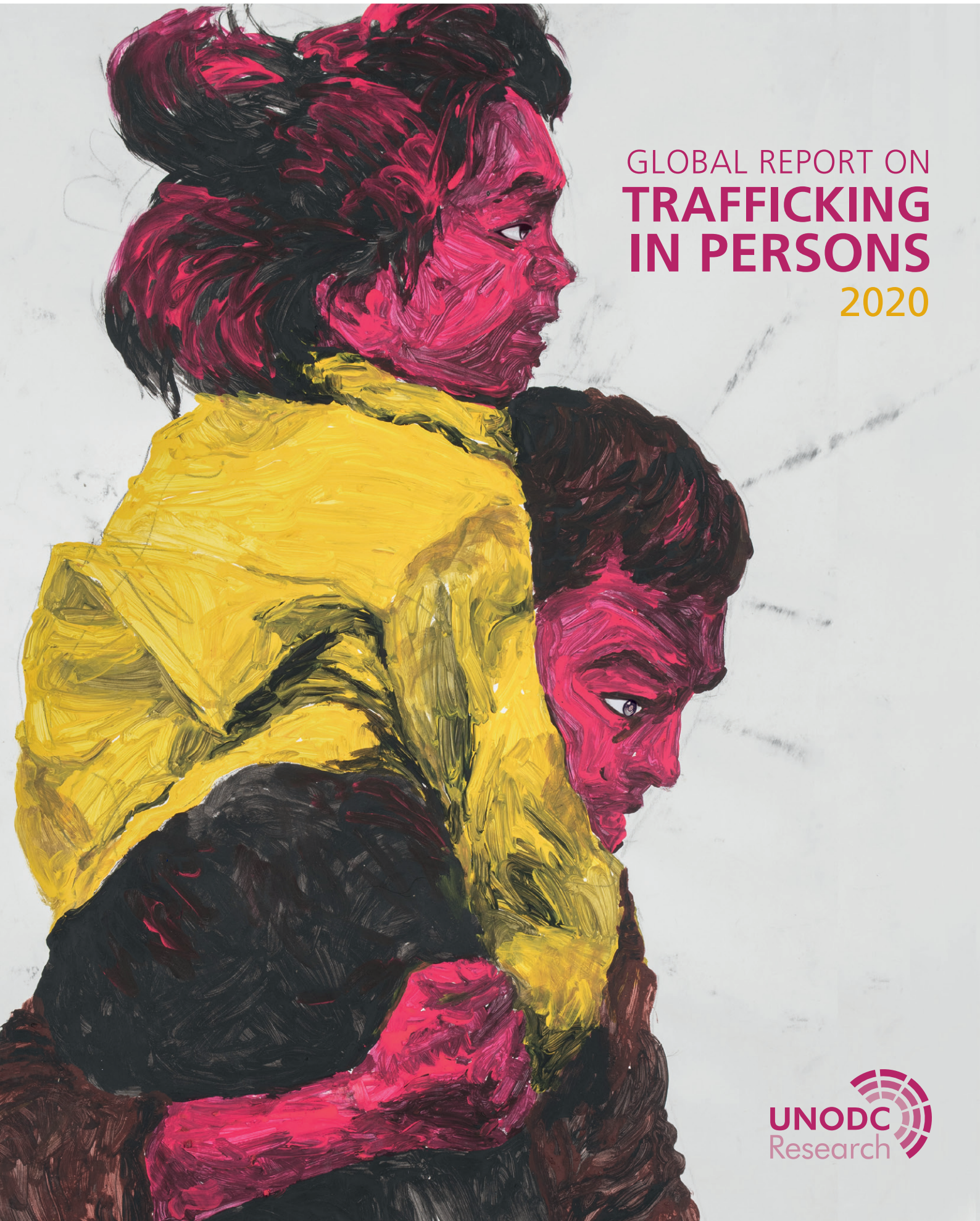




**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

GLOBAL REPORT ON  
**TRAFFICKING  
IN PERSONS**  
2020



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME  
Vienna

# Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020



UNITED NATIONS  
New York, 2020

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## PREFACE

This is the fifth global report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), mandated by the General Assembly through the 2010 Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

The report comes at a time when global suffering has vastly increased vulnerabilities to trafficking. Extreme poverty is expected to rise for the first time in decades, with the continuing COVID-19 crisis casting a long shadow over our societies and economies. With many millions more women, men and children in every part of the world out of school, out of work, without social support and facing diminished prospects, targeted action is urgently needed to stop crimes like trafficking in persons from adding to the pandemic's toll.

In order to act, we need to understand better the factors that facilitate human trafficking. It is in this spirit that I present to you the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020.

The report draws on data from 148 countries and explores issues of particular relevance in the current crisis, including the impact of socio-economic factors, drivers of child trafficking and trafficking for forced labour, and traffickers' use of the internet.

Although found in every country and every region, trafficking in persons remains a hidden crime, with perpetrators operating in the dark corners of the internet and the underbelly of the global economy to entrap victims for sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation.

For every 10 victims detected globally, five are adult women and two are girls. Migrants account for a significant share of the detected victims in most regions. Traffickers prey upon the marginalized and impoverished. Cases examined by UNODC found that at least half involved victims who were targeted because of economic need.

Children living in extremely poor households are especially vulnerable, and countries in West Africa, South Asia and Central America and the Caribbean report

much higher shares of detected child victims. Globally, one in every three victims detected is a child, but in low income countries, children account for half of the victims detected, most of them trafficked for forced labour.

By bringing visibility to this crime, and shedding light on trafficking patterns and flows, this report can assist governments, parliaments and stakeholders in developing solutions capable of addressing root causes and risk factors, prosecuting offenders, protecting the vulnerable and better supporting victims.

UNODC has been systematically collecting and analysing data on trafficking in persons for more than a decade. During this time, an increasing number of countries have criminalized trafficking in line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol under the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

More traffickers are being brought to justice every year - globally, the number of people convicted per 100,000 population has nearly tripled since 2003, when the protocol entered into force. Having anti-trafficking legislation in place and investing in national capacities and international cooperation strengthens responses.

We cannot allow the pandemic recession to reverse this progress or put more women, men and children in danger of being trafficked.

Even as the crisis puts resources under pressure, law enforcement and social protection responses must address trafficking risks. Countering trafficking effectively also requires tackling related forms of transnational organized crime, as well as cybercrime and corruption.

As the Trafficking in Persons Protocol highlights, to prevent trafficking governments need to address poverty, underdevelopment and a lack of equal opportunity, and raise awareness. That means investing in people - in education and jobs, as part of systemic solutions pursued in solidarity, with support to developing countries most of all. An inclusive recovery must create opportunities and give hope to young people and the disadvantaged,

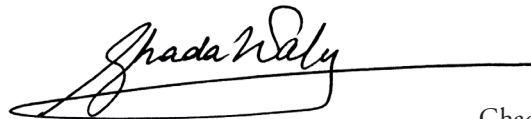
and tackle the structural inequalities that leave women as well as children and marginalized groups vulnerable to human trafficking.

Systemic solutions also rely on broad, cross-border partnerships between governments, with the support of international and regional organizations. Civil society and private sector cooperation are also crucial - businesses and tech companies represent essential partners in addressing supply chain integrity to stop trafficking for forced labour and other forms of exploitation, and in countering recruitment and exploitation via the internet.

We also need more sharing of information and intelligence, and more research. Over the past decade, we have seen the number of child victims go up. Victims trafficked domestically, without crossing international borders, are being increasingly detected. Trafficking patterns and flows change and shift - possibly now more than ever in a world upended by the pandemic. But the picture is also changing because we understand more, and see more. Better training of service providers, police

and healthcare workers leads to greater detection and enhanced support. Educating the public raises awareness and fosters a sense of responsibility - as bystanders, consumers and concerned citizens, we all have a part to play in preventing and countering human trafficking.

With this in mind, I urge governments and all partners to make use of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 - and of the integrated technical assistance UNODC provided to 83 countries last year alone through its programmes and field network - to include protection and trafficking prevention as part of pandemic response and recovery efforts, and leave no one behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ghada Waly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Ghada Waly  
Executive Director  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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*The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020* was prepared by the UNODC Crime Research Section under the supervision of Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Director of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs and Angela Me, Chief of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Victims are targeted when they are vulnerable and the COVID-19 economic recession will result in more people at risk of trafficking

Female victims continue to be particularly affected by trafficking in persons. In 2018, for every 10 victims detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. About one third of the overall detected victims were children, both girls (19 per cent) and boys (15 per cent), while 20 per cent were adult men.

Traffickers target victims who are marginalized or in difficult circumstances. Undocumented migrants and people who are in desperate need of employment are also vulnerable, particularly to trafficking for forced labour.

Criminals trafficking children target victims from extremely poor households, dysfunctional families or those who are abandoned with no parental care. In low-income countries, children make up half of the victims detected and are mainly trafficked for forced labour (46 per cent). In higher income countries, children are trafficked mainly for sexual exploitation, forced criminality or begging.

As with previous economic crises, the sharp increase in unemployment rates brought about by the COVID-19

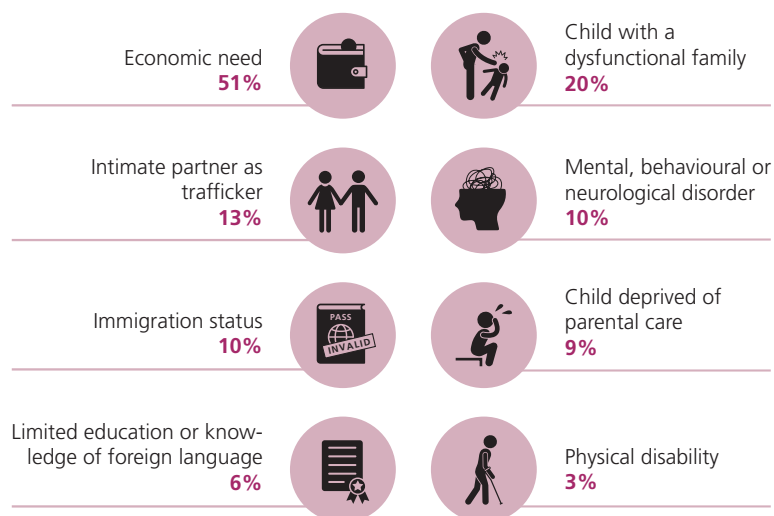
pandemic is likely to increase trafficking in persons, particularly from countries experiencing the fastest and most persistent drops in employment. Job seekers from these countries are likely to be more willing to take high risks in the hope of improving their opportunities.

The most vulnerable groups, even in wealthy nations, are those suffering the most during the Pandemic Recession. Evidence suggests low earners have been hit the hardest by spiking unemployment. As unemployment rates rise, increasing numbers are likely to be trafficked from the poorest communities to those parts of the world recovering faster.

### Child trafficking emerges from communities in extreme poverty

Children account for about one third of the detected victims of trafficking. Trafficking of children, however, disproportionately affects low-income countries, where it is linked to the broader phenomenon of child labour. In Sub-Saharan Africa, children have been trafficked to work on plantations, in mines and quarries, on farms, as vendors in markets and on the streets. In South Asia, children as young as 12 have been trafficked to work in brick kilns, hotels, the garment industry and in agriculture. Child trafficking for forced labour has also been reported on South American plantations.

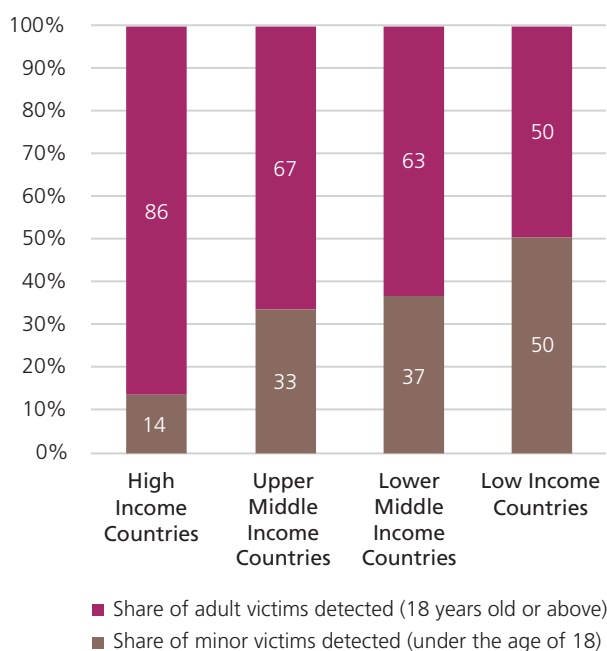
**FIG. 1** Percentage of cases by pre-existing factors that traffickers have taken advantage of



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries, based on 233 court cases out of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

\*Note: The same case may report multiple factors, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100.

**FIG. 2** Shares of detected victims of trafficking, by age group and national income,\* 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration based on national data on detected trafficking in persons and data on national income based on World Bank groupings.

\*The World Bank groups countries according to their economic performance. Economies are divided into four income groupings: low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high. Income is measured using gross national income (GNI) per capita, in U.S. dollars, converted from local currency using the World Bank Atlas method. Estimates of GNI are obtained from economists in World Bank country units; and the size of the population is estimated by World Bank demographers from a variety of sources, including the UN's biennial World Population Prospects. For more on this see *How does the World Bank classify countries?* at the following link: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/378834-how-does-the-world-bank-classify-countries>

Broad cultural acceptance of child labour can serve as a fertile ground for traffickers. It is easier to exploit youngsters when people are accustomed to sending their children to work away from home. In such settings, child trafficking victims may be hidden in plain sight. The detection of child victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation is largely concentrated in Central America and the Caribbean, and East Asia.

In higher income countries, child trafficking is generally less detected and typically takes the characteristics of sexual exploitation. In high-income countries in Europe or North America, children trafficked for forced labour constitutes roughly 1 per cent of total victims detected. Most child victims globally are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

In addition to sexual exploitation (72 per cent of girl victims) and forced labour (66 per cent of boys), children are exploited for begging and forced criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, among other crimes. Traffickers in these cases often leverage difficult family backgrounds, trying to create a sense of belonging for the victim. Case summaries and literature show that parents and siblings may also be directly involved in child trafficking.

**Migration status can be used against victims**

Trafficking victims who do not have permission to work or stay in the country of exploitation face an extra layer of vulnerability. The fear of being exposed as an irregular migrant can be a powerful tool for traffickers, who typically threaten to file reports with the authorities and can more easily keep victims under exploitative conditions.

Migrants make up a significant share of the detected victims in most global regions: 65 per cent in Western and Southern Europe, 60 per cent in the Middle East, 55 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, 50 per cent in Central and South-Eastern Europe, and 25 per cent in North America.

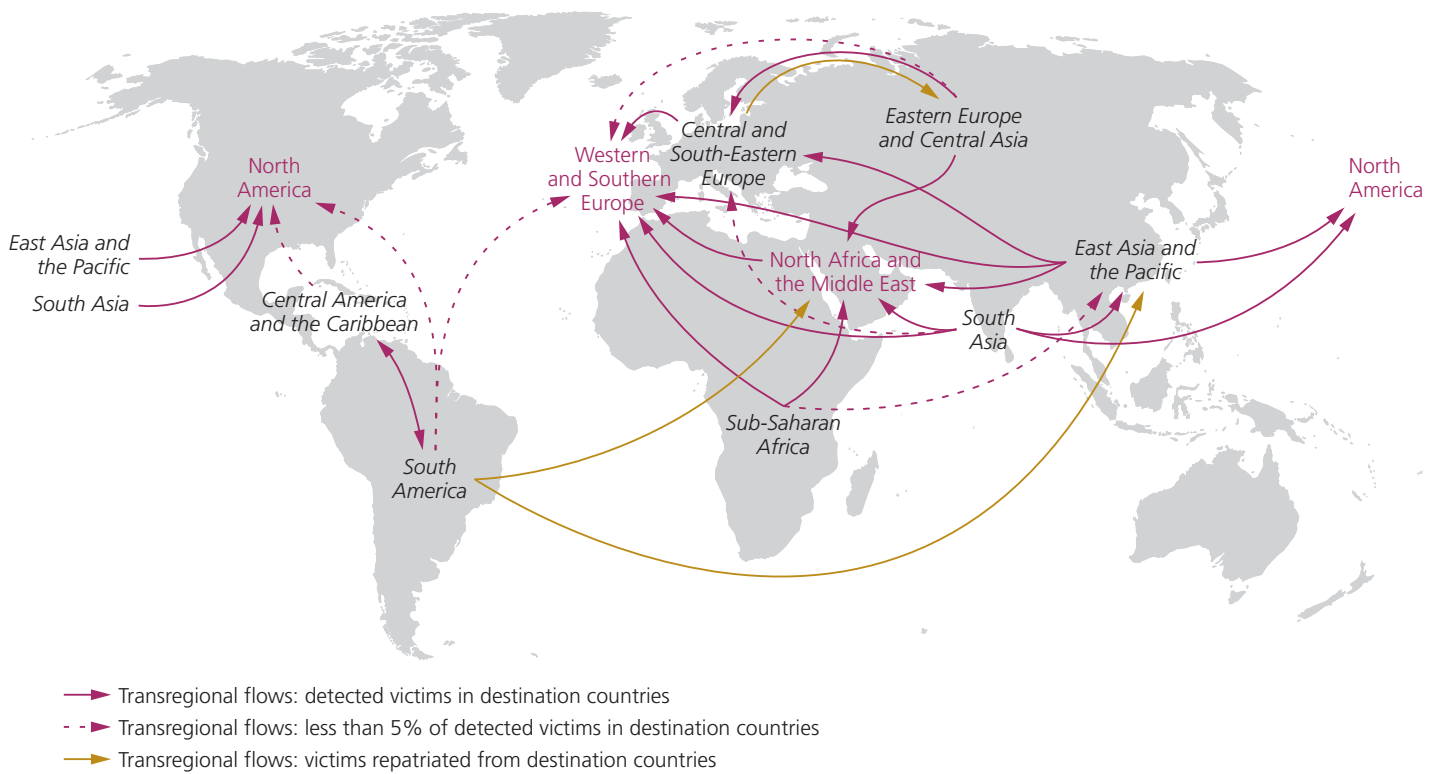
Even labour migrants who have the right to work can be vulnerable to exploitation. For instance, because they are unaware of their labour rights.

**Traffickers exploit victims in a variety of forms and infiltrate the globalized legal economy by exploiting victims in many economic sectors**

Overall, 50 per cent of detected victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation and 38 per cent for forced labour, while 6 per cent were subjected to forced criminal activity and more than one per cent to begging. Smaller numbers were trafficked for forced marriages, organ removals and other purposes. Victims of trafficking for forced labour are exploited across a range of economic sectors, including agriculture, construction, fishing industry, mining, street trading and domestic servitude.

Although patterns of trafficking for forced labour vary across economic sectors, one aspect is true for all sectors: it is generally the result of a deterioration of labour rights, such as lower salaries, longer working hours, reduced protections and informal employment. Also, it is mainly a cross-border phenomenon, especially in high-income countries – dozens of court cases involving hundreds of victims of trafficking for forced labour analysed by UNODC overwhelmingly involved a cross-border element. Victims were taken from their countries in much larger proportion than for any other form of trafficking.

MAP. 1 Main detected transregional flows, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

FIG. 3 Share of detected trafficking victims, by form of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.





**Female victims trafficked for domestic servitude suffer extreme harm. 'Invisibility' of some sectors helps to hide trafficking for forced labour**

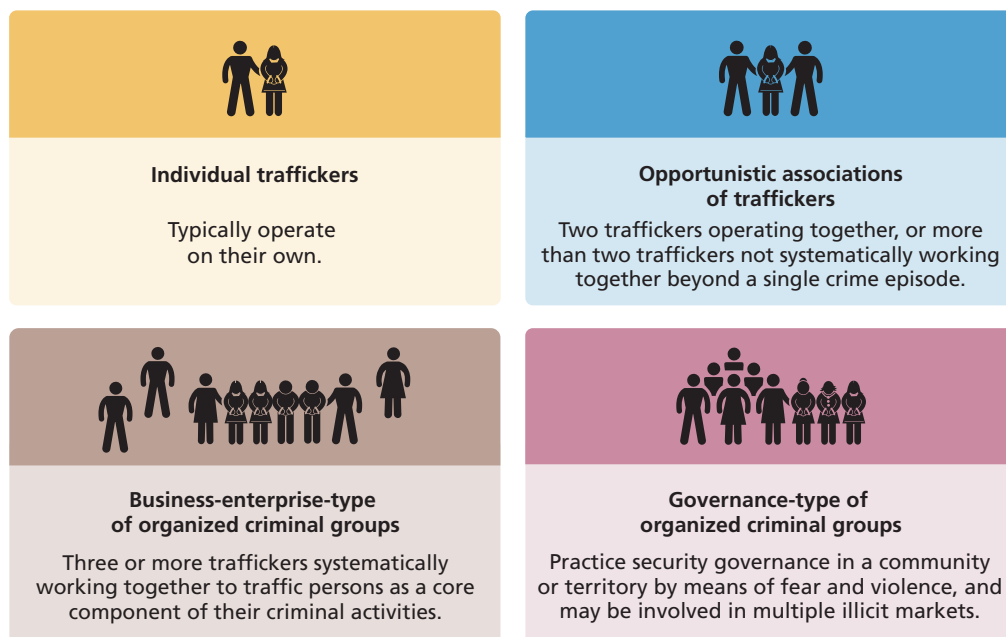
Among the different forms of trafficking for forced labour, trafficking for the purpose of domestic servitude is a global phenomenon as it is detected in all regions of the world. Victims of trafficking for domestic servitude are exposed to multiple forms of exploitation and violence, including sexual, physical, and psychological abuse that is rarely seen in other forms of trafficking, analysis of court case summaries and literature suggests. Victims of this type of trafficking are usually women. The nature of the work often segregates them from wider society and they often work and live with the perpetrators of exploitation, making them particularly vulnerable.

Besides domestic servitude, sea fishing, agriculture and mining are among the sectors of the economy where exploitation and trafficking have been well documented, and they are also occupations where workers can be isolated. Abuses are less easy to detect and punish in situations with no labour inspections or law enforcement control.

For example, workers on fishing boats operating in distant waters are particularly at risk. Fishing vessels can re-

The gender and age of forced labour trafficking victims, along with the geographical distribution, can be explained by the sector involved. More adult men are detected on large construction sites or in the fishing industry. Conversely, where forced labour revolves around domestic servitude, women and girls predominate.

**FIG. 4** Type of criminal actors involved in trafficking in persons



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries, based on 422 court cases out of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

main at sea for long periods, meaning crewmembers can be isolated for years. According to court cases summaries, hundreds of victims can be exploited in a single instance of trafficking in the fishing industry.

### Organized criminal groups traffic more victims and tend to use more violence than small scale traffickers

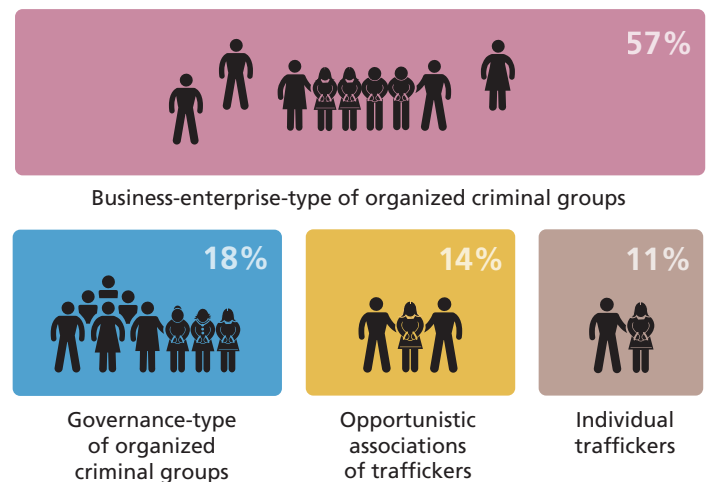
Actors engaged in trafficking range from organized criminal groups – well-structured groups operating as business enterprises, seeking territorial control – to individuals operating on their own or in small groups on an opportunistic basis.

When organized criminal groups are involved, many more victims are trafficked, often for longer periods, across wider distances and with more violence. However, a higher number of court cases analysed by UNODC reported of single traffickers than those involving organized crime groups.

One group specialized in trafficking for sexual exploitation across Central America and North America, for example, operated for more than a decade before being dismantled. These well-organized groups are typically involved in other crimes. West African groups trafficking victims to Europe, for example, systematically engage in drug trafficking, money laundering, financial fraud and other transnational crimes, as reported by national authorities.

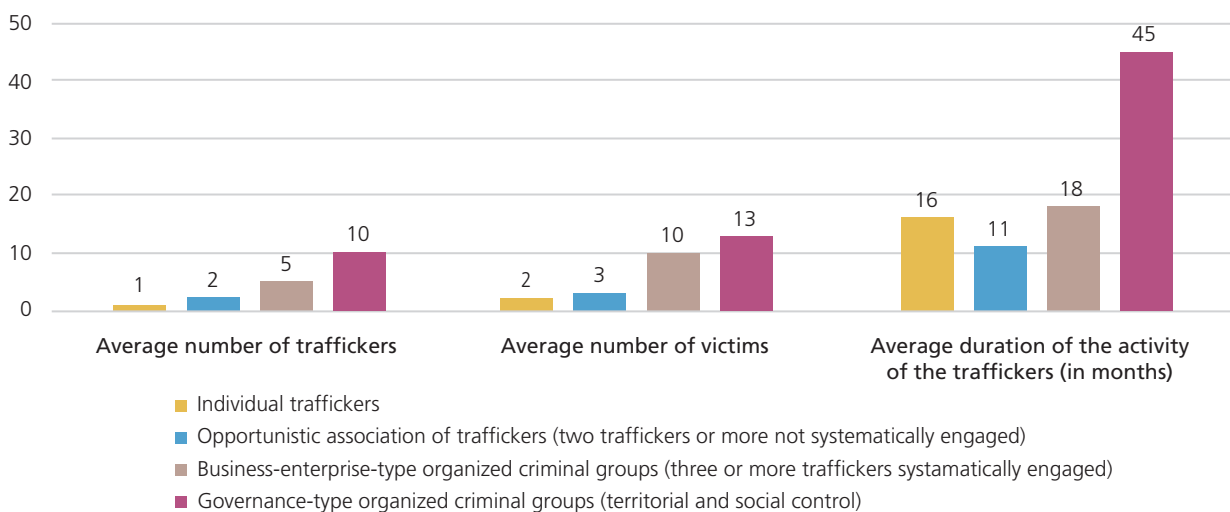
While many traffickers have criminal backgrounds and use trafficking as a direct source of income, there are also business owners, intimate partners and other family members involved in human trafficking. Court cases reveal instances of parents facilitating the sexual exploitation of their children or forcing them into street begging. Other cases involve business owners exploiting victims into forced labour.

FIG. 5 Share of trafficking victims reported in case court summaries, by type of criminal actors involved in trafficking



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries, based on 2,196 victims reported in 364 cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

FIG. 6 Average number of traffickers, average number of victims and average duration of traffickers' activity per single case, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The number of traffickers was reported in 396 case summaries, the number of victims in 364 case summaries and duration in 224 case summaries of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

More broadly, almost two-thirds of people convicted of trafficking in persons offences in 2018 were male, although participation of women is higher compared with other crimes. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, more women than men are convicted for trafficking in persons. Most convicted traffickers were citizens of the country where they were sentenced, while roughly one quarter were foreigners. Countries of origin convict their own citizens (95 per cent), while countries of destination tend to convict more foreigners (52 per cent). These trends were consistent with previous years.

### **Some traffickers use recruitment agencies as a cover**

Court cases and literature suggest that some trafficking operations are organized as recruiting agencies typically used by potential migrants seeking work abroad. In these instances, workers are often deceived over the fees taken from their wages to allegedly cover the job search, official documents, transport, housing, and other services. Some agencies are reported to have charged up to 11 months' salary.

These agencies are found in a range of economic sectors, including construction, fishing, agriculture, manufacturing, or cleaning. In some cases, agencies threaten the workers and they often have the power to intercept salaries paid by the company.

Small scale recruiters apply the same methods in poor rural communities. These traffickers approach families in extreme poverty, convince them to send their children to work, advance funds to buy the tools for labour, and put the families in perpetual debt bondage with their children trapped in exploitation.

Some agencies engaged in the recruitment of domestic workers in Asia for rich households in the Middle East and other parts of the world often charge fees to the employers. The employers often make the workers repay the fees – sometimes by withholding documents and refusing to allow the worker to leave until the fee is paid.

### **Illicit profits from trafficking can vary: large criminal organizations make the highest incomes, while small scale traffickers can earn little more than average wage**

There are cases where the illicit income made by traffickers is substantial. These cases relate to large criminal organizations exploiting dozens of victims over years. In the highest value case analysed by UNODC, a criminal

group trafficked hundreds of women from South-East Asia to North America for sexual exploitation. Investigators estimated that the criminal group made tens of millions of US dollars during five years of activity.

But the size of income from trafficking can vary considerably depending on the typologies and organizational structures of the activity. Dozens of court case summaries analysed by UNODC dealt with relatively low-profit scams, with women and girls sold to their future exploiter for less than 5,000 USD and intermediaries receiving less than 2,000 USD. Victims of trafficking within national borders were sold for as little as 250 USD.

Recruiting victims may be no more profitable than an annual average salary in a legitimate business, according to these figures. The market value attached to victims is higher when it reaches the exploitation phase. There are examples where victims were sold for up to 25,000 USD each in countries where they were going to be exploited. The case summaries are illustrative of the wide range of profits made by traffickers. Estimating the global size of the trafficking in persons market in terms of illegal profits remains challenging, given the lack of a reliable estimate of the number of victims globally.

The analysis shows how little the victims are valued in the illicit market of trafficking. Traffickers trade their victims as commodities. Cases reveal victims are “priced” when bought and sold between traffickers. The monetary value traffickers give to victims may be as little as a couple hundred dollars, equivalent to a few grams of methamphetamine.

### **Traffickers use subtle means to recruit victims and get more violent during exploitation**

Traffickers structured in governance-type organized criminal groups tend to use violence more frequently than individual or opportunistic traffickers. The more common pattern followed by traffickers, however, is to employ deceptive or manipulative means – at least during the recruitment phase.

Only a handful of cases analysed by UNODC featured physical violence as a mean to recruit victims. More often during the recruitment phase, traffickers employ deception through fake job advertisements or direct contact with victims pretending they want friendship. Victims are typically exposed to more coercive and often violent situations as they are exploited.

Most cases of trafficking within high-income countries involve sexual exploitation of girls or young women. To recruit them, traffickers may exploit the victims' vulnerable circumstances, such as socio-economic deprivation, substance abuse or precarious family situations. Traffickers often use manipulative methods such as feigning romantic interest for the victims and may not necessarily resort to violence.

### Traffickers adapt to technology shifts and exploit through the internet to operate in multiple locations at the same time

Traffickers have kept pace with technology, becoming adept at using the internet for their trafficking operations. In the early days of the web, they used stand-alone sites, before exploiting the potential of classified ad sites and then moving into social media. The internet helps traffickers to operate in multiple locations simultaneously while physically exploiting the victims in just one location.

The first case of online trafficking recorded by UNODC took place in the early 2000s, when a free-standing webpage was used to connect buyers with local agents.

