "has attracted considerable public and political concern in recent years".[1]

When researching *"what and how"* about Human Trafficking crime, it becomes apparent that it "is the fastest – growing business of organised crime and the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world".[2] The seriousness of this crime is also reflected by the fact that it links with the crime of Sexual assault since the perpetrators of Human Trafficking often use sexual exploitation and sexual abuse towards their targets. Accordingly, the paper will significantly focus on sex trafficking as it is "the most common form of human trafficking (79%)".[3]

Although many countries try to "tackle human trafficking in domestic policing and criminal justice contexts, challenges remain in understanding and responding to human trafficking during times of conflict and crisis".[4] For instance, many countries have tried to define this horrendous crime but still, they cannot be certain of how it will develop in the long term. Consequently, issues around the exact definition are evident.

Additionally, because of the illegality of this crime and its unseen nature, it is "extremely difficult to calculate the actual number of victims".[5] As a consequence, we cannot be certain about who is being affected since "globally, the number of convictions for trafficking offences fell by 27 per cent in 2020 from the previous year".[6]

Even though we cannot be certain of the exact numbers of Human Trafficking, many organisations and governments try to use a number of methods to measure and tackle this crime. The International Labour Organization (ILO), for example, has set out that "49.6 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, of which 27.6 million were in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage".[7] Even if these numbers may vary, they are

---

[1]. Maggy Lee, 'Human Trafficking', Chapter 1, Willan Publishing, 2007.

[2]. Amanda Walker – Rodriguez and Rodney Hill, "Human Sex Trafficking", March 1, 2011 (Human Sex Trafficking — LEB (fbi.gov)).

[3]. UNODC Report on human trafficking exposes modern form of slavery, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html).

[4]. Toby Fenton, Graham Hesketh, Giuseppe Maio, Julia Muraszkiewicz & Hayley Watson (2020): Toward a Better Understanding of Human Security Risks: Developing a Risk Assessment Methodology for Human Trafficking at the onset, during and after conflict, Journal of Human Trafficking, DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2020.1743072

[5]. ACLU, 'Human Trafficking: Modern Enslavement of immigrant women in the United States", (https://www.aclu.org/other/human-trafficking-modern-enslavement-immigrant-women-united-states).

[6]. 'Bangladesh: UNODC launches the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons', 26 January 2023, (https://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/frontpage/2023/January/bangladesh_-unodc-launches-the-global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html).

[7]. International Labour Organization, 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage', Geneva, September 2022.

significantly high, and year by year they will continue to increase even more. This is clearly shown in Figure 1 below where "a total of 2,198 persons were referred to U.S. Attorneys for human trafficking offences in fiscal year 2020, a 62% increase from the 1,360 persons referred in 2011".[8]

Human trafficking suspects referred to and prosecuted by U.S. attorneys and human trafficking defendants convicted, fiscal years 2011-2020

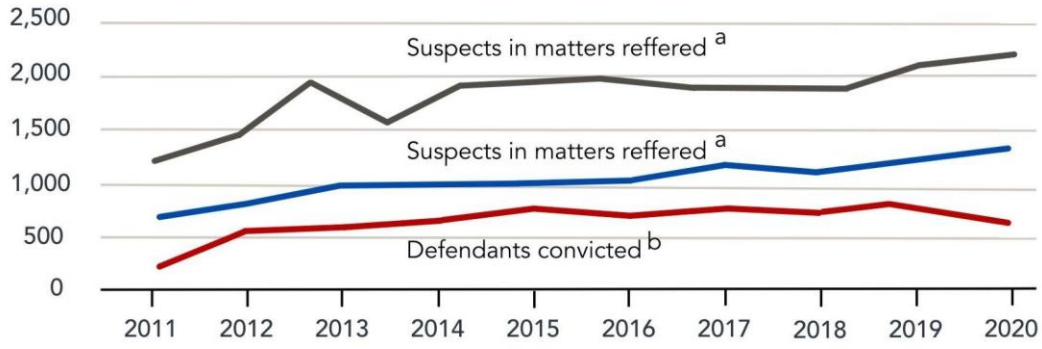


Fig. 1

This paper explores the causes and types of this horrific crime and in particular, the reasons why it continues to be a threat to society despite the several efforts of many countries to stop it. Moreover, the paper focuses on the profile of the people who tend to be the victims of this crime as well as the consequences and ideal solutions. In order to understand the seriousness of Human Trafficking, the paper will outline and analyse case studies and examples from various organizations and reports. Finally, the paper will try to evaluate certain solutions and seek to conclude with the more realistic ones, as well as highlight the need for reform and further research.

The paper addresses all the aforementioned matters and achieves its objective, by using the following structure:

- *Section II* explains the history of Human Trafficking and its progression throughout the years, and
- *Section III* examines the potential link between Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault so that it can point out the high levels of sexual exploitation;
- *Section IV* illustrates the execution and characteristics of Human Trafficking and subsequently,

[8]. U.S. Department of Justice, 'Human Trafficking Data Collection Activities', October 2022, NCJ 305205.

- *Section V* focuses on the reasons why this crime continues to be an obstacle to our society. Finally,
- *Section VI* evaluates several solutions and concludes with the more efficient ones in order to move onwards.

II. THE HISTORY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The crime of Human Trafficking is not a modern crime. This dreadful crime has, historically, been considered a serious threat to our humanity, and "for as long as humans have existed, Human Trafficking has existed".[9] It is unfortunate but no matter how many years pass this crime cannot be fully rooted out.

Many scholars, governments, policymakers and organisations have tried to define Human Trafficking, one of which is the United Nations (UN) which defined Human Trafficking, as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Women, men and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims".[10] Through this definition, it can be pointed out that Human Trafficking is made up of three core elements. These are the act, the means, and the purpose for exploitation.[11] This detailed definition has been formed by studying closely the crime of Human Trafficking as well as its progression throughout the years.

The beginning of human trafficking and slavery is slightly ambiguous but it is known that slavery had existed for many years prior to the 1200s, and was a common form of everyday life worldwide. The 1400s marked the beginning of European slave trading in Africa with the Portuguese transporting people from Africa to Portugal and using them as slaves. Historical documentation of Human trafficking is identified back to the 16th Century when Africans were captured and enslaved. Particularly, during that time "owning African slaves was a legal and governmentally condoned practice. It wasn't until 1807 that Britain first outlawed slavery. The

---

9. Becky Giovagnoni and Amber Van Schooneveld, "The History of Human Trafficking", 25 January 2022, (https://theexodusroad.com/history-of-human-trafficking/).

