

FINDING HUMANITY

A PODCAST SHARING TRUE STORIES OF COURAGE AND PURPOSE

FINDING HUMANITY PODCAST EDUCATION TOOLKITS Season 2: Seeking Justice on the Frontlines

EPISODE 7

Trafficked: A Woman's Courageous Escape and the Big Business of Modern Slavery | Blessing Okeidon

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Finding Humanity is a production of **Humanity Lab Foundation** and **Hueman Group Media**. This educational toolkit was created to help inspire additional learning and engagement around critical social justice and human rights topics surfaced the Finding Humanity podcast. The goal of the toolkit is to provide insight into the political, social, legal and economic systems that hinder our progress on solving complex social and political problems.

Our goal is to share our insights, research, policy analysis and key findings with hopes to inspire continued engagement and learning around the podcast episodes and the substantial content and topics unearthed in each episode.

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About the Finding Humanity Podcast | Season 2:

For some, fighting for change means risking it all, one's own life. As history has taught us, fighting grave injustice requires courage, perseverance and grit. In season 2 of Finding Humanity Podcast, we unpack the stories of people on the frontlines of change. People who put their bodies on the line to create an equitable and just world. [Learn More](#)

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EPISODE

Main topics in Episode: Human Trafficking, Modern Day Slavery, Sexual Exploitation

Short Description of Episode:

Living in a small village in Nigeria, Blessing Okeidon was promised a job in Europe as a computer engineer— only to fall into the hands of human traffickers in Italy. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an estimated 40.3 million people worldwide were trafficked in 2016. This crime earns profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers as a whole, with \$99 billion coming from commercial sexual exploitation. While the majority of sexual trafficking happens in the Asia Pacific region, cases are present in every region of the world, with females constituting 99% of its victims. In this episode, we follow Blessing's journey — from an aspiring doctor to a woman forced into prostitution currently fighting for other victims and survivors. On the show, we talk about the challenges of combatting modern slavery, the solutions needed to address its root causes, and the support needed to advocate for victims. We unpack how businesses (Airports, travel and service industries) are large players in breaking the cycle of human exploitation.

Glossary

Human smuggling - the "facilitation, transportation, or procurement of the illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border."

Sexual exploitation – the use of another person in non-consensual sex for profit. Children are especially vulnerable – attitudes to privacy can make communities reluctant to intervene in cases of child sex exploitation, and children are targeted particularly by internet pornography and sex tourism.

Slavery - the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.

Abduction - is the act of leading someone away by force or lies.

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Branding - a tactic traffickers sometimes use to show ownership; often a tattoo of the trafficker's name or a gang symbol.

Coercion - a trafficker may coerce another person to act against his or her will through violence or the threat of violence, or through other fears, such as the fear of being returned to a war-torn home, being separated from loved ones, or losing immigration status.

Deception - in the context of human trafficking, the act or practice of intentionally deceiving another person for the purpose of exploitation. For example, a trafficker may tell a young woman that a modelling contract or a singing career await her in another place, when in fact she will be exploited for sex or labour.

Domestic servitude - a form of forced labour, defined as slavery or bondage. A person is subject to a master and has no personal freedom to make life choices.

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

Fraud - is a knowing misrepresentation of the truth that induces another person to act to his or her detriment.

Grooming - occurs when a trafficker or recruiter deliberately develops a relationship of physical and/or emotional dependency with someone in preparation for exploiting them. Grooming tactics can include gift giving, providing drugs, flattery, giving affection and isolating the person from their family and friends.

Harbouring - occurs when a human trafficker hides or houses a trafficked person—and keeps her under his or her control—in order to exploit her.

Debt bondage - forced labour to pay off loans that people have been tricked into taking (to pay for medicine or school fees, for instance). The work usually involves long hours, 7 days a week (in return for just basic food and shelter). Can end up being a permanent state of bondage, with the loan never being "paid off".

Child labour - exploitation of minors in work that may be physically or mentally damaging or prevent the child getting a decent education

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Early and forced marriage – marriage forced on women and girls who then face a life of servitude. Early/forced marriage is often accompanied by physical violence. Victims may be vulnerable to early pregnancies.

Forced labour – work performed under threat of violence or other penalties, for little or no pay and involving restrictions on basic rights such as freedom of movement. Very common fate for victims of people trafficking, e.g. forced labour as domestic servants, farm labourers, etc.

Migration of workers – movement of consenting people to other parts of the same country or other countries in search of work or a livelihood. The need or desire to migrate can encourage people trafficking activities and create a market for people smuggling.

People smuggling – the transportation – for financial or other material benefit – of people to countries for which they lack the necessary visas or entry permits. Normally takes place at the initiative of the smuggled person or with their consent.

Sources/Extracted from:
European Commission, Glossary, [link](#)
BC.ca, Human Trafficking Glossary, [link](#)

Quick Facts & Data

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

- At any given time in 2016, an estimated **40.3 million people are in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labour and 15.4 million in forced marriage.** [1]
- It means there are **5.4 victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 people** in the world. [1]
- **1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children.** [1]
- Out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million persons in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities. [1]
- Human trafficking earns profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers. [2]

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- Human trafficking does not always involve travel to the destination of exploitation: 2.2 million (14%) of victims of forced labor moved either internally or internationally, while 3.5 million (74%) of victims of sexual exploitation were living outside their country of residence. [2]
- Victims spend an average of 20 months in forced labor, although this varied with different forms of forced labor. [2]
- According to the 2017 State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, there were only 14,894 prosecutions and 9,071 convictions for trafficking globally in 2016. [2]

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

- Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors. [1]
- While only 19% of victims are trafficked for sex, sexual exploitation earns 66% of the global profits of human trafficking. The average annual profits generated by each woman in forced sexual servitude (\$100,000) is estimated to be six times more than the average profits generated by each trafficking victim worldwide (\$21,800). [2]
- OSCE studies show that sexual exploitation can yield a return on investment ranging from 100% to 1,000%, while an enslaved laborer can produce more than 50% profit even in less profitable markets (e.g., agricultural labor in India). [2]

Extracted from/Sources:

[1] ILO, Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, [link](#)

[2] Human Rights First, Human Trafficking by the Numbers, [link](#)

[3] ILO, Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children, [link](#)

Topical Background Information & Context

INTERNATIONAL LAW ON TRAFFICKING

Trafficked persons are entitled to the full range of human rights. Even if they are outside their country of residence, international law is clear that trafficked persons cannot be discriminated against simply because they are non-nationals.