Now, internet-based trafficking spans from the basic advertisement of victims online, to advanced combinations of smartphone apps in integrated business models to recruit victims and transfer profits.

Technology is used not only for sexual exploitation but also to coerce victims into crime and forced labour, and to advertise the selling of kidneys harvested from victims they have trafficked.

### CYBER FLOWS

Cyber flows connect perpetrators, victims and consumers at multiple locations



### Hunting and Fishing Strategies



**Hunting strategies**  
Perpetrators actively approach victims in online spaces



**Fishing strategies**  
Perpetrators wait for victims or consumers to respond to ads

Internet tools have been integrated into the business models of traffickers at every stage of the process. In the recruitment phase, two types of strategy can be identified from court case summaries reviewed by UNODC – “hunting” and “fishing”.

Hunting involves a trafficker actively pursuing a victim, typically on social media, initially as a friendly introduction that becomes more aggressive as the relationship develops.

Fishing strategies involve posting an advertisement and waiting for potential victims to respond, often using advertisements for high-paying or prestigious jobs. In one case, roughly 100 women were snared by an ad for modelling jobs overseas. The women were required to submit explicit images, before being told they were being recruited for sexual exploitation and blackmailed with the pictures. Fishing strategies can also be used to lure potential clients through advertisements for exploitative services. One court case showed how a single trafficker managed to connect one victim with more than 100 sex buyers over two months using an online ad.

While high proportions of child-trafficking cases involve platforms with higher levels of anonymity such as social media, cases where the victim is an adult are more likely to involve the use of free-standing webpages and other platforms involving open advertisements.

### Long-term trends

#### Forced labour on the rise, proportion of adult women victims declining

Over the last 15 years, the number of detected victims has increased for both females and males, but the number of detected men, boys, and girls has increased more than women so the profile of the victims detected has changed – the share of adult women falling from more than 70 per cent to less than 50 per cent in 2018. During



the same period, a steady increase in the detection of girl and male victims has been recorded.

Sexual exploitation remains the most common motive for trafficking, but the share of those trafficked for forced labour has grown from 18 per cent to 38 per cent among detected cases. More recently, more victims have been detected for the purpose of forced criminality.

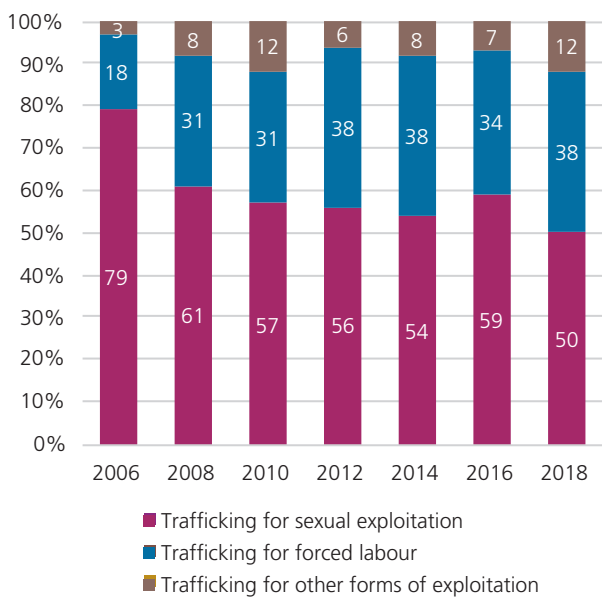
**Towards universal criminalization of trafficking in persons but criminal justice responses still differ**

More traffickers are being convicted every year since 2003 when the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol) entered into force, possibly reflecting a better criminal justice response and/

or an increase of the trafficking scale. Currently, more than 90 per cent of the countries, for which this information is available, criminalize trafficking in line with the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol. Globally, the average conviction rate has nearly tripled since 2003. Countries that introduced anti-trafficking legislation before 2003 still record the highest rates of conviction, but rates are also rising in countries that adopted legal measures later.

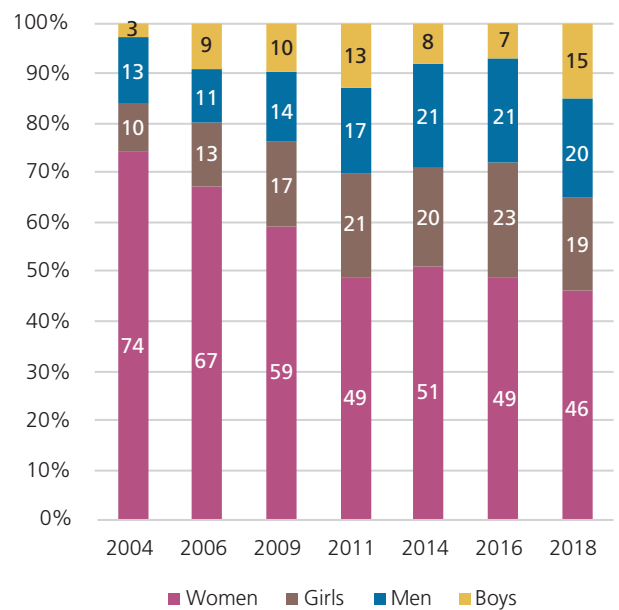
European countries record much higher conviction rates than in other parts of the world. However, this number has been stagnating or decreasing over the last few years. Countries in America, Asia and Middle East have recorded increasing numbers since the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force.

**FIG. 7** Trends in the share of forms of exploitation detected trafficking victims, across selected years



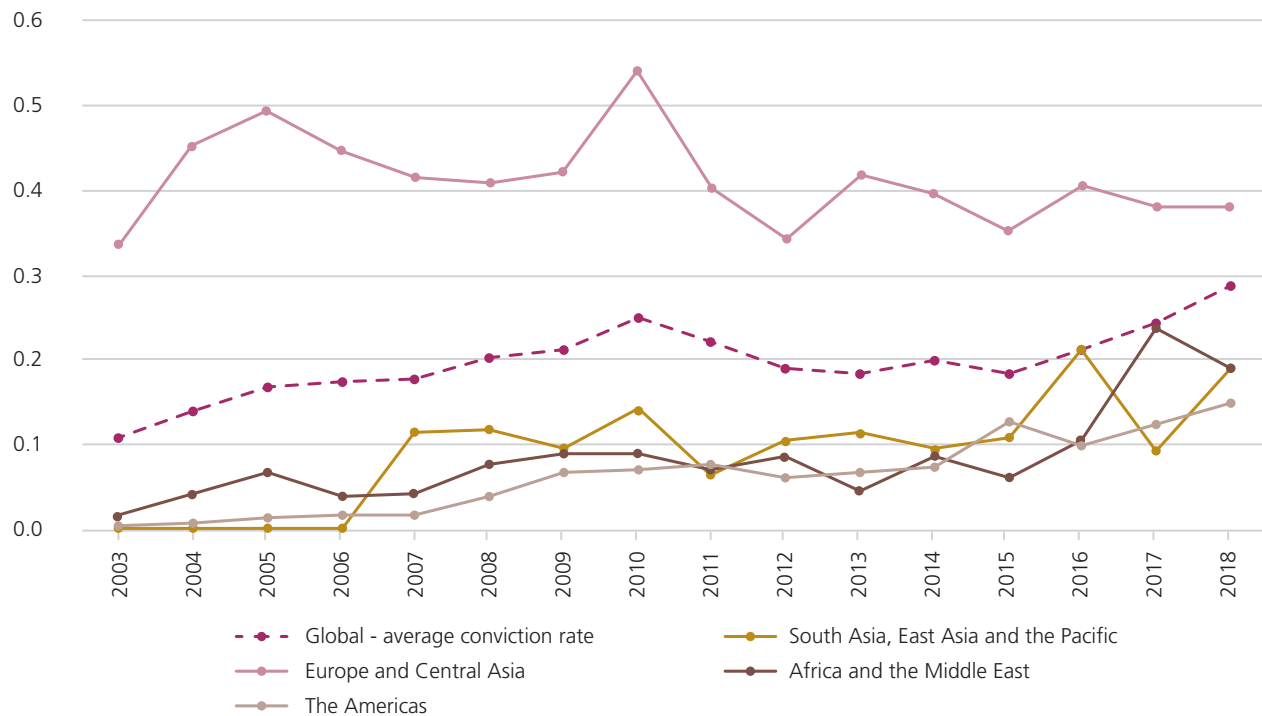
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 8** Trends in the share of age and sex profiles of detected trafficking victims, across selected years



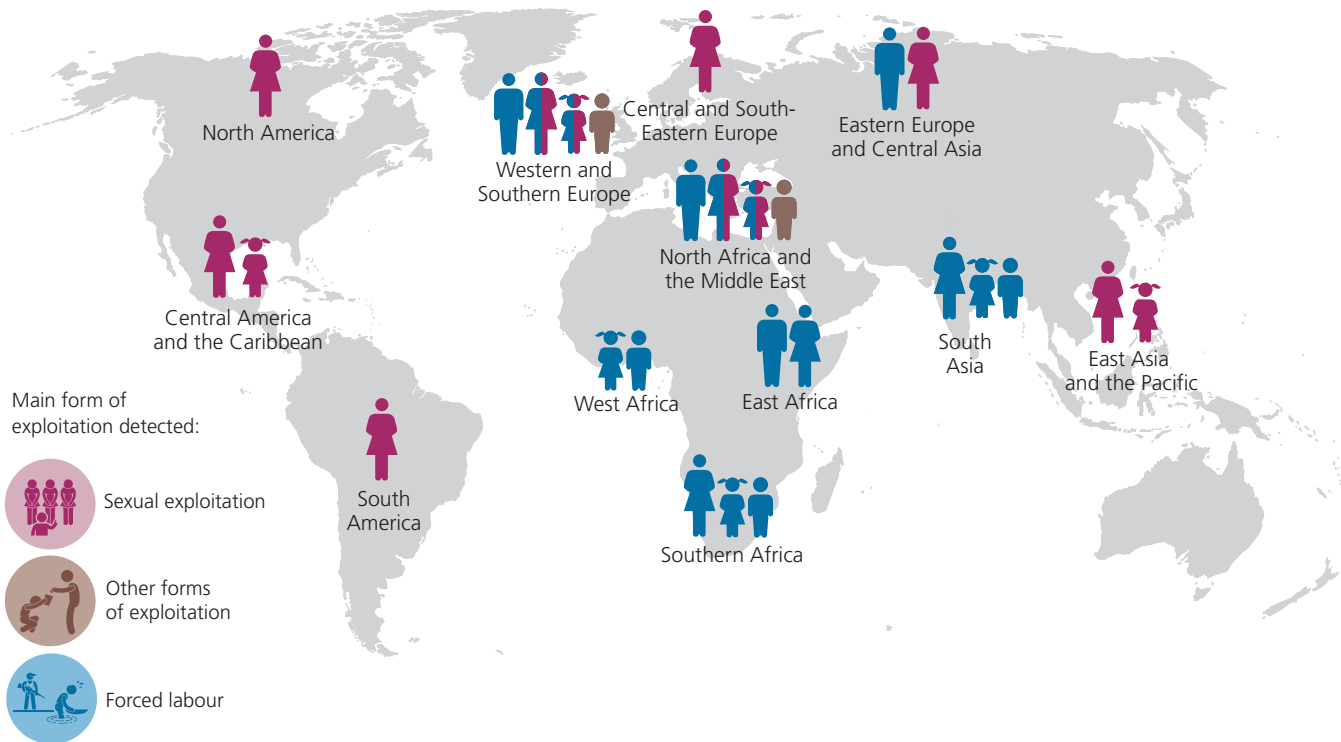
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 9** Average conviction rates (per 100,000 population) globally and by region, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**MAP. 2** Main forms of exploitation and profiles of detected victims, by subregions, 2018 (or mor recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### Establish specialized national anti-trafficking agencies with multidisciplinary expertise

Trafficking in persons is a multifaceted crime that calls for a multi-sectorial response. The analysis presented in this *Report* describes the wide range of criminal environments where trafficking in persons is perpetrated: from large and well-structured organized crime groups to single individuals who may not be characterized as typical criminals such as business owners, intimate partners and family members. These different realities require diversified crime prevention strategies involving different institutions, from law enforcement and anti-organized crime agencies, to labour inspectors, national human rights institutions, child protection services, social and mental health organizations and other services, including civil society organizations. **The establishment of specialized agencies dedicated to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, as well as to assisting victims, can facilitate dialogue between these different areas of expertise and promote coordinated responses. Together with dedicated training of multidisciplinary investigation and prosecution units, this multisectoral approach can promote effective identification, protection and redress of victims, as well as investigative actions targeting the different forms of this crime, based on a victim-centred, child and gender sensitive, and human rights-based approach.**

### Strengthen supply chain integrity

As shown in court cases, certain economic sectors are more vulnerable to trafficking for forced labour than others. Most at risk are sectors where work is undertaken in isolated circumstances such as in the fishery, construction and agriculture sectors and domestic work. Recruitment and exploitation for forced labour are often facilitated by recruiting agencies and labour intermediation and subcontracting at the local or international levels increase the opacity of labour relations and risks of abuse. This opacity facilitates the integration of trafficking victims' exploitation into the supply chain of the legal economy through private sector organizations that may be accomplice or may be unaware of the exploitation. **The private sector therefore plays a pivotal role in the fight against trafficking, by conducting due diligence with respect to their supply chains and promoting regular controls on labour standards. National authorities should incentivize companies to collaborate to prevent trafficking in persons in their supply chains and include them in their integrated efforts such as the develop-**

**ment of national plans of action, along with other relevant stakeholders, including civil society. Economic sanctions, along with criminal charges in the case of evidence of *mens rea*, can be used to target companies and their management making use of exploitative practices associated with trafficking in persons. Regulating government procurement and global supply chains, including prohibiting recipients of government funding from engaging in practices known to facilitate trafficking in persons are additional approaches to consider to prevent trafficking.**

### Address trafficking in persons facilitated by the use of the internet

The use of internet has been integrated into the business model of traffickers and it facilitates the luring of victims into sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminality and other purposes. The internet has helped traffickers to amplify their impact operating online in multiple locations, whilst physically exploiting victims in a single location. While advanced technology may be a resource for law enforcement to improve investigations, multiple online and offline jurisdictions render trafficking increasingly difficult to detect. An effective response requires governments to match the technological advancements of the criminals that they seek to bring to justice in a proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary manner. **Anti-trafficking teams should be able to proactively, with judicial oversight, infiltrate existing online markets and networks, collect human-rights compliant digital forensic evidence, and develop enforcement countermeasures. Partnerships between public and private actors are essential and should be leveraged for better detection of cases whilst proportionately addressing the challenges presented by strong encryption.**

### Address the conditions of vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons

People in economic need, undocumented migrants, children in dysfunctional families, persons who are marginalized and have mental disorders are among those who are particularly vulnerable to traffickers. Their desperation to find or retain employment, their fear of being repatriated or their health circumstances make them more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation. Member States' anti-trafficking actions need to address these socio-economic factors that create an environment conducive to trafficking activities. The COVID-19 pandemic will further amplify socio-economic inequalities, increasing the pool of potential victims. The most vulnerable groups, even in high-income countries, are those suffering the

most in the pandemic recession. So more than ever, **strategies to prevent trafficking in persons need to target marginalized communities and population groups most frequently identified as trafficking victims. Reinforcing social ties and safety nets for households in economic need, addressing economic inequalities resulting from gender discrimination may be the best protection against traffickers' deceptive strategies. International cooperation would need to bring in the necessary resources to address the socio-economic dimension of trafficking in key countries of origin for victims of trans-national trafficking.**

**In this view, engagement with local communities and grassroot organizations represents a building block of effective national anti-trafficking strategies. Community-based interventions aimed at creating new sustainable livelihood opportunities for populations at risk and victims of trafficking, along with increasing awareness of the risks of irregular migration or child labour should be promoted.**

### **Focus on crime prevention as a key pillar of anti-trafficking strategies**

Strategies to prevent trafficking in persons may also include locally based actions aimed at reducing the incentive to engage in illicit conduct. While the knowledge base on traffickers' motivations and decision-making is still in its infancy, common patterns on the modus operandi unveil some key factors characterizing the crime at the global level. Elements such as **gender disparity, discrimination of legal status and ethnic inequalities** are systematically associated with trafficking in persons in all its various forms **and should be increasingly integrated as essential elements of crime prevention strategies.** Alternative livelihood opportunities as well as awareness raising and education campaigns aimed at discouraging sexist cultures, or ensuring access to rights, could promote safer and more equal societies. **Efforts would need to be accompanied by the development and wide dissemination of educational material to reduce the vulnerability of individuals using online platforms. National authorities and private sector should implement measure for a trafficking-free environment on social media.**

### **Ensure that victims are not punished for acts they commit as a result of trafficking**

Victims of trafficking are subjected to various forms of exploitation. Sometimes, as a result of their victimization, they are forced to engage in criminal activities. Vic-

tims should not be prosecuted for these crimes. Punishing victims of trafficking for the crimes they commit as a result of their exploitation undermines their rights and reduces the likelihood that they will report their victimization to the authorities<sup>i</sup> and, as a result, may lead to victims, especially children and young people, entering long-term criminal careers.<sup>ii</sup> It also reduces the opportunities to bring traffickers to justice, as victim cooperation is the main tool used in many countries to prosecute traffickers.<sup>iii</sup> As recently stated by the resolution of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficked persons should not be subject to arrest, charge, detention, prosecution, penalization or other punishment for illegal activities that they have committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked.<sup>iv</sup>

The trafficking of children by terrorist and violent extremist groups is to be considered a serious form of violence against children. The non-punishment principle should apply regardless of the role of the child in the offence, and children must be treated as victims of offenses against international law. **Criminal justice and assistance standards should be put in place to make**

i United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2008) *Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons*, New York, page 254.

ii Piquero, A.R; Farrington, P.D.; Blumstein, A. *The Criminal Career Paradigm*, The University of Chicago, 2003, page 368-396.

iii United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2010) *Need Assessment Toolkit on the Criminal Justice Response to Human Trafficking*, New York, 2010, page 40.

iv CTOC/COP/2020/L.6/Rev.1, para. 13, letter g, states: Consider providing, in accordance with their domestic law, that victims of trafficking in persons are not inappropriately punished or prosecuted for acts they commit as a direct consequence of being trafficked and, where appropriate, provide access to remedies if they are punished or prosecuted for such acts and, accordingly, establish, as appropriate, domestic laws, guidelines or policies that espouse these principles;

See also; The Inter-agency coordination group against Trafficking in Persons *Non-Punishment of Victims of Trafficking* Issue Brief 08/2020, ICAT.

Under the non-punishment principle, legislative mechanisms in international law are:

- Article 26 of the 2005 Council of Europe Trafficking Convention which states that parties shall 'provide for the possibility of not imposing penalties on victims for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they have been compelled to do so'.

- Article 8 of the EU Directive (2011/36) goes further, asserting that: 'Each Party shall take the necessary measures to ensure that competent national authorities are entitled not to prosecute or impose penalties on victims of trafficking in human beings for their involvement in criminal activities'

- Recommended Principle by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, states that trafficked persons shall not be detained, charged or prosecuted for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that such involvement is a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons.

sure victims of trafficking are not inappropriately punished or prosecuted for acts they commit as a direct consequence of being trafficked, in order to avoid further victimization and ensure access to justice. Member States should consider promoting application of the non-punishment principle and establish, as appropriate, domestic laws, guidelines and/or policies that espouse these principles. Raising awareness and providing training for law enforcement officers, the judiciary, as well as for support and protection service providers are crucial to ensure that cases are identified, perpetrators brought to justice and victims are protected.

### Strengthen the implementation of the protection measures included in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol

The UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol urges Member States to consider implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking in persons (Art. 6). These measures include the provision of (1) appropriate housing, counselling and information, as well as (2) medical, psychological and material assistance, and (3) employment, educational and training opportunities to victims of trafficking. As the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to further limit victims' access to basic services, **Member States should adopt measures to ensure protection of victims of trafficking identified within the national territory and abroad. Member States should also consider enhancing their support to service providers including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### Safeguard the access to justice

The Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power<sup>v</sup> states that victims of crime should be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity. They are entitled to access to the mechanisms of justice and to prompt redress, for the harm that they have suffered, as provided for by national legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have a negative impact on the provision of timely and fair legal proceedings, contribute to case backlogs and limit the legal services provided to victims of trafficking. Investigations providing evidence for successful prosecution may be halted delaying the adjudication and possible compensation to

victims. **The principle of protecting and respecting international human rights standards and basic principles of legality must safeguard the rule of law in crisis situations. Policymakers need up-to-date data to understand the problems and bottlenecks in the justice system and recognise which policy options could be used to strengthen access to justice, even during the pandemic. Technology should be utilised to facilitate the criminal justice processes to ensure the access to justice.**

### Promote anti-trafficking policy development based on solid research and data

Data on trafficking in persons, beyond the forms that come to the attention of authorities, is still limited and challenge the effectiveness of anti-trafficking programmes. Since the signature of the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, an increasing number of Member States have developed national data collection systems on trafficking in persons, but efforts are still needed to **improve data granularity and coverage**. Often if data are reported disaggregated by one or few characteristics (for example citizenship, or form of exploitation), while others are not contemplated. **Ensuring that all collected information, regardless of its complexity is disaggregated by sex**, would be the first building block of a gender-sensitive policy response.

Estimating the total number of victims of trafficking, including those detected and non-detected, is key to evaluate the effectiveness of the efforts made in the fight against trafficking. Statistical methods such as the Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) offer a cost-effective approach that can support and measure Member States' commitments to reducing the number of victims of trafficking as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals. Crime research allows countries to tailor investigative actions, policy responses and victim identification efforts to the context-specific forms of trafficking in persons. The regular **production of national reports**, for instance, constitutes one of the central pillars to establish best practices in reporting on the crime. Research on the financial gains related to trafficking activities, as well as on the illicit financial flows deriving from it may also greatly benefit **investigative and prosecution activities**, especially if supported by strengthened international cooperation.

**Internal coordination** between national and regional authorities engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons may also contribute to more effective and evi-

v General Assembly resolution 40/ 34, annex

dence-based policy making. Coordination efforts may result in the development of a central repository of data on victims of trafficking in persons, which consolidates information from all different sources (criminal justice system, service providers, law enforcement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.).





## INTRODUCTION

### 20 years of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol

This edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* is published on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also referred to as the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol or the UN Protocol).<sup>1</sup>

The UN Protocol was opened for signature on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2000 in Palermo, Italy. Since then, the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol has reached almost universal ratification, totalling 178 parties. Its implementation has resulted in an enhanced capacity to detect, prosecute and prevent trafficking in persons across the entire international community.

As documented in this *Report*, before the UN Protocol entered into force, most countries did not have adequate legal frameworks that criminalized trafficking, meaning victims were unidentified, traffickers went unpunished and trafficking in persons occurred with impunity.

Twenty years later, over 90 per cent of the United Nations Member States have established a specific offence for the criminalisation of trafficking, and the definition of trafficking in persons is almost universally based on the UN Protocol. Over the last decade, marked improvements in the legislative framework were recorded particularly in the Americas, Asia and the Middle East (see the section on *institutional responses* on page 51 in this Report).

### Addressing trafficking beyond the criminal justice response

The UN Protocol supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the main international legal instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. The purposes of the UN Protocol transcend the facilitation of efficient international cooperation in investigating and

prosecuting trafficking in persons cases,<sup>2</sup> establishing a specific focus on prevention, paying particular attention to preventing the exploitation of women and children.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, an additional purpose of the UN Protocol is to protect and assist victims of trafficking, with full respect for their human rights.<sup>4</sup>

In this respect, the UN Protocol calls on State Parties to consider implementing measures for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims,<sup>5</sup> through the provision of appropriate housing,<sup>6</sup> counselling and information,<sup>7</sup> medical and material assistance,<sup>8</sup> as well as employment and opportunities for education and training.<sup>9</sup> Equally important, the UN Protocol invites State Parties to consider measures that permit migrant victims of trafficking in persons to remain in the country of detection, either temporarily or permanently.

Moreover, Article 9, paragraph 4 of the UN Protocol calls on State Parties to address the structural factors that increase vulnerabilities to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and a lack of equal opportunity – including economic, gender, sexual orientation and/or ethnic inequalities. This call has become particularly relevant now, as the international community prepares for the imminent global recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* includes an analysis of the conditions that expose individuals to the risk of being trafficked. An in-depth examination of cases shows that traffickers target irregular migrants and teenagers with difficult upbringings, and those in desperate need of employment or children living in extreme poverty are particularly at risk of being trafficked (see *Chapter 2 - The impact of socio-economic factors on the victims' experience and the risks of the COVID-19 Recession* in this Report).

1 The United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation.” For an entire definition, see Article 3(a) of the UN Protocol.

2 Article 2(c) of the UN Protocol, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

3 Ibid. para. 2(a).

4 Ibid. para. 2(b).

5 Article 6, para. 3 of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

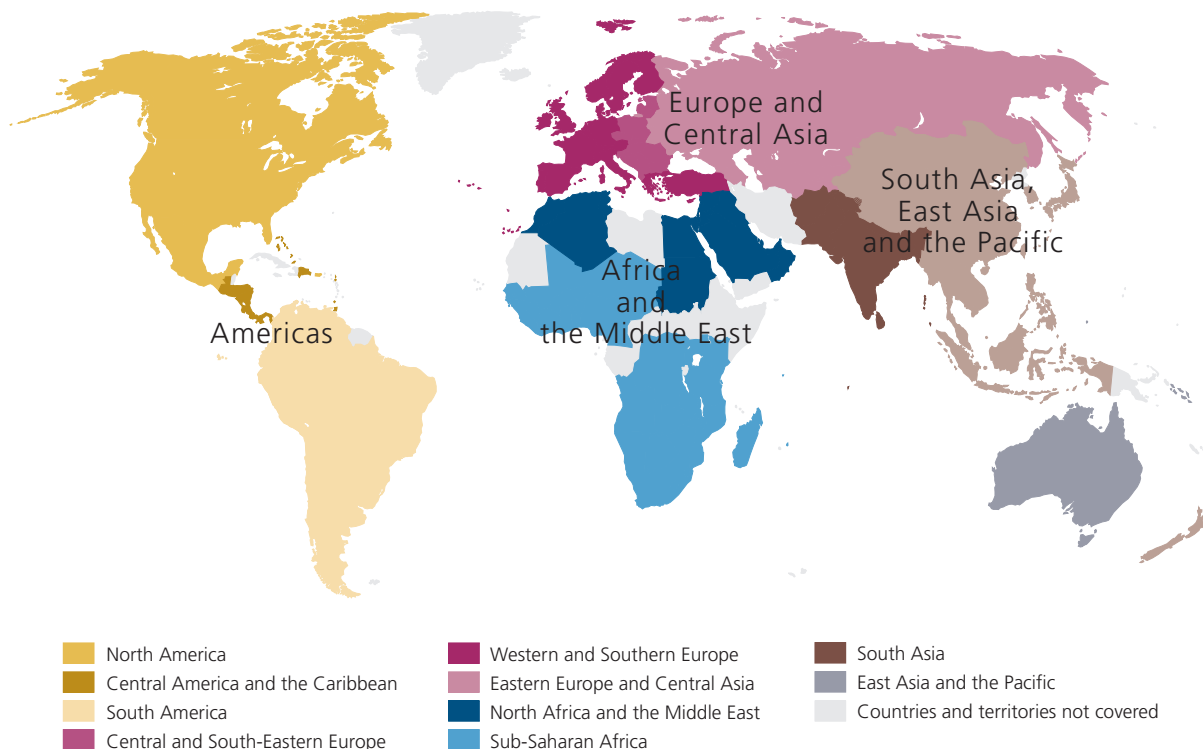
6 Ibid. para. 3(a).

7 Ibid. para. 3(b).

8 Ibid. para. 3(c).

9 Ibid. para. 3(d).

**MAP. 3** Regional and subregional designations used in this report



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Resulting from the COVID-19 health crisis, the world is today facing an impending economic crisis that will increase unemployment globally, widening social and economic inequalities, and thus potentially impacting the landscape of trafficking worldwide.

As the world is facing such global challenge, today more than ever, relying on multilateralism and effective internationally binding legal instruments such as the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol is essential to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

As guardian of the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is entrusted with the collection of data and reporting of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at national, regional and international levels every two years. This mandate, set by the United Nations General Assembly, is fulfilled by the biennial UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which acts as a resource for individuals, organisations and governments in the development of counter-trafficking policies and institutional responses.

The availability of timely and comprehensive data on patterns and flows of trafficking is essential to inform context-specific and evidence-based interventions by national authorities to assist victims and enhance investigative methods to stop criminals.

### Data and information used for the Global Report 2020

As with previous years, this edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* presents a global picture of the patterns and flows of trafficking (Chapter 1), alongside detailed regional analyses (Chapter 6) and country profiles.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, this *Report* provides four thematic chapters. The second chapter, the first thematic chapter, examines how poor socioeconomic conditions are used by traffickers to recruit and exploit victims. The third chapter expands on patterns of child trafficking and the roles that extreme poverty, social norms and familial backgrounds play in this form of trafficking. Then, the fourth chapter focuses on trafficking for forced labour and explores

<sup>10</sup> The country profiles are available on the website <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>

the specific economic sectors that are more vulnerable to trafficking. Finally, the fifth chapter presents emerging patterns on internet technologies that are used by traffickers to facilitate recruitment and exploitation.

The 2020 edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* is based on different types of information, with the main source for the analysis consisting of official statistics on the detected cases of trafficking in persons, collected from 148 countries. The countries covered encompass more than 95 per cent of the world's population. The time period covered by the data collection for this *Global Report* is 2016-2018. A limited number of countries (34) also provided information for the year 2019. The official statistics collected refer to cases of trafficking officially recorded by national authorities reporting on the profiles of victims and offenders, as well as the characteristics of trafficking cases.

Data are also presented for the years before 2016 in order to discern longer-term data trends. Annual patterns and flows at the regional and global levels were derived by using "2018 (or most recent)" as the reference year, meaning that, for the countries where 2018 data were not available, the most recent data from the period covered were used (2019, 2017 or 2016).

Data and analyses presented based on the official statistics reported to UNODC by Member States are sourced as "UNODC elaboration on national data."

Below is a summary of the total number presented for "2018 (or most recent)":<sup>11</sup>

Number of detected victims reported 2018 (or most recent)	49,032
Number of detected victims for which age and sex is reported 2018 (or most recent)	48,478
Number of detected victims for which a form of exploitation is reported 2018 (or most recent)	39,805
Number of detected victims for which citizenship is reported 2018 (or most recent)	27,610
Number of persons investigated/suspected or arrested reported 2018 (or most recent)	9,429
Number of persons prosecuted reported 2018 (or most recent)	7,368
Number of persons convicted reported 2018 (or most recent)	3,553
Number of persons convicted for which citizenship is reported 2018 (or most recent)	3,475

An additional source of information used for this edition of the *Report* is a collection of summaries of national court cases. In the context of the annual data collection for the *Global Report*, UNODC has asked Member States to share a summary of the narrative of court cases where convictions were attained for the crime of trafficking in persons.

Over the course of eight years, UNODC has compiled these cases and the result is a collection of a total of 489 cases from 71 different countries, involving a total of 2,963 victims and 1,576 offenders. The cases were analyzed for the purpose of this report to extrapolate 21 indicators, including the characteristics of criminal networks, trafficking methods, risk factors of victims, monetary transactions among traffickers, business models used by traffickers, among others. Analyses based on this data is referred to as "GLOTIP collection of court case summaries."