10. United Nations, 'Human Trafficking', (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html).

11. UN, The Crime, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/crime.html).

United States followed in 1820".[12] Unfortunately, this awful crime did not stop there since around the 1800s the Chinese have also started to be targets of this crime.

As time passed, 'white slavery' also started to emerge which was defined as the "procurement by use of force, deceit, or drugs of a white woman or girl against her will for prostitution".[13] Although in 1904 governments signed the first International Agreement to try to deter the crime of white slavery, still the crime of Human Trafficking continued to take place during the first and second world wars.

"Today, there is recognition that women, children and men are trafficked into many different forms of labour, and for sexual exploitation".[14] Therefore, it is crystal clear that the traffickers of this crime do not focus on one particular type of individual to commit their wrongdoings. This is shown in the case of Sir Mo Farah, who "was brought to the UK illegally as a child and forced to work as a domestic servant".[15]

Despite the efforts of many countries to combat Human Trafficking through the formation of the Intentional Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919, the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948, the United Nations (UN) Convention for the suppression of the traffic in persons and of the exploitation of the prostitution of others in 1949,[16] and the establishment of many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) still, this crime continues to develop and survive.

The main reason for the continuance of Human Trafficking is the fact that traffickers are well-equipped with many skills, work in networks, and are well aware of how to exploit several factors, some of which will be outlined in this paper.

---

[12]. Becky Giovagnoni and Amber Van Schooneveld, "The History of Human Trafficking", 25 January 2022, (https://theexodusroad.com/history-of-human-trafficking/).

[13]. Grant Oster, "The History of Human Trafficking", (https://hankeringforhistory.com/the-history-of-human-trafficking/).

[14]. World Health Organization (WHO), 'Understanding and addressing violence against women', 2012.

[15]. BBC, 'Sir Mo Farah reveals he was trafficked to the UK as a child', 16 July 2022.

[16]. Convention for the suppression of the traffic in persons and of the exploitation of the prostitution of others, adopted 02 December 1949, by General Assembly resolution 317 (IV), (https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-suppression-traffic-persons-and-exploitation).

III. THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING & SEXUAL ASSAULT

The three most common types of human trafficking are sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage, therefore the crime of Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault have an undeniable intricate link. Both are traumatic crimes, premised upon the power, control, abuse, and exploitation of another human being.

Human Trafficking, on the one hand, can be seen as a form of modern slavery and as time passes, it is evident that it can have many different forms such as sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, organ trafficking, forced labour, forced marriage, debt bondage, domestic servitude, etc.[17] Evidently, this crime along with its definition and forms tends to evolve day by day therefore, making it even harder to be tackled.

Sexual Assault, on the other hand, is also considered one of the most atrocious crimes in society. The main characteristic of this crime is the lack of explicit consent by the victim towards their perpetrator. Like Human Trafficking, Sexual Assault can occur in many forms such as sexual battery, sexual harassment, rape, molestation, and many more. Many countries have tried to tackle it by defining it and also by criminalising it. Some of the countries which try to prohibit this serious crime are the UK,[18] the US,[19] Canada[20], Australia,[21] India[22] etc.

What both crimes have in common, is the approach and tactics which are being used in order to commit them. For example, both Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault are primarily based on the abuse, coercion, control, and exploitation from one individual onto another. As a result, the victims of both of these crimes are severely traumatised as their human rights are being violated. However, it is important to note that the definitions, interpretations, and punishments of these two crimes can vary between jurisdictions.

The meeting point between these two crimes occurs when the crime of sexual assault is seen to take place in many forms of human trafficking. In a few words, “Traffickers commonly use

---

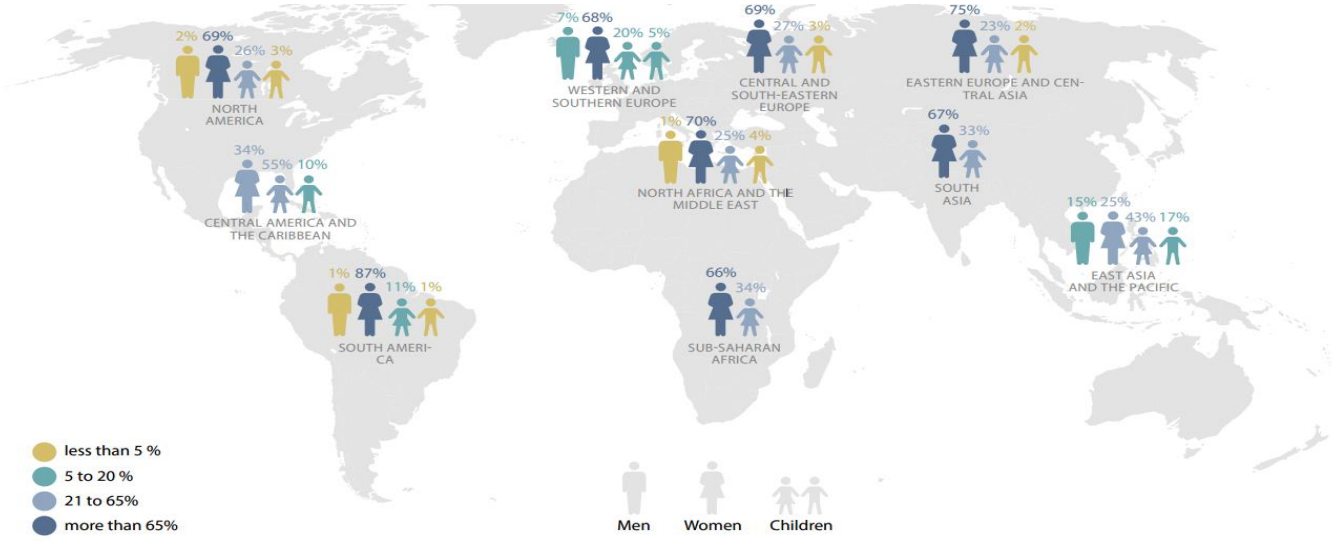
[17]. UN, The Crime, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/crime.html).
[18]. Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 3.
[19]. Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act etc.
[20]. Criminal Code of Canada.
[21]. Victoria Crimes Act 1958.
[22]. Indian Penal Code

sexual violence as a tool to assert power and control over women, children, and men, regardless of the type of trafficking they are engaging in".[23]

Traffickers do not limit their actions to one particular victim and for this reason, it is crucial to understand that in order to tackle Human Trafficking, Sexual Assault crimes such as rape, sexual exploitation, and sex trafficking should also be addressed.