MODERN SLAVERY

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This acts as an umbrella term, which covers a number of human rights issues, of which human trafficking is one. It is governed by a number of treaties, conventions and declarations (including Article 4 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights), which says that: “no one should be held in slavery or servitude, slavery and servitude in all of its forms should be eliminated”.

Modern slavery encompasses:

- Human trafficking
- Servitude
- Forced or compulsory labour
- Forced prostitution
- Debt bondage

Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude, and inhumane treatment.

DEFINITION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

International agreement on what constitutes “trafficking in persons” is very recent. In fact, it was not until the late 1990s that States began the task of separating out trafficking from other practices with which it was commonly associated such as facilitated irregular migration. The first-ever agreed definition of trafficking was incorporated into the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking Protocol).

The Trafficking Protocol defines the term “trafficking in persons” as follows:

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring 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; (b) The

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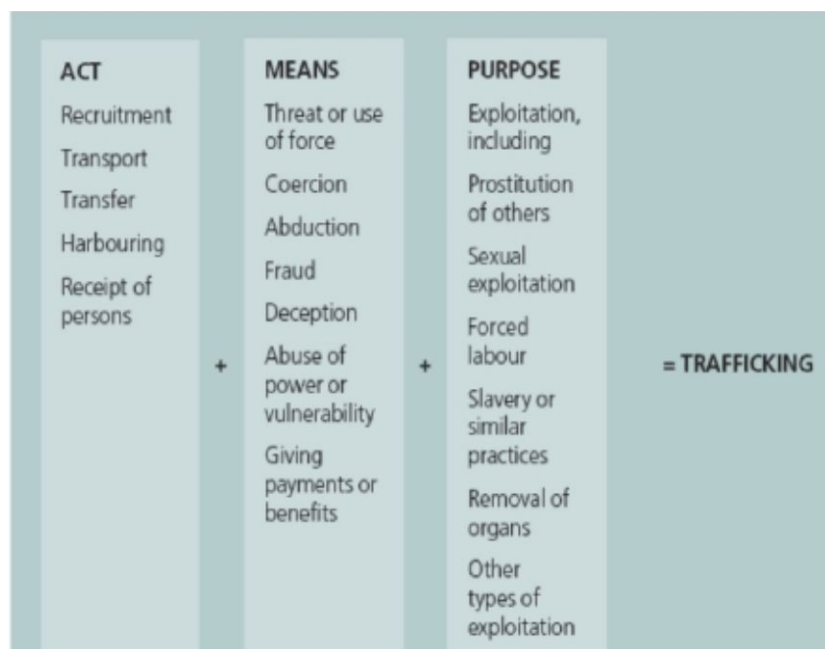
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consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used; ... (art. 3).

2. The three key elements that must be present for a situation of trafficking in persons (adults) to exist are therefore: (i) **action** (recruitment, ...); (ii) **means** (threat, ...); and (iii) **purpose** (exploitation).

International law provides a different definition for trafficking in children (i.e., persons under 18 years of age). **The “means” element is not required in this case.** It is necessary to show only: (i) an “action” such as recruitment, buying and selling; and (ii) that this action was for the specific purpose of exploitation. In other words, trafficking of a child will exist if the child was subjected to some act, such as recruitment or transport, the purpose of which is the exploitation of that child.



FEATURES OF THE DEFINITION

Human trafficking is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.

Trafficking in persons has three constituent elements: **the act, the means and the purpose.**

The following are key features of the new international legal understanding about trafficking:

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Trafficking affects women, men and children, and involves a range of exploitative practices. Trafficking was traditionally associated with the movement of women and girls into sexual exploitation. The international legal definition set out above makes clear that men and women, boys and girls can all be trafficked—and that the range of potentially exploitative practices linked to trafficking is very wide. The list of examples set out in the definition is open-ended and new or additional exploitative purposes may be identified in the future.

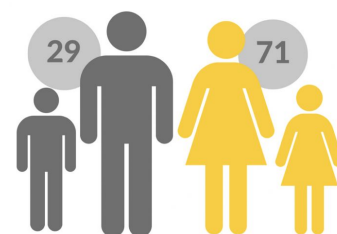
Trafficking does not require the crossing of an international border. The definition covers internal as well as cross-border trafficking. That is, it is legally possible for trafficking to take place within a single country, including the victim's own.

Trafficking is not the same as migrant smuggling. Migrant smuggling involves the illegal, facilitated movement across an international border for profit. While it may involve deception and/or abusive treatment, the purpose of migrant smuggling is to profit from the movement, not the eventual exploitation as in the case of trafficking.

Trafficking does not always require movement. The definition of trafficking identifies movement as just one possible way that the "action" element can be satisfied. Terms such as "receipt" and "harbouring" mean that trafficking does not just refer to the process whereby someone is moved into situations of exploitation; it also extends to the maintenance of that person in a situation of exploitation.

It is not possible to "consent" to trafficking. International human rights law has always recognized that the intrinsic inalienability of personal freedom renders consent irrelevant to a situation in which that personal freedom is taken away. This understanding is reflected in the "means" element of the definition of trafficking. As noted by the drafters of the Trafficking Protocol: "once it is established that deception, coercion, force or other prohibited means were used, consent is irrelevant and cannot be used as a defence

By Gender



71% of trafficking victims around the world are women and girls and 29% are men and boys.