It should be noted that these analyses do not constitute a legal assessment of the cases, but rather provide for an overview of the 21 indicators. Some of these cases can be found in more detail in the UNODC Knowledge Portal on Trafficking in Persons<sup>12</sup> and its dedicated case-law database.

Finally, the *Report* makes use of research literature or assessment reports produced by national authorities, international organizations and academia. The literature used is quoted in the text in the form of footnotes as standard practice.

<sup>11</sup> See Annex I on the website for more detailed information on the core data used for this *Report*. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/v3/htmls/index.html>

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA		SOUTH ASIA, EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC		AMERICAS			AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST		
<b>WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE</b>	<b>CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE</b>	<b>EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA</b>	<b>SOUTH ASIA</b>	<b>EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b>	<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	<b>CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>	<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>	<b>SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA</b>	<b>NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST</b>
Andorra	Albania	Armenia	Bangladesh	Australia	Canada	The Bahamas	Argentina	Angola	Algeria
Austria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Azerbaijan	Bhutan	Brunei Darussalam	Mexico	Costa Rica	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Benin	Bahrain
Belgium	Bulgaria	Belarus	India	Cambodia	The United States of America	Dominican Republic	Brazil	Burkina Faso	Egypt
Cyprus	Croatia	Georgia	Maldives	China		El Salvador	Chile	Cabo Verde	Iraq
Denmark	Czechia	Kazakhstan	Nepal	Cook Islands		Honduras	Colombia	Cameroun	Israel
Finland	Estonia	Kyrgyzstan	Pakistan	Indonesia		Guatemala	Ecuador	Chad	Jordan
France	Hungary	The Republic of Moldova	Sri Lanka	Japan		Nicaragua	Paraguay	Cote d'Ivoire	Kuwait
Germany	Latvia	The Russian Federation		Malaysia		Panama	Peru	Democratic Republic of Congo	Lebanon
Greece	Lithuania	Tajikistan		Mongolia		Trinidad and Tobago	Uruguay	The Gambia	Morocco
Ireland	Montenegro	Ukraine		Myanmar		Jamaica	Venezuela	Ghana	Oman
Italy	North Macedonia	Turkmenistan		Nauru		Panama	(Bolivarian Republic of)	Guinea	Qatar
Liechtenstein	Poland	Uzbekistan		New Zealand		Trinidad and Tobago		Guinea-Bissau	Saudi Arabia
Luxembourg	Romania			Palau				Kenya	Sudan
The Netherlands	Serbia			The Philippines				Lesotho	Syrian Arab Republic
Norway	Slovakia			The Republic of Korea				Liberia	Tunisia
Portugal	Slovenia			Singapore				Madagascar	United Arab Emirates
Spain				Solomon Islands				Malawi	
Sweden				Thailand				Mali	
Switzerland				Timor-Leste				Mauritius	
Turkey								Mozambique	
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland								Namibia	
								Niger	
								Nigeria	
								Rwanda	
								Senegal	
								Seychelles	
								Sierra Leone	
								South Africa	
								Togo	
								Uganda	
								United Republic of Tanzania	
								Zambia	
								Zimbabwe	











CHAPTER I  
GLOBAL OVERVIEW





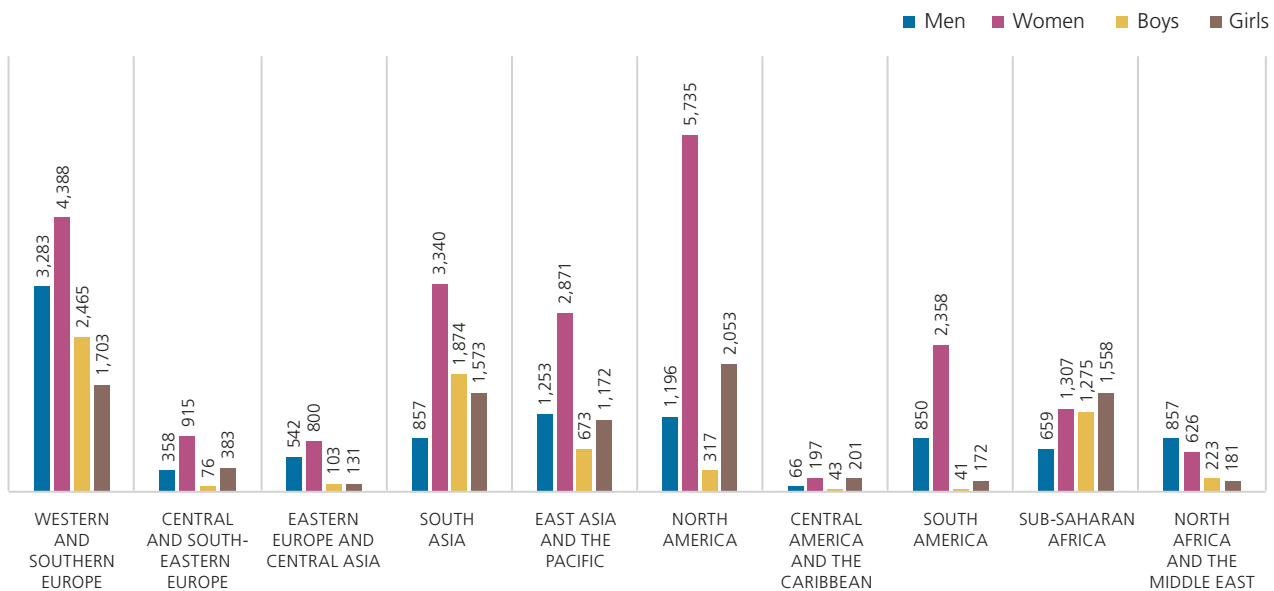
## CHAPTER I GLOBAL OVERVIEW

The following chapter presents the age and sex profile of victims, based on trafficking cases officially reported by national authorities. In addition, it reports on the profile of the traffickers, their organization, business activity and modus operandi. Furthermore, the global overview assesses the principal detected transregional and regional trafficking flows, as well as the main patterns characterizing domestic trafficking.

to other parts of the world. Europe, North America, as well as countries in Asia recorded more adult women among the victims detected. At the same time, countries in North Africa and the Middle East detected more adult men than other victims.

The absolute number of victims detected reflects geographical differences in the capacity to detect, record and report on trafficking in persons.

**FIG. 1** Number of detected victims of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, by region of detection, 2018 (or most recent)



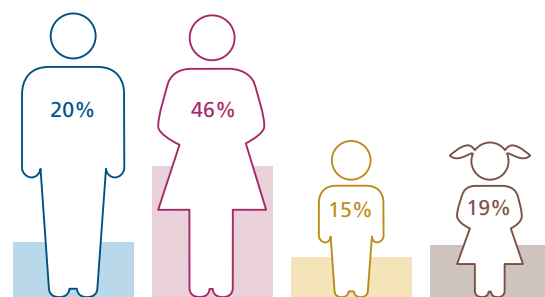
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

### Profile of the victims<sup>13</sup>

Female victims continue to be particularly affected by trafficking in persons. In 2018, for every 10 victims detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. About one third of the overall detected victims were children, both girls and boys, while 20 per cent were adult men.

The profile of the victims, however, changes widely in different parts of the world. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa detected more children than adults. Conversely, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the shares of adults among total victims were much greater in comparison

**FIG. 2** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex,\* 2018 (or most recent)

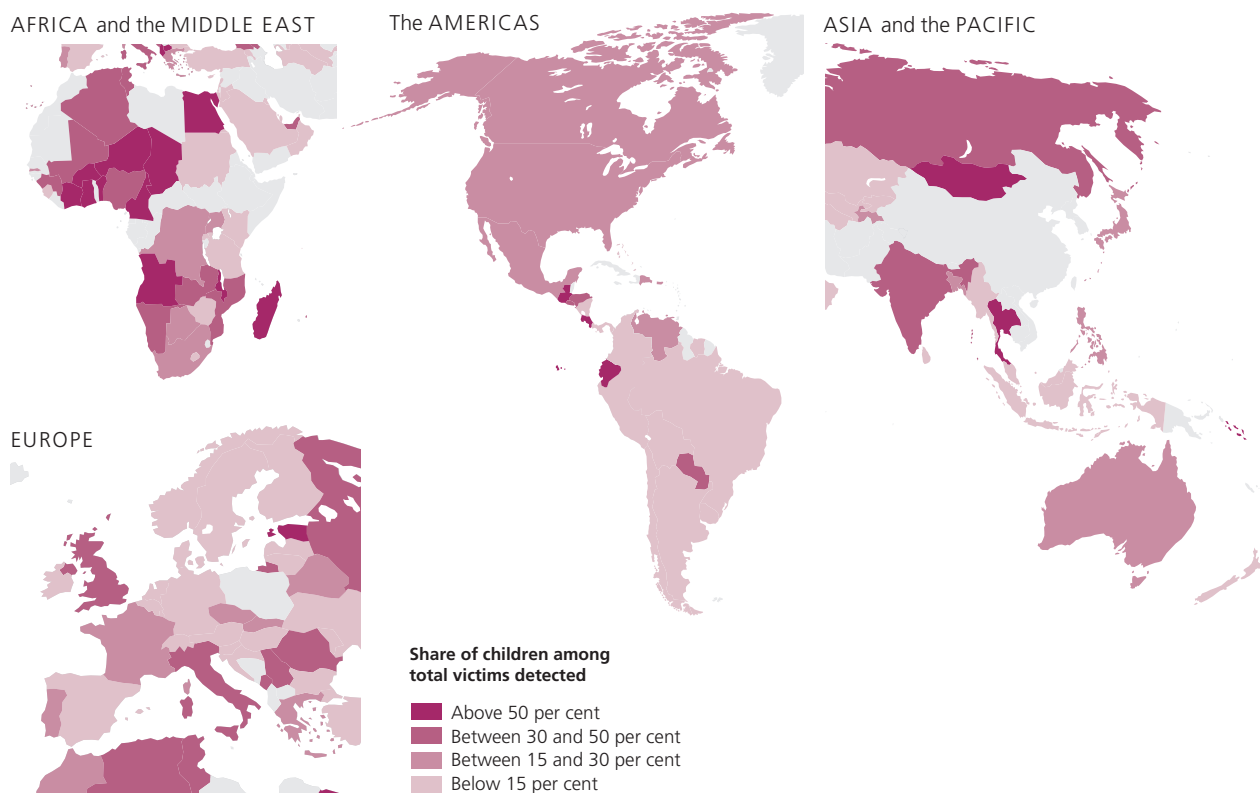


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Estimates are based on information referring to age and sex of 48,478 victims detected in 135 countries in 2018 or, if data not available for that year, in 2019, 2017 and 2016.

<sup>13</sup> According to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2000 UN Trafficking Protocol, a child is any person younger than 18 years of age. In the following text, the terms 'girls' and 'boys' refer to, accordingly, female and male children.

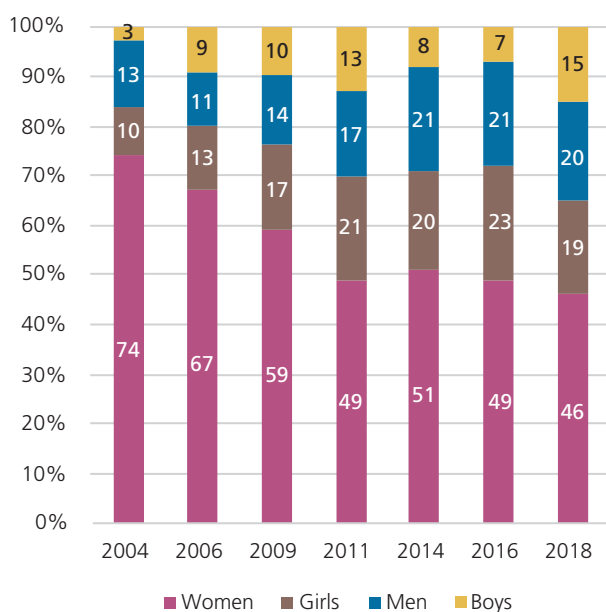
**MAP. 4** Shares of children among the total number of detected victims in the different regions, by country, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**FIG. 3** Trends in age and sex profiles of detected trafficking victims, selected years



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

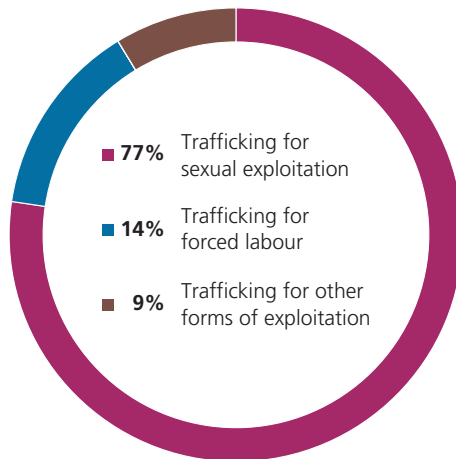
The 2018 findings confirm the 15-year trend of changing age and sex composition of detected victims. Adult women are becoming, in proportion, less commonly detected, and the share of children has increased to over 30 per cent of detected victims. The share of boys detected has risen significantly when compared to girls.

Over the last five years, the share of men among total detected victims remained broadly stable around 20 per cent. However, some regions, including Central and South-Eastern Europe, Central America and the Caribbean and South America, have detected increased shares of this profile compared to 2016.

Different victim profiles are trafficked for different purposes. In 2018, most women detected were trafficked for sexual exploitation, whereas the men detected were mainly trafficked for forced labour. However, a significant share of detected men were trafficked for sexual exploitation or for other forms of exploitation. Similarly, approximately 14 per cent of women were trafficked for forced labour.

**FIG. 4** Shares of forms of exploitation among detected women victims of trafficking in persons, 2018 (or most recent)

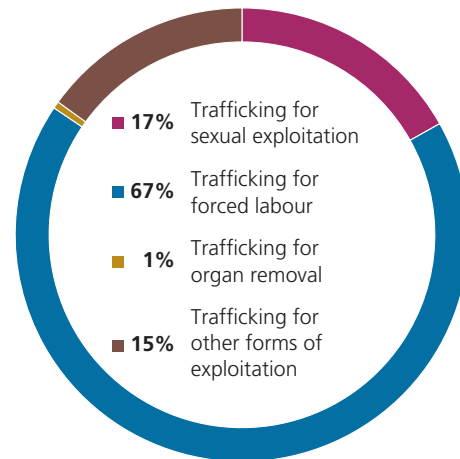
106 countries (n=12,162 victims whose age, sex and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 5** Shares of forms of exploitation among detected men victims of trafficking in persons, 2018 (or most recent)

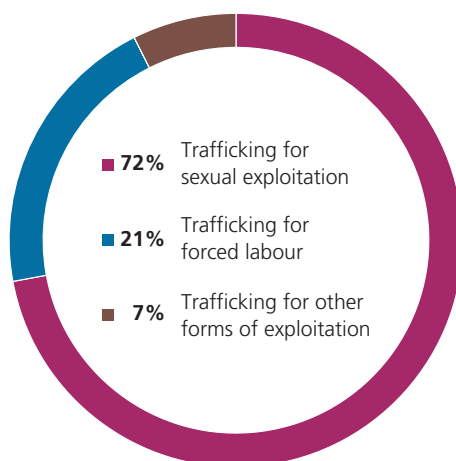
106 countries (n=3,762 victims whose age, sex and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 6** Shares of forms of exploitation among detected girl victims of trafficking in persons, 2018 (or most recent)

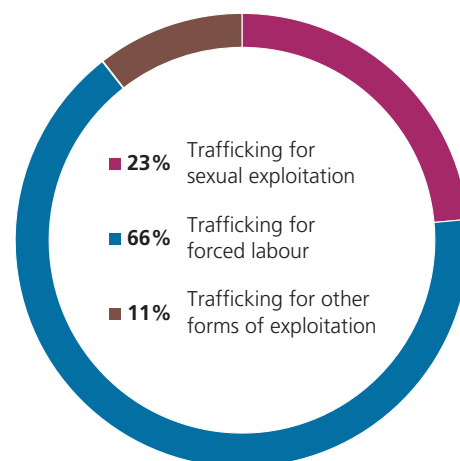
106 countries (n=4,863 victims whose age, sex and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 7** Shares of forms of exploitation among detected boy victims of trafficking in persons, 2018 (or most recent)

106 countries (n=2,065 victims whose age, sex and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

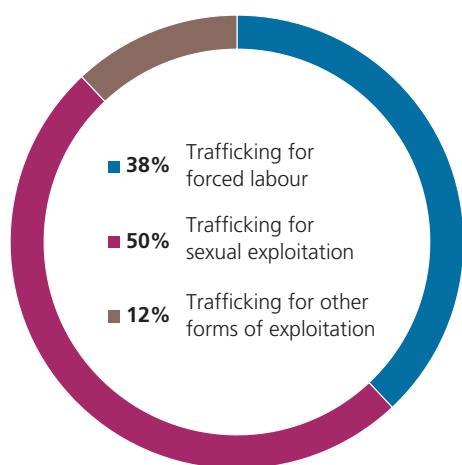
For detected child victims, similar differences exist in terms of exploitation and sex. While boys are detected as mainly being trafficked for forced labour, detected girls are largely trafficked for sexual exploitation (see *Chapter 3 – Children; easy to target*).

### Forms of exploitation

Globally, most victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In 2018, 50 per cent of the victims detected were trafficked for sexual exploitation and 38 per cent were trafficked for forced labour. Detected

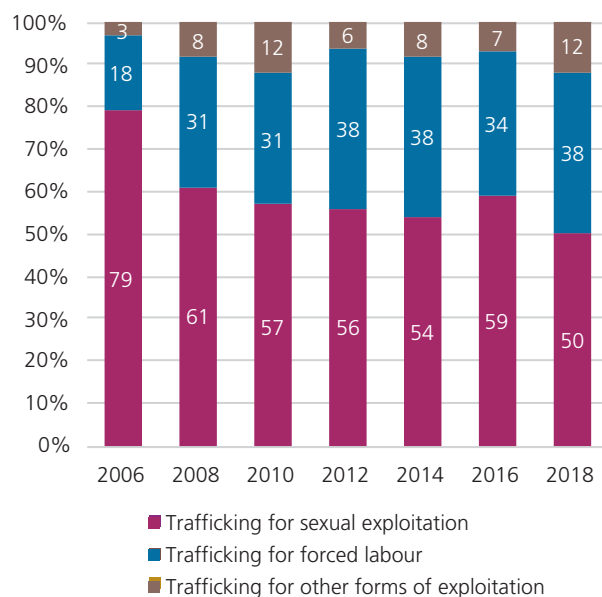


**FIG. 8** Shares of forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims\*, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Estimates are based on data provided by 115 countries reporting 39,213 detected victims.

**FIG. 10** Trends in the shares of forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, 2006–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 9** Detailed forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

victims were also trafficked for other purposes<sup>14</sup>, albeit in smaller numbers.

The increasing share of detected victims trafficked for the purpose of forced labour has been steadily reported for more than a decade. Similarly, trafficking for ‘other’

forms of exploitation has registered a minor, yet consistent, increase over the last ten years.

Outside of trafficking for forced labour or sexual exploitation, trafficking for forced criminal activity is the most detected form of trafficking. About 6 per cent of total victims detected globally are exploited for the commission of crime, ranging from pickpocketing to drug cultivation or drug trafficking. In the year 2018 alone, this form of trafficking was reported by 13 countries in Europe, South Asia, Africa and the Americas (see the box

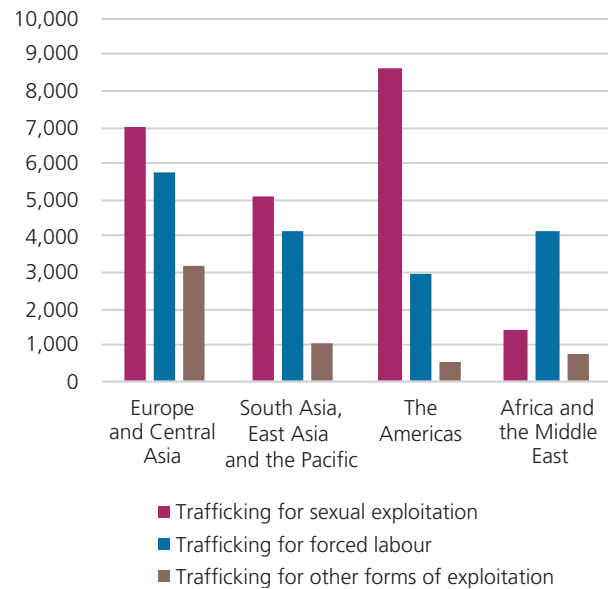
<sup>14</sup> Beyond trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour, detected victims of trafficking in persons were reported to be trafficked for the purposes of criminal activity, exploitative begging, forced marriage, baby selling and illegal adoption, organ removal and for mixed forms of exploitation.

– Trafficking for exploitation in criminal activities – a double victimization).

A less commonly reported form of trafficking is that for the purpose of exploitative begging. Nineteen countries across all regions of the world reported cases of this form of trafficking, accounting for more than one per cent of total detected victims in 2018. Countries in North Africa and the Middle East report the most significant numbers of this form of trafficking, where it accounts for about 30 per cent of victims detected in the subregion.

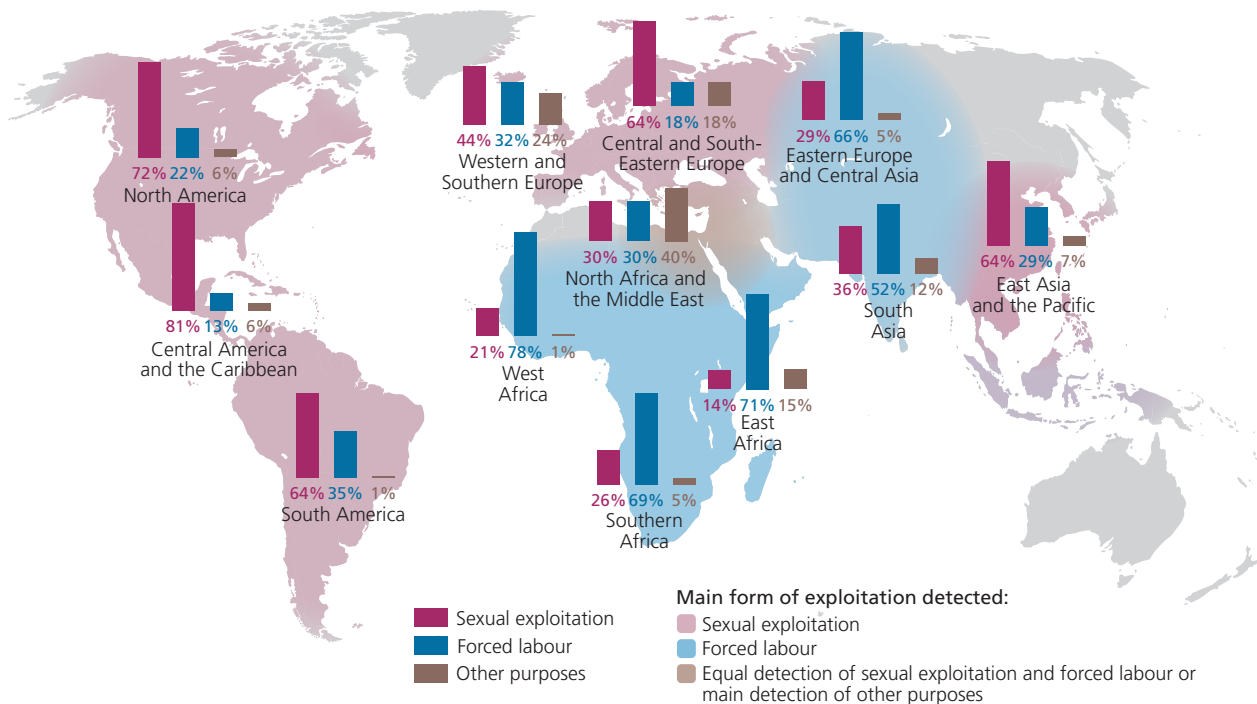
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage are less frequently detected, with nine countries across different regions reporting cases, amounting to about 1 per cent of the global total. Similarly, mixed forms of exploitation, where trafficking victims are exploited both for forced labour and sexual exploitation, also accounts for about 1 per cent of the total victims detected. In addition, a few cases of trafficking of pregnant women and/or trafficking of infants, both for the purpose of illegal adoption, are also reported in multiple countries.

FIG. 11 Number of detected trafficking victims, by form of exploitation and region of detection, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

MAP. 5 Shares of detected trafficking victims, by form of exploitation, by subregion of detection, 2018 (or most recent)

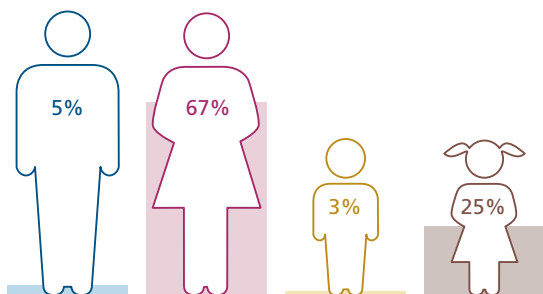


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**FIG. 12** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

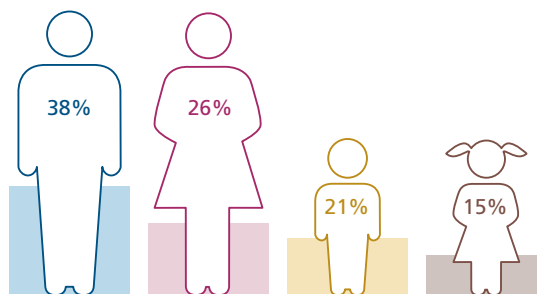
106 countries (n=14,022 victims whose form of exploitation by sex and age was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 13** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

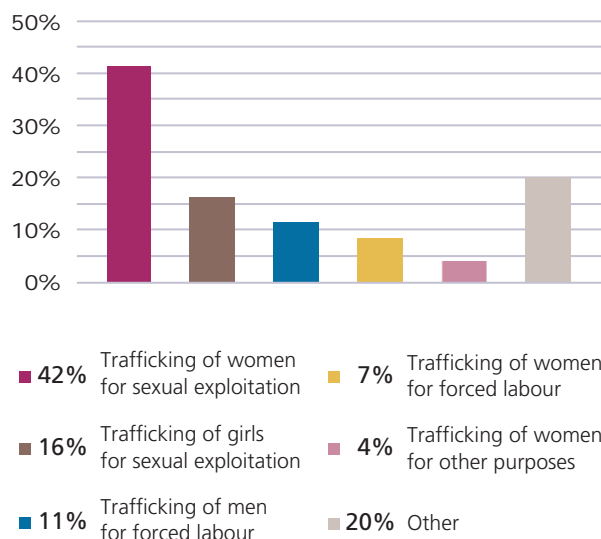
106 countries (n=6,530 victims whose form of exploitation by sex and age was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 14** Shares of detected victims of trafficking, by age group, sex and forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)

106 countries (n=22,743 victims)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

While still detected in small numbers, trafficking for the purpose of organ removal was reported in North Africa, South and South-East Asia, Central America and Europe during the reporting period. In 2017, about 25 victims were reported, and in 2018, this number had risen to more than 40.

The detected forms of exploitation and the victims involved vary widely across the different subregions. In 2018, trafficking for forced labour was the most detected form of trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where it mostly involved adults, while in South Asia, both adults and children were detected. Meanwhile, in

Sub-Saharan Africa, where it was by far the most commonly identified type of trafficking, the victims were mostly children.

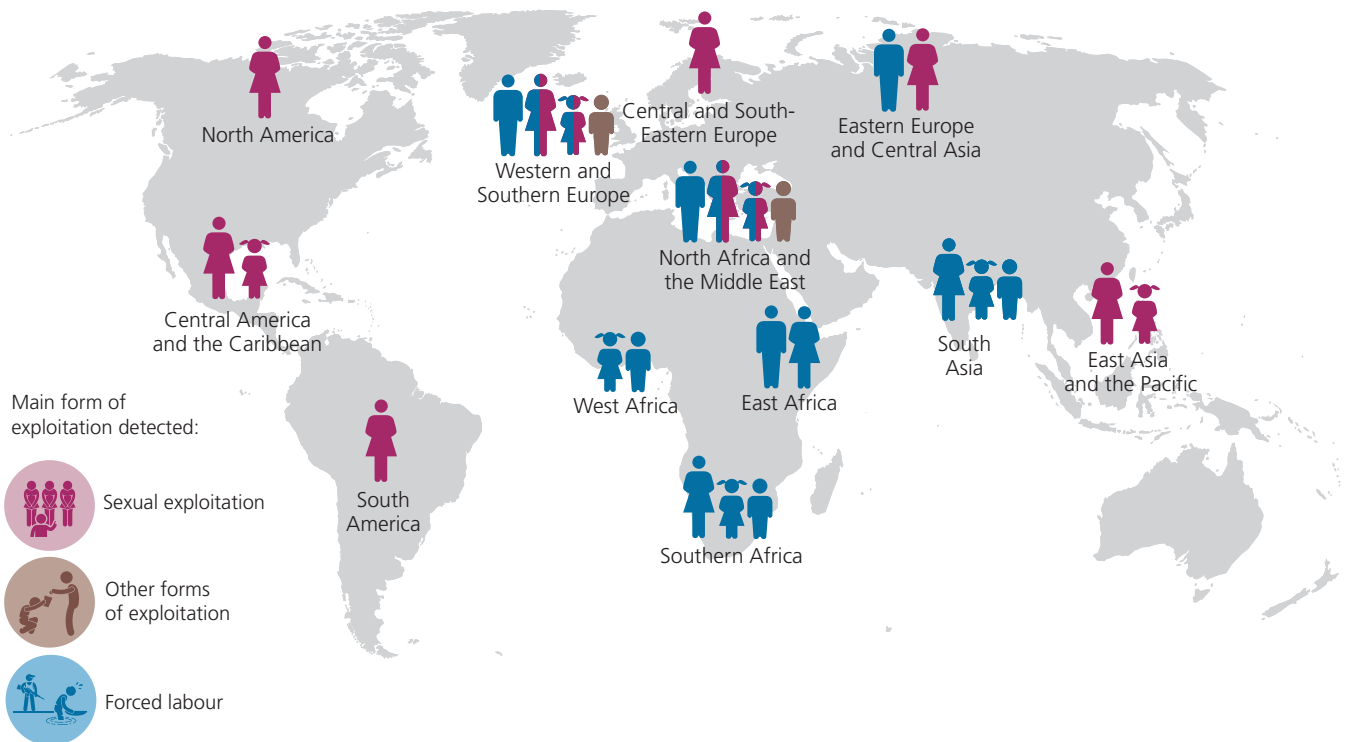
Trafficking for sexual exploitation was the most common form of trafficking detected in Western and Southern Europe, Central and South-Eastern Europe, as well as in East Asia and the Pacific and all regions of the Americas.

Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are females, while the sex and age profiles of detected victims who are trafficked for forced labour are more diverse (see *Chapter 4 Trafficking for forced labour; the economy of coercion*).