Figure 2 below is an indication of the seriousness of sexual exploitation as it illustrates that any gender or age is affected as well as any region.

Fig 2: Detected victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, by region 2020 (or most recent)[24]



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.
* Based on 14,201 detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation whose age and sex were reported in 104 countries. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

IV. COMMITTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In order to achieve the objective of this paper, it is very important for individuals to understand how this crime is being committed, its characteristics and how to prevent becoming a victim.

A. WHO ARE THE VICTIMS AND TRAFFICKERS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

The main reason why individuals need to be able to understand when someone is being a victim or a trafficker, is because only in that way, they will be able to identify them and eventually

[23]. Freedom Network USA, 'Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault', April 2015, https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2018/10/FNUSA-Human-Trafficking-and-Sexual-Assault-2015.pdf
[24]. UNODC, 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022',

protect or prevent them accordingly. Due to the complexity of this crime, it is not so easy to define the potential victims and exact traffickers since there is not one specific standard profile for each one of them.

Through considerable research and investigations, our society has managed to categorise certain signs and characteristics of them, in order to assist us. Although there is not one exhaustive list, some signs and factors stand out which cannot be neglected.

Initially, "early discussions about trafficking in persons focused almost solely on sex trafficking of women and girls and drew primarily on law enforcement responses".[25] Throughout the years, it has been evident that the victims of Human Trafficking come from all social layers of society and groups which means that this crime has broadened considerably. Traffickers will not limit themselves to one specific race, age, gender, religion, colour, or nationality, since they want to have many options when completing their criminal activity and, why not, offer a wide variety of "choices" to their clients.

The wide choice of victims is also reflected by the history of Human Trafficking since traffickers have never limited themselves to one particular category of people. This is clearly shown in Figure 3 below, which illustrates that victims of modern slavery are not limited to one specific profile. Additionally, from the figure below, it can be pointed out that traffickers will choose victims from any type of income group. Clearly, people who come from lower-middle-income households are the main attraction of traffickers but this does not limit them from going after people from other sources of income.

[25]. Cathy Zimmerman, Ligia Kiss 'Human Trafficking and exploitation: A global health concern', November 22. 2017, Human trafficking and exploitation: A global health concern | PLOS Medicine.

Fig. 3

Similarly, traffickers are also individuals from various backgrounds as they "represent every social, ethnic, and racial group. Various organizational types exist in trafficking, including large nationwide gangs and criminal organizations, local street and motorcycle gangs, and individuals with no affiliation with any one group or organization. Traffickers are not only men; women are also perpetrators".[26]

Furthermore, the reason why Human Trafficking is viewed as a very complex crime is because its traffickers are not always strangers and only males. For instance, it is very common for family members and high-profile individuals such as company owners to also be traffickers. A recent example that shows that there is not one common identity for traffickers, is the "couple who made about £70,000 trafficking sex workers around the UK".[27] Despite the fact that the couple has been sentenced, this case shows that people cannot be trusted and everyone around us can be a trafficker.

The complexity of Human Trafficking is further outlined by the fact that nowadays, it is very common for women to be seen as perpetrators. For example, "nearly 30% of the convicted human traffickers worldwide are female compared to women's involvement in other violent crimes such as murder (13%) or robbery (9%)".[28] However, there is a great lack of research on this matter since we cannot be certain about how "female perpetrators of sexual exploitation

[26]. Youth.gov, 'Human Trafficking the Problem', (Human Trafficking: The Problem | Youth.gov).

[27]. BBC, Wiltshire, 'Swindon couple jailed for trafficking vulnerable women', 30 September 2021, (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-58739146).

[28] Brielle Francis, 'The Female Human Trafficker in the Criminal Justice System: A Test of the Chivarly Hypothesis', 2016, University of Central Florida.

who have been victims of sexual exploitation differ from female perpetrators who have not been victims of sexual exploitation".[29]

Thereupon, the nature of Human Trafficking is considered to be very vague, as there are no specific examples of its exact actors when it comes to its execution.

B. CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE EXPLOITATION OF THE VULNERABLE

After a significant amount of research, researchers have concluded several causes of Human Trafficking. Some of these "include lack of employment opportunities, poverty, economic imbalances among regions of the world, corruption, decline of border controls, gender and ethnic discrimination, and political instability and conflict".[30]

Arguably, all these causes amount to vulnerability. Therefore, it is very common for traffickers to go after vulnerable individuals as they are considered easy targets and whom they can easily take advantage of.

Despite the fact that there is not one definitive definition of who can be vulnerable, after a number of case studies it has been concluded that vulnerability is "a condition resulting from how individuals negatively experience the complex interaction of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors that create the context for their communities".[31] Unfortunately, governments and organizations are familiar with this trend but there is no change in this.

Some examples of vulnerable people are "children in the child welfare system or children in the child welfare system or children who have been involved in the juvenile justice system; runaway and homeless youth; unaccompanied children; persons who do not have lawful immigration status in the United States; Black people and other people of colour; American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other indigenous peoples of North America; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+)

---

[29]. Miriam Wijkman & Edward Kleemans, 'Female offenders of human trafficking and sexual exploitation', 10 May 2019, 53-72.

[30]. Louise Shelley, 'Human Trafficking: A global Perspective', Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[31]. Clark, M. A. (2008). Vulnerability, prevention and human trafficking: The need for a new paradigm. In United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action, UNOD

individuals; migrant labourers; persons with disabilities; and individuals with substance use disorder".[32]

What all these people have in common, is the fact that they might lack the necessary help to go back to their everyday lives. For instance, people who have engaged in criminal behaviour such as drug consumption, or whose sexuality is not accepted by the people who surround them, are left all alone. Also, "poverty, lack of education, unstable social and political conditions, economic imbalances, climate change and war are key issues that contribute to someone's vulnerability in becoming a victim of modern slavery".[33] Consequently, this is where traffickers step in and exploit this vulnerability.

Moreover, Figure 4 sets out how people with disabilities are also easy targets in this crime. Clearly, from the figure below, both males and females are subject to disabilities and are subject to Human Trafficking, as traffickers can exploit these types of people even more.

Individuals who suffer from the disabilities which are set out below, are subject to limited help "particularly those who may have difficulty understanding and reporting or seeking legal recourse".[34] The problem, however, does not stop there since it is very common for traffickers to also be subject to several disabilities.

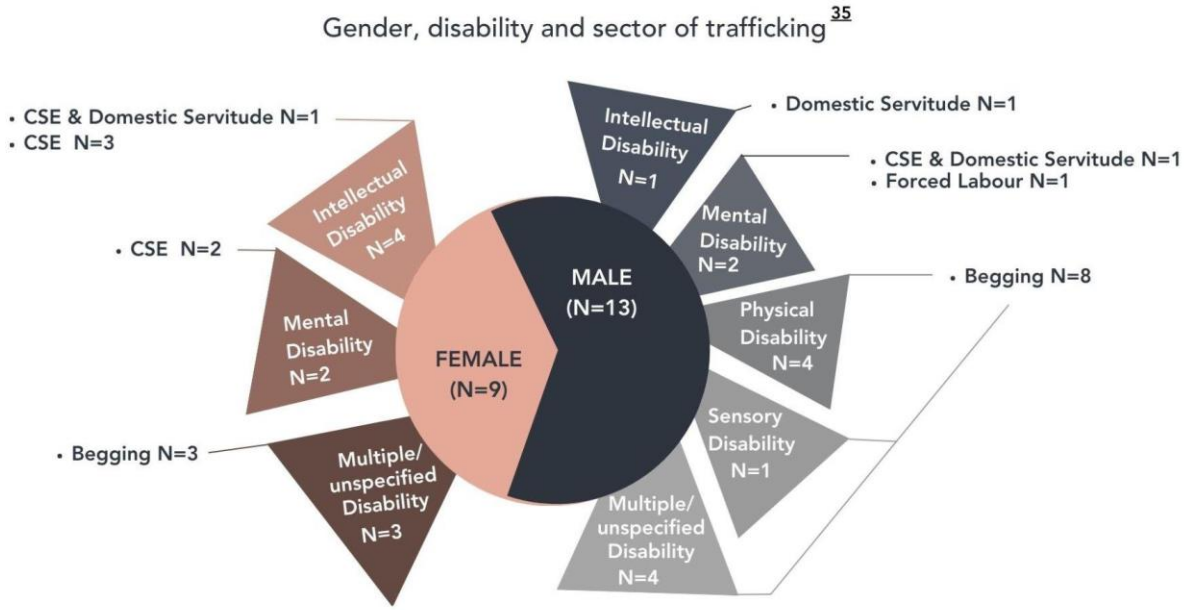


Fig. 4

[32]. U.S. Department of Justice, 'What is Human Trafficking?', (Human Trafficking | What is Human Trafficking? (justice.gov)).

[33]. Unseen, Modern slavery, fact and Figures, (https://www.unseenuk.org/about-modern-slavery/facts-and-figures/).

[34]. Caroline Jagoe, Pei Ying Natalie Toh & Gillian Wylie, 'Disability and the Risk of Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: An analysis of Case Law', 19 August 2022, (https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2022.2111507).

C. SIGNS WE NEED TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

Due to its severity, social impact and unwavering nature most country leaders rightfully do not ignore it. For example, many countries have introduced helplines for victims and for individuals who witness this illegality in order to be able to report it. Nonetheless, in order for helplines to be used effectively individuals need to be cautious and aware of what signs or characteristics they need to identify.

Some examples could be:

- disconnection from family members and friends;
- inconsistency in attending school or work;
- different behaviour from the regular social routines;
- mood swings;
- physical weakness;
- psychological abuse;
- lack of everyday necessities.

Moreover, victims of Human Trafficking tend to be more isolated and often "have relationships which don't seem right – for example, a young teenager appearing to be the boyfriend/girlfriend of a much older adult".[35] Also, individuals need to be cautious about the movement of victims as they are subject to "restricted freedom of movement".[36]

For example, traffickers usually take possession of the passports and IDs of the victims on purpose, so that they can exploit their every move. In addition to this, traffickers will also control the victims' earnings as well as supervise them in public spaces. Furthermore, the threats of this crime are not limited to just the victims since occasionally, traffickers will threaten to hurt or even kill the families of the victims if they disobey them.

Despite the research which has been carried out on specific signs of Human Trafficking, "not all indicators listed above are present in every human trafficking situation, and the presence or absence of any of the indicators is not necessarily proof of human trafficking".[37] Consequently, individuals need to be alert for any unusual signs when it comes to this crime.

---

[35]. Unseen, 'Spot the signs of modern slavery', (https://www.unseenuk.org/about-modern-slavery/spot-the-signs/).

[36]. ibid 30.

[37]. Blue Campaign, 'Indicators of Human Trafficking', (Indicators of Human Trafficking | Homeland Security (dhs.gov)).

V. REASONS FOR ITS CONTINUITY

Section IV has focused on the execution of Human Trafficking. Nonetheless, just being aware of the kind of abuse, causes, victims and signs of this crime is not enough. In order to fully understand the seriousness of Human Trafficking, it is crucial for members of society to be aware of the reasons why it continues to be a challenge to our world. Arguably, having an overall idea of some possible reasons why this crime continues to exist, can aid society in forming a better understanding of the issue and possibly, more accurate research and eventually, more effective measures.

A. TACTICS

Through the pace of time, traffickers have spent a lot of time getting to develop the desired victim's profile and how they can escape without convictions, manipulating the systems to their advantage. Unsurprisingly, traffickers have learned how to exploit victims based on their status. Furthermore, depending on the form of Human Trafficking, traffickers have adopted different tactics for each one of them.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline says that "traffickers employ a variety of control tactics, the most common include physical and emotional abuse and threats, isolation from friends and family, and economic abuse. They make promises aimed at addressing the needs of their target in order to impose control. As a result, victims become trapped and fear leaving for a myriad of reasons, including psychological trauma, shame, emotional attachment, or physical threats to themselves or their family".[38] Respectively, all these tactics have been formed by traffickers throughout the years and will continue to progress, depending on the circumstances that traffickers have in front of them.

When reading several confessions of victims of Human Trafficking, the conclusion is that manipulation is a key tactic by traffickers. A good example is the case of Shandra Woworuntu, who moved to the US for a better career but "instead, she found she had been trafficked into a world of prostitution and sexual slavery, forced drug-taking and violence".[39]

Shandra however, is not the only one who has been subject to false promises and exploitation. Traffickers will identify individuals who urge a better life or want to get away from their everyday hardship, by exploiting them financially, sexually, and psychologically.

---

[38]. National Human Trafficking Hotline, (https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/human-trafficking).

[39]. BBC, 'Shandra Woworuntu: My life as a sex-trafficking victim', 30 March 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35846207.

Unfortunately, the problem with the tactics which are being used by traffickers does not stop here. What makes this crime frightening is the fact that traffickers seem to know whom to go after. Traffickers will not just choose any individual but instead, victims who are discouraged report to the authorities or close ones what they are going through. Arguably, "people see trafficked women as prostitutes, and they see prostitutes not as victims, but criminals. And in cities, people turn a blind eye to all sorts of criminality".[40] Another example of such a case is the case of Luiza Karimova who at the age of 22, moved abroad for work purposes but found herself trafficked and eventually jailed. The consequence of this was that after she got released, "Karimova was left to live on the streets, ashamed and unemployed".[41]

Thereupon, the several tactics used by traffickers in combination with the appropriate victims, result in one of the various reasons for the continuity of this crime.

B. MYTHS, MISPERCEPTIONS STEREOTYPES

It is very common for our society to form certain myths and stereotypes to "help people to understand and explain events in their social world".[42] Therefore, when it comes to serious crimes many myths "reflect societal or cultural attitudes".[43] Respectively, as long as Human Trafficking is subject to certain myths, misperceptions, and stereotypes, its existence will never go extinct. Thus, the following need to be understood by society first, before we can put an end to this horrendous crime.

Firstly, we need to understand that it is not uncommon for Human Trafficking to take place in their country and even closer to home, maybe to a next door neighbour or family member.

Many people have the opinion that this crime can only occur in certain countries, but this is not the case. Secondly, as mentioned above, this crime can be practised by family members and/or close friends of the victims. Therefore, it is imperative to detach from the misconception that this crime can only be committed by strangers.

Thirdly, there is a growing misperception that only women and girls are victims of this crime especially, sex trafficking. Men and boys are also victims and unfortunately, they are being failed by the system. For example, "the invisibility of men and boys in scholarly discussions

---

[40]. Shandra Woworuntu: My life as a sex-trafficking victim, 30 March 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35846207

[41]. UN Women, 'Trafficked: Three survivors of human trafficking share their stories', 29 July, 2019, original story published on *Medium.com/@UN_Women*.

[42]. Miranda Horvath and Jennifer Brown 'Rape, challenging contemporary thinking', Willian Publishing 2009 Chapter 2 23.

[43]. Sokratis Dinos, Nina Burrowes, Karen Hammond, Christina Cunliffe 'A systematic review of juries 'assessment of rape victims: Do rape myths impact in juror decision- making?' 2014 p.38 International Journal of Law Crime and Justice.

of the global sex trade"[44] is apparent and hence, there is "a lack of screening and intake by law enforcement and social agencies rooted in the belief that boys are not victims".[45] Consequently, how will Human Trafficking be tackled to the fullest when its victims are not equally treated and recognised?

Fourthly, there is an ongoing myth that "If the trafficked person consented to be in their initial situation, then it cannot be human trafficking or against their will because they "knew better"".[46] And so, this should not be the case since consent could have been given under threats, violence or false pretences. Because of this myth, many victims are afraid to open up about what they are going through, since they want to avoid stigmatisation and prosecution.

Social shaming is also a major factor due to which victims do not talk about their unfortunate experience.

Despite the fact that "trafficking is not the same thing as sex work",[47] and the fact that in some countries prostitution is legal, individuals need to move away from the myth and stereotype that individuals who are in prostitution cannot be trafficked. Instead, "the occurrence of trafficking does not depend on the legality of prostitution; it exists whether prostitution is legal, illegal, or decriminalised. It is the obligation of every government, regardless of the legal status of prostitution, to look closely for victims of trafficking and to ensure their protection".[48]

By trying to overcome these myths, misperceptions, and stereotypes, society will be one step closer to combating Human Trafficking.

C. LACK OF A UNIFORM DEFINITION

Another reason why this crime continues to be a threat to our society, has to do with the definition of Human Trafficking.

Despite the efforts of scholars, governments, policymakers, and organizations to define this crime, its complexity does not guarantee an accurate and reflective definition of the problem. Arguably, even the definition of the UN which has been set out above, is not adopted by all

---

[44]. Dennis J (2008), 'Women are Victims, Men Make Choices: The Invisibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade. Gender Issues', 25(1).
[45]. Sara Ann Friedman, 'And boys too', ECPAT USA, discussion paper 2013.
[46]. National Human Trafficking Hotline, 'Myths & Facts', (Myths & Facts | National Human Trafficking Hotline).
[47]. Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), 'What's the cost of a rumour?', 2011.
[48]. U.S. Department of State, 'Misperceptions lead to missed opportunities to identify victims', June 1, 2013, (Misperceptions Lead to Missed Opportunities To Identify Victims (state.gov)).

countries and does not produce a full picture of the problem. This results from the ambiguity of this crime as well as from its hidden nature. For instance, policymakers cannot be certain about the exact forms, signs, and characteristics of Human Trafficking as it is a crime that constantly evolves.

Also, inconsistency occurs from the different definitions which have been adopted by each country. For example, each country has a different view as to what it means to consent, exploitation, and trafficking an individual. Hence, the use of one universal definition is not as easy as it seems.

In addition, it is possible for some definitions to focus more on certain forms of Human Trafficking thus, neglecting some others. Similarly, some definitions will focus on specific victims and traffickers and simultaneously define specific tactics. As a consequence, there is no balance in the definitions nor a full picture of the crime and its elements.

Overall, this crime does not only affect individuals physically but also, emotionally and psychologically as well. Therefore, Human Trafficking could be considered to be a social crime. This means that those who are affected by it will be subject to diverse consequences, as well as different signs.

D. LOW PROSECUTION RATES AND THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Low prosecution rates as well the Covid-19 pandemic have been two of the main reasons why this crime continues to disadvantage our society. It is not a secret that the crime of Human Trafficking is very difficult to prosecute and requires a lot of sensitivity when prosecuting it.

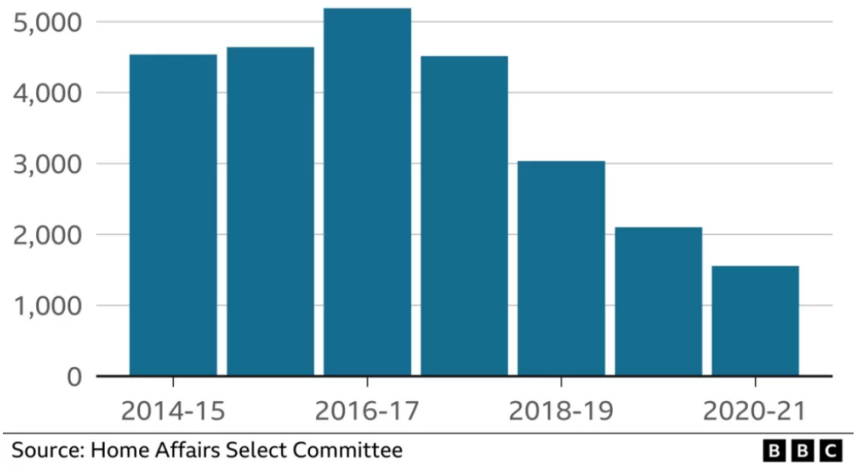
Although the crime of Human Trafficking has always been subject to low prosecution because of barriers such as its hidden nature, the problem of low convictions has been more apparent with the Covid-19 pandemic. Figure 5[49] below illustrates how the pandemic has triggered a significant slowdown in convictions. For instance, "in the year 2020, a 27% reduction in the number of convictions was recorded globally compared to 2019; the number of convictions has been decreasing since 2017".[50]

[49]. UNODC, 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons', 2022.
[50]. ibid 50.

Fig. 5

Additionally, the number of rape prosecutions that links to Human Trafficking has also been declining considerably for the last few years. This is evidenced by Figure 6 below which illustrates that "in 2020-21 there were just 1,557 prosecutions, compared with 2,102 in the previous 12 months".[51]

Figure 6: Low rape prosecution[52]



[51] . BBC, 'Why do so few rape cases go to curt?', 27 May 2022, (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48095118).
[52]. ibid 52.

Arguably, the Covid-19 pandemic has played a significant role in the decline in numbers of prosecution of both of these connected crimes. This is because "despite reducing opportunities for traffickers to operate, the pandemic may have weakened law enforcement's capacity to detect victims".[53] Therefore, traffickers have used the pandemic as a tool to benefit from and remain uncovered.

Low prosecution rates are also occurring because victims are afraid to come forward and report it. The National Sexual Violence Resource Canter (NSVRC) "says an estimated 63% of sexual assaults go unreported".[54] Some reasons might be that the victims are afraid to come forward because they fear that they will not be believed. Also, some other victims might not know how they can be helped by the system.

However, why do we have low prosecution numbers when tackling this crime is "a priority for those working in many other policy areas such as human rights, health, gender law enforcement, and social services"?[55]

Perhaps, the main barrier to addressing this crime and triggering low prosecutions is the fact that there is limited data collection. Because of the illegality and the concealed nature of this crime, we have to deal with "missing individual-level information about suspects and victims, and failure to update cases as the investigations progressed".[56] Also, limited research and education on Human Trafficking can reasonably lead to the inability to identify and prosecute traffickers effectively.

Another reason why there is a decrease in prosecutions of this crime is because of the lack of evidence. Similar to rape, this crime has the nature of "*it will be your words against mine*" therefore it is very challenging to determine who speaks the truth. The victims are often not believed because of weak testimonies and in cases of rape, because they did not report it soon enough. The case of *Muñoz y Lezcano*[57] "highlights the detrimental impact on victims when they face their traffickers in court. In this case, the court noted that the presence of the

[53]. UN News, 'Causes hindering victim identification: UNODC human trafficking report', 24 January 2023, (Crises hindering victim identification: UNODC human trafficking report | UN News).
[54]. NSVRC, 'False Reporting' (Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf).
[55]. Frank Laczko and Marco A. Gramegna, 'Developing Better Indicators of Human Trafficking', Vol. 10, No. 1 (SUMMER / FALL 2003), pp. 179-194.
[56]. Duren Banks and Tracey Kyckelhan, BJS Statisticians, 'Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010', April 2011.
[57]. Muñoz y Lezcano (Argentina) 15/03/2013, conviction La Pampa (BB), Argentina.

defendants in the room strongly affected the victims' ability to speak the truth". Hence, victims should be believed in the first place and not failed by the system otherwise, this crime will continue to affect our society even more.

E. THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND WARS

So far, the paper has highlighted various reasons why Human Trafficking continues to disadvantage us. Correspondingly, because Human Trafficking is also a social crime, several modern factors can assist in its development and perpetuity.

One factor that supports traffickers in committing their offences in an easier way is through technology and particularly, through social media. For example, "research conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows how victims are being targeted and recruited via social media and online dating platforms where personal information and details of people's locations are readily available".[58] Therefore, traffickers manage to keep pace with technological improvements so as to go after more targets.

Furthermore, technology does not help traffickers in just one form of Human Trafficking but instead, can assist them in all forms of Human Trafficking. Depending on whether traffickers want to commit sexual exploitation or labour exploitation, they are well-equipped on how to proceed. Hence, "the internet helps traffickers to operate in multiple locations simultaneously while physically exploiting the victims in just one location".[59]

Additionally it also aids traffickers in keeping a better grip on their already "recruited" victims by geolocation surveillance and use of cameras, which can easily be accessed remotely. Evidently, technological improvements do not help society to minimise this horrendous crime and unfortunately, enhance its survival. Traffickers "have moved almost completely online, which reduces their risk of detection and offers them greater profitability". [60]

Also, traffickers are present in unfortunate times of war since "war and conflict offer opportunities for traffickers to exploit".[61] Accordingly, it is the perfect recipe for disaster because instability and fear pushes unknowing victims into the hands of the abusers.

---

[58]. UN, 'Good Use and Abuse: The Role of Technology in Human Trafficking', (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/Webstories2021/the-role-of-technology-in-human-trafficking.html).

[59]. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons' 2020.

[60]. European Commission, 'World day against trafficking in persons'. 29 July 2022, (World Day against Trafficking in Persons (europa.eu)).

[61]. ibid 54.

Traffickers do not care about what their targets are going through but instead, feed off the existing misery and exploit in any given scenario.

VI. HOW SHOULD WE PROCEED FROM NOW ON?

When taking into account all the consequences and long-term effects that Human Trafficking can have on society, anyone can argue that this crime is one of the biggest threats to humanity. As explained in Section II, Human Trafficking has always existed and it seems like it will not go away anytime given all the reasons listed above.

Therefore, "appreciating the magnitude of the problem requires first understanding what the issue is and what it is not".[62] Respectively, the first step is for all individuals to genuinely understand the crime of Human Trafficking. Arguably, this does not mean just reading about how Human Trafficking is committed but instead, finding out how traffickers perform their tactics and subsequently, how and which kind of targets are being selected. Hence, forming a more detailed understanding of who can have a role in this crime and how they can make it happen can be key, when identifying and tackling this crime. Perhaps, this can only be achieved through high levels of education, significant levels of research and legislative reforms by all countries.

For example, governments could ensure that people in schools and work environments are provided with educational workshops and materials about who can be a trafficker, a victim, and the vulnerable categories to this crime. In addition, governments should "develop individual action plans for individual border locations and develop a work plan outlining necessary steps to improve local capacity and cross-border cooperation".[63] In doing so, countries should make efforts on addressing all forms of Human Trafficking.

The target is to drastically reduce the numbers of victims of Human Trafficking in all countries and therefore cooperation is crucial in forming a universal definition. "This obligation also implies a duty to identify the manifold features of contemporary human trafficking in order to define and harmonise offences as between national jurisdictions, with a view to enhancing

[62]. Ibid 2.

[63]. UN, 'Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons', 2008.

international cooperation both for preventing and repressing a phenomenon which can only be addressed through the coordinated effort of all States".[64]

Hence, without in depth research, an updated legislation, implementation and correct social practices the crime remains vague and broad. We should all find it easy to recognise signs of Human Trafficking and correspondingly, inform the designated authorities and prevent it from occurring.

It has been highlighted above that the crime of Human Trafficking stigmatises victims that have the courage to open up and talk about their tragedy. Victims might not be heard and others might fear the risk of prosecution for the criminal activities that they have committed while being abused. For this reason "authorities fail to understand that victims need protection wherever they come from".[65] Accordingly, government officials need to question and investigate the victims, often referred to as a standard identification or screening process—thus, officials are empowered to make an informed determination.

Officials should be trained on trafficking indicators, such as:

- Does the person appear to be or report being controlled by someone else?
- Does he or she show signs of abuse?
- Does he or she appear fearful?"[66]

In addition to this, even after the victims come forward about their suffering, PTSD is likely to occur respectively, "health professionals must work as a team to identify victims and assist in their transition to a normal and productive everyday life". [67] By adopting these tactics, victims will not rely on self-rescue since member states could "enhance online confidential reporting mechanisms, allowing anonymous reporting of trafficking in persons cases".[68]

Further to understanding the extent of Human Trafficking, "it is important that governments ensure medical, psychological, and legal assistance is sensitive to the needs of all victims, regardless of gender. Assistance could include shelter, medical assistance, vocational training, repatriation, and other aid".[69] Therefore, aid to recover from this disastrous crime should not

---

[64]. Ernesto U. Savona and Sonia Stefanizzi, 'Measuring Human Trafficking, Complexities and Pitfalls', 2007.

[65]. BBC, 'I was trafficked, raped, and left for my abusers to find', 27 September 2022, ('I was trafficked, raped, and left for my abusers to find' - BBC News).

[66]. U.S. Department of State, 'Non-criminalization of victims from crimes committed in the course of being trafficked', June 1 2013, (Non-Criminalization of Victims for Crimes Committed in the Course of Being Trafficked (state.gov)).

[67]. Tammy J, Toney- Butler, Megal Ladd, Olivia Mittel, 'Human Trafficking', November 6, 2022.

[68]. ibid 50.

[69]. U.S. Department of State, 'MALE Trafficking Victims', June 1, 2013, (Male Trafficking Victims (state.gov)).

only be provided to women and girls. But instead, to anyone who needs it regardless of age, race, gender, and nationality.

Furthermore, when it comes to the myths, misperceptions, and stereotypes of human trafficking, the ideal solution is for individuals to be educated about the characteristics of Human Trafficking. However, the only way that this problem can be tackled effectively is for society to move away from these myths. Thus, this can only occur through the appropriate education of the crime.

Additionally, in terms of technological issues, governments should make sure that technology is exploited by officers for the government's benefit. For instance, officers should be trained on how to track down red flags on the internet and social media. Arguably, in a few years' time and with the appropriate means, we can turn technology against traffickers by various programs and platforms.

One example is Lincoln Laboratory which "has developed algorithms to extract signatures in images, such as specific tattoo designs linked to human trafficking networks".[70] Also, media can also play a significant role on this by ensuring that "there is context, comparison and professionalism in all aspects"[71] of Human Trafficking.

Finally, victims who found themselves trapped in war zones or pandemics should be supported by member states. For example, international organisations can "reduce vulnerability to trafficking within conflict areas by ensuring safe access to essential services and humanitarian support for affected populations". [72]

To sum up, the crime of Human Trafficking will never be tackled to the fullest if we remain ignorant and with our hands tight thus, justice for victims will rarely be provided. Evidently, there is a great need for reform and new legislation in order to reflect and track down its progression.

The paper has tried to set out the seriousness and complexity of this crime by setting out several reasons why it continues to exist as well as its ambiguity when it comes to its nature and role of individuals.

---

[70]. Kylie Foy, 'Turning technology against human trafficking traffickers', May 6, 2021, (https://news.mit.edu/2021/turning-technology-against-human-traffickers-0506).

[71]. International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 'Media and Trafficking in Human Beings Guidelines', 2017.

[72]. ibid 50.

Consequently, the need for a direct change in how society views this crime needs to be addressed. In addition, the paper has emphasised that governments and organizations need to conduct new detailed research in order to have a better picture of the magnitude of this crime.

Nonetheless, these objectives will only be accomplished if individuals within the society work together in a positive manner. Accordingly, they need to try to empathise with the shoes of the victims and move away from the myths and stereotypes that threaten potential victims. Respectively, Human Trafficking can be tackled through universal cooperation and when the society itself is ready to adopt new measures by genuinely believe the victims when they come forward.

List of References

ACLU, 'Human Trafficking: Modern Enslavement of immigrant women in the United States",

(https://www.aclu.org/other/human-trafficking-modern-enslavement-immigrant-women-united-states).

Amanda Walker – Rodriguez and Rodney Hill, "Human Sex Trafficking", March 1, 2011

(Human Sex Trafficking — LEB (fbi.gov)).

'Bangladesh: UNODC launches the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons', 26 January 2023, (https://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/frontpage/2023/January/bangladesh_-unodc-launches-the-global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html).

Becky Giovagnoni and Amber Van Schooneveld, "The History of Human Trafficking",

25 January 2022, (https://theexodusroad.com/history-of-human-trafficking/).

BBC, ‘Sir Mo Farah reveals he was trafficked to the UK as a child’, 16 July 2022, (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-62123886).

BBC, Wiltshire, ‘Swindon couple jailed for trafficking vulnerable women’, 30 September 2021, (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-58739146).

BBC, ‘Shandra Woworuntu: My life as a sex-trafficking victim’, 30 March 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35846207.

BBC, ‘Why do so few rape cases go to curt?’, 27 May 2022, (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48095118).

BBC, ‘I was trafficked, raped, and left for my abusers to find’, 27 September 2022, ('I was trafficked, raped, and left for my abusers to find' - BBC News).

Brielle Francis, ‘The Female Human Trafficker in the Criminal Justice System: A Test of the Chivarly Hypothesis’, 2016, University of Central Florida.

Blue Campaign, ‘Indicators of Human Trafficking’, (Indicators of Human Trafficking | Homeland Security (dhs.gov)).

Caroline Jagoe, Pei Ying Natalie Toh & Gillian Wylie, ‘Disability and the Risk of Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: An analysis of Case Law’, 19 August 2022, (https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2022.2111507).

Cathy Zimmerman, Ligia Kiss ‘Human Trafficking and exploitation: A global health concern’, November 22. 2017, Human trafficking and exploitation: A global health concern | PLOS Medicine.

Clark, M. A. (2008). Vulnerability, prevention and human trafficking: The need for a new paradigm. In United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action, UNOD.

Convention for the suppression of the traffic in persons and of the exploitation of the prostitution of others, adopted 02 December 1949, by General Assembly resolution 317 (IV), (https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-suppression-traffic-persons-and-exploitation).

Criminal Code of Canada.

Dennis J (2008), 'Women are Victims, Men Make Choices: The Invisibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade. Gender Issues', 25(1).

Duren Banks and Tracey Kyckelhan, BJS Statisticians, 'Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010', April 2011.

Ernesto U. Savona and Sonia Stefanizzi, 'Measuring Human Trafficking, Complexities and Pitfalls', 2007.

European Commission, 'World day against trafficking in persons'. 29 July 2022, (World Day against Trafficking in Persons (europa.eu)).

Frank Laczko and Marco A. Gramegna, 'Developing Better Indicators of Human Trafficking', Vol. 10, No. 1 (SUMMER / FALL 2003), pp. 179-194.

Freedom Network USA, 'Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault', April 2015, https://freedomnetworkusa.org/app/uploads/2018/10/FNUSA-Human-Trafficking-and-Sexual-Assault-2015.pdf

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), 'What's the cost of a rumour?', 2011.

Grant Oster, "The History of Human Trafficking", (https://hankeringforhistory.com/the-history-of-human-trafficking/)

Indian Penal Code

International Labour Organization, 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage', Geneva, September 2022.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 'Media and Trafficking in Human Beings Guidelines', 2017.

Kylie Foy, 'Turning technology against human trafficking traffickers', May 6, 2021, (https://news.mit.edu/2021/turning-technology-against-human-traffickers-0506).

Louise Shelley, 'Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective', Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Maggy Lee, 'Human Trafficking', Chapter 1, Willan Publishing, 2007.

Miranda Horvath and Jennifer Brown 'Rape, challenging contemporary thinking', Willian Publishing 2009 Chapter 2 23.

Miriam Wijkman & Edward Kleemans, 'Female offenders of human trafficking and sexual exploitation', 10 May 2019, 53-72.

Muñoz y Lezcano (Argentina) 15/03/2013, conviction La Pampa (BB), Argentina.

National Human Trafficking Hotline, (https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/human-trafficking)

National Human Trafficking Hotline, 'Myths & Facts', (Myths & Facts | National Human Trafficking Hotline).

NSVRC, 'False Reporting' (Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf).

Sara Ann Friedman, 'And boys too', ECPAT USA, discussion paper 2013.

Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 3.

Sokratis Dinos, Nina Burrowes, Karen Hammond, Christina Cunliffe 'A systematic review of juries 'assessment of rape victims: Do rape myths impact in juror decision- making?' 2014 p.38 International Journal of Law Crime and Justice.

Tammy J, Toney- Butler, Megal Ladd, Olivia Mittel, 'Human Trafficking', November 6, 2022.

Toby Fenton, Graham Hesketh, Giuseppe Maio, Julia Muraszkiewicz & Hayley Watson (2020): Toward a Better Understanding of Human Security Risks: Developing a Risk Assessment Methodology for Human Trafficking at the onset, during and after conflict, Journal of Human Trafficking, DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2020.1743072

UNODC Report on human trafficking exposes modern form of slavery, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html).

U.S. Department of Justice, 'Human Trafficking Data Collection Activities', October 2022, NCJ 305205.

United Nations, 'Human Trafficking', (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html).

UN, The Crime, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/crime.html).

UNODC, 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022'.

U.S. Department of Justice, 'What is Human Trafficking?', (Human Trafficking | What is Human Trafficking? (justice.gov)).

Unseen, Modern slavery, fact and Figures, (https://www.unseenuk.org/about-modern- slavery/facts-and-figures/)

Unseen, 'Spot the signs of modern slavery', (https://www.unseenuk.org/about-modern- slavery/spot-the-signs/)

UN Women, 'Trafficked: Three survivors of human trafficking share their stories', 29 July, 2019, original story published on Medium.com/@UN_Women.

U.S. Department of State, 'Misperceptions lead to missed opportunities to identify victims', June 1, 2013, (Misperceptions Lead to Missed Opportunities To Identify Victims (state.gov)).

UN News, ‘Causes hindering victim identification: UNODC human trafficking report’, 24 January 2023, (Crises hindering victim identification: UNODC human trafficking report | UN News).

UN, ‘Good Use and Abuse: The Role of Technology in Human Trafficking’, (https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/Webstories2021/the-role-of-technology-in-human-trafficking.html)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ‘Global Report on Trafficking in Persons’ 2020.

UN, ‘Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons’, 2008.

U.S. Department of State, ‘Non-criminalization of victims from crimes committed in the course of being trafficked’, June 1 2013, (Non-Criminalization of Victims for Crimes Committed in the Course of Being Trafficked (state.gov)).

U.S. Department of State, ‘MALE Trafficking Victims’, June 1, 2013, (Male Trafficking Victims (state.gov)).

Victoria Crimes Act 1958.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act etc.

World Health Organization (WHO), ‘Understanding and addressing violence against women’, 2012.

Youth.gov, ‘Human Trafficking the Problem’, (Human Trafficking: The Problem | Youth.gov).

LLPO

LAW FIRM

The Law Firm **Network**

FAR - REACHING LEGAL SOLUTIONS