Human trafficking and modern slavery are thought to be amongst the most widespread crimes in the world, affecting millions of men, women and children each

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day. Human trafficking and modern slavery do not discriminate; they affect men and women of all ages.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

The distinctions between smuggling and trafficking are often very subtle and sometimes they overlap. Identifying whether a case is one of human trafficking or migrant smuggling and related crimes can be very difficult for a number of reasons:

Some trafficked persons might start their journey by agreeing to be smuggled into a country illegally, but find themselves deceived, coerced or forced into an exploitative situation later in the process (by e.g. being forced to work for extraordinary low wages to pay for the transportation).

Traffickers may present an 'opportunity' that sounds more like smuggling to potential victims. They could be asked to pay a fee in common with other people who are smuggled. However, the intention of the trafficker from the outset is the exploitation of the victim. The 'fee' was part of the fraud and deception and a way to make a bit more money.

Smuggling may be the planned intention at the outset, but a 'too good to miss' opportunity to traffic people presents itself to the smugglers/traffickers at some point in the process.

Criminals may both smuggle and traffic people, employing the same routes and methods of transporting them. The relationship between these two crimes is often oversimplified and misunderstood; both are allowed to prosper and opportunities to combat both are missed. It is important to understand that the work of migrant smugglers often results in benefit for human traffickers. Smuggled migrants may be victimized by traffickers and have no guarantee that those who smuggle them are not in fact traffickers. In short, smuggled migrants are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked - combating trafficking in persons requires that migrant smuggling be addressed as a priority.

There are four main differences between human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

1. **Consent** - migrant smuggling, while often undertaken in dangerous or degrading conditions, involves consent. Trafficking victims, on the other hand, have either never consented or if they initially consented, that consent has been rendered meaningless by the coercive, deceptive or abusive action of the traffickers.

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2. **Exploitation** - migrant smuggling ends with the migrants' arrival at their destination, whereas trafficking involves the ongoing exploitation of the victim.
3. **Transnationality** - smuggling is always transnational, whereas trafficking may not be. Trafficking can occur regardless of whether victims are taken to another state or moved within a state's borders.
4. **Source of profits** - in smuggling cases profits are derived from the transportation or facilitation of the illegal entry or stay of a person in another country, while in trafficking cases profits are derived from exploitation.

DEFINING THE TYPES OF EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

There are many forms of exploitation into which people can be trafficked and held in slavery. These crimes are happening in every corner of the world and can include any person, regardless of age, socio-economic background or location. As a result, each case can look very different. Below are some of the most commonly reported forms of human trafficking and modern slavery.

❖ SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

This is when someone is deceived, coerced or forced to take part in sexual activity. Places where someone could be sexually exploited:

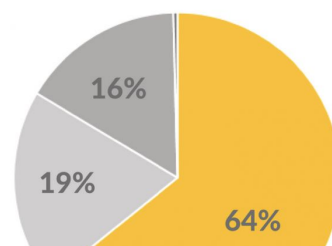
- Prostitution
- Brothels – massage/sauna
- Escort agencies
- Pole/lap dancing
- Forced marriage
- Stripping on a webcam
- Phone sex lines
- Internet chat rooms
- Pornography
- Mail order brides
- Sex tourism

❖ LABOUR EXPLOITATION

By Industry

Forced labour takes place in many different industries.

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This refers to situations where people are coerced to work for little or no remuneration, often under threat of punishment. There are a number of means through which a person can be coerced, including:

- Use of violence or intimidation
- Accumulated debt
- Retention of identity papers
- Threat of exposure to immigration authorities

All types of labour, within every industry, are susceptible to labour exploitation. Some common sectors and industries that are identified as vulnerable include:

- Manufacturing
- Factory work
- Hospitality
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Fishing
- Car washes
- Nail bars

❖ DOMESTIC SERVITUDE

A domestic worker or helper is a person who works within their employer's home, performing a variety of tasks. This arrangement becomes exploitative when there are restrictions on the domestic worker's movement, and they are forced to work long hours for little pay. They may also suffer physical and sexual abuse.

Places where someone can be in domestic servitude:

- In a private home
- In a community such as a commune

❖ FORCED MARRIAGE

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This is when a person is put under pressure to marry someone. They may be threatened with physical or sexual violence or placed under emotional or psychological distress to achieve these aims.

Situations where you may find forced marriage used:

- To gain access into a country
- To gain access to benefits

❖ FORCED CRIMINALITY

This is when somebody is forced to carry out criminal activity through coercion or deception. Forced criminality can take many forms, including:

- Drug trade, e.g. cannabis cultivation, drug distribution
- Begging
- Pick-pocketing
- Bag snatching
- ATM theft
- Selling of counterfeit goods

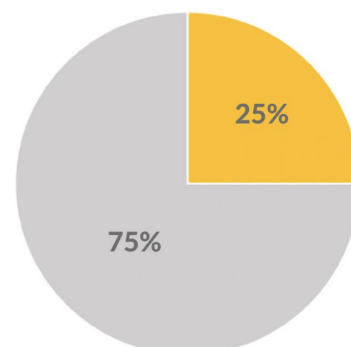
Forced criminality also encompasses social welfare fraud. This takes place when exploiters falsely apply for tax credits and other welfare benefits using the victims' details. It is not only the state that is the victim of social welfare fraud, there is often horrific abuse used against the individual in order to coerce them into falsely applying for benefits.

❖ CHILD SOLDIERS

These are children and young people, ranging from as young as four up to 18, who are used for any military purpose. It affects both males and females.

Children may be used for frontline combat – which means they are made to commit acts of

By Age



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30.2 million victims (75%) are aged 18 or older, with the number of children under the age of 18 estimated at 10.1 million (25%).

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violence – or within auxiliary roles, such as informants or kitchen hands. Often, the children are also sexually abused.

This type of practice is most prevalent in parts of Africa and Asia.

❖ ORGAN HARVESTING

The trafficking in organs involves removing a part of the body, commonly the kidneys and liver, to sell often as an illegal trade. Organs can be taken in a number of ways:

- Trade – a victim formally or informally agrees to sell an organ, but are then cheated because they are not paid for the organ, or are paid less than the promised price
- Ailments – a vulnerable person is treated for an ailment, which may or may not exist, and the organs are removed without the victim’s knowledge
- Extortion – a victim may be kidnapped from their family and organs removed without consent

DEBT BONDAGE

Traffickers often burden victims with excessive “debt” to trap them in bondage and exploit them for sex or labor. In the context of trafficking in women, debt bondage usually occurs when traffickers force women into prostitution to pay off “unlawful ‘debt’ purportedly incurred through [the women’s] transportation, recruitment, or even their crude ‘sale.’

In situations of debt bondage, women are unable to earn back the amount “owed” to the traffickers. If the trafficked women are in a country illegally or do not speak the local language, they have little recourse against their traffickers, who often retain their travel documents and use violence or threats of violence against the victim or her family to further control her. Traffickers may continue to charge costs for other services such as room and board and then fail to apply money earned by the trafficked women to the debt.

Sources/Extracted from:

Stop the Traffik, Types of exploitation, [link](#)

Stop Violence Against Women, [link](#)

OHCHR, Human Rights and Human Trafficking, [link](#)

UN, Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, [link](#)

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UN, Human Trafficking, [link](#)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING GLOBALLY

According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons launched by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) **the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation.** The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, **in 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender of traffickers, women make up the largest proportion of traffickers.** In some parts of the world, women trafficking women is the norm. The second most common form of human trafficking is forced labour (18%), although this may be a misrepresentation because forced labour is less frequently detected and reported than trafficking for sexual exploitation. Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority (up to 100% in parts of West Africa). Although trafficking seems to imply people moving across continents, most exploitation takes place close to home. Data show intra-regional and domestic trafficking are the major forms of trafficking in persons.

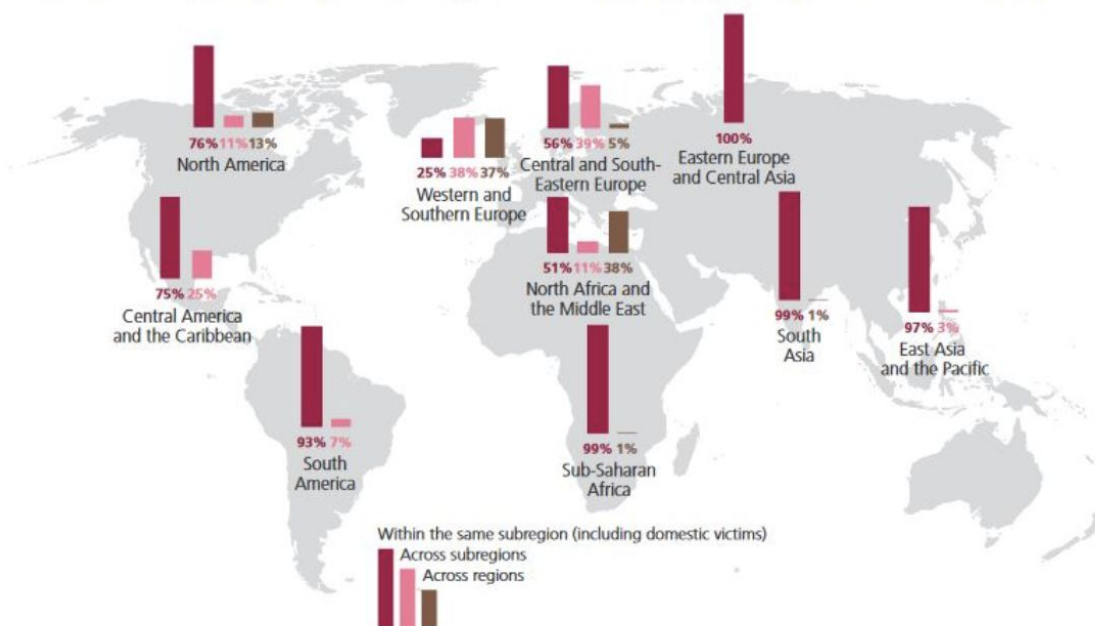
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Shares of detected victims by area of origin and of detection, by subregion, 2016 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

In addition, according to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons:

- There has been an overall increase in the detection of victims of trafficking in persons across the world in recent years
- Most trafficking victims are detected in their countries of citizenship
- Countries in East Asia detect far fewer victims per capita than countries in Europe and the Americas
- Most of the victims detected across the world are females; mainly adult women, but also increasingly girls
- In East Asia and the Pacific, females accounted for about half of all convicted trafficking offenders
- The many available ways of using the internet makes it easier for traffickers
- In the countries of the Mekong area, more child victims, especially girls, were detected
- The trafficking of children – particularly girls – remains a key concern

Read the Report on Trafficking in Persons [here](#).

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING: OTHER CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS BIG BUSINESS

Human trafficking earns profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers, according to the ILO report from 2014. The following is a breakdown of profits, by sector:

- \$99 billion from commercial sexual exploitation
- \$34 billion in construction, manufacturing, mining and utilities
- \$9 billion in agriculture, including forestry and fishing
- \$8 billion dollars is saved annually by private households that employ domestic workers under conditions of forced labor

While only 19% of victims are trafficked for sex, sexual exploitation earns 66% of the global profits of human trafficking. The average annual profits generated by each woman in forced sexual servitude (\$100,000) is estimated to be six times more than the average profits generated by each trafficking victim worldwide (\$21,800), according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

OSCE studies show that sexual exploitation can yield a return on investment ranging from 100% to 1,000%, while an enslaved laborer can produce more than 50% profit even in less profitable markets (e.g., agricultural labor in India).

In the Netherlands, investigators were able to calculate the profit generated by two sex traffickers from a number of victims. One trafficker earned \$18,148 per month from four victims (for a total of \$127,036) while the second trafficker earned \$295,786 in the 14 months that three women were sexually exploited according to the OSCE.

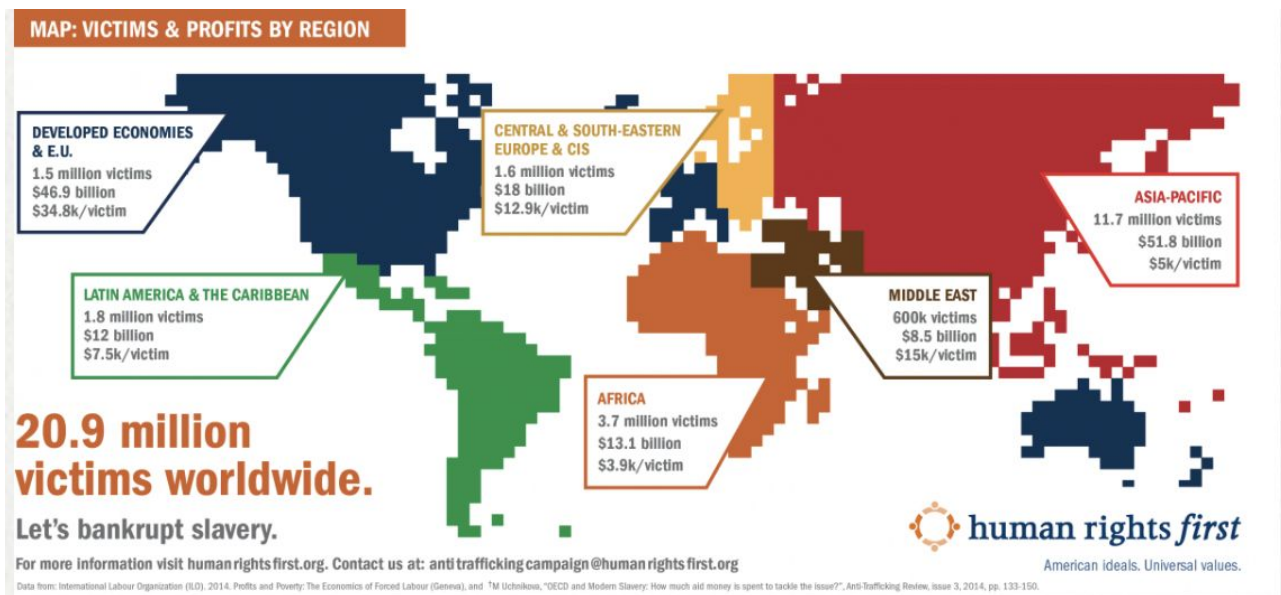
While sexual exploitation generates profits, forced labor saves costs. In one case, Chinese kitchen workers were paid \$808 for a 78-hour work week in Germany. According to German law, a cook was entitled to earn \$2,558 for a 39-hour work week according to the OSCE.

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TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Trafficking is almost always a form of organized crime and should be dealt with using criminal powers to investigate and prosecute offenders for trafficking and any other criminal activities in which they engage. Trafficked persons should also be seen as victims of crime. Support and protection of victims is a humanitarian objective and an important means of ensuring that victims are willing and able to assist in criminal cases.

As with other forms of organized crime, trafficking has globalized. Groups formerly active in specific routes or regions have expanded the geographical scope of their activities to explore new markets. Some have merged or formed cooperative relationships, expanding their geographical reach and range of criminal activities. Trafficking victims have become another commodity in a larger realm of criminal commerce involving other commodities, such as narcotic drugs and firearms or weapons and money laundering, that generate illicit revenues or seek to reduce risks for traffickers.

The relatively low risks of trafficking and substantial potential profits have, in some cases, induced criminals to become involved as an alternative to other, riskier criminal pursuits. With the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially

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Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in November 2000, countries have begun to develop the necessary criminal offences and enforcement powers to investigate, prosecute and punish traffickers and to confiscate their profits, but expertise and resources will be needed to make the new measures fully effective.

Risks are further reduced by the extent to which victims are intimidated by traffickers, both in destination countries, where they fear deportation or prosecution for offences such as prostitution or illegal immigration, and in their countries of origin, where they are often vulnerable to retaliation or re-victimization if they cooperate with criminal justice authorities. The support and protection of victims is a critical element in the fight against trafficking to increase their willingness to cooperate with authorities and as a necessary means of rehabilitation.

In addition, there's a connection between human trafficking and drugs.

- Trafficking of illegal drugs and human trafficking often happen together. Drug traffickers may also be transporting people as another source of money
- Human traffickers may also force their victims to smuggle drugs across borders
- Human traffickers can use drugs as "bait" to recruit people who have a substance use disorder. Or they can use drugs to force a victim to obey their orders, or work harder or for longer hours.

CORRUPTION IN TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Trafficking in persons and corruption are closely linked criminal activities, whose interrelation is frequently referred to in international fora. Yet, the correlation between the two phenomena, and the actual impact of corruption on trafficking in persons, are generally neglected in the development and implementation of anti-human trafficking policies and measures. This lack of attention may substantially undermine initiatives to combat trafficking in persons and prevent the customization of responses as needed. Only after recognizing the existence and the effects of corruption in the context of human trafficking, can the challenges posed by it be met. It is thus important to examine how corruption plays a role in human trafficking and actually contributes to the growth of the phenomenon.

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Examples of trafficking-related corruption and complicity

- Border officials accepting bribes or inducements to permit the passage of persons who may be trafficked;
- Law enforcement officials or international peacekeeping, military or humanitarian personnel accepting favours in exchange for protection from investigation or prosecution;
- Labour inspectorates or health and safety officials accepting bribes to certify dangerous or illegal workplaces;
- Law enforcement or other public officials (including international peacekeeping or international military personnel) maintaining commercial interests in businesses using the services of trafficked persons, such as brothels; and
- Criminal justice officials, including prosecutors and judges, accepting bribes to dispose of trafficking cases in a particular way.

Source: *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking: Commentary.*

Most States do not seem to systematically collect and analyse data on investigations or prosecutions of public officials relating to human trafficking and corruption. Yet, while there is a lack of systematic research and official data on the links between trafficking and corruption, there is a wealth of anecdotal evidence provided by the victims of the crime and by traffickers. **Victims often reveal to service providers instances**

of corrupt officials or former public officials involved in the process of trafficking; a number of post-conviction studies conducted interviewing persons convicted for trafficking-related crimes, who shared information on criminal practices with researchers, also revealed the corrupt involvement of public officials in the trafficking criminal activities.

Victims of trafficking in persons have reported complicity of public officials at all stages of trafficking, indicating that bribery and abuse of power of public officials or influential people are often part of the process.

In the process of transfer, transport and in general in the early stages of the trafficking journey, **bribery and abuse of power are the most common forms of corruption reported**, such as crossing of borders without any checks or with the cooperation of airline staff and visa officials. **Victims often mention to have been able to go through immigration checks where officials appeared to be complicit.**

Some victims have been trafficked using **illegally obtained passports**, which would be either previously issued documents belonging to others (bought, borrowed or stolen) or 'black and

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white' or fake passports. The latter are allegedly often acquired through the involvement of corrupt officials in the issuing country."

Victims have also reported that often traffickers would mention they had to bribe officials to obtain visas and the cost of the bribe had been added to the victims' debt towards the trafficker.

"Closing an eye": Victims trafficked into sexual exploitation have repeatedly reported that police would visit the premises on a regular basis, but would not talk to the women and inspect their situation, but have a coffee with the owner. Similar anecdotal cases were reported across Europe. In a few cases in Central and South-Eastern Europe, victims have identified police officers as their customers.

Some victims reported that also after having escaped/been rescued from a situation of exploitation and having returned home, they were faced with threats from corrupt officials in their countries. In a number of cases, for instance, victims reported being apprehended by officials at the airport and held until they or their families paid a bribe. Sometimes they were threatened that they would be publicly exposed as being prostitutes.

BARRIERS FOR TRAFFICKED PERSONS

A trafficked person may fear the police and other authorities such as border guards for a number of reasons:

- Because they are doing something illegal (such as working in a drug lab, like Maria from Module 1) and believe they will be arrested.
- Because they are from another country where the police are ineffective, corrupt or dangerous.
- Because they are from another country and are afraid of being deported.
- Because their trafficker has threatened them with violence if they talk to the police.

Violence and threats of violence are the primary means used to control trafficked persons, and may be directed at the trafficked person or at their family and friends. A trafficked person may be convinced that if they seek help, the trafficker will carry out the threats they have made to the individual or their loved ones.

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A trafficker may also create a situation where the trafficked person is dependent on the trafficker, despite having been exploited. The trafficked person may then feel that the trafficker is the only person they can count on or trust. They may have a relationship with their trafficker where they see the trafficker as a love interest or provider, and they worry about what will happen if the trafficker is caught.

A person who has been trafficked may fear that, if they tell their story, you will not believe them. They may also think you'll blame them for their situation or say "you got yourself into this."

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to justice means access to a fair, respectful and efficient legal process, either through judicial, administrative or other public processes, resulting in a just and adequate outcome.

The vast majority of trafficking survivors do not enjoy their right to access the justice system. Problems with identification and poor legal knowledge mean that most victims never become aware of their rights. Even if they do, lack of training and resources to police, poor prosecutions, weak legal systems, discrimination and many other factors make bringing trafficking cases a long and arduous road.

Even where a case is successful, it is extremely rare for a victim to receive restitution for the violations suffered. Of the three cases in which survivors presented their stories, none had received any compensation.

Overwhelmingly participants agreed that obtaining justice could be an essential step to claiming back one's life, but that the choice to seek justice should be the victim's alone. Many trafficked persons choose not to press charges and that should be respected.

All countries seeking to tackle trafficking are doing so, at least partly, through their legislative and judicial systems. Further, all advocates have the same general goals for these systems: comprehensive legislation, effective police action, successful prosecutions that do not further victimise the victims of this crime, adequate sentences, and compensation. Different countries are achieving these goals to greater and lesser extents, but clearly lessons can be shared across jurisdictions.

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Anti-trafficking legislation was highly valued by participants from countries that did not have such legislation in place, whereas for participants already working within such a framework, much more emphasis was placed on implementation.

The commitment of the trafficked person and her lawyer was essential to a successful case. In all cases, the survivor's determination, patience and courage to fight for her rights had been crucial to the case being finalised.

Creative solutions – successful cases often relied not only on laws criminalising trafficking but used labour laws, other criminal laws, the media and human rights mechanisms.

Networking between NGOs and law enforcement, and among NGOs, both nationally and internationally, is essential to improving access to justice for victims.

WHY TRAFFICKING IS SO HARD TO BREAK

It seems like there have never been so many ways to stop human trafficking. Awareness of human trafficking is at its all time high. Legislation and protocol against it have also increased. And yet, in the last United Nations report on human trafficking, the number of people being trafficked appears to be going up.

The international scale of human trafficking makes it difficult to even wrap one's mind around. Human trafficking in the U.S. looks different than human trafficking looks in Uganda. Understanding the many nuances of how this crime takes place in different countries is both vital to solving the problem and extremely difficult.

The nature of the crime also depends greatly on what kind of trafficking is taking place. Sex trafficking is different than trafficking humans for labor, and both are different than trafficking for the purpose of harvesting organs. Understanding and dealing with these differences is extremely important.

And, as already mentioned, trafficking is a crime that often takes place across borders. **The international nature of the crime is not only difficult to comprehend, it leads to further complications in prosecuting traffickers.** This is because it usually takes place in more than one country.

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Unfortunately, laws are useless unless enforced. Although the number of laws about human trafficking have gone up worldwide, the number of human traffickers who are prosecuted hasn't. After the passing of so much legislation around human trafficking, one would assume that the number of traffickers convicted would go up. However, in the 2014 UN report, they found that from a global perspective, not much had changed. The report stated that "Globally, the number of convictions per 100,000 population [in 2010-2012] remained basically unchanged in comparison to the 2007-2010 period (0.1 per 100,000 population)" (UN) And, 40% of countries report less than 10 convictions a year (UN). For a crime with as many instances as human trafficking, that's incredibly low. Human trafficking is definitely still happening, so a low number of convictions suggests that these countries aren't doing much to stop trafficking within their borders.

Human trafficking is complex, and a lot of work has been put into trying to stop this horrible crime. But it's clear that the answer to stopping it hasn't been found yet. It does seem that for anything to change, the laws that have been put into place need to be enforced by their respective governments. And in the

Examples of anti-trafficking measures that may adversely affect established rights

- Detention of trafficked persons in immigration or shelter facilities;
- Prosecution of trafficked persons for status-related offences including illegal entry, illegal stay and illegal work;
- Denial of exit or entry visas or permits—whether generally applicable or only in relation to a group of persons identified as being especially vulnerable to trafficking;
- Denial of the right of all persons, including those who have been trafficked, to seek asylum from persecution;
- Denial of basic rights to migrants, including migrant workers and those not lawfully within the territory of the State;
- Raids, rescues and "crackdowns" that do not include full consideration and protection of the rights of the individuals involved;
- Forced repatriation of victims in danger of reprisals or re-trafficking;
- Denial of a right to a remedy;
- Violations of the rights of persons suspected or convicted of involvement in trafficking and related offences, including unfair trials and inappropriate sentencing; and
- Laws or procedures that authorize any of the above.

Risks to human rights that may arise in addressing vulnerability to trafficking

- Failing to distinguish between children who are trafficked into situations of exploitation and children who migrate on their own or are assisted by others to find non-exploitative jobs they want to stay in;
- Failing to distinguish between those who are trafficked and those who migrate for work;
- Preventing or obstructing children, women or members of a particular ethnic or racial group from leaving home or migrating in search of work;
- According insufficient recognition and protection to male victims of trafficking;
- Failing to focus adequate attention on all forms of trafficking.

Source: Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking: Commentary.

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absence of successful legislation on human trafficking, it seems clear that entities outside of governments are necessary to be successful in this battle.

ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE VULNERABILITY TO TRAFFICKING

While our understanding of trafficking is far from complete, it is clear that certain factors can make an individual more vulnerable to trafficking and related exploitation. These factors include poverty and inequality as well as discrimination and gender-based violence. Vulnerabilities to trafficking can be short- or long-term, specific or general, procedural, political, economic or structural. A human rights approach to trafficking recognizes that empowering individuals by guaranteeing their human rights will reduce their susceptibility to being trafficked and exploited.

States have a legal obligation to prevent trafficking and associated human rights violations through addressing vulnerability. In particular, there are specific forms of trafficking-related vulnerability:

- related to poverty and inequality
- related to discrimination and violence against women

In addition, states should recognize vulnerabilities of children, especially unaccompanied and separated children (see above).

Another important link between discrimination and vulnerability to trafficking lies in the fact **that measures taken by states can perpetuate discrimination and even violate the legal prohibition against discrimination.**

BLUE HEART CAMPAIGN

It is a global awareness raising initiative to fight human trafficking and its impact on society. It seeks to encourage involvement from governments, civil society, the corporate sector and individuals alike, to inspire action and help prevent this heinous crime.



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The Blue Heart is increasingly recognized as the international symbol against human trafficking, representing the sadness of those who are trafficked while reminding us of the cold-heartedness of those who buy and sell fellow human beings.

The campaign allows people to show their solidarity with the victims of human trafficking and increasing their visibility by wearing the Blue Heart.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address key problem areas that a combined anti-trafficking in persons and anti-corruption approach would need to address, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in the Issue Paper recommends:

1. **Streamlining approaches** (mainstreaming anti-trafficking measures into anti-corruption measures and vice-versa)
2. **Connecting relevant actors** (jointly address corruption in trafficking in persons to identify possible agencies and actors operating)
3. **Identification of Vulnerable Sectors** (generally includes: Police, customs, border control, immigration, armed forces and private sector, such as travel agencies)
4. **Awareness-Raising and Training of Relevant Public Officials**
5. **Ensuring Transparency of Performance** (safeguards and transparency)
6. **Developing and Implementing Codes of Conduct for Law Enforcement Agencies, Criminal Justice Actors, and International Civil Servants**
8. **Establishment of Control Mechanisms** (special measures may be required in specific areas such as the referral of victims of trafficking)
9. **Disciplinary and Judicial Responses** (supervision, discipline and accountability)

Actions to reduce the vulnerability of children to trafficking

- Ensure that appropriate legal documentation (including for birth, citizenship and marriage) is in place and available;
- Tighten passport and visa regulations in relation to children, particularly unaccompanied minors and minors accompanied but not by an immediate family member;
- Improve children's access to educational opportunities and increase the level of school attendance, in particular by girls;
- Protect children from violence including family and sexual violence;
- Combat discrimination against girls;
- Raise public awareness of the unlawful nature and effects of child trafficking and exploitation.

Source: *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking: Commentary.*

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10. **Personnel Recruitment and Training of Staff** (transparent selection process)
11. **Cooperation between Anti-Trafficking and Anti-Corruption Practitioners**
12. **Improvement of Data Collection** (improved data gathering)
13. **Improvement of Protection of Victims of Trafficking who Report Corruption** (the use of proactive investigative techniques)
14. **Involving Civil Society and the Private Sector** (building civic response and community awareness)
15. **Incentives and Protection Measures** (e.g. incentives for and protection of whistleblowers, ensuring integrity of public officials)
16. **Developing Joint Strategies** (and highlighting corruption in trafficking in person as a grave concern)

Extracted from/Sources:

UN, The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, [link](#)

Center4Girls, Key Findings, [link](#)

UNODC, Issue Paper: the role of corruption, [link](#)

British Columbia, Fear barriers for trafficked persons, [link](#)

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Access to justice, [link](#)

Kinship United, Human trafficking so difficult to stop, [link](#)

UNODC, Human Trafficking FAQ, [link](#)

Proposed Discussion Questions

- Why do you think human trafficking is growing? What factors in our communities/societies enable its growth?
- How might COVID-19 have affected the occurrence of trafficking in persons?
- What are some of the reasons victims may be reluctant to try to escape or report the crime of trafficking?
- What might be some of the challenges that trafficking survivors face?
- What services might a survivor of human trafficking need once they are out of the exploitative situation? What are the specific needs of victims who are minors; male; female; POC; belong to the LGBTQ community; foreigners?
- Why do you think poverty is a leading risk factor for trafficking? Can you think of risk factors that might make someone vulnerable to human trafficking that relate to the particular community that you belong to?
- What can be done to your community to raise awareness on human trafficking?
- How can lobby for better policies to end human trafficking? What would your policy recommendations be?

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Additional Reading & Follow up

Learn more about/from our expert guests:

Blessing Okoedion:

- Profile, TIP Heroes, [link](#)
- Article, NPR, [link](#)
- End slavery.va, [link](#)

Ilias Chatzis:

- UNODC, [link](#)

Katherine Bryant's work:

- Walk Free, Global Slavery Index, [link](#)

Human trafficking:

- Blue Heart Campaign, [link](#)
- Stop the Traffik, [link](#)
- Lastrada International, [link](#)
- Polaris, [link](#)

Episode Speaker Biographies

[Main Story Biography] BLESSING OKOEDION | Cultural Mediator, Casa Ruth

Blessing Okoedion is an inspirational voice in the fight against modern slavery. Through her work as a cultural mediator in combination with her lived experiences, she raises and spreads awareness about human trafficking. Blessing was born in Ibore, Nigeria.

[Expert Biography] ILIAS CHATZIS | Chief, Human Trafficking and Migrant Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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Mr. Ilias Chatzis joined the UN in 2006 working on terrorism prevention and anti-organized crime. Since 2012, he has been leading UNODC's Section against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr Chatzis served as Director of the Secretariat Against Organized Crime of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe located in Bucharest, Romania and as Head of the Department for Rule of Law and Human Rights in the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro. Between 1998 - 2004, Mr Chatzis was head of legal section in the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and senior legal advisor to the International Supervisor of the special administrative District of Brcko. A national of Greece, Mr Chatzis is a qualified lawyer and has practiced criminal law in his country. Mr Chatzis holds a master's degree in War Studies from the University of London and a law degree from the University of Athens, Greece. He is fluent in English and French. [Twitter](#): @ilias_chatzis, @UNODC_HTMSS, @UNODC

[Expert Biography] KATHARINE BRYANT | Lead of European Engagement, Walk Free Foundation

Katharine Bryant is Lead of European Global Slavery Index (GSI). Katharine oversees Walk Free's Engagement at Walk Free and co-author of the Research program focused on, 'what works?' to combat modern slavery, including the government response component of the GSI and the promising practices database. She has worked in counter trafficking and anti-slavery programming and research for the past 10 years. [Twitter](#): @katharinebryant, @WalkFree

[The Elders Special Segment Guest Biography] Graça Machel | Deputy Chair of The Elders, an independent group of global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007, who work together for peace, justice and human rights.

Graça Machel co-founded The Elders with her husband, Nelson Mandela in 2007. She is a renowned international advocate for women's and children's rights. As Education Minister in Mozambique's post-war government, she oversaw an increase in primary school enrolment from 40% of children in 1975 to over 90% of boys and 75% of girls by 1989. In 1994, she was appointed by the UN Secretary-General to assess the impact of armed conflict on children. Her landmark report established a new and innovative agenda for the comprehensive protection of children caught up in war. Graça Machel is Founder and President of the [Foundation for Community Development \(FDC\)](#) and Founder of the [Graça Machel Trust](#).

[Host Biography] HAZAMI BARMADA | Founder & CEO, Humanity Lab Foundation; co-Executive Producer & Host, Finding Humanity Podcast. Hazami is a social entrepreneur, thought leader, and public affairs and social impact expert recognized by Forbes as an "inspirational agent of change." She has consulted for many leading global brands including the United Nations, United Nations Foundation, Aspen Institute, and the Royal Court of the Sultanate of Oman. Among her posts at the United Nations, she served as the Coordinator for the United Nations Secretary General's World

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Humanitarian Summit, an Advisor to the first-ever United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, as a member of the United Nations SDG Strategy Hub for the launch of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Hazami has a Masters from Harvard University where she was an Edward S. Mason Fellow in Public Policy and Management. She studied social and public policy at Georgetown University and has a BA in Anthropology and Sociology. Twitter: @hazamibarmada

PODCAST PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS & TEAM

Humanity Lab Foundation is a disruptive empathy-driven movement at the intersection of public policy and people power. As a collective of enablers, the Humanity Lab facilitates public engagement and social innovation to drive progress on human development and create an equitable and just world. Through a diverse portfolio of programs and initiatives, the Humanity Lab enhances global development systems by convening, connecting and collaborating with everyday people to solve complex challenges and drive social change. The Humanity Lab aims to: unlock human potential, break down barriers, provoke thought-leadership and knowledge sharing, facilitate partnerships, catalyze action, and democratize access to the power that shapes the world. The Humanity Lab has collaborated with a large array of partners including the Office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Office of Partnerships, United Nations, Qualcomm, The Elders, Warner Music, MTV and the Washington Diplomat.

Hueman Group Media ("HGM") is an award-winning podcast company for social change. HGM produces impactful and high-caliber podcasts for leading nonprofit organizations, purpose-driven companies and thought leaders, amplifying conversations around today's most important causes and issues — including gender inequality, climate change, racial injustice, and mental health. HGM podcasts cater to diverse, socially conscious, and deeply curious audiences. With the power of storytelling and expert-driven conversations, HGM activates listeners to take action and make a positive impact in their communities. HGM has worked with notable organizations including UN Women, The Elders, SAP, GoDaddy, CORE Response, and MIT Solve.

Podcast Production Team:

Ayesha Amin, Fact-Checking, Policy, Research
Maverick Aquino, Mixing, Editing, Music
Hazami Barmada, Co-Executive Producer & Host
Diana Galbraith, Assistant Producer & Research

Camille Laurente, Co-Executive Producer
Karolina Mendeka, Fact-Checking, Policy, Research
Fernanda Uriegas, Associate Producer

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