Compared to trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour, far fewer victims of trafficking for ‘other’ purposes are detected. These forms are diverse and vary in terms of victim profile. For example, victims trafficked for the purpose of forced marriages are mainly adult women and girls, while boys are more commonly targeted for trafficking for forced criminal activity. Trafficking for exploitative begging targets both girls and boys, although some adults have also been reported.

The age and sex profiles of the detected victims, along with the corresponding form(s) of exploitation among each group, were reported by 106 countries globally. The information from these countries confirms the patterns found in the general analysis: the majority of victims detected are adult women (about 42 per cent) who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

**MAP. 6** Main forms of exploitation and profiles of detected victims, by subregions, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

### Profile of the offenders

Most persons investigated or arrested, prosecuted, and/or convicted of trafficking in persons continue to be male, comprising over 60 per cent of the totals in these three categories. Similar to previous years, in 2018, 36 per cent of those prosecuted for trafficking were female. The share of females is slightly higher for those convicted and slightly lower for those coming into first contact with the police (investigated or arrested for trafficking) when compared to males.

In addition, while most offenders are adults, a very small percentage are under the age of 18, both boys and girls. About 1 per cent of total persons convicted for trafficking are boys, with the same share was recorded for girls. Regional differences also generally correspond with previous reporting periods. The subregion of Eastern Europe and Central Asia continues to convict far more females than males (80 per cent), while in Central America and in East Asia, males and females were convicted in near-equal shares in 2018. Comparatively, countries in Western

and Southern Europe, North America and North Africa and the Middle East reported lower shares of convicted females.

As discussed in the previous editions of the *Global Report*, the differences in the sex profile of individuals convicted may reflect different factors, including the operational activities of the trafficking networks. Accordingly, studies show that women traffickers may be particularly active in the recruitment phase of human trafficking.<sup>15</sup> This could explain the significant differences in the sex profiles of perpetrators in origin and destination countries reflected at all stages of criminal proceedings.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See page 30 of the UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.V.6). See pages 27-29 of the UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.10). See page 36-39 of the UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6).

<sup>16</sup> See page 35 of the UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2).

## LGBTQI+: Unreported victims

Administrative records reported by most governments are not often helpful in understanding how LGBTQI+ individuals – persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or have other sexual orientations or gender identities – are vulnerable to trafficking in persons. However, a growing body of research shows that LGBTQI+ individuals are at higher risk of becoming victims of trafficking.<sup>a</sup>

Recent studies show that LGBTQI+ children and young adults can be especially vulnerable to trafficking in persons for forced labour and sexual exploitation. First, their high vulnerability arises from their young age, as they are assumed to be easily manipulated and unable to protect themselves.<sup>a</sup> Second, their LGBTQI+ identity increases their vulnerability, as they are often marginalized in society and ostracised by friends and relatives who may force them out of their home. This combination is particularly appealing to traffickers who seek persons who are at the margins of societies and are less protected.<sup>b</sup>

Because of the stigma existing in families and society, LGBTQI+ are over-represented amongst children living on the streets and are often exposed to discrimination by law enforcement, social service providers, emergency housing and shelter facilities.<sup>c</sup> In North America, approximately between 20 and 40 per cent of homeless youth<sup>d</sup> identify as LGBTQI+, while in contrast, less than 5 per cent of the general population identifies as LGBTQI+.<sup>e</sup> Homeless youth are vulnerable to both trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation because of poverty, histories of sexual abuse and lack of access mental health care.<sup>f</sup> Furthermore, LGBTQI+ youth are more likely to engage in illegal activities or resort to ‘transactional sex’ in exchange for money, shelter, food and other necessities, compared to homeless heterosexual youth.<sup>e</sup> The combination of homelessness, discrimination, limited resources, violence and ‘transactional sex’ significantly increases the vulnerability of LGBTQI+ individuals to being trafficked, particularly for sexual exploitation.

As of December 2019, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) reports that 70 countries continue to criminalize same-sex relationships.<sup>g</sup> In countries where same-sex relationships are criminalized, LGBTQI+ persons face more intense societal stigma,<sup>h</sup> and those who fall victim to trafficking and

are forced into same-sex sexual exploitation are labelled as criminals rather than acknowledged as victims, violating the United Nations Trafficking Protocol and preventing LGBTQI+ victims of trafficking from exercising their rights and seeking help. Sexual abuse and exploitation against men and boys is often considered taboo, which limits trafficked men and boys from reporting their victimization and accessing victim rights and services.<sup>a</sup>

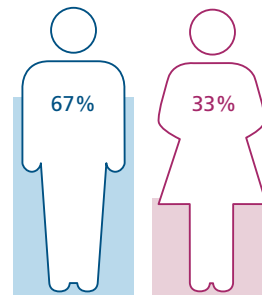
Most of the research on LGBTQI+ persons’ vulnerability to trafficking in persons has been conducted in North America, and, to a lesser extent in Europe and Latin America. The limited studies available reveal the need for increased research at a global level, especially in countries with strong social stigma and severe laws criminalizing same-sex relationships and/or transgender identities.

- a Martinez, O. and G. Kelle, *Sex Trafficking of LGBT Individuals: A Call for Service Provision, Research, and Action*. The international law news, 2013. 42(4).
- b U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2016*. 2016: Washington, DC.
- c Dank, M., et al., *Surviving the streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YWSW engaged in survival sex*. 2015; Xian, K., S. Chock, and D. Dwiggin, (2017) *LGBTQ Youth and Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking*, in *Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue*. 2017, Springer, p. 141-152.
- d There is no universally agreed international definition of the youth age group. For statistical purposes, however, the United Nations – without prejudice to any other definitions made by Member States – defines ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition, which arose in the context of preparations for the International Youth Year (1985) (see A/36/215), was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28 of 1981.
- e Dank, M.L., et al., (2017) *Pretesting a human trafficking screening tool in the child welfare and runaway and homeless youth systems*. 2017: Urban Institute New York, NY.
- f Murphy, L.T., (2017) *Labor and sex trafficking among homeless youth: A ten-city study*. 2017, Modern Slavery Research Project, Loyola University New Orleans, Covenant House: New Orleans.
- g ILGA World, *State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019: Global Legislation Overview Update*, L.R. Mendos, Editor. 2019, ILGA: Geneva.
- h *Human Rights Council, Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (A/HRC/19/41)*, p. 13.

Furthermore, most traffickers convicted in 2018 were citizens of the country where they were convicted. Around one fourth of those convicted were foreigners, but generally from the same region.

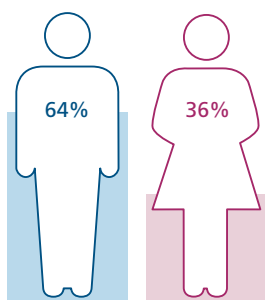
The citizenship profile of the offenders, however, differs in countries of origin and countries of destination. Typically, countries of origin generally convict fewer foreigners of trafficking in persons. On the contrary, countries of destination tend to record larger shares of convictions of foreign citizens.

**FIG. 15** Shares of persons investigated or arrested for trafficking in persons, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
80 countries (n=9,429)



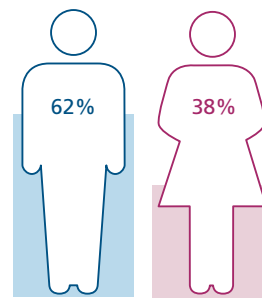
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 16** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
87 countries (n=7,368)



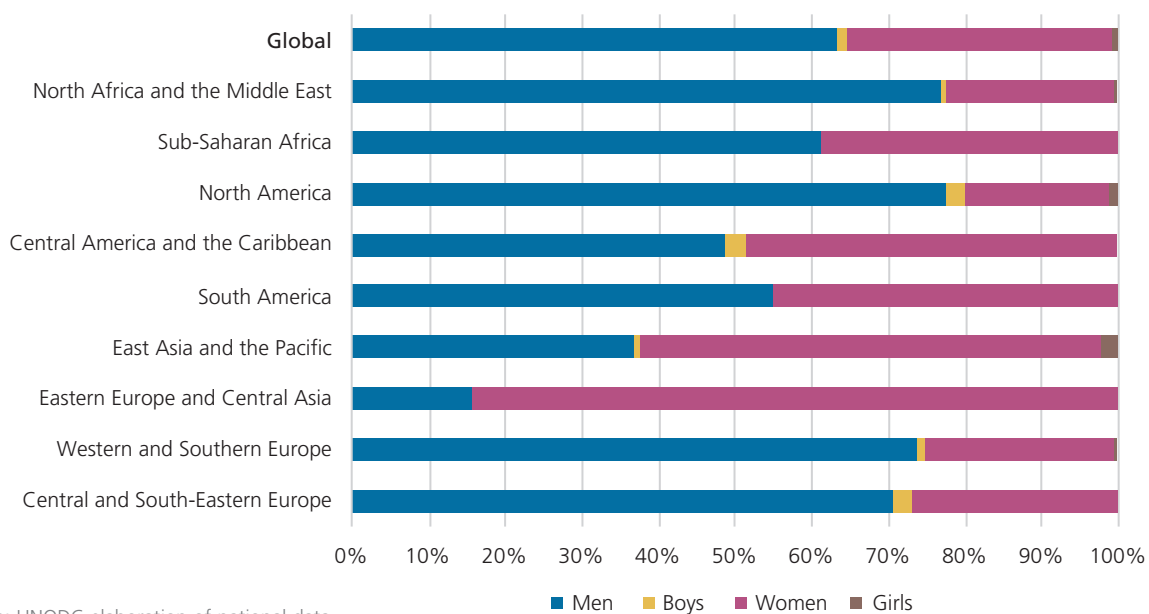
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 17** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
88 countries (n=3,553)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 18** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons, by age group, sex and by subregion\* of detection, 2018 (or most recent)

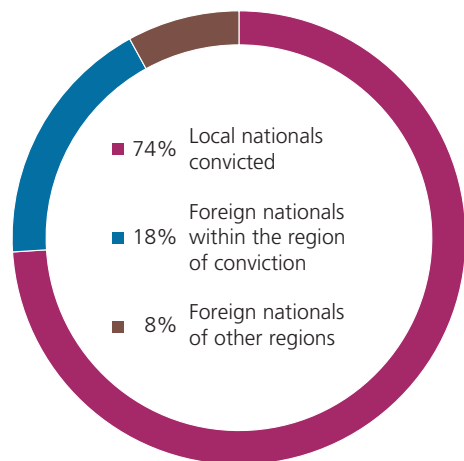


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*South Asia is not included in the analysis for lack of sufficient data



**FIG. 19** Shares of national and foreign citizens among convicted traffickers (relative to the country of conviction), 2018 (or most recent)  
104 countries (n=3,392)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

### Traffickers: how they operate

A wide array of criminals and groups are involved in trafficking in persons. These traffickers may include young males who recruit their younger schoolmates into sexual exploitation,<sup>17</sup> parents who exploit their children in begging,<sup>18</sup> urban gangs<sup>19</sup> and structured transnational organized criminal groups,<sup>20</sup> brokers negotiating children’s work in rural villages,<sup>21</sup> as well as licensed multinational recruitment agencies and legal companies.<sup>22</sup>

17 Court case 27 – Canada; court case 56 – Mexico 2011; court case 281 – Hungary 2015.

18 Court case 61 – Norway 2012; court case 471 – Sweden 2010; court case 175 – Serbia 2014.

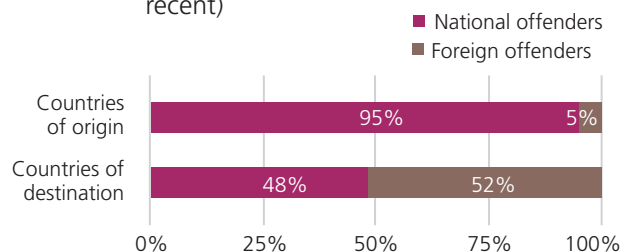
19 Court case 27 – Canada; court case 182 – United States of America 2014.

20 Court case 24 – Canada 2010; court case 39 – El Salvador 2011; court case 41 – Israel 2009; court case 75 – Argentina 2012; court case 265 – El Salvador 2017; court case 267 – France 2015; court case 270 – France 2015; court case 271 – France 2015; court case 321 – Spain 2014; court case 416 – France 2018; court case 417 – France 2018.

21 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Nepal, *Forced labour of adults and children in the agriculture sector of Nepal* (2013), page 50.  
A/HRC/30/35/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shabinian, Mission to Ghana* (22 29 November 2013) page 27-38;  
A/HRC/30/35, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Urmila Bhoola, Mission to Niger*, 30 July 2015, page 13.

22 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, page 40-41.  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *the Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practices of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons*, Vienna 2015, page 10.

**FIG. 20** Shares of national and foreign citizens (relative to the convicting country) among convicted traffickers, by countries of origin\* and destination\*\* of trafficking flows, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Number of persons convicted whose citizenship was reported is 1587 in 46 countries of origin.

\*\*Number of persons convicted whose citizenship was reported is 1676 in 37 countries of destinations.

Knowing the profile of the trafficker helps to define the appropriate criminal justice response. For example, dismantling a large, structured trafficking group requires specialized anti-organized crime mechanisms, while addressing exploitation in the context of an intimate relationship may require approaches more similar to those used in cases of domestic violence.

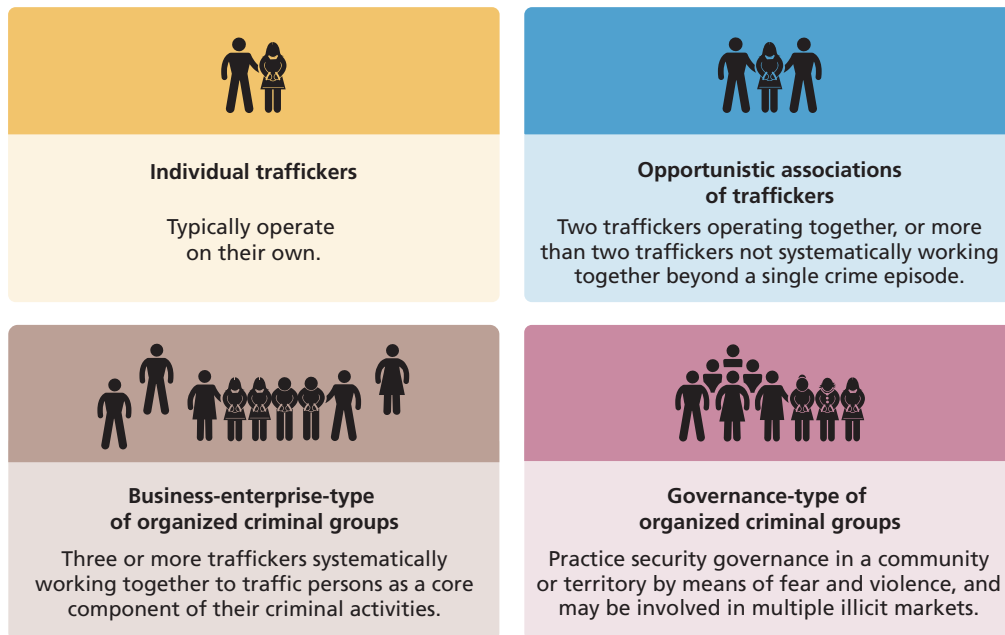
Furthermore, the question of ‘who’ commits the crime can also inform its scope and impact. For example, more structured organizations may traffic more victims for longer periods, affecting several individuals in a village, community or city, versus individual traffickers who typically operate on a smaller scale.

Trafficking in persons is perpetrated by actors with different level of organizational structures and can be divided into two broad categories: groups that meet the definition of organized criminal groups<sup>23</sup>, and opportunistic traffickers that operate alone or in cooperation with one or other traffickers.

23 Article 2(a) of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) contains a definition of ‘organized criminal group’ as a (I) group of three or more persons that was not randomly formed, (II) existing for a period of time and (III) acting in concert with the aim of committing at least one crime punishable by at least four years’ incarceration (IV) in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit. It should be noted, however, that in accordance with the UNTOC, countries may apply more stringent definitions by reducing the minimum number of persons to be engaged in the criminal activity in order to form an organized crime group. Some countries consider a group formed by two or more persons as an Organized Crime group. For the purpose of this analysis, Organized Criminal Group is as defined by Article 2 (a) of the UNTOC.

The UNTOC covers only crimes that are ‘transnational’, a term cast broadly. The term covers not only offences committed in more than one State, but also those that take place in one State but are planned or controlled in another. Also included are crimes committed by groups that operate in more than one State, and crimes committed in one State that has substantial effects in another State.

## Traffickers structure



Organized criminal groups engaging in the crime of trafficking in persons can be further distinguished into:

- **Governance-type** organized criminal groups, which apply security governance in a community or territory by means of fear and violence, and may be involved in multiple illicit markets<sup>24</sup>;
- **Business-enterprise-type** organized criminal groups, involving three or more traffickers systematically working together to traffic persons as a core component of their criminal activities.

Opportunistic traffickers can be further grouped into:

- **Opportunistic association of traffickers** working together, where two traffickers operate together, or more than two traffickers do not systematically work together beyond a single crime act;
- **Individual traffickers** who typically operate on their own.

While the cases analyzed in the database comprise only a non-representative set of prosecuted cases, the resulting patterns are quite informative. The analysis suggests that only a limited number of cases prosecuted were driven by

criminal organizations with a governing structure rooted in the community where they operate. This result may be explained by these groups being more difficult to detect or because there is a lower rate of engagement of these groups in this kind of criminal activity.

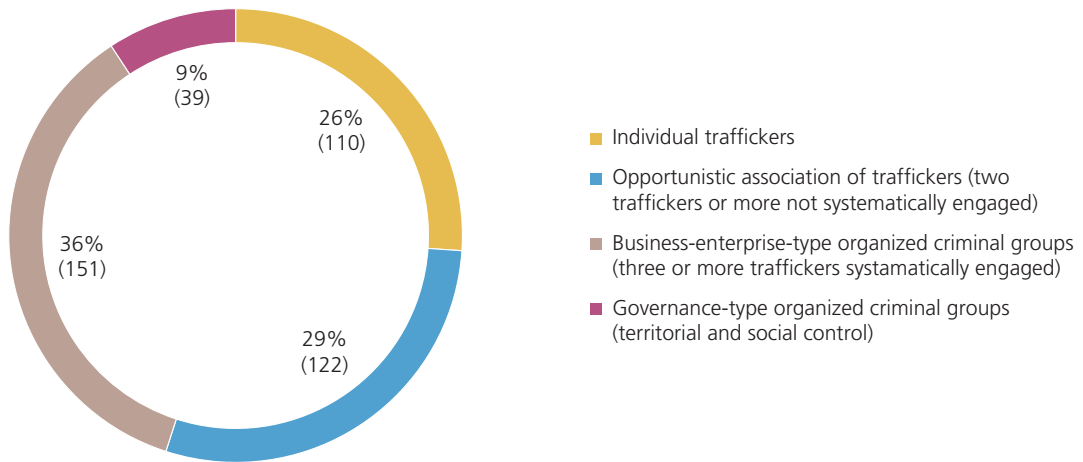
At the same time, however, organized criminal groups are able to traffic more victims, over longer time, and with more violent means. As such, most of the victims in the court cases considered for this analysis were trafficked by organized criminal groups.

While the sampling of cases does not represent the whole landscape, such an analysis may assist in assessing the impact of different criminal structures' involvement in trafficking in persons.

The vast majority of the victims in the court cases analyzed for this report are females. Considering cases where the information about the sex of the victims was available, female victims were reported in 88 per cent of the cases perpetrated by business-enterprise-type of criminal groups, in 91 per cent of cases operated by individual traffickers and in 97 per cent of the cases where the perpetrators can be considered governance-type of criminal groups or by an opportunistic association of traffickers. Male victims were more frequently reported to be trafficked by the business-enterprise-type of criminal groups (12 per cent of these cases), mostly for the purpose of forced labour.

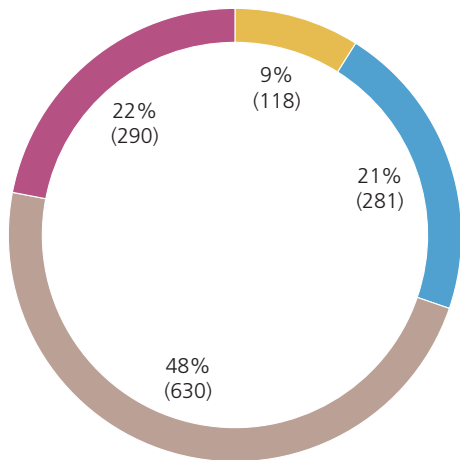
<sup>24</sup> When the narrative of the court cases made reference to criminal groups making use of violence, intimidation and fear to ensure social control over a community or a territory, these were categorized as governance-type organized criminal group. For more on this see Varese, F. (2010) *What is Organized Crime?*, in Varese, F. (ed.), *Organized Crime: Critical Concepts in Criminology*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–33.

**FIG. 21** Number and shares of cases\*, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases



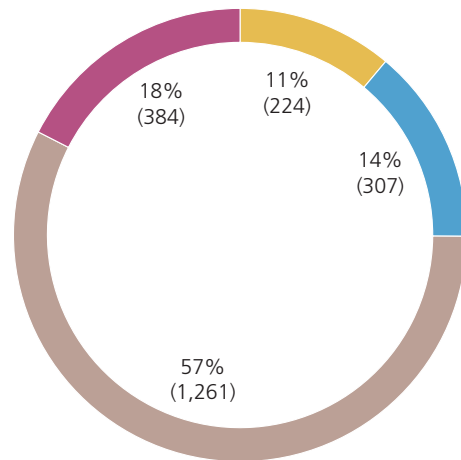
Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*This information was reported in 422 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

**FIG. 22** Total number of traffickers involved in the cases\*, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases



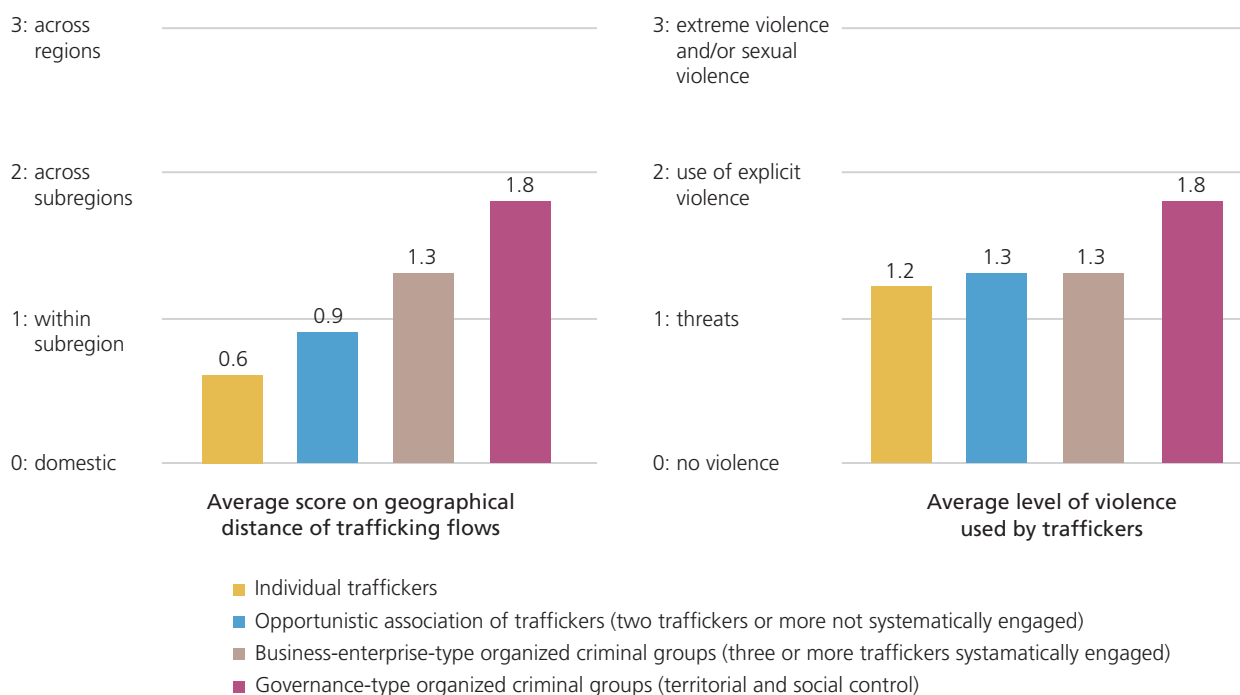
Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*This information was reported in 396 court cases on a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In detail, 33 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 136 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 117 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 110 to individual traffickers. A total of 1,319 traffickers were reported in the court cases that included this information.

**FIG. 23** Total number of victims involved in the cases\*, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*This information was reported in 364 court cases on a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In detail, 29 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 123 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 113 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 99 to individual traffickers. A total of 2,196 victims were reported in the court cases that included this information.

**FIG. 24** Distance of trafficking flows\* and level of violence\*\* used by traffickers, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases

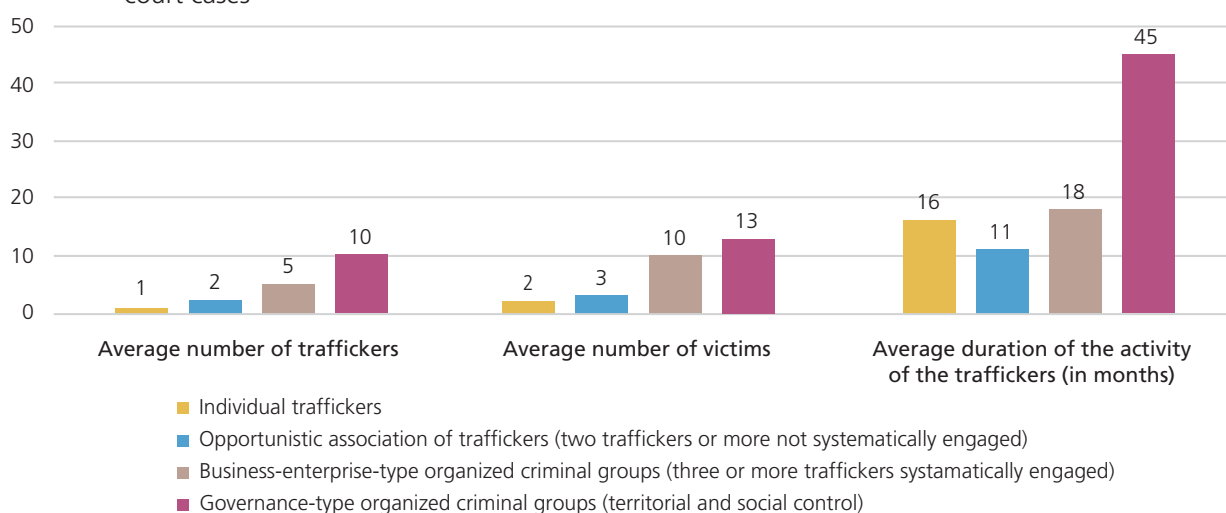


Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*This information was reported in 382 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In details, 30 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 141 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 110 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 101 to individual traffickers.

\*\*This information was reported in 347 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In details, 29 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 122 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 99 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 97 to individual traffickers.

**FIG. 25** Average number of traffickers\*, average number of victims\*\* and average duration of traffickers' activity\*\*\* per single case, by type of criminal actor, as reported in GLOTIP court cases



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*This information was reported in 396 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In detail, 33 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 136 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 117 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 110 to individual traffickers.

\*\*This information was reported in 364 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In details, 29 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 123 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 113 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 99 to individual traffickers.

\*\*\*This information was reported in 224 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report. In detail, 20 cases referred to governance type of organized crime, 86 cases referred to business-enterprise-type of organized crime, 56 cases referred to opportunistic association of two and/or three traffickers and 52 to individual traffickers.

### Organized criminal groups

There is evidence of large territorial criminal organizations engaging in trafficking in persons together with other forms of illicit trafficking, for example, the *Mara Salvatrucha* group in Central America.<sup>25</sup>

There are other examples of transnational criminal groups involved in drugs trafficking, money laundering and other illicit trades active between West Africa and Europe that also engage in trafficking for sexual exploitation. For example, authorities in France reported some cases in which the criminal group *Supreme Eiye Confraternity* engaged in trafficking in persons along this route.<sup>26</sup> The involvement of the similar types of groups were reported by Spanish<sup>27</sup> and Italian<sup>28</sup> authorities in cases of trafficking of women in combination with other criminal activities, such as credit cards fraud or money counterfeiting.

Meanwhile, in the United States, authorities reported persons associated with the *Crips* engaged in trafficking for sexual exploitation across different American states.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the US authorities also reported detecting a large gang specialized in trafficking for sexual exploitation across different countries Central and North America. This group operated for more than a decade with profits estimated at hundreds of thousands of US dollars (USD). The eight members of the group were connected by family ties and exploited the victims by threatening their families back home.<sup>30</sup> A similar modus operandi has been reported as being used by a group that traffics women for domestic servitude from Colombia to Mexico<sup>31</sup>, as well as by a group recruiting men from Central Europe for exploitation in the construction sector in Canada. These groups had members in the countries of origin who could threaten the families of the victims to secure the victims' obedience.<sup>32</sup>

25 Court case 265 – El Salvador 2017.

26 Court case 416 – France 2018; court case 417 – France 2018; court case 270 – France 2015; court case 271 – France 2015.

27 Court case 321 – Spain 2014.

28 Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA), *Relazione del Ministro dell'Interno al Parlamento sull'attività svolta e sui risultati conseguiti dalla Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, Attività svolta e risultati conseguiti dalla direzione investigative antimafia, Gennaio – Giugno 2019*, 2019, page 455.

29 Court case 182 – USA 2014.

30 Court case 337 – USA 2017.

31 Court case 488 – Colombia 2019.

32 Court case 24 – Canada 2010.

### Intimate partners and relatives

A different trafficker profile involves intimate relationships. Literature<sup>33</sup> and court cases<sup>34</sup> have documented how young men traffic female victims by enticing them into a romantic relationship. Often, these traffickers operate alone, trafficking one victim at the time. Some studies report that they normally take advantage of girls or young women with difficult family backgrounds and who lack affection.<sup>35</sup>

Usually under the pretext of a shortage of money, by means of emotional manipulation with increasing levels of physical threats or mistreatment, traffickers perpetuate the sexual abuse and exploitation of their partners. The level of manipulation often leads the victims to not perceive the situation as abusive, nor be willing to report partner abuse.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the relationship between the victim and her exploiter makes this form of trafficking more similar to domestic violence than to a typical forms of organized crime.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, such methods are used by other people who the victim trusts, such as siblings<sup>38</sup> or parents. Indeed, some court cases describe mothers taking their teenaged daughters to one or more abusers to be sexually exploited,<sup>39</sup> violent fathers exploiting their children through street begging or the commission of crimes<sup>40</sup> or parents selling pictures of their children being sexually abused.<sup>41</sup>

33 MYRIA, Federal Migration Centre, *Annual Report 2015, Trafficking and Smuggling in Human Beings Tightening the Links*, Brussels, January 2016, pp-23-40

Bundeskriminalamt, *Trafficking in Human Beings; National Situation Report*, 65173, Wiesbaden, 2014, p7; Dutch National Rapporteur, *Samen tegen mensenhandel Een integrale programma-aanpak van seksuele uitbuiting, arbeidsuitbuiting en criminele uitbuiting*, DNR, 2018, p12

34 Court case 27 – Canada; court case 27 Mexico; court case 94 – Belgium; court case 100 Canada; court case 173 – Serbia ; court case 191 – the Dominica Republic; court case 191-Spain; court case 281 – Hungary; court case 406 – Bolivia; court case 443 – Canada.

35 London Abused Women's Centre, *Sex Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation: Keeping Youth Safe*, LAWC, London, 2018, p.11;

Federal Centre for the Analysis of Migration Flows, the Protection of Fundamental Rights of Foreigners and the Fight against Human Trafficking, *Building Bridges, Trafficking and Smuggling in Human Beings, Annual Report 2013*, Brussels, 2014, p23.

36 Verhoeven, M., et.al. (2013), *Relationships between suspects and victims of sex trafficking. Exploitation of prostitutes and domestic violence parallel in Dutch trafficking cases*, European Journal of Criminal and Policy Research, 12 December 2013.

37 *Ibid.*

38 Court case 4 – Armenia 2012.

39 Court case 83 – Australia 2013; court case 124 – Mexico 2014; court case 149 – South Africa 2013; court case 195 – Spain; court case 292 – Mexico 2016; court case 133 – Poland.

40 Court case 175 – Serbia, 2014; France, Court case 267, 2015; Court case 311 – the Netherlands, 2016.

41 Dominican Republic- Court case 438, 2018; Czechia – Court case 252, 2016; Australia – Court case 221, 2016; Israel – Court case 163, 2013; Israel – Court case 163, 2013.



### Small and large recruiting agents

Some social norms, such as the practice of parents sending their child to work to sustain the family income, may provide fertile ground for the trafficking of children. These contexts often see both children and parents as the victims, with traffickers taking advantage of a situations of extreme poverty (see *Chapter 3 - Children; easy to target*).

Traffickers who specialize in recruiting children deceive families with an offer to provide some economic support to the household, while actually placing the children to work for others who will exploit them. One method documented in South Asia, for instance, is that in exchange for recruiting children, traffickers lend money to their parents in order to buy work tools. Then, due to the incurred debt with the trafficker, the parents are subsequently unable to withdraw their children from work. High interests are levied on the advance payment, putting families into permanent debt and trapping children in perpetual work. These methods to exploit children have been documented in different regions, in the agricultural,<sup>42</sup> fishing<sup>43</sup> and other sectors.<sup>44</sup>

At an international level, a similar scheme is used by traffickers operating in the context of labour migration. Recruiters in the community of origin get in touch with or are contacted by the person who wishes to emigrate, often the family or friend of someone who migrated in the past. The recruiter generally then liaises with more professional recruitment agents/agencies that will then provide services to assist the person to emigrate, including job placement in the destination country.<sup>45</sup>

These agencies typically advance the funds for travel expenses and documents, as well as for the job placement.<sup>46</sup> Migrants are then charged these costs in the form of a debt they must pay back once they reach the destination. In some cases, the debt will be higher than what was agreed on and its payment will serve as a basis for the migrant's exploitation (see *Chapter 4 - Trafficking for forced labour; the economy of coercion*).<sup>47</sup>

Yet, it is important to note that the knowledge of recruiters and agencies varies in regard to exploitation in the country of destination. In some cases, individual recruiters and recruitment agencies may act in good faith and are unaware of the exploitative situations that migrants eventually find themselves in. In others, these intermediaries are part of complex organized criminal groups involved in human trafficking.<sup>48</sup>

These agencies may operate under the guise of legal and registered companies, and yet are criminal in the way they recruit and deceived victims for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>49</sup>

### Legal businesses and ordinary people

Sometimes business that may appear legitimate have been found to be involved in trafficking. Court cases have documented the convictions of owners and operators of companies in the agricultural,<sup>50</sup> fishing,<sup>51</sup> cleaning,<sup>52</sup> construction,<sup>53</sup> garment<sup>54</sup> and food service indus-

42 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Nepal, *Forced labour of adults and children in the agriculture sector of Nepal* (2013), page 50.

43 Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shahinian, *Mission to Ghana, 22-29 November 2013*, page 27-38

44 Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Urmila Bhoola, *Mission to Niger, 30 July 2015*, A/HRC/30/35/Add.1, page 13.

45 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, page 40-41. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *the Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practices of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons*, Vienna 2015, page 10 Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, *mission to the United Arab Emirates*, A/HRC/23/48/Add.1 page 6

46 Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, *Mission to Malaysia*, 15 June 2015, A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. page 6, International Labour Organization (ILO), *Recruitment fees and related costs: What migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar pay to work in Thailand*, International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 36.

47 Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, *mission to Malaysia*, 15 June 2015, A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. p. 5.

48 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *the Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practices of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons*, Vienna 2015, page 10 Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, page 14 . See Court case 93 – Belgium 2012; court case 117 – Indonesia 2015.

49 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, – FRA, Vienna, 2015, p. 32; Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, page 14; International Labour Organization (ILO), *Recruitment fees and related costs: What migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar pay to work in Thailand*, 2020, p. 20.

50 Court case 307 – The Netherlands 2016; court case 285 – Israel 2016.

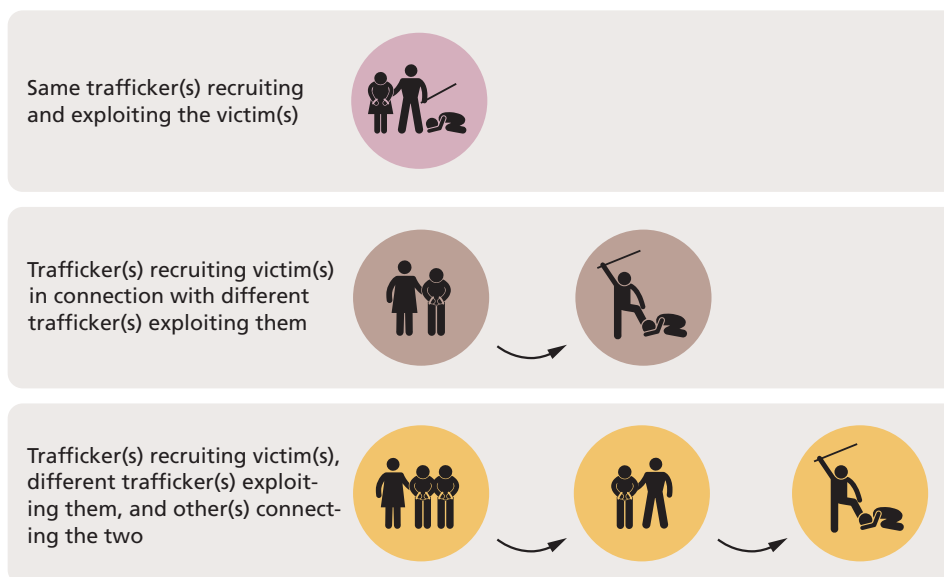
51 Court case 116 – Indonesia, 2014.

52 Court case 93 – Belgium, 2012.

53 Court case 101 – Czechia 2012; court case 331 – Ukraine 2014.

54 Court case 391 – Russian Federation 2017.

### Business models for trafficking in persons



tries as having been convicted for trafficking persons for the purpose of forced labour.<sup>55</sup>

The involvement of companies that operate in legal markets in trafficking is also documented in cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation. In a case reported by Belgian authorities, three offenders and four companies faced charges under various offences, including trafficking in persons, money laundering, tax fraud and insurance fraud. The offenders operated a complex scheme involving victims recruited with the promise of having regular contracts to engage in legal prostitution. The victims, however, were deceived about the working conditions and lured into sexual exploitation.<sup>56</sup>

A type of trafficking that is normalized in an apparently legal context at the hands of ordinary, seemingly non-criminal people, is trafficking for domestic servitude. Victims of this form of trafficking are typically recruited to work in houses of middle or high-income families.

In documented cases of trafficking for domestic servitude, literature and case narratives refer to family members forcing their domestic workers to work long hours, a lack of personal space, and coerced into limited movement and socialization outside the house. In a case reported by Canadian authorities, the person charged with

55 Court case 7 – Australia, 2012; court case 433 – Norway, 2019; court case 190 – Dominican Republic, 2014; court case 235 – Belgium, 2014; court case 104 – Czechia, 2012.

56 Court case 95 – Belgium, 2013.

a human trafficking offence was a highly educated father of three children who recruited a Filipino woman to work as a nanny. While the woman was promised regular travel documents, once she arrived in the destination country, she realized she had been tricked into irregular immigration. She was socially isolated, forced to work as domestic servant and paid less with longer working hours than agreed upon before departure.<sup>57</sup>

In more violent cases of trafficking for domestic servitude, family members have abused victims physically, sexually and/or and psychologically (see *Chapter 4 - Trafficking for forced labour; the economy of coercion*).<sup>58</sup>

### The business behind trafficking

Some court cases have shown that the entire trafficking process may involve more than one group, with some groups that specialize in recruitment of victims and others that specialize in exploitation. For example, Hungarian authorities dismantled a criminal scheme consisting of a group of people recruiting young women in Hungary that were to be sold to a different group for exploitation in Switzerland.<sup>59</sup> A similar business model was used by a network involved in trafficking for forced marriage in

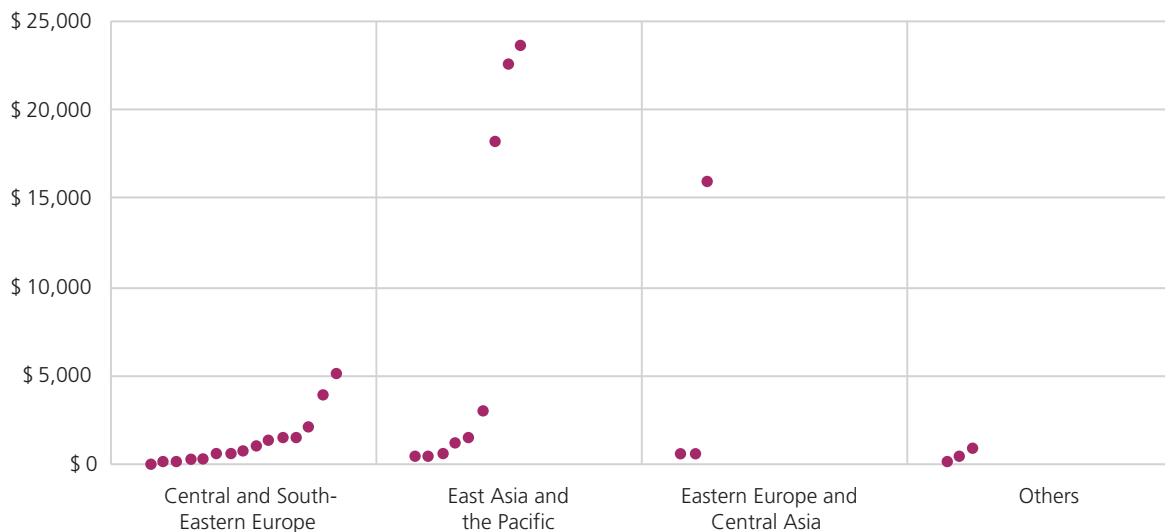
57 Court case 98 – Canada, 2013.

58 Court case 22 – Brunei Darussalam 2012; court case 70 – United States of America 2012; court case 21 – Brunei Darussalam 2012; Report of the Special Rapporteur trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *mission to Jordan*, 2016, A/HRC/32/41/Add.1, p. 6; Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, *mission to Malaysia*, A/HRC/29/38/Add.162., p. 6

59 Court case 112 – Hungary 2013.



**FIG. 26** Monetary value of victims in USD, based on amount paid by traffickers to “buy” one victim from other traffickers, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*, by region



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The subset of analysed court cases includes: 15 cases in Central and South Eastern Europe, nine cases in East Asia and the Pacific, three cases in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, one case in the Middle East and North Africa, one case in Sub-Saharan Africa, one case in Western and Southern Europe.

East Asia, where one group specialized in finding women in the rural areas of South-East Asia. Victims were then sold to a broker who sold them to another group that specialized in reselling them for forced marriage to men in other countries.<sup>60</sup>

The use of traffickers that act as brokers between other traffickers, that facilitate the buying and selling of victims, is reported in multiple cases, and showing the level of complexities of some human trafficking markets. To illustrate, Austrian authorities reported a group that specialized solely on brokering women for sexual exploitation. The role of the group was to facilitate the distribution of victims among procurers operating in different European countries.

Authorities reported the group did not make use of violence but used their good reputation to relate with business partners and intimidation to relate with victims.<sup>61</sup>

In these schemes, victims are sold by the recruiting group to the exploiting group with brokers also profiting from negotiations over the victims' price.

### The traffickers' financial gains

Traffickers consider their victims as commodities that can be used and sold for financial gain, without regard for human dignity and rights. There are different phases

at which traffickers make profits.

Groups specialized in recruiting victims make profits by 'selling' victims, with the amount depending on their ability to negotiate the monetary value per victim. Whereas at the exploitation phase, profits are made from the selling of exploited services to third parties, or from reduction of costs derived from the victims' un-paid services.

Between 2007 and 2017, 15 countries in six regions of the world reported information on the monetary value exchange between traffickers to recruit a victim. In the reported data, the majority of cases involved women (26 cases). A few cases involved girls (two cases), a man, or a baby (one case each). According to the narrative of the case files collected, women victims of trafficking were bought for as little as 36 USD and for as much as 23,600 USD.<sup>62</sup>

In 26 out of the 30 recorded cases, women and girls were sold to their future exploiter for less than 5,000 USD, with victims sold for less than 1,000 USD in eight of these cases. In 22 out of the 30 cases, the intermediary received less than 2,000 USD for each victim successfully recruited. Cases of domestic trafficking presented the lowest recorded monetary values, with victims sold for a maximum of 600 USD, with the average value reported being 250 USD.

60 Court case 207 – China 2014.

61 Court case 225 – Austria 2014.

62 Average = 3,662 USD; median = 870 USD; based on current prices.



While these findings are not representative of the dynamics of the trafficking in persons market worldwide, they do challenge many of the market value estimations commonly provided.<sup>63</sup> While some studies have tried to estimate the market value of sexual exploitation,<sup>64</sup> limited analysis has been done to estimate profits at recruitment. An analysis of the legal proceedings in the United States revealed that intermediaries may charge up to 100,000 USD per person recruited.<sup>65</sup> The 30 cases considered from the 489 case narratives provided by Member States to UNODC suggest that these figures may be sensational outliers, and that the actual monetary transaction to recruit a trafficking victim appears to be far less than expected.

Comparing the monetary returns described in the analyzed court cases to national average incomes, suggests that recruiting trafficking victims may not be more profitable than an average job in the legal sphere. A single trafficker recruiting victims in Central and South-Eastern Europe and selling them to groups in Western Europe would have to recruit at least 20 women per year to reach the average annual salary in their own countries.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, compared to other illegal markets, the criminal

activity of trafficking in persons appear much less profitable than other types of trafficking. The wholesale price of one kilogram of crystal methamphetamines produced in Central and South-Eastern Europe ranges from 19,500 USD to 26,500 USD.<sup>67</sup> This means that in this part of the world recruiting one victim (for 1,500 USD - 2000 USD) to be later sexually exploited is worth the same to criminals as selling 80-100 grams of methamphetamines, or as little as one pistol in the illegal firearms market<sup>68</sup> or the value of two kilos of illegally traded live glass (juvenile) eels.<sup>69</sup>

The income made by a trafficker recruiting a woman in South-East Asia for forced marriage (reported to be 3,000 USD maximum) is about the same as the annual minimum wage in the subregion.<sup>70</sup> In comparison with the wholesale price of crystal methamphetamines produced in South-East Asia, one woman recruited worth as little as 100-200 grams of methamphetamines.<sup>71</sup>

As is the case with other markets, profits gained by traffickers are more pronounced when made closer to the ‘product’s’ final consumption, which is the case of trafficking in persons, is the exploitation phase. In East Asia, a trafficked bride can be sold for about 10,000 USD,<sup>72</sup> cheaper than the value of 15 kilograms of ivory<sup>73</sup> or than 40 grams of

63 The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) (2018). *Financial Flows from Human Trafficking* p.74.

64 Aronowitz, A et al., *Analyzing the Business Organization of Trafficking in Human Beings in Order to Decrease Vulnerabilities and to Better Prevent the Crime*, OSCE/UN.GIFT, Vienna, 2010.

65 Zakhari, B.S. (2005). *Legal Cases Prosecuted under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*. In *Human Traffic and Transnational Crime: Eurasian and American Perspectives*. Edited by S. Stoecker and L. Shelley. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

66 Average job earnings in USD Dollars for Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia as reported by the OECD Better Life Index. See OECD estimates based on OECD (2019), *OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2019 Issue 2*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b2e897b0-en> and *OECD Annual National Accounts Prices and Purchasing Parities Database*, [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SNA\\_TABLE4](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SNA_TABLE4).

67 UNODC data collected from national authorities through the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ). See <https://dataunodc.un.org/data/drugs/Retail%20drug%20price%20and%20purity%20level>

68 UNODC, *Global Study on Firearms Trafficking*, 2020. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.IV.1), page 60.

69 UNODC, *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020. Page 55.

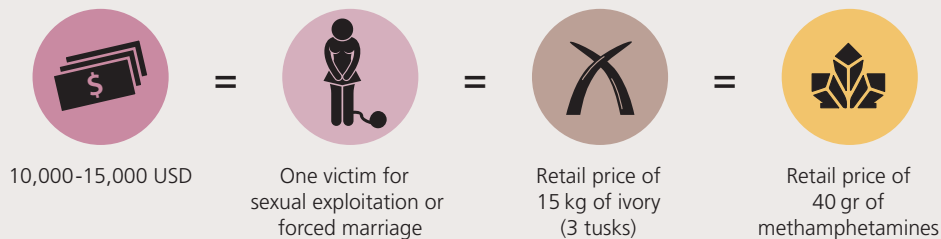
70 See Statistics of wages; Statutory gross monthly minimum wages in US dollars (converted using exchange rates and 2017 PPPs), latest year in <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/wages/fa>

71 UNODC data collected from national authorities through the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ). See <https://dataunodc.un.org/data/drugs/Retail%20drug%20price%20and%20purity%20level>

72 Court case 207 – China 2014.

73 UNODC, *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020. Page 100.

### Monetary values given by traffickers in East Asia at exploitation phase and retail market



crystal methamphetamines sold to the final consumer.<sup>74</sup> Victims recruited for a few thousand dollars in South-East Asia are sold for sexual exploitation in Australia or in Japan for 10,000–15,000 USD.<sup>75</sup>

In another case, Belgian authorities reported on a group of five persons who sexually exploited women in a massage parlor. The women were originally ‘bought’ in South-East Asia from another group that specialized in recruiting women with the promise of a job in Europe. The group in Belgium paid 2,800 USD for each woman recruited. Once at the destination, the group demanded the victims pay off a debt of 12,000 USD and then exploited them under a scheme of repaying it. The network trafficked about 50 victims in two years. Considering only the recruitment costs, it can be roughly estimated that the traffickers’ profit was about 450,000 USD over the course of two years. Debts, often inflated, allegedly relate to the costs of the victim’s travel (e.g. transportation, visa, etc.) and accommodation expenses that are initially covered by the trafficker. In some cases, however, the debt serves more as a coercive instrument than as a source of income, as it bonds the victim to the trafficker and discourages them from escaping or seeking alternatives.

Little information is available on traffickers’ profits deriving from exploitation. The total estimated crime proceeds estimated for single court cases were generally in the range of a few thousand US dollars, except for some cases in which they exceeded 100,000 USD. These exceptional cases concern large criminal organisations, which exploited multiple victims (in two cases, more than 100) over a period of more than three years, either through sexual exploitation, forced labour or forced criminal activity.

<sup>74</sup> UNODC data collected from national authorities through the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ). See <https://data.unodc.un.org/data/drugs/Retail%20drug%20price%20and%20purity%20level>

<sup>75</sup> Court case 8 – Australia, 2007; court case 203 – Japan, 2016.

One of the highest proceeds in the court cases collected for this *Report*<sup>76</sup> refer to a group involving a dozen offenders, trafficking thousands of children for forced criminal activity over two and a half years in different Western and Southern European countries. The children were forced to commit a number of thefts (mainly pickpocketing) per day. Investigators estimated the total proceeds at 1.1 million USD for the whole period of activity of the criminal group.<sup>77</sup> In another case, US law enforcement traced tens of millions of dollars to an organization involving 35 offenders who have trafficked hundreds of women from South-East Asia to several US cities for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

In the large majority of reported cases, however, traffickers earned less than 5,000 USD per victim (in 12 cases out of 16 cases reporting this information). Only 3 cases reported monthly earnings per victim above 10,000 USD per victim.

These cases are illustrative of the wide range of profits made by traffickers. Estimating the global size of the trafficking in persons market in terms of illegal profits remains challenging given the lack of a reliable estimate of the global number of victims.

The relatively low income made by single traffickers show how little the victims are valued in the illicit market of trafficking. Traffickers trade their victims as commodities. Cases reveal that victims are “priced” at as little as a few hundred dollars, equivalent to a few grams of methamphetamine.

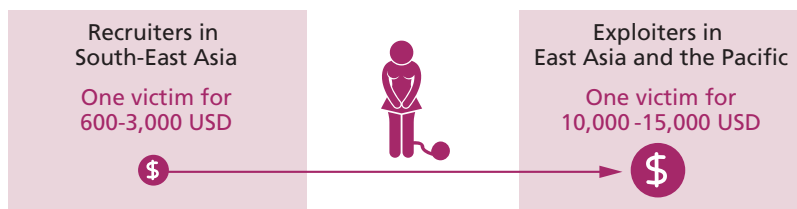
While from a monetary value perspective, the size of the trafficking in persons market may be smaller than other criminal markets, the harm associated to trafficking in persons has no comparable metrics.

<sup>76</sup> The estimated proceeds for traffickers was reported in 49 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

<sup>77</sup> Court case 267 – France 2015.

Monetary values given by traffickers

VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING FOR MARRIAGE OR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



CRYSTAL METH



Trafficking for exploitation in criminal activities – a double victimization

Trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation in criminal activities is a form of trafficking that has risen in numbers and is gaining increased attention in different parts of the world. About 5 per cent of the total victims of trafficking detected in 2018 were exploited in the commission of crimes. This form of trafficking has been detected in a dozen countries in all regions of the world.

This form of trafficking entails recruiting and exploiting persons, often children, to commit crimes for the monetary benefit of traffickers (see *Chapter 3 – Children; easy to target*). The crimes recorded range from petty crimes such as shoplifting, pickpocketing or other forms of petty thefts,<sup>a</sup> to more serious crimes, such as forcing children to grow, transport, traffic or sell drugs.<sup>b</sup> In the cases of *county lines*, for example, British authorities have widely documented the use of children trafficked for the transportation of drugs.<sup>c</sup> Recruiting migrant children for the purpose of drug trafficking has also been documented along migration routes from the Middle East to Europe.<sup>d</sup>

Trafficking for exploitation in criminal activities also goes beyond drug production and trafficking. In some cases, victims of trafficking are forced to participate in murders<sup>e</sup>, or children are forced into violent extremism.<sup>f</sup> This form of trafficking is often characterized by a high degree of organization of the trafficking networks. In a case reported by Central American authorities, a crimi-

nal group recruited women for the purpose of marrying wealthy men from the United States with false promises of accessing American citizenship. After some months of marriage, the men were killed by members of the group, who then cashed in on the life insurance these men had registered for their wives. These women were forced to be part of the criminal plot and as such, the court considered them as trafficking victims, while the members of the criminal group were charged with homicides and trafficking in persons.<sup>g</sup>

The phenomenon of child recruitment and exploitation by terrorist and violent extremist groups is a form of trafficking in persons and a serious form of violence against children.<sup>h</sup> This crime clearly illustrates the linkages between trafficking for exploitation in criminal activities, terrorism and violent extremism, representing an area of particular concern. The recruitment of children can often lead to their sexual exploitation, enslavement and involvement in armed violence, including for the purposes of committing criminal offences such as acts of terrorism, war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>i</sup>

This serious form of violence violates children's rights and has long-lasting consequences on the wellbeing of the child's physical, emotional and mental health<sup>j</sup>, as well as on their families, communities and society at large. These children should therefore be treated primarily as victims of violations of international law,<sup>k</sup> with primary consideration given to their best interests, such as rehabilitation and reintegration.

The level of organization of the group is not necessarily related to the level of violence of the crimes perpetrated. French authorities have, for instance, dismantled a large criminal network organizing the exploitation of more than two thousand children in theft, operating in the south of France, Spain, Italy and beyond, with a large number of petty thefts over a period of two years. The logistics for moving the children around were very well organized. The group was involved in complex money laundering schemes and was made up of active or retired thieves organized in hierarchically modes with specific assigned roles.<sup>1</sup>

Other cases refer to East Asian victims trafficked for the purpose of scamming at call-centres. Victims were forced to defraud wealthy people by contacting them and convincing them to make large bank transfers. The victims of trafficking engaged in the scam were forced to live and work segregated from society, with no remuneration, by the criminals who were cashing in on the proceeds of the fraud.<sup>m</sup> The very same scheme was also reported by media in different parts of Europe, suggesting that this could be a form of trafficking that may be widespread around the world.<sup>n</sup>

Besides the structured level of organization, trafficking in persons for exploitation in criminal activity normally implies a high level of monetary return connected to the illegal markets that victims' exploitation is contributing to. Drug trafficking is very lucrative<sup>o</sup> and exploiting people to engage in this crime reduces not only the economic costs, but also the risk of arrest. The French petty thefts case resulted in profits estimated at more than one million euros in less than two years of activities.

This form of criminal activity may still be limited in terms of numbers detected but brings large economic and criminal incentives.

This type of trafficking creates complexity in legal and criminological frameworks. Trafficking in persons to commit a crime represents a concrete form of poly-crime, with structured criminal organizations active in different criminal activities. One crime is human trafficking and others are the crime that victims are obliged to perpetrate: drug trafficking, systemic fraud, organized petty thefts or others where traffickers have a solid know-how. In terms of victims, there are two categories: the victims of thefts, fraud or other crimes and the trafficking victims that are the perpetrators of these crimes.

This is the complexity that traffickers exploit and that raise the challenges in terms of how criminal justice and protection systems should treat victims in these circumstances in order to create disincentives for this kind of

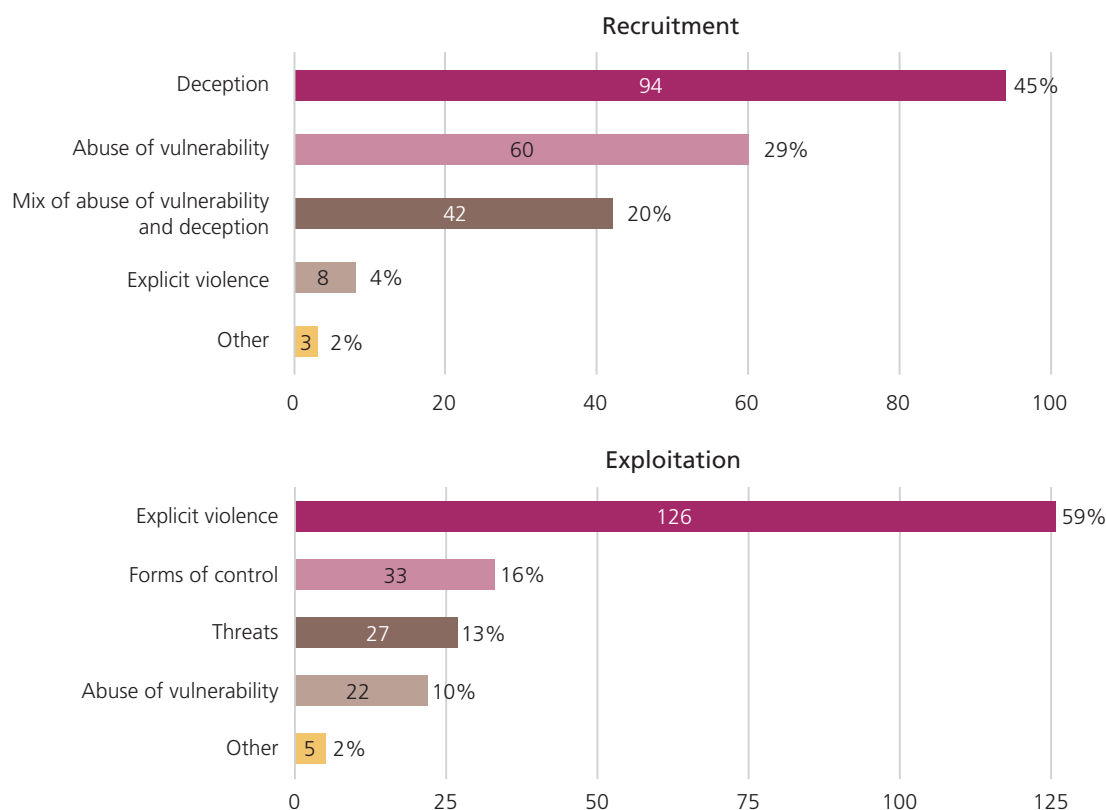
traffickers, protect victims, and ensure their access to justice.

Forcing trafficking victims to perpetrate crime is a way for criminals to make victims liable. If the victims perceive themselves as “partners in crime”, they are not likely to report their abusers.<sup>p</sup> In addition to trafficking victims' fears for their personal safety and of reprisals by the traffickers, the added fear of prosecution and punishment only further discourages victims from seeking protection or cooperating with law enforcement.

- a Court case 60 – Norway 2012, court case 61 – Norway 2012, court case 136 – Poland 2014, court case 184 – Norway 2015, court case 267 – France 2015, court case 311 – Norway 2017, court case 341 – United Kingdom 2017, court case 354 – Poland 2016, court case 404 – Austria 2018, court case 415 – France 2017, court case 475 – France 2019 (Ali Baba case), court case 481 – Lithuania.
- b Court case 308 – Netherlands 2016, court case 439 – Mexico 2017, court case 475 – France 2019; court case 470 – Germany, see National Crime Agency *County Lines Drug Supply, Vulnerability and Harm* 2018, January 2019, page 1.
- c National Crime Agency *County Lines Violence, Exploitation & Drug Supply* 2017, January 2018 page 1, page 14.
- d Healy, Claire (2019). *The Strength to Carry On: Resilience and Vulnerability to Trafficking and Other Abuses among People Travelling along Migration Routes to Europe*. Vienna: ICMPD., page 210-212
- e Court case 265 – El Salvador 2017, court case 439 – Mexico 2017.
- f Uganda Police, *Annual Crime Report 2018*, 2018, Kampala, page 50.
- g Court case 265 – El Salvador 2017.
- h United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2017). *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System*. Vienna: United Nations, p. 2
- i See A/70/836-S/2016/360, A/69/926-S/2015/409 and A/HRC/30/67.
- j United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice Section*, 2017 at 2.
- k Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (Paris Principles), February 2007, <https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf> para.3.6.
- l Court case 267 – France 2015.
- m Court case 222 – Australia 2017.
- n See press articles in Slovenia: <https://english.sta.si/2753753/prison-sentences-handed-out-in-taiwanese-call-centres-case>, in Spain; <https://cn.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUSKCN-1T80IP> in Croatia; [http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off\\_the\\_Wire/2018-01/30/content\\_50350812.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2018-01/30/content_50350812.htm) in Portugal; <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/police-arrest-people-traffickers/50981> All accessed 11 June 2020;
- o United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2020) *World Drug Report 2020* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.XI.6). Booklet 4, page 14.
- p Shared Hope International (2020) *Responding to Sex Trafficking Victim-Offender Intersectionality: A Guide for Criminal Justice Stakeholders*, Villanova Law Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation; Minna Viuhko (2019) *Just trust me and you'll make a fortune – relationships between offenders and victims of human trafficking*, *Nordic Journal of Criminology*, 20:2, 196-212.



**FIG. 27** Number and shares of cases, by means used by traffickers for the recruitment\* and for the exploitation\*\* of adult victims, as reported in GLOTIP court cases



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*This information was reported in 207 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

\*\*This information was reported in 213 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

**The means used by traffickers: tools of control**

Traffickers employ different tactics to gain control over and exploit their victims. The means used by traffickers are listed in the international definition of the crime: *“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”*.<sup>78</sup>

According to this definition, in the context of trafficking of adults<sup>79</sup>, at least one of these “means” must be employed in order to constitute the offence of trafficking in

persons. In most accounts of trafficking, however, traffickers make use of different means in combination or in sequence at different phases of the trafficking process. They typically start out using deceptive means, while later resort to more violent means. It appears traffickers make use of different means during the different phases of the trafficking process.

**First establishing trust, second forcing the will**

The means used by traffickers to recruit adult victims<sup>80</sup> are characterized by an almost exclusive absence of direct physical violence. In fact, among those considered for this analysis, only eight cases report physical violence being used to recruit or otherwise gain control of their victims. In the recruitment phase, traffickers commonly make use of deceptive ploys, such as promising false income

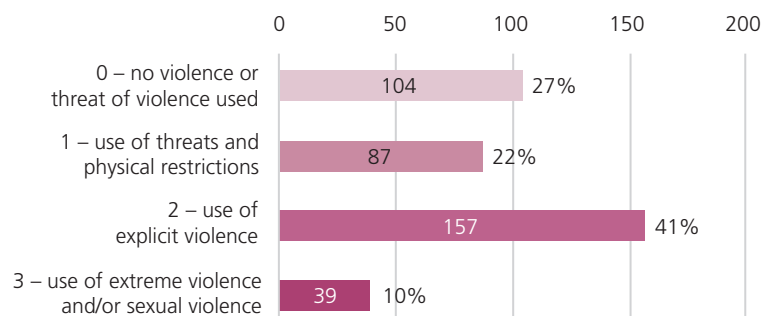
78 The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; Article 3, paragraph (a).

79 When the victim is a child, a trafficking act for the purpose exploitation is enough to constitute the crime of trafficking definitively and the means become irrelevant. See The UN Protocol, article 3, paragraph (c).

80 The analysis refers only to adult victims as, according to the UN Trafficking Protocol, when the victim is a child, the “means” are not required to define a trafficking case.



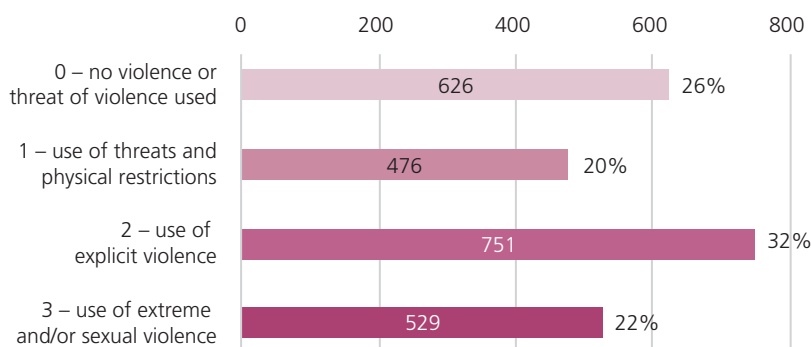
**FIG. 28** Number and shares of cases, by level of violence at any point of the trafficking process (adults and child victims), as reported in GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The level of violence used by traffickers was reported in 387 court cases of a total of 489 collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

**FIG. 29** Number and shares of victims, by level violence at any point of the trafficking process (adults and child victims), as reported in GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The analysis refers to the 2,382 victims reported in 387 court cases which mentioned the level of violence used by traffickers.

opportunities. The means used span from fake and lucrative job advertisements<sup>81</sup> to direct outreach by traffickers under the pretense of wanting friendships.<sup>82</sup> Deception is often used in combination with targeting and abusing the victim's situation of economic need.

Even if the means are not required to define a case of trafficking when the victims are minors, it should be noted that the proportion of the means of recruitment remains broadly the same if cases of child trafficking are included in the analysis.

Contrary to the recruitment phase, during exploitation, a large number of court cases reported the use of explicit violence. Still, a significant number of cases reported other forms of controls like the confiscation of travel documents and/or taking advantage of the migration status of victims as a mean to control the victim during exploitation. Likewise in this analysis, the results do not change if the cases of child trafficking are considered.

The violent nature of this crime is clear. Although not necessarily representative of the trafficking phenomenon, victims were physically coerced into exploitative practices in more than a half of the cases of trafficking in persons reported by Member States. The results are broadly confirmed when the number of victims, rather than cases, are considered. In about 10 per cent of these cases, and for 22 per cent of the victims considered, traffickers make use of extreme violence against the victims.

It should be noted, however, that in a considerable number of cases, traffickers did not appear to use explicit violence during the entire trafficking process. In about 27 per cent of the analysed court cases and 26 per cent of the victims considered, traffickers made use of non-violent or physically restrictive means. In most of these cases, traffickers abused victims' vulnerabilities, for instance, an emotional or economic dependence on the trafficker.

81 Court case 219 – Egypt 2014.

82 Court case 99 – Canada 2013.

## Female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation as defendants: a case law analysis

Through a gender lens, UNODC analysed case law on trafficking for sexual exploitation involving female defendants, who had been or were simultaneously exploited as trafficking victims. These victims are defined here as victims-defendants (V/Ds). The resulting analysis is based on 53 judicial decisions<sup>a</sup> from 16 jurisdictions.<sup>b</sup> The results that emerge from the analysis show that V/Ds are typically engaged in acts proximate to exploitation (recruitment of new victims, controlling victims, collecting proceeds, etc). In this way, traffickers use V/Ds to shield themselves from prosecution. Criminalizing victims who have engaged in acts of trafficking directly plays into their instrumentalization by traffickers to avoid punishment.

The case law analysis further highlights the intersection between human trafficking and domestic and intimate partner violence. In at least 25 per cent of the cases examined, V/Ds were subject to multiple forms of gender-based violence prior to and while being trafficked, including from early childhood. Despite the critical nature of the V/D's relationship to the trafficker in the case law examined, very few courts addressed these dimensions. Furthermore, an examination of victims' roles in offending also revealed a different set of motives from those typically ascribed to traffickers, including seeking alleviation from their own exploitation, securing the trafficker's affection and having no alternative but to obey the trafficker's orders, among others.

The analysis further demonstrates that the "means" of coercion and "abuse of a position of vulnerability" remain unclear in judicial practice. The same applies with the issue of "consent." All of these aspects are crucial, as the relationship between the V/Ds and the traffickers in many of the cases could be characterized by the dynamics of "coercive control," as it is understood in the domestic and intimate partner violence context.

Moreover, the case law analysis illuminates several mechanisms by which V/Ds are excluded from the protection theoretically offered by the non-punishment principle, expunction statutes and international guidelines, such as the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules). These generally include burden of proof requirements, early plea agreements, temporality requirements and explicit statutory exceptions provided for V/Ds. Whether "forced criminality" is recognised as a "purpose" within national anti-trafficking legislation may also have an impact on the application of the non-punishment principle. In addition, the analysis shows that courts also engaged in divergent interpretations of the V/D's prior trafficking experience and other forms of victimisation for the purposes of sentencing, whereby the V/D's trafficking experience was applied as both an aggravating and mitigating circumstance. *This case law analysis is available at:* <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/publications.html>

a Available in the case law database of the UNODC Knowledge Portal on Trafficking in Persons, URL: <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/v3/htmls/index.html>.

b Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Serbia, South Africa, United Kingdom, the United States and the European Court of Human Rights.

## Trafficking flows

Based on the data collected, UNODC was able to record 534 different trafficking flows.<sup>83</sup> More than 120 countries reported having detected victims from more than 140 different countries of origin. However, it is likely that some flows have not been detected by national authorities, and the diffusion of human trafficking may be more complex than what emerges from this analysis. The trafficking flows are generally characterized by a lim-

ited geographical range. Victims are typically trafficked within geographically close areas.<sup>84</sup> Globally, most detected victims are citizens of the countries where they are detected. In 2018, over half of victims whose citizenship was reported were detected in their own countries.

83 For the purpose of this analysis "flow" has been defined as a combination of one origin country and one destination where at least 5 victims were detected during the period considered.

84 See page 13 of the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.V.6). ; See pages 38-39 of the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.10); See page 41-42 of the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6); See page 41-44 of the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2).

**FIG. 30** Shares of victims detected within their own country's borders, by subregion, 2014, 2016 and 2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Moreover, the share of detected victims domestically trafficked has increased over the last few years.

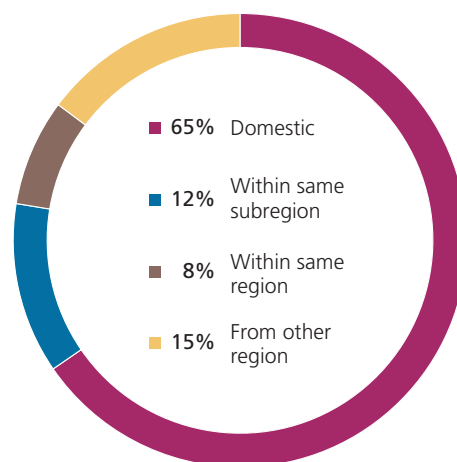
Yet, not all countries have detected the same levels of domestic trafficking. Most countries in South Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia recorded higher levels of domestic trafficking compared to other regions. Over the last few years, however, countries in Western and Central Europe and in North America have also increasingly detected their own nationals trafficked within national borders.

Analysis of the information emerging from the court cases could shed light on the common characteristics of domestic trafficking in high income countries.<sup>85</sup>

In these countries, domestic trafficking tends to be different compared to patterns that characterize cross-border trafficking. In most of the cases considered for this analy-

sis, victims are girls or young women trafficked for sexual exploitation. Most of these victims are targeted due to personal risk factors, such as behavioural issues associated with a difficult upbringing or addiction. Following the World Health Organization classification, these risk

**FIG. 31** Shares of detected victims, by geographical reach of trafficking flows,\* 2018 (or most recent)

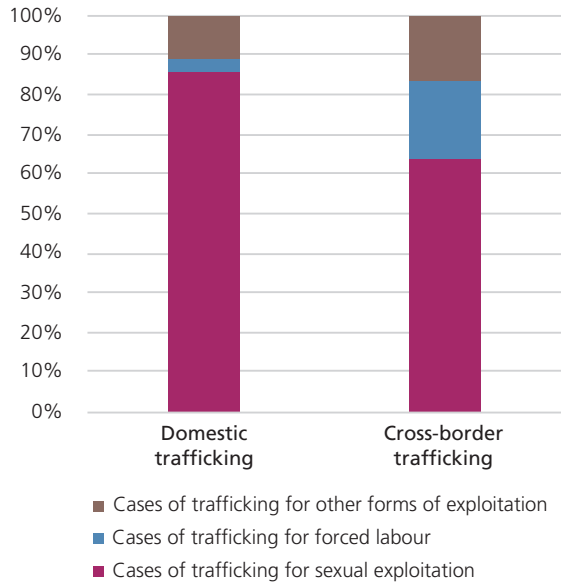


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Estimate based on 36,137 detected victims whose citizenship was reported by 105 countries.

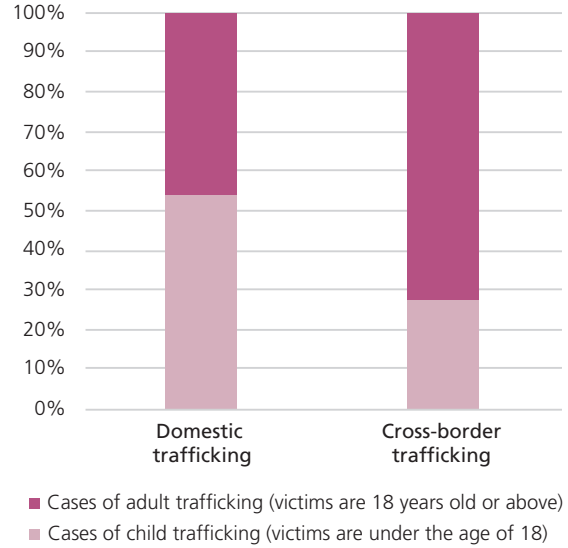
85 The court cases analysed were collected from 34 countries classified by the World Bank as high-income countries: Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay.

**FIG. 32** Shares of cases, by forms of exploitation, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases. Comparison domestic and cross-border trafficking in high income countries\*



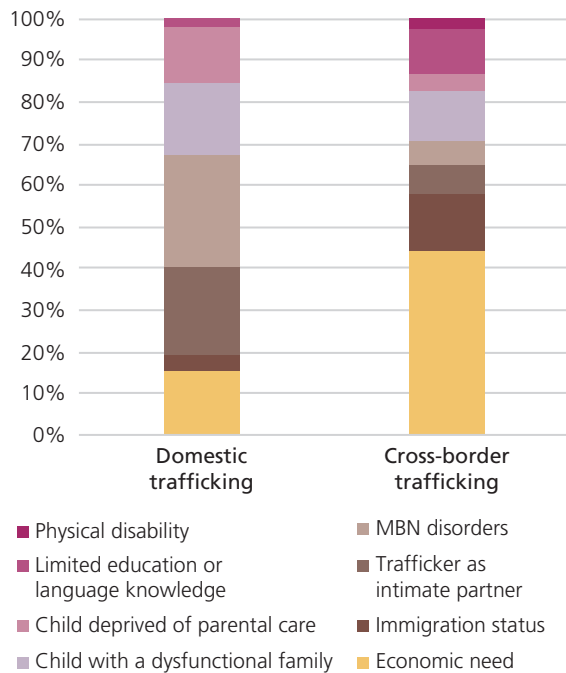
Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*The analysis was conducted on 54 cases of domestic trafficking and in 172 cases of cross-border trafficking that reported the form of exploitation.

**FIG. 33** Shares of cases, by age group, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases. Comparison domestic and cross-border trafficking in high income countries\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*The analysis was conducted on 56 cases of domestic trafficking and in 172 cases of cross-border trafficking that reported the age of the victims.

**FIG. 34** Shares of cases, by condition before trafficking, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases. Comparison domestic and cross-border trafficking in high income countries\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.  
 \*Of the total 249 cases collected for the purpose of this Report, information on the age of the victims was reported in 52 cases of domestic trafficking and in 112 cases of cross-border trafficking.

factors are defined as *mental, behavioural or neurodevelopmental disorders (MBN disorders)*.<sup>86</sup> In other cases, victims are found to be emotionally attached to the trafficker or part of a dysfunctional family.

On the other hand, cross-border trafficking victims in high income countries are more likely to be adults, trafficked for a variety of exploitative purposes, and targeted because they are in economic need or with irregular migration status.

**The flows in domestic trafficking; limited movement and internal migration**

While victims of domestic trafficking are not transported across borders, court narratives show that they may still be subject to significant geographical movements.

86 The International Classification (ICD-11) of the World Health Organization defines ‘Mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders’ as syndromes characterised by clinically significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes that underlie mental and behavioural functioning. These disturbances are usually associated with distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. See <https://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/>

In a relatively large number of court cases, victims were exploited at a location in close proximity to where they were recruited. A typical example involves girls recruited in a suburban area and exploited in nearby motels or bars. Armenian authorities, for example, reported a case in which underage girls who were recruited in the surroundings of a hotel in the capital city were then sexually exploited within the premises of the same hotel.<sup>87</sup>

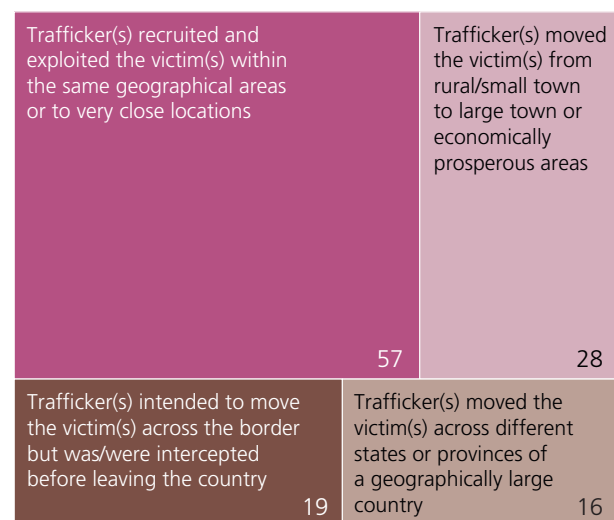
In other cases, traffickers moved victims from poorer to richer areas, in flows following patterns of internal migration. Authorities in the Dominican Republic, for instance, reported victims recruited in the suburbs of the capital city who were sexually exploited in the tourist zones along the coast.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, victims trafficked from poor communities to tourist areas is a reported pattern.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, trafficking may also follow the flows towards places of economic activity. Some countries in West Africa reported children recruited in rural areas are exploited for forced labour on cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire or in fishing on Lake Volta in Ghana.<sup>90</sup> Cases of victims trafficked from small villages to urban areas are also frequently reported.<sup>91</sup>

Additionally, victims of domestic trafficking may still be trafficked across large distances when they are recruited and exploited in different states or provinces of large countries, such as Argentina,<sup>92</sup> Canada,<sup>93</sup> China,<sup>94</sup> Mexico,<sup>95</sup> the Russian Federation<sup>96</sup> or the United States of America.<sup>97</sup>

Yet, not all cases of domestic trafficking were intended to be as such. Some national victims may be detected before they can be trafficked abroad: even if they did not leave the country, their cases relate to cross-border trafficking, rather than domestic trafficking.<sup>98</sup>

The Hungarian authorities, for example, reported the case of a young man who agreed to sell his Hungarian girlfriend for sexual exploitation abroad. Investigators detected the case and assisted the victim before she left country.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Moldovan authorities intercepted a young woman recruited in Moldova who was to be trafficked to Turkey, together with her trafficker, at the Chisinau airport before leaving the country.<sup>100</sup> In these cases, the victim was recruited for the purpose of exploitation – which makes this a trafficking in persons case – but the transportation across the border was prevented and consequently the victim was recorded in the country of recruitment.

**FIG. 35** Number of cases of domestic trafficking, by geographical reach, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*Based on 120 court cases of domestic trafficking where the movement of the victim was specified in the case narrative.

87 Court case 78 – Armenia, 2014.

88 Court case 258 – Dominican Republic, 2017.

89 Court case 124 – Mexico, 2014; court case 214 – Argentina, 2015; court case 215 – Argentina, 2015; court case 255 – Dominican Republic, 2017; court case 148 – South Africa, 2013.

90 Court case 373 – Cote d'Ivoire 2014; court case 374 – Cote d'Ivoire 2015; court case 489 – Ghana 2018.

91 See Court case 4 – Armenia 2012; court case 38 – El Salvador 2008; court case 56 – Mexico 2011; court case 63 – Poland year NA; court case 143 – Russian Federation 2013; court case 167 – Moldova 2013; court case 208 – China 2014; court case 345 – Honduras 2014; court case 397 – Argentina 2018; court case 406 – Bolivia 2018; court case 451 – Myanmar 2019; court case 489 – Colombia 2018.

92 Court case 212 – Argentina 2017; court case 213 – Argentina 2017.

93 Court case 55 – Mexico 2010; court case 123 – Mexico 2015; court case 440 – Mexico 2017.

94 Court case 206 – China 2014.

95 Court case 25 – Canada; court case 26 – Canada 2012; court case 243 – Canada 2017; court case 446 – Canada 2018.

96 Court case 143 – Russian Federation 2014.

97 Court case 71 – USA 2013; court case 182 – USA 2014; court case 183 – USA 2014; court case 460 – USA 2018.

98 Court case 111 – Hungary 2012; court case 127 – Mongolia 2012; court case 145 – Russian Federation 2014; court case 155 – Vietnam 2014; court case 168 – Moldova 2013; court case 231 – Belarus 2016; court case 246 – Chile 2017; court case 249 – Cote d'Ivoire 2014; court case 266 – El Salvador 2017; court case 308 – The Netherlands 2016; court case 315 – Panama 2016; court case 368 – Russian Federation 2016; court case 376 – Cote d'Ivoire 2016; court case 280 – Morocco 2017; court case 389 – Russian Federation 2017; court case 447 – Myanmar 2018; court case 448 – Myanmar 2018; court case 449 – Myanmar 2018; court case 449 – Myanmar 2018; court case 449 – Myanmar 2019.

99 Court case 111 – Hungary 2012.

100 Court case 168 – Moldova 2013.



## Increasing representation of domestic trafficking – a rise in severity or greater attention paid by national authorities?

The continuous increase of the proportion of national victims in the total number of detected victims may reflect a number of changes: an actual increase in the trafficking of national victims, an increase in the awareness and priority of national authorities and/or an evolution of national jurisprudence. Greater detection may be attributed to increased awareness due to better training of service providers, law enforcement, health care workers and the public to identify victims.<sup>a</sup> Growing public awareness of victims of trafficking is influenced by media portrayal of victims and may impact bystander recognition and reporting of victims.<sup>b</sup>

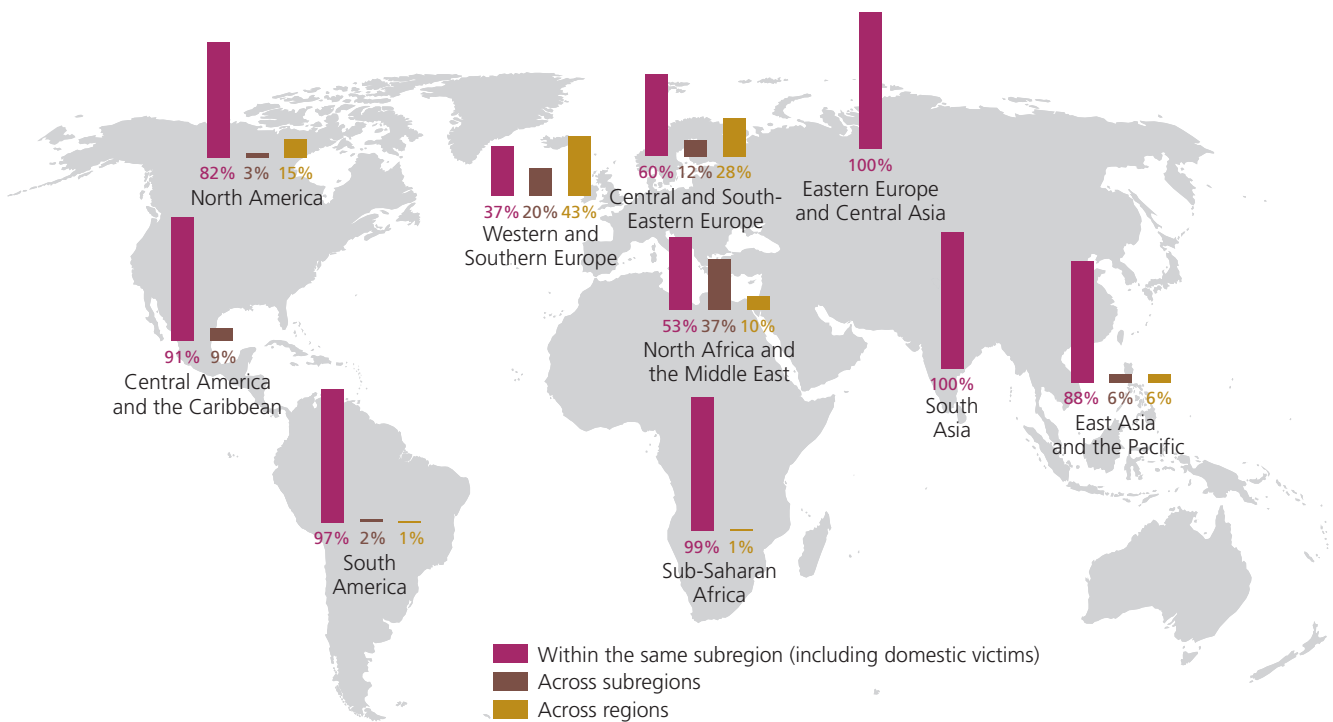
It could be that such forms of domestic trafficking have existed for long time before they began to be recorded as human trafficking, but that only now national authorities are identifying these as trafficking in persons. Similarly, the rising number of domestic trafficking cases could be connected to different prioritization of certain forms of exploitations, namely child sexual exploitation. Trends in cases of trafficking in persons in countries in North America reveal a notable increase in prosecutions of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation among women and girls. Specific to the United States, reports of trafficking prosecutions may reflect the long-term effects of earlier normative changes and policy initiatives in the context of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000<sup>c</sup>, subsequent amendments and changes to federal legislation, as well as new policies regarding child sexual exploitation. With each reauthorization, the TVPA has evolved from its initial primary focus on international trafficking and funding services for immigrant victims in the United States to a greater focus on domestic victims, particularly those trafficked for sexual exploitation.<sup>d</sup>

With this type of policy development, the increase in domestic trafficking may not necessarily reflect an increased incidence of this type of crime, but rather may be construed as the result of more resources invested in combating child sexual exploitation than in the past.

There are quite a few countries reporting new forms of trafficking targeting mainly national victims. The United Kingdom, for instance, has been recording more victims of trafficking forced to transport drugs. Victims are mainly British boys and young men, and the number has been increasing over the last few years. National authorities report these victims are youth with mental health or behavioural issues and, often, from a disadvantaged family background.<sup>e</sup>

- a. Kiss, L. and C. Zimmerman (2019), Human trafficking and labor exploitation: Toward identifying, implementing, and evaluating effective responses. *PLOS medicine*, 2019. 16(1): p. e1002740.
- b. Bishop, R.A., C.V. Morgan, and L. Erickson (2013), *Public awareness of human trafficking in Europe: How concerned are European citizens?* *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 2013. 11(2): p. 113-135.
- c. Current federal trafficking in persons legislation in the United States of America includes forced labor and commercial sex.
- d. A 2016 report conducted by the US Government Accountability Office on the assessment of domestic human trafficking grants reported increased funding for human trafficking victim services. From FY2014 to FY2015, national institutions received \$1.44 million in increased funding for domestic trafficking victims, whereas, funding for foreign victim services increased by \$0.1 million (See United States Government Accountability Office, Report Congressional Committees, *Human Trafficking: Agencies have taken steps to assess prevalence, address victims issues, and avoid grant duplication*, GAO-16-555, June 2016, pp 22-24).  
See also: Brennan, D. (2008), *Competing claims of victimhood? Foreign and domestic victims of trafficking in the United States*. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 2008. 5(4): p. 45.  
Siskin, A. and L.S. Wyler, *Trafficking in persons: US policy and issues for Congress*. 2012, Congressional Research Service: Washington, DC.  
Zhang, S.X., (2012) *Trafficking of Migrant Laborers in San Diego County: Looking for a Hidden Population*. 2012, San Diego State University: San Diego, CA.
- e. United Kingdom National Crime Agency *County Lines Violence, Exploitation and Drug Supply*, 2017, National Briefing Report, November 2017, page 15.

MAP. 7 Shares of detected victims by type of trafficking flows, by subregion, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**Cross-border trafficking; subregional, transregional and global flows**

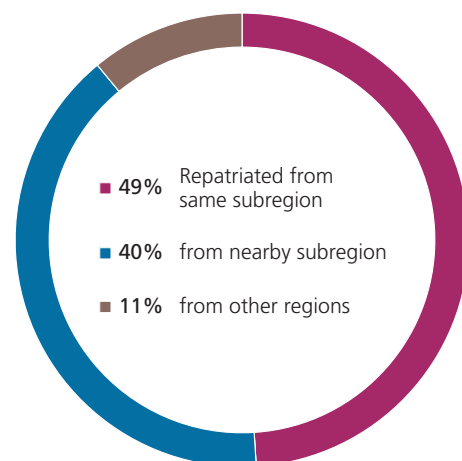
Most cross-border trafficking flows around the world are limited within the same subregion or region. Accordingly, most victims detected in South America are citizens of other South American countries, with a limited flow originating from the Caribbean islands. Most victims detected in Europe are Europeans, but with significant flows originating from other regions, and so forth.

Western and Southern Europe, the affluent countries of the Middle East and North America are the only destinations with significant levels of detected victims trafficked from other regions.

Data on repatriated victims confirm the broad pattern of trafficking being mainly confined within subregions.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, repatriation data also reveal additional long-distance trafficking activity. South American citizens, for example, have been found to be trafficked to and repatriated from Europe, North America, East Asia and the

Middle East. Victims from West, East and Southern Africa are also trafficked to and repatriated from the Middle East. Similarly, repatriation data show that victims from Central and South-Eastern Europe are also trafficked to and repatriated from Eastern Europe.

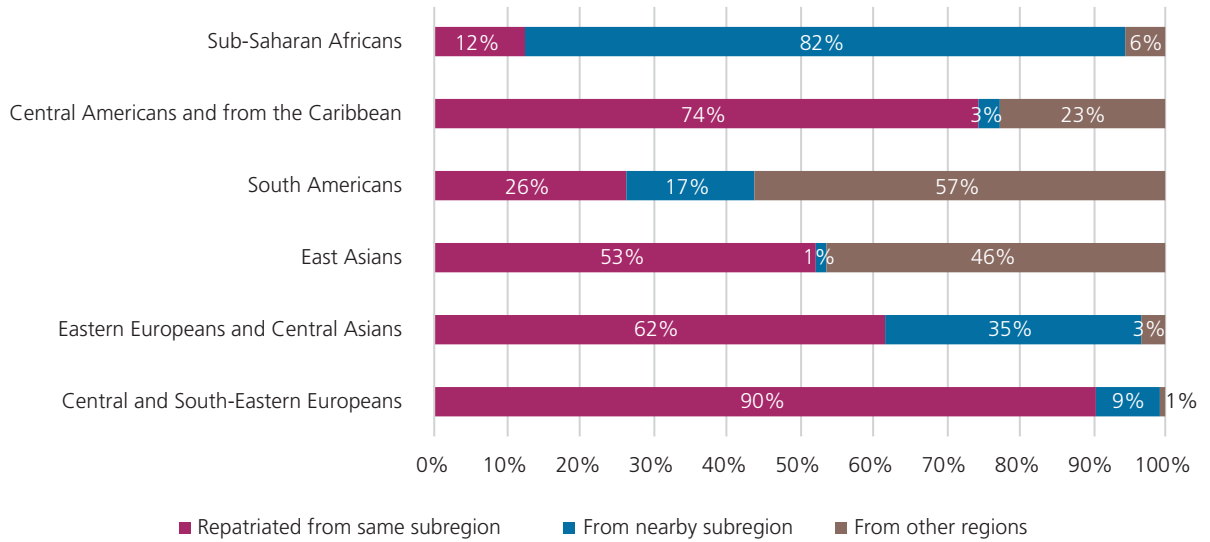
FIG. 36 Shares of victims of trafficking repatriated to their country of origin, by type of trafficking flows, 2017–2018  
30 countries (n=4,589)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

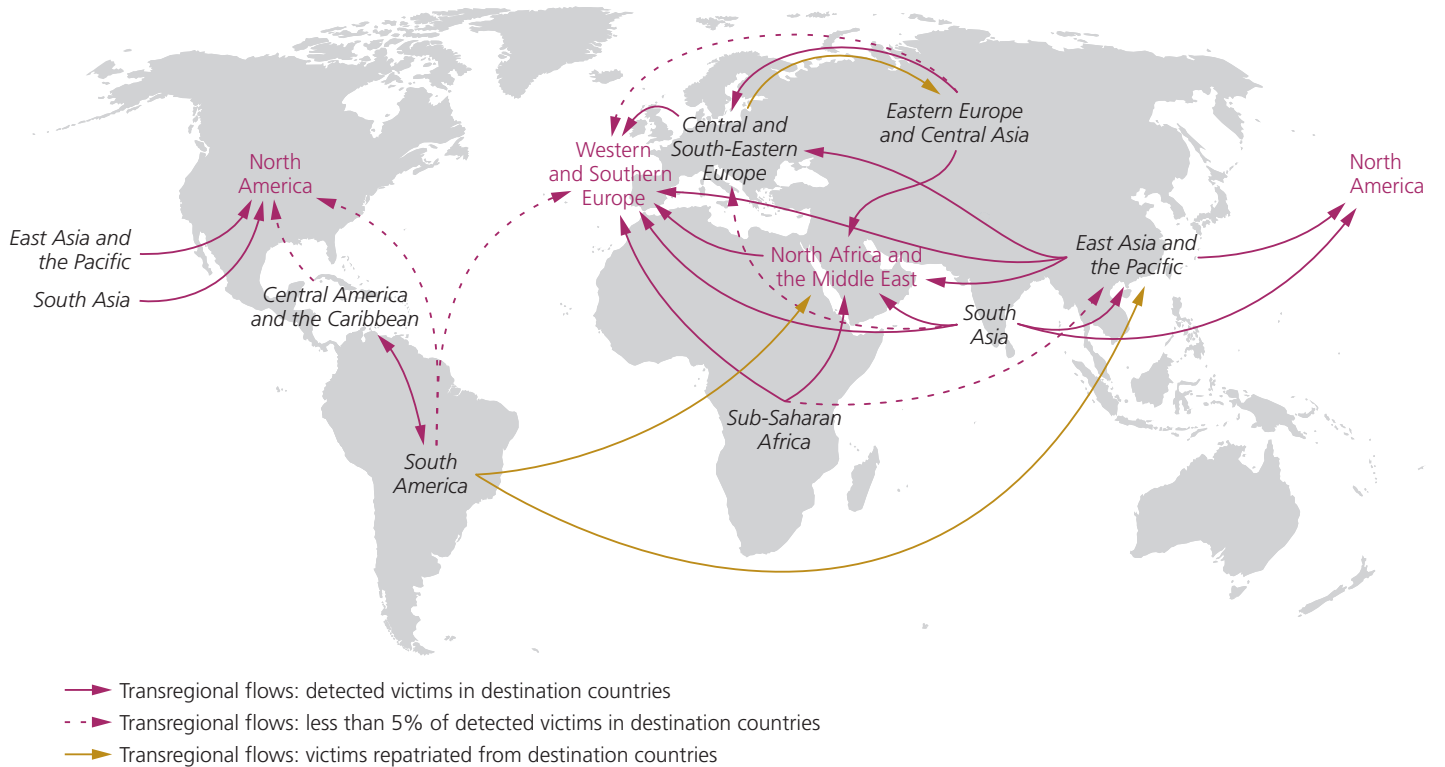
<sup>101</sup> Repatriation data refer to countries reporting their own citizens detected as victims of trafficking in persons in another country and repatriated. The UNODC questionnaire used for this Report enquires national authorities about the number of their own citizens repatriated per year. It further enquires on the countries these victims were repatriated from. This information is used as a proxy for the destinations of these trafficking victims.

**FIG. 37** Shares of victims of trafficking who were repatriated to their country of origin, by area of repatriation, 2017–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

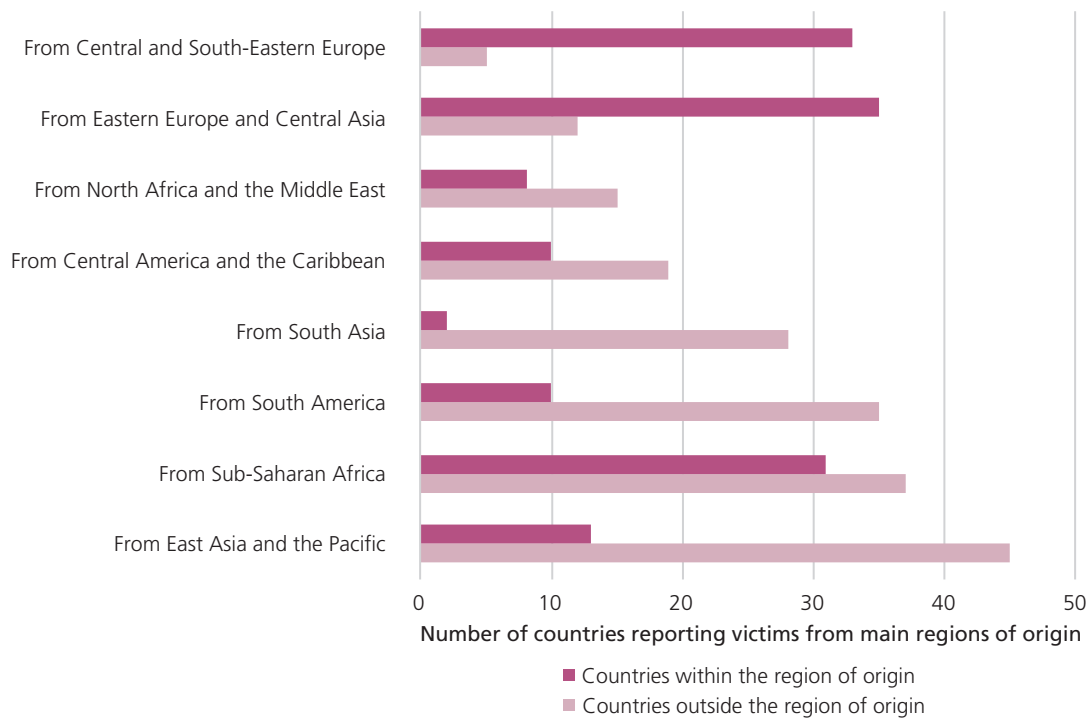
**MAP. 8** Main detected transregional flows, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**FIG. 38** Number of countries where victims were detected to be trafficked to, by area of citizenship of the victims and geographical reach of trafficking flows, 2017–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

When data on detection and repatriation is considered together, it shows that Europe, the Middle East, North America and some countries in East Asia and the Pacific are destinations for trafficking victims from a wide range of origins. In particular, for the period 2017–2018, countries in Western and Southern Europe detected victims of 125 different citizenships.

As far as the origin of transregional trafficking flows is concerned, during the reporting period, victims from East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa were detected in a large number of countries in almost every region of the world. On the contrary, Central and South-Eastern European victims were detected in large numbers, but mainly in European destinations.

## Institutional responses

### Legislation

As of August 2020, 169 countries among the 181 assessed have legislation in place that criminalizes trafficking in persons broadly in line with the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

Between August 2018 and August 2020, one country amended its trafficking legislation to be partially in compliance and two countries amended their legislation to

become fully in accordance with the definition of trafficking from the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

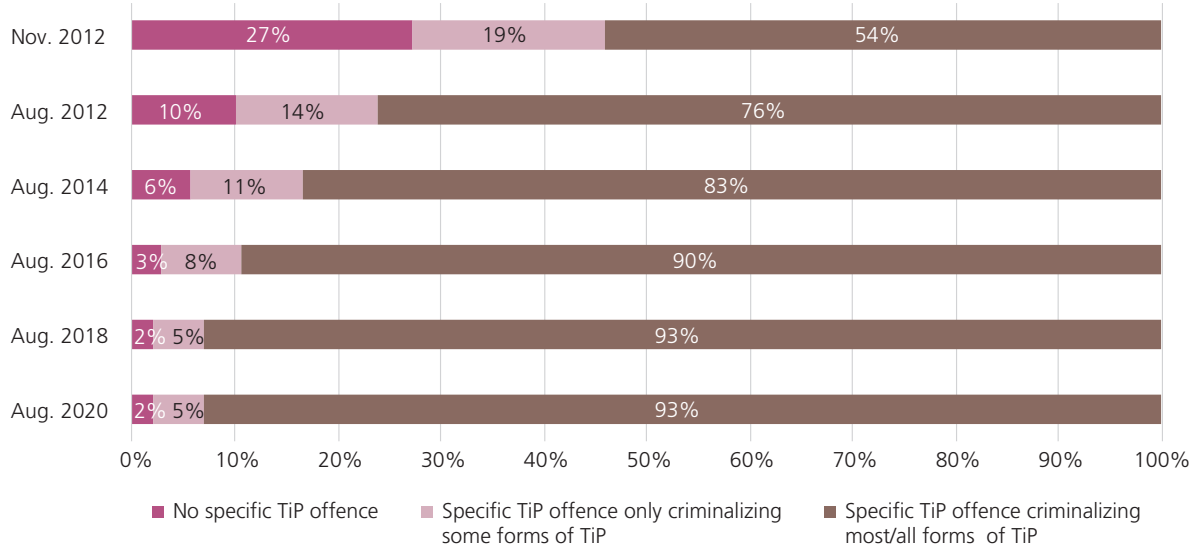
For 12 of the 193 United Nations Member States, the status of their trafficking legislation is unknown to UNODC. Another nine countries have anti-trafficking legislation that only criminalizes some aspects of the trafficking definition (for example, only trafficking for sexual exploitation or trafficking in children). Three countries have criminal codes that do not include the offence of trafficking in persons.

Some countries in Africa and the Middle East either lack trafficking legislation or have partial legislative coverage. Other countries in Asia and Latin America still define trafficking in persons differently from United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, considering only some aspects of the crime.

### Criminal Justice Response

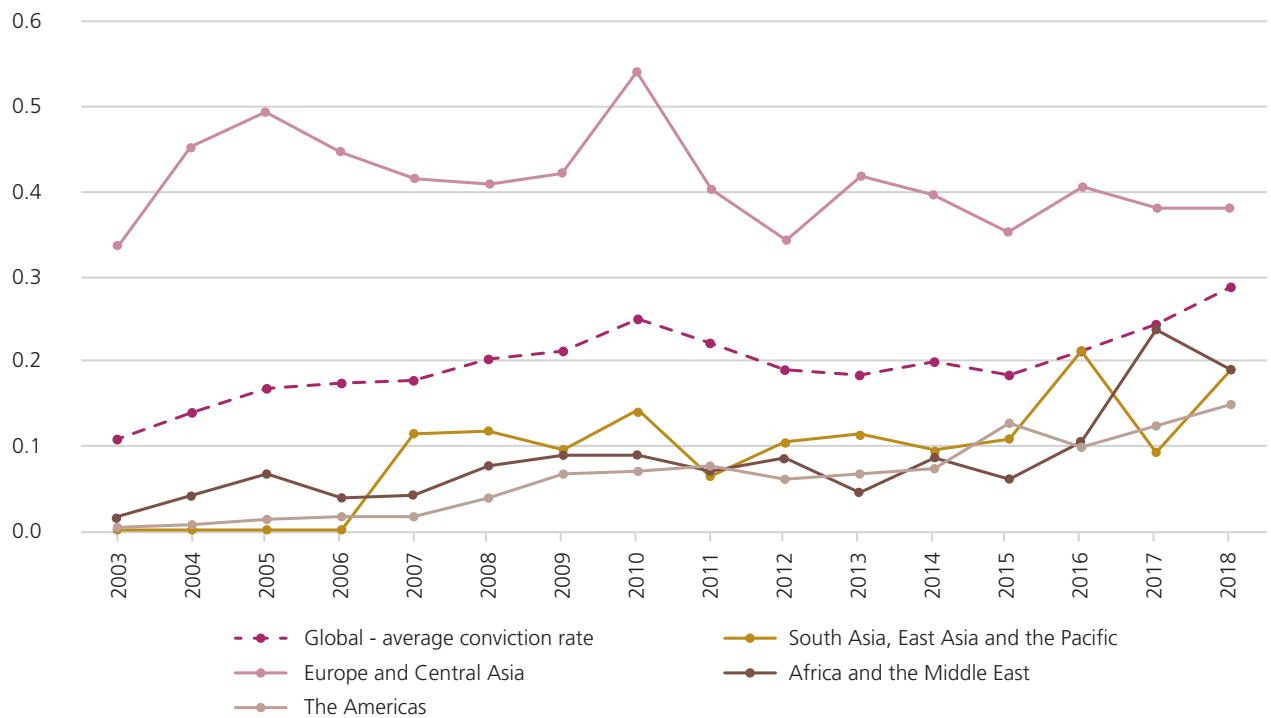
Over the last decade, UNODC has reported on the weak criminal justice actions taken by national authorities to combat trafficking in persons, demonstrated by the limited number of convictions for trafficking in persons reported by countries.

**FIG. 39** Criminalization of trafficking in persons as a specific offence covering all or some forms of trafficking in persons (TiP) as defined in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, shares of countries 2003–2020, (181 countries)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 40** Average conviction rates (per 100,000 population) globally and by region, 2003–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

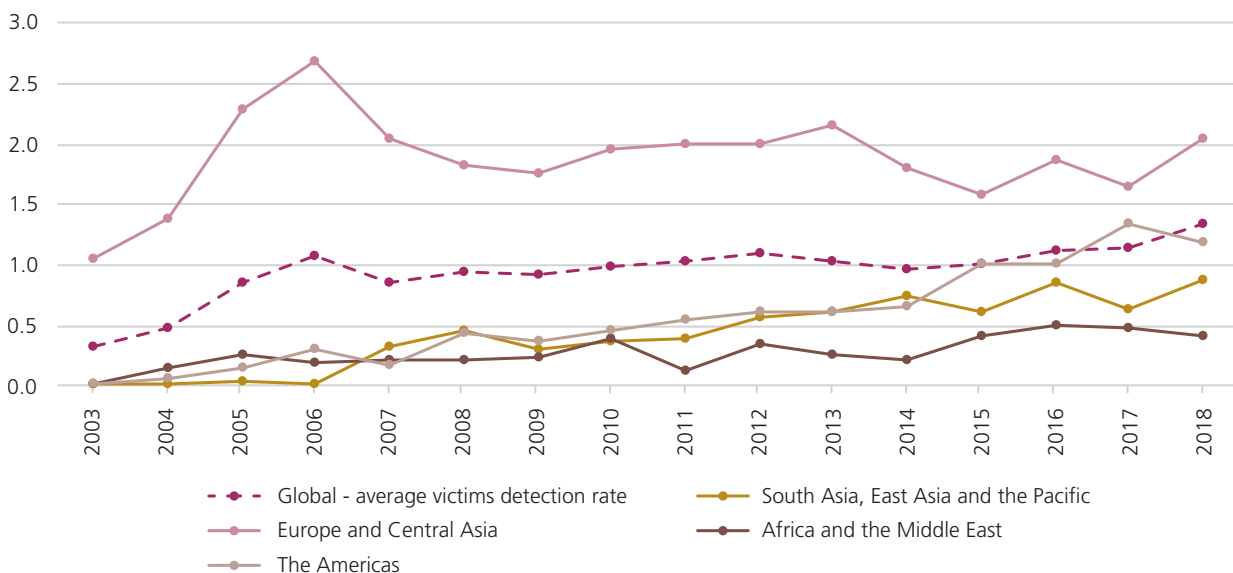


The number of convictions in any given country typically reflect two main factors: the actual severity of the crime and the capacity of state authorities to convict criminals. High numbers can generally be understood as an indication of multiple incidents of trafficking, or as an indication of an efficient criminal justice system. Therefore, there is no ideal threshold of convictions that may indicate an effective response to trafficking in persons. However, recording no or a few convictions per year in countries whose citizens are trafficked and detected by authorities in other countries, is a red flag for an alarming level of impunity.

Over the years, the conviction rate for trafficking in persons has increased in parallel to a broader adoption of the offence of trafficking in persons in national legislations.

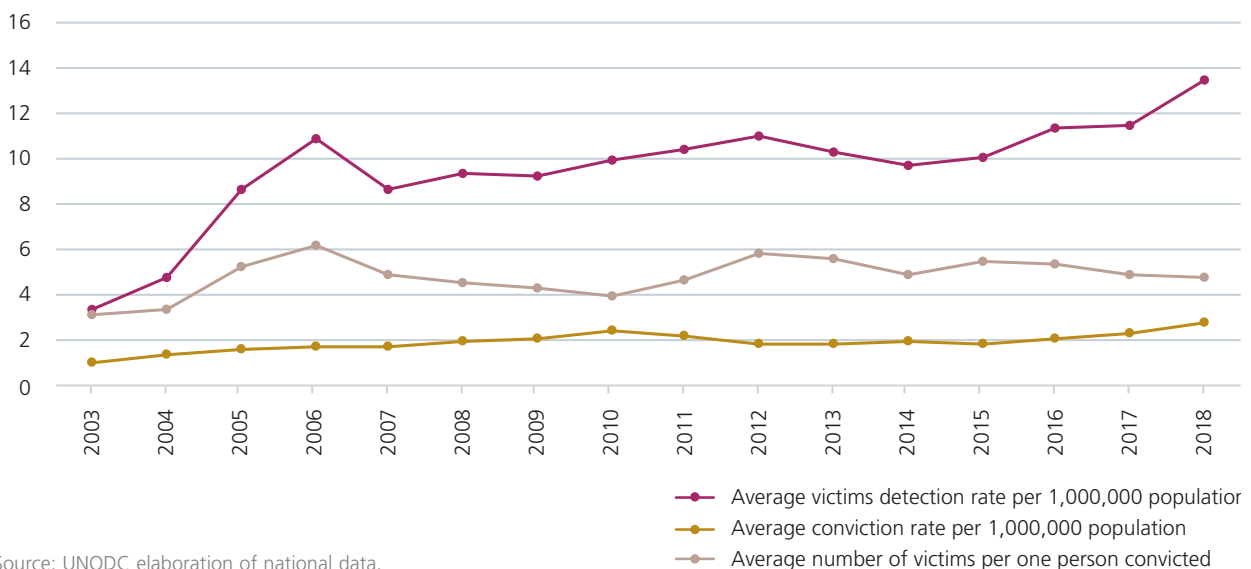
Globally, the number of persons convicted per population (conviction rate) has almost tripled since the year 2003. Countries that introduced anti-trafficking legislation before the year 2003, such as many European countries, continue to record a higher conviction rates than other parts of the world. Those with more recent legislation record significant increases compared to the previous years.

**FIG. 41** Average victims detection rates (per 100,000 population) globally and by region, 2003–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 42** Average number of victims per one person convicted of trafficking in persons, 2003–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

As a matter of convenience, using a rate on 1,000,000 population, it can be counted 1 person per 1,000,000 population was convicted globally in 2003, increasing to 3 in 2018 (see fig. 42).

While European countries record the highest conviction rates globally, their trend is stable or decreasing. It is difficult to assess whether this is the result of a saturation of law enforcement capacity, a lower prioritization of the fight against trafficking or a reduction in trafficking activity.

Most of the recorded increase in the global conviction rates is the result of more convictions recorded in East Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa still record a limited number of convictions. Data from South Asian countries are difficult to consider over a longer period, due to changes in legislation and a lack of consistent data over the years.

Global and regional trends in conviction rates mirror trends in the number of victims detected per population. Using a 1,000,000 population rate, in 2018 each country on average reported about 13 victims of trafficking, more than triple the four victims recorded in 2003 (see fig. 42).

Similarly with victims, European countries recorded much higher rates of victim detection compared to the rest of the world. This number, however, has been stagnating or decreasing over the last few years. On the contrary, countries in other regions have increased the number of victims detected. In the period considered, per 1,000,000 population, five victims were recorded in Africa and the Middle East, eight in Asia and 12 in the Americas, representing a strong upward trend from about zero recorded in 2003.











CHAPTER II  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND RISKS  
OF COVID-19 RECESSION





## CHAPTER 2

### THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON VICTIMS' EXPERIENCES AND THE RISKS OF THE COVID-19 RECESSION

Article 9, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol asserts “*States Parties shall take or strengthen measures, including through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity.*”

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant global economic downturn. Current projections indicate that the COVID-19 Pandemic Recession (hereinafter “Pandemic Recession”) will involve a 6.2 per cent decline in global per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP per capita), making it the most severe recession since the end of World War II.<sup>102</sup> While both advanced economies and developing countries are experiencing a recession, experts warn that there is a risk that the Pandemic Recession may increase inequality both at global levels and within countries.<sup>103</sup>

This chapter explores the micro and macro-economic factors that affect susceptibility to recruitment in trafficking in persons and a victim’s exposure to certain exploitative and coercive practices.

While contributing to the wider understanding of the role that socio-economic factors play in the context of trafficking in persons, this chapter specifically focuses on the pre-existing factors that may increase susceptibility to trafficking at both individual and national levels, and shape both recruitment and exploitative practices. This shall not be considered an exhaustive account of the role that economic determinants play in the context of trafficking in persons, which is the subject of study of a much larger research area.

This chapter draws upon primary data collected by UNODC, as well as available scientific literature to shed light on how economic factors may influence both individual dynamics related to socio-economic deprivation and macro-economic trends at the national level. A qualitative analysis of the GLOTIP collection of court case

The concept of vulnerability has been widely used in the conceptualization and further interpretation of the crime of trafficking in persons in legislative and normative instruments. In this framework, “vulnerability” is used to refer both to the pre-existing individual and structural factors that may increase the susceptibility of an individual or group to trafficking in persons (further referred to as “susceptibility” to trafficking) and to those elements that may be generated by the trafficker in order to maximize control over the victim in the context in which the exploitation takes place (such as isolation, dependency and irregular legal status). According to the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, “abuse of a position of vulnerability” qualifies as the combination of means through which persons can be subjected to a range of particular actions such as recruitment, transportation and harbouring, for purposes of exploitation.

Source: UNODC (2013), Abuse of a position of vulnerability and other “means” within the definition of trafficking in persons, Issue Paper.

summaries was conducted in order to identify common patterns in the profiles of victims and the dynamics of the exploitation when aspects related to socio-economic deprivation were reported.

#### A micro level analysis of the economic determinants of trafficking in persons

As highlighted in the previous chapter of this report, victims of trafficking in persons consist of a wide range of different profiles. Women, men, boys and girls of different nationalities and backgrounds are reported among detected victims of trafficking every year. Existing literature considers elements related to economic need,<sup>104</sup> such

<sup>104</sup> The notion of economic need as conceptualized in the literature encompasses situations of poverty, to include the range of physiological, personal, and socioeconomic requirements necessary for individual life. As such, the term emphasizes a person’s individual situation, including people who may not fall within the cohort of persons in extreme poverty, but are faced with high barriers to accessing basic services and human rights protection. See Christopher, Karen (2005), *The Poverty Line Forty Years Later: Alternative Poverty Measures and Women’s Lives*, Race Gender and Class, 12 (2), 34 – 52.

<sup>102</sup> World Bank (2020). *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2020. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9>

<sup>103</sup> IMF Blog (2020), *How Pandemics Leave the Poor Even Farther Behind*, 11 May 2020.

as poverty, unemployment, and lower income levels, as highly relevant to explain the social dynamics that govern trafficking in persons. Recent studies have identified economic determinants as among the most relevant risk factors affecting victims' susceptibility to trafficking in persons.<sup>105</sup>

This section presents the findings of the qualitative analysis conducted on the GLOTIP collection of court case summaries regarding socio-economic determinants of trafficking in persons. Findings were triangulated with existing scientific literature.

### **Economic needs at the recruitment stage**

The analysis of 233 trafficking in persons court cases which present information on the vulnerability of the victims before recruitment shows that the majority of the victims were reportedly in a condition of economic need, characterized by an inability to meet basic needs, such as food, shelter or healthcare.

In these cases, victims were reportedly recruited at a moment when they were experiencing either persist or deteriorating economic needs. At the same time, traffickers made use of deception that could appear as solutions to alleviate the condition of economic need. Jobs offered by the traffickers, for example, included elements of greater financial stability or better social status. In a few cases, victims were also deceived about the working and living conditions (mostly concerning salary, working hours and type of accommodation), or, more generally, the quality of life to be expected in countries of destination.

The vulnerability that traffickers exploit relates to the higher level of risk that persons in economic need are ready to take. Research in the European Union (EU) has shown that individuals in economic need may be more likely to take risks compared to less disadvantaged population groups, as the marginal gain potentially derived from the prospective job opportunity significantly out-

weighs the cost of inaction.<sup>106</sup> In the case of a young man, for example, who was trafficked from West Africa to Europe for the purpose of exploitation in forced criminal activity, the victim was approached after the occurrence of a series of events that had progressively eroded both the household's financial resources and his access to support networks, such as extended family members. The victim faced significant challenges in accessing economic opportunities, having lost the support of family members who had passed away and was now responsible for providing for several individuals in his household. Faced with these immediate challenges, the victim was approached by a well-known individual in his community who offered him the prospect of attractive job opportunities in Europe, along with a loan covering the initial expenses. The victim quickly accepted the offer, driven by hope for a better future and a perceived lack of alternatives.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, an analysis of the reported vulnerabilities shows that other factors, outside of economic conditions, also characterized the situation of the victim before recruitment took place. Often, victims in economic need are also affected by other conditions perceived as disadvantageous within their social context, and therefore, may face additional challenges.<sup>108</sup> These include having a dysfunctional family presently or in the past, and mental, behavioural or neurological (MBN) disorders, among others.<sup>109</sup> In the 489 cases analysed, these were the other most commonly reported types of disadvantages, often associated with economic need.

Very limited differences emerge by comparing disadvantages affecting female and male victims. Economic need appears the main cause of vulnerability in 52 per cent of the cases reporting female victims and in 50 per cent of those reporting male victims. Being emotionally attached

105 Among others: David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019) *Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives*; FRA, Vienna, 2019; Cho, S. Y. (2015), *Modeling for determinants of human trafficking – An empirical analysis*. *Social Inclusion*, 3 (Special Issue, "Perspectives on Human Trafficking and Modern Forms of Slavery"), 2-21; Kara, *Modern Slavery: A Global Perspective*, (2017); Perry McEwing, *How Do Social Determinants Affect Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia, and What Can We Do About It? A Systematic Review*, *Health and Human Rights*, 15 2, (2013).

106 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights *Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives*; FRA, Vienna, 2019.

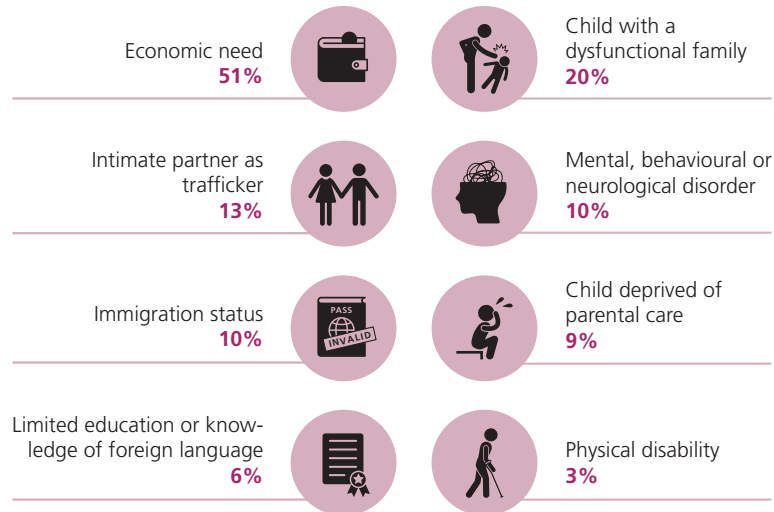
107 UNODC Data, UN Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants, Interview IT-M-03.

108 Ramona Vijayarasa (2015), *Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman: Myths and Misconceptions About Trafficking and Its Victims*, Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.

109 The International Classification (ICD-11) of the World Health Organization defines *Mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders* as syndromes characterised by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes that underlie mental and behavioural functioning. These disturbances are usually associated with distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. See <https://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/>

**FIG. 43** Percentage of cases by pre-existing factors that traffickers have taken advantage of, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*

Some cases reported more than one factor



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The vulnerability condition of the victim before being trafficked was reported in 233 court cases of a total of 489 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

to the traffickers and having a dysfunctional family is more frequently reported in cases of female victims. Being in an interpersonal relationship with a trafficker is reported in 20 per cent of cases reporting trafficking of women or girls, while no cases of male victims reported them as having attachment. Dysfunctional family is reported in 20 per cent of cases affecting female victims, and in 10 per cent of the cases of male victims. Yet, physical disability and lack of parental care seem to affect more male victims.

In all analyzed court cases concerning victims in economic need, abuse of a position of vulnerability was the most reported means used by the perpetrators to recruit the victims. In these cases, we can assume that the intersection of economic need and structural disadvantages results in a situation of vulnerabilities that often does not require traffickers to adopt a deceptive strategy. As typical examples of structural disadvantages include being migrant workers, women and children. The gender dimension is especially relevant when assessing how economic need and structural disadvantages may affect individuals' vulnerability to trafficking. Individuals in economic need who are members of disadvantaged groups are often faced with a reduced range of opportunities and hence, may have a higher level of acceptance of exploitative practices that constitute trafficking when compared to other groups. In these cases, field research illustrates that trafficking experiences can begin as a rational choice,

with no element of deception.<sup>110</sup> Research on migrants in an irregular situation, for example, has shown that victims may accept working conditions that they perceive as exploitative – and would mostly likely be qualified as such under international law – or even actively search for them, when they perceive that there are no other alternatives for them to fulfil their economic needs.<sup>111</sup>

The presence of multiple layers of structural disadvantages may aggravate a situation of economic need, increasing a person's vulnerability to trafficking, even when poverty is not extreme. In these cases, a much higher level of economic security is needed to reduce susceptibility to trafficking. Findings from a recent study on migrant workers in the EU provide an example of how migrants with a regular status – who technically, could access regular labour opportunities with legal protection – still tend to prefer more lucrative job offers that present a higher risk of being put into an exploitative-like situation.<sup>112</sup> As structural disadvantages have a multiplier effect on socioeconomic vulnerability, far greater levels of economic

110 Ramona Vijayarasa (2015), *Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman: Myths and Misconceptions About Trafficking and Its Victims*, Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.

111 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019) *Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives*; FRA, Vienna, 2019.

112 *Ibid.*

security may be needed to fulfill the person's economic needs. The same dynamics may be at play with other groups affected by structural disadvantages, such as children or minority groups. Job opportunities that are just above the poverty line may not be enough if combined with the challenges posed by structural disadvantages.

Structural disadvantages are defined as individual, family or socio-economic circumstances that are systematically devalued within a society or community and place individuals in a disadvantaged position when compared to the society at large. Typical examples of structural disadvantages are being “migrant workers, women, and children.” While none of these characteristics represent a disadvantage per se, the process of social devaluation and stigmatization of these groups, often coupled with a restricted structure of opportunities for their members, systematically translates in a disadvantaged position within their society or community.

Source: Ramona Vijayarasa, *Sex, Slavery and the Trafficked Woman: Myths and Misconceptions About Trafficking and Its Victims*, (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

### The role of economic needs during the exploitation phase

While some individual characteristics may be more frequently associated with certain forms of trafficking, there is no typical form of exploitation in trafficking to which victims in economic need seem to be more vulnerable. Economic factors do not appear to correlate to a defined set of exploitative practices. Available evidence suggests that victims in economic need may be subject to all the forms of exploitation.

When examining the court cases concerning victims in economic need recruited for trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation,<sup>113</sup> children account for a significant proportion of victims.<sup>114</sup> A recent study identified that a situation of material deprivation is among the key

113 The GLOTIP collection of court case summaries includes 153 cases of victims of sexual exploitation who were in economic need, out of 331 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation; A total number of 205 cases concerned victims in a condition of economic need before being trafficked.

114 The GLOTIP collection of court case summaries includes 518 child victims on a total 1,496 victims who were in a condition of economic need before being trafficked for sexual exploitation.

drivers of susceptibility to trafficking for the larger majority of detected child trafficking cases in Europe.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, it can be suggested economic need is a widespread condition characterizing child trafficking worldwide (see *Chapter 3 – Children; easy to target*).

### Coercion by economic means; financial control and debt bondage

Beyond the recruitment phase, victims in economic need may be exposed to specific types of coercive practices when subject to exploitation. Being in economic need may severely hinder the capacity of the victim to leave the exploitative situation. In the case of victims trafficked for forced labour, it has been noted that being in economic need increases the victim's dependence on the employer, hence exacerbating “the imbalance of power and allowing employers to take advantage of the workers.”<sup>116</sup>

Financial control is one of the main strategies actively used by traffickers to keep victims in exploitative work situations. Traffickers may resort to a number of mechanisms aimed at prolonging the situation of dependence of the victim and reducing their capacity to access any support mechanisms potentially available. Examples of financial control used in situations of trafficking for forced labour identified in the EU, are the delay of the payment of wages, or the promise of higher payments in the near future (two- or four-weeks' time). Perpetrators thereby maintain control over their victims and manage to continue their exploitation without resorting to physical means of coercion.<sup>117</sup>

Another coercive practice widely reported in court cases concerning victims in economic need is debt bondage. Victims are often told in advance that they must repay travel and living expenses that the trafficker has incurred. Often, the debt increases over time - according to the traffickers - because of interest rates, medication or purported costs for other necessities. In some cases, the practice of levying fines if daily work targets are not met has also been reported.

In the case of victims of sexual exploitation, it has been shown that debt bondage has acted as an effective means

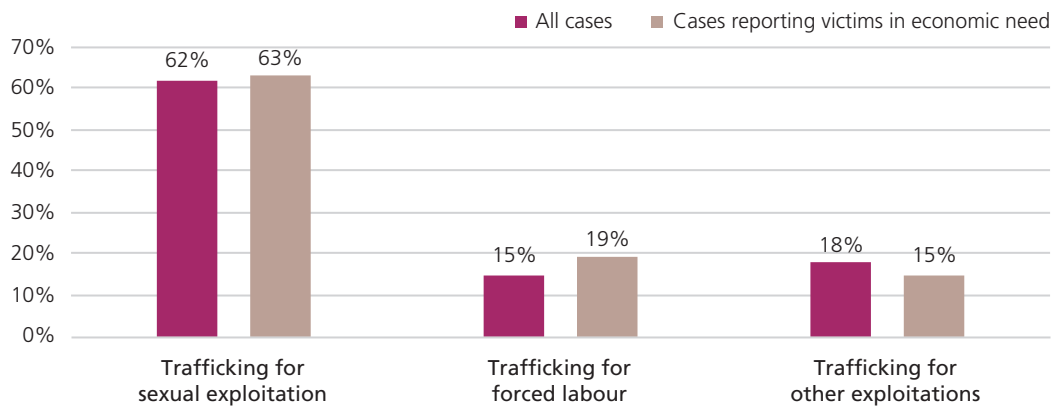
115 Cancedda, A., De Micheli, B., Dimitrova, D., Slot, B., *European Commission, Directorate-General for Home Affairs, ECORYS, Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, 2015. Study on high-risk groups for trafficking in human beings final report*. Publications Office, Luxembourg.

116 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019) *Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives*; FRA, Vienna, 2019.

117 *Ibid*.



**FIG. 44** Distribution of the forms of exploitation reported in court cases concerning victims in economic need, compared to those reported across all GLOTIP court cases



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

of coercion,<sup>118</sup> hampering the victims' capacity to seek help while increasing their profitability.<sup>119</sup> In these cases, traffickers create a system of penalties and rewards, which lead to the progressive increase of the debt held by the victims. For example, traffickers may call the victims at different times of the day and night, overloading their schedule and adding penalties in any cases of no-show. This practice increases the severity of the exploitation, as the victim is forced to work more in order to bear these additional expenses. These debts act as a mean of psychological control over the victims, reducing their willingness to take risks and attempt to escape or leave the exploitative situation without a safe alternative for income generation. In these situations, victims are often set up so that their debts become impossible to repay, and their economic condition dramatically deteriorates over time.

### Macro economic determinants of trafficking in persons

The analysis presented in the previous section indicates that people in economic need may be more exposed to trafficking in persons, both at the recruitment and exploitation phases and may be subject to specific coercive mechanisms. Neoclassical economic theory suggests that a deterioration in a country's economic outlook may re-

sult in an increased outflow of migrant workers.<sup>120</sup> As trafficking in persons flows overlap labour migration flows,<sup>121</sup> the deterioration in a country's economic outlook may equally result in an increased outflow of victims of trafficking.

When looking at the macro level, recent research shows that a reduction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), an increase in the share of the population below the poverty line, or an increase in the unemployment rate may increase the cohort of people in economic need.<sup>122</sup>

### Rising unemployment rates lead to a higher risk of trafficking

When trying to predict how changes in a country's unemployment rate may affect trafficking, experts have looked to the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2010 as a reference. During the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2010 (hereinafter the "Financial Crisis"), trafficking victims from some countries particularly affected by prolonged high unemployment rates were increasingly detected in certain destination countries. Between 2007 and 2009, many economies around the world were seriously affected by the Financial Crisis and ensuing slump in economic activity. It is estimated that more than 60 countries went into recession. The global downturn first touched the major world economies in 2007, and severely im-

118 Article 1(a) of the United Nations' 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery defines debt bondage as "the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined".

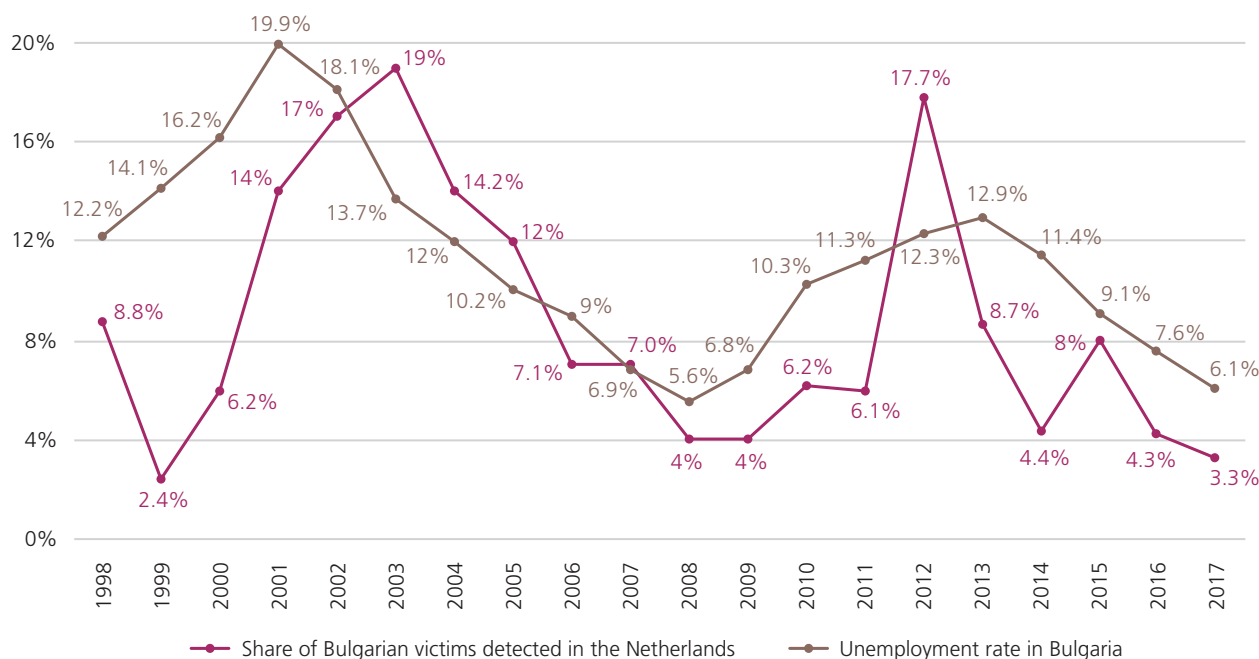
119 ECPAT (2017), *The Sexual Exploitation of Children in Southeast Asia*, ECPAT International.

120 Blanchard, Olivier (2017) *Macroeconomics*, 7th Edition, Pearson.

121 UNODC (2016), *The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*.

122 UNODC/Global Migration Group (2009), *Fact-Sheet on the Economic Crisis, Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants*. Online resource, available at: [https://globalmigrationgroup.org/system/files/uploads/documents/UNODC\\_GMG\\_Factsheet\\_impact\\_economic\\_crisis\\_May10.pdf](https://globalmigrationgroup.org/system/files/uploads/documents/UNODC_GMG_Factsheet_impact_economic_crisis_May10.pdf)

**FIG. 45** Relationship between unemployment rates in Bulgaria and Bulgarians as a share of potential trafficking victims detected in the Netherlands\* (1998 – 2017)



Source: UNODC elaboration based on ILO Estimates (unemployment rates) and Dutch National Rapporteur (potential trafficking victims detected)

\*Linear Regression, Bulgarian victims of trafficking as dependent share of total victims detected in the Netherlands, and independent variable Bulgarian unemployment rate recorded one year before victim detection. Results: R-sq .716, Sig : .000, standardized coeff. for independent variable 0.846, sig. 0.000.

pacted their outputs during the two subsequent years. High income economies experienced an average reduction of 7.5% in real GDP during the fourth quarter of 2008, and output continued to fall almost as fast during the first quarter of the following year.<sup>123</sup>

The Financial Crisis quickly turned into a social crisis, with increasing unemployment rates both in richer and poorer countries.<sup>124</sup> Not all countries, however, were affected in the same way. The uneven rate of recovery seems to have affected trafficking in persons. As such, in countries that experienced a faster rate of recovery, an increased number of trafficking victims were detected from countries with high unemployment and stagnant economies.

123 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America*, UNODC, Research Brief, 2020.

124 United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, *The Global Social Crisis: Report on the World Social Situation 2011*, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.IV.12, New York, 2011, pp-27-32. Junankar, R. (2011) *The Global Economic Crisis: Long-Term Unemployment in the OECD*, Institute for Study of Labour, Discussion Paper No 6057, October 2011.

As an example, the graph shows the parallel trends of the unemployment rate in Bulgaria and the number of Bulgarian victims of trafficking in persons identified in the Netherlands. A similar pattern can be shown for Hungary and Hungarian victims in the Netherlands during the years 1998-2016. In contrast, countries with a faster rate of recovery did not appear to experience a higher rate of trafficking. During the years of the financial crisis and its aftermath in 2008-2013, countries like Czechia, for example, saw lower unemployment rates and a shorter period of economic stagnation. Correspondingly, no increases in the identification of Czech victims of trafficking in the Netherlands were observed.<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, it can be concluded that deteriorations in the economic and labour conditions in origin countries may increase the number of people at risk of being deceived by job opportunities or recruited into abusive working conditions. As observed in the analysis of court cases, traffickers take advantage of situations of economic need.

125 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America*, UNODC, Research Brief, 2020.

This dynamic is reflected in the identification of victims originating from countries suffering from higher rates of poverty and unemployment than in richer destination countries.

This dynamic is especially relevant today, as the non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) and the patterns of behaviour prompted by the COVID-19 Pandemic have resulted in a global recession characterized by increasing levels of unemployment.<sup>126</sup> As already anticipated by UNODC,<sup>127</sup> the sharp increase in unemployment rates already seen in many parts of the world are likely to increase incidents of cross-border trafficking in persons from countries experiencing the fastest and most persistent decreases in employment. States whose economies are reliant on tourism, travel, hospitality and entertainment are experiencing particularly severe disruptions.<sup>128</sup>

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) predicts that unemployment rates in Central and South-Eastern Europe will rise from 3-5 per cent recorded in 2019, to 6-8 per cent for the year 2020, and 5-6 in 2021.<sup>129</sup> Considering these economic predictions, and according to the statistical analysis presented, assuming all conditions remain constant, it can be expected that the number of victims trafficked from Central and South-Eastern Europe to Western Europe will increase substantially over the course of the next two years, after a decreasing trend reported over the last five years. Similar considerations can be drawn on the basis of the negative economic forecasts for other origin countries of trafficking.

Experts have noted that the two crises present comparable patterns in terms of the most affected employment sectors. The types of jobs which were less affected during the Financial Crisis were equally less affected during the

first six months of the Pandemic Recession.<sup>130</sup> In the United States, where the national unemployment rate sharply increased from 3.5 per cent in February 2020 to 14.7 per cent in April 2020, Hispanic and female workers, along with less educated and young workers have been more severely affected during the current Pandemic Recession in comparison to other groups.<sup>131</sup> Low income earners have had a much higher chance of job loss than those at the top wage quantile. Thus, unemployment has been particularly concentrated at the bottom of the wage distribution in the United States, especially amongst the youngest and eldest members of the population.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, one of the first studies conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on migrants in Central America suggests that migrants may have been, and continue to be, disproportionately affected by the economic consequences of NPI, as half of respondents had reportedly lost their employment due to the Pandemic.<sup>133</sup> Lessons learned from the Financial Crisis and preliminary analysis of the Pandemic Recession reveal worrying similarities, which may have a severe impact on the magnitude and composition of global cross-border trafficking flows. An overall rise in unemployment rates in countries of origin may increase the number of people willing to take high risks for better economic opportunities. Furthermore, labour market disruption disproportionately affecting population groups who are already affected by structural disadvantages – such as Hispanic and female workers – may have a multiplier effect on the susceptibility of these groups to trafficking.

### Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fluctuations and trafficking flows

The global data on identified trafficking victims offer striking examples of sudden increases of victims from countries that fall into drastic economic recessions. The recent developments in Venezuela are particularly illustrative of this phenomenon. Since 2014, Venezuela has experienced significant GDP contractions, with estimates suggesting that wide sections of the population may have fallen below the poverty line.<sup>134</sup> In parallel to the deterioration of

126 Gopinath, Gita (2020) *The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression*, IMF Blog, April 14, 2020.

127 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2020b). *How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America* [Research Brief].

128 Gopinath, Gita (2020) *The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression*, IMF Blog, April 14, 2020.

129 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Hungary Economic Snapshot Economic Forecast Summary (June 2020)* accessible at <http://www.oecd.org/economy/hungary-economic-snapshot/> or *Bulgaria Economic Snapshot Economic Forecast Summary (June 2020)* accessible at <http://www.oecd.org/economy/bulgaria-economic-snapshot/>

130 Shibata, I. (2020). *The Distributional Impact of Recessions: The Global Financial Crisis and the Pandemic Recession*. IMF Working Papers, WP/20/96.

131 *Ibid.*

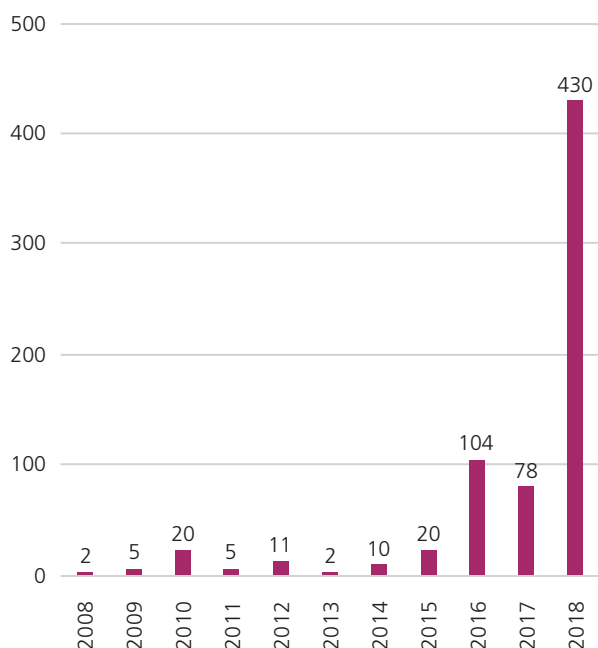
132 *Ibid.*

133 International Organization for Migration (2020), *Effects of COVID-19 on Migrants, Main Findings, Survey in Central America and Mexico*, June 2020.

134 According to the international poverty line set at less than 1.90 dollars per day. United Nations (2019) *Venezuela: Panorama de las Necesidades Humanitarias Prioritarias*.

economic indicators, the number of Venezuelan victims of trafficking identified abroad has continued to rise. In 2018, 430 Venezuelan victims of trafficking in persons were identified in 21 countries in South America, Central America, Western and Southern Europe, and Central and South-Eastern Europe. Furthermore, regression analysis confirms that there is a significant relationship between

**FIG. 46** Detected Venezuelan victims of trafficking in persons reported by the country of detection (cross-border trafficking only), 2008–2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

GDP contraction and the magnitude of trafficking flows originating from Venezuela, making GDP fluctuations a relatively good predictor for the number of Venezuelan victims detected worldwide.

In contrast, in times of economic growth, it seems reasonable to expect that people in economic need can access a greater variety of support mechanisms, hence increasing their resilience to exploitative situations. Thus, socio-economic improvement in a country of origin is expected to reduce the number of trafficking victims reaching abroad destinations.

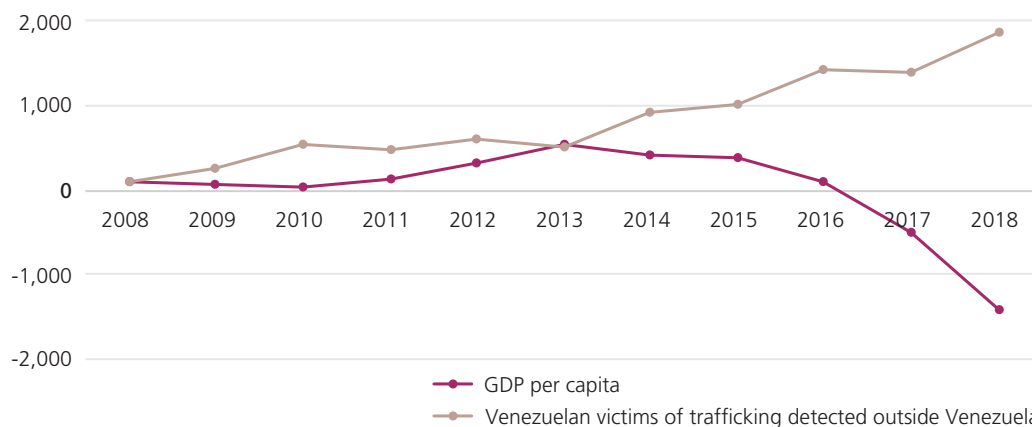
To demonstrate this idea, the case of Russian victims of trafficking detected in Germany and the Netherlands offers a relevant case of analysis. The increase in Russian GDP per capita registered between 1999 and 2015 matches a reduction in identified Russian victims in Germany and the Netherlands in the same time period.

These results are especially relevant in view of the current recession, suggesting that, in the forthcoming months, susceptibility to trafficking may increase in countries or regions that are experiencing the greatest GDP contractions in relative terms.

The World Bank, for instance, estimates that Growth GDP per capita will plummet to -8 per cent in Latin America, -5.3 in Sub-Saharan Africa and -4 in South Asia for the year 2020.<sup>135</sup> According to the analysis above, it is likely trafficking flows affecting these countries will increase substantially.

<sup>135</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2020, page 17. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9>

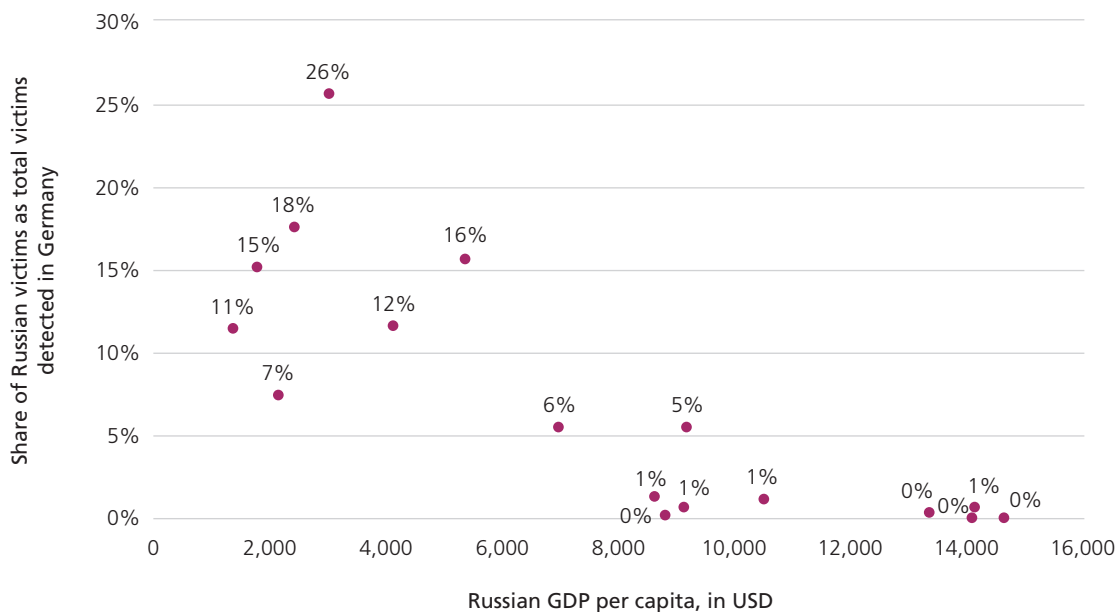
**FIG. 47** Real GDP growth in Venezuela and number of identified Venezuelan victims of trafficking in persons reported by the country of detection (cross-border trafficking only), 2008–2018 (Index 2008 = 100)\*



Source: UNODC elaboration on national data and IMF data.

\*Linear Regression, Venezuelans victims of trafficking detected outside of Venezuela, and independent variable Venezuelan GDP recorded. Results: R-sq .734, Sig : .000, standardized coeff. for independent variable -.036, sig. 0.000.

**FIG. 48** Relation between percentage of Russian victims out of the total population of victims of trafficking detected in Germany and the Russian GDP per capita (1999-2015)



Source: UNODC elaboration on national data and IMF data.

### The predictive value of economic factors in understanding trafficking flows

Beyond GDP alone, it is the mix of macroeconomic determinants such as GDP, income levels, and unemployment in countries of origin of victims that seem to influence the level of trafficking flows to more affluent destinations.<sup>136</sup> But while data show a significant relationship between these indicators and trafficking flows, further research is needed to qualify the type of relationship between macroeconomic variables and trafficking flows, and quantify their incidence. Beyond correlation, causal relationships between the two phenomena should be investigated further in order to identify the potential direct or indirect determinants.

It should be recognized that, as trafficking in persons builds upon the structural conditions of disadvantages and oppression affecting selected population groups and economic determinants represent only one of several driving factors. Migration policy issues, gender and race-based discrimination, along with legislative framework

and law enforcement capacity, as well as policy and legal frameworks that encourage abusive and exploitative practices are some of the other key elements that should be further investigated when addressing the question of the key determinants of international flows of trafficking in persons.

The general deterioration of economic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely increase the numbers of people at risk of being targeted by traffickers. The World Bank anticipates a drastic reduction in GDP per capita with a simultaneous increase in unemployment for most countries of the world.<sup>137</sup>

Moreover, this will severely affect low-income countries as well, with the World Bank expecting a contraction by 1.6 per cent in 2020 for countries in this category.<sup>138</sup> As discussed in the next chapter, the population at-risk of trafficking in low-income countries mainly consists of children living in extremely poor households.

<sup>136</sup> Crime, economic migration patterns and income level have also been discussed in the literature as factors explaining human trafficking. Among others, see Cho, S. Y. (2015), *Modeling for determinants of human trafficking – An empirical analysis*. Social Inclusion, 3 (Special Issue, “Perspectives on Human Trafficking and Modern Forms of Slavery”), 2-21.

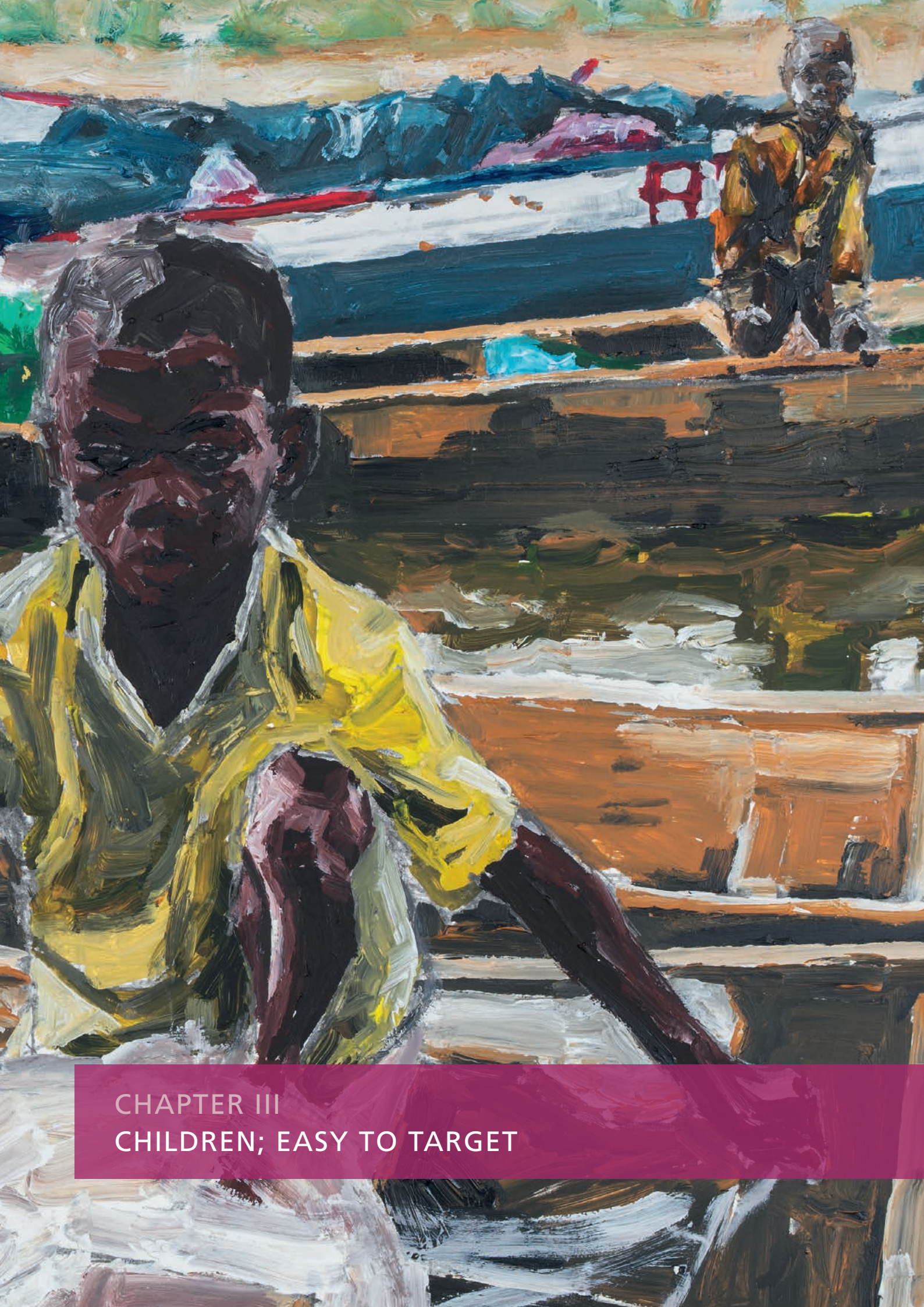
<sup>137</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2020, page 5. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9>

<sup>138</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2020, page 24. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9>









CHAPTER III  
CHILDREN; EASY TO TARGET





## CHAPTER 3

### CHILDREN;<sup>139</sup> EASY TO TARGET

Globally, one in every three victims detected is a child. Patterns about the age profile of the victims, however, appear to change drastically across different regions. Countries in West Africa, South Asia and Central America and the Caribbean typically present a much higher share of children among total victims detected.

More broadly, differences in the age composition of detected victims appear to be related to the income level of the country of detection. The detection of children account for a significantly higher proportion in low income countries when compared to high income countries. As such, wealthier countries tend to detect more adults than children among the trafficking victims.

These differences could be the result of varying criminal justice focuses in different parts of the world. At the same time, however, they may reflect different trafficking patterns according to countries' socio-economic conditions.

This chapter provides an overview of the dynamics related to the trafficking of children. The first section discusses the main forms of child trafficking, namely trafficking for forced labour and trafficking for sexual exploitation. The second section focuses on risk factors connected with child trafficking.

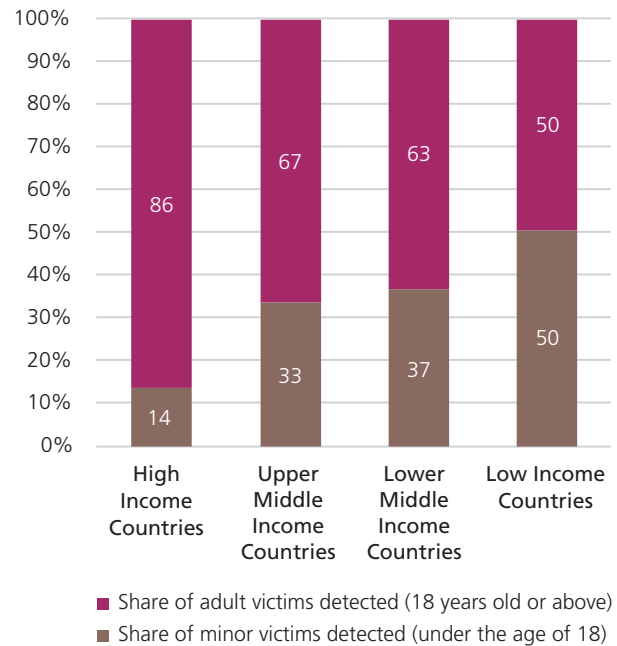
#### Different forms of child trafficking in different parts of the world

The characteristics of child trafficking and its underlying drivers seem to differ according to geographical and social contexts. Trafficked children detected in low income countries are more likely to be exploited in forced labour; this is particularly the case for Sub-Saharan African countries. Conversely, children detected in high income countries are more frequently trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Thus, it can be concluded that the nature of child trafficking in low-income countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, seems to be part of the broader phenomenon of child labour. In high-income countries, it is more related to child sexual exploitation.

<sup>139</sup> According to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2000 UN Trafficking Protocol, a child is any person younger than 18 years of age. In the following text, the terms 'girls' