



General Assembly Third Committee

Topic B: Preventative Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Introduction

Human trafficking is and continues to be a global problem that the international community combats every year. Forms of trafficking include but are not limited to: forced labor, crime, illegal adoption, sexual abuse, and recruitment into armed groups. The root causes of human trafficking include but are not limited to poverty, displacement (due to climate, conflict, threat of violence, economic hardship, etc.), inequality, and corruption. UN Chief António Guterres called human trafficking “a heinous violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms. The majority of detected victims are women and children, many of whom suffer brutal violence, forced labor, and horrific sexual exploitation and abuse”.¹ The number of victims of Human Trafficking fell by 11% in 2020 per the previous year driven by lower reporting from low-income countries and complications related to the pandemic.² Global cases of sexual trafficking fell in 2020 and 2021 with the closure of public places in most countries and globally the number of convictions lowered by 27% however the war in Ukraine is increasing the number of trafficked cases in the region in the displaced population.³

Global 1 in 3 trafficking cases are children with the majority of the cases being girls. Children are twice as likely to face violence while being subjected to various forms of trafficking, including forced labor, crime, begging, illegal adoption, sexual abuse, and the online dissemination of abusive images, and some are also recruited into armed groups.⁴ To date, the fight against child trafficking has not been effective and requires collaboration at national and international levels. Preventative measures to address poverty and inequality are urgently needed. Every country in the world faces human trafficking challenges that are tracked by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)⁵

Background

Three important background documents were passed in General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/25 in 2000, but they entered into force at different times and can be referred to as independent documents. All of the protocols fall under UNTOC (UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime)⁶ There are many protocols under this convention but a few are of particular note for trafficked individuals.

¹ UN “UN calls for urgent action against human trafficking” 2024.

² UNDOC “UNDOC global report” 2024.

³ UNDOC “UNDOC global report” 2024.

⁴ UN “World Day Against Trafficking in Persons” 2024

⁵ UN “World Day Against Trafficking in Persons” 2024

⁶ UN “Treaty collection” 2000

a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime went into force November 5, 2000.⁷ It is the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition of trafficking in persons defined as Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. The intention behind this agreed-upon definition is to facilitate convergence in national approaches with regard to the establishment of domestic criminal offenses that would support efficient international cooperation in investigating and prosecuting trafficking in person cases. An additional objective of the Protocol is to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons with full respect for their human rights.⁸

The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air entered into force on January 28, 2004, adopted by resolution A/RES/55/25.⁹ It addresses the growing problem of organized criminal groups domestic and abroad who smuggle migrants, often at high risk to the migrants and at great profit for the offenders. A major achievement of the Protocol was that, for the first time in a global international instrument, a definition of smuggling of migrants was developed and agreed upon. The Protocol aims at preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants, as well as promoting cooperation among States parties, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants and preventing the worst forms of their exploitation which often characterize the smuggling process.¹⁰

The UNDOC 2022 global report on trafficking in persons is one of the most up-to-date reports that have been published.¹¹ Resolution A/RES/68/192 was passed on February 14th, 2013 with the intent to improve the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons between member states.¹²

Current Situation

Preventative Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons has many important actors that are working to help prevent trafficking most promptly UNODC organizing the Transnational Organized Crime and all its various Protocols. UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF): Europe and Central Asia. "Preventing and Countering Trafficking in Human Beings." report covers refugees fleeing from Eastern Europe

⁷ UN "Treaty collection: 2000

⁸ UNODC "UN convention" 2024

⁹ UNODC "UN convention" 2024

¹⁰ UNODC "UN convention" 2024

¹¹ UNDOC "Global report" 2022

¹² UN GA "A/RES/68/192" 2013

relating to the Ukrainian war covering children and women in particular who are being targeted for trafficking.¹³ in their “The Practical Guide on Identification of Victims/Persons ‘At-Risk’ of Trafficking in Human Beings”. OHCHR (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) released a 2024 report “OHCHR and Trafficking in persons” focusing primarily on boys, girls, and women as the most vulnerable populations to trafficking focusing on 4 primary points a) the primacy of human rights;(b) preventing trafficking; (c) protection and assistance; (d) criminalization, punishment and redress.¹⁴ ICAT (The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons) is a policy mandate forum meant to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including protection and support for victims of trafficking.

The UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking is an important organization that provides on-the-ground assistance and protection to victims of trafficking while also giving financial assistance to trafficked individuals. The International Organization for Migration signed a joint effort with UNODC¹⁵ the joint partnership aims to facilitate collective efforts and improve the efficiency of programmes in the priority areas of human trafficking, migrant smuggling, border management and border security, and terrorism prevention, as well as the collection, analysis, and use of data to better serve migrants, Member States and other partners.¹⁶ UNDOC and IOM have a defined relationship guided by the Cooperation Agreement signed on 17 April 2012.

Addressing the root causes of Trafficking and assisting Member States in implementing a policy that criminalizes human trafficking and builds protections for victims is of utmost importance to combat Human Trafficking OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)¹⁷ created a comprehensive plan to combat human trafficking’s root causes which a focus primarily on poverty enabling the conditions that allow it to happen. OSCE identified most prevention strategies must fall into one of their defined categories Reducing the vulnerability of potential victims through social and economic development, Discouraging the demand for the services of trafficked persons, Public education, Border control, and preventing the corruption of public officials. The OSCE heavily recommends any entities to review their plan to help combat Trafficking.¹⁸

Future Outlook

UNDOC currently has a “Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, 14th Session” meeting to discuss current efforts to fight trafficking, and updates on the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This is an ongoing working group¹⁹. The United States Department of State posted a 2024

¹³ UNICEF “trafficking in Human Beings” 2022

¹⁴ OHCHR “ OHCGR and Trafficking” 2024

¹⁵ IOM” Signed effort” 2024

¹⁶ IOM” Signed effort” 2024

¹⁷ OSCE “Toolkit” 2024

¹⁸ OSCE “Toolkit” 2024

¹⁹ UNDOC “Working Group 2024”

trafficking report focusing on and expanding the role of digital technologies to combat trafficking.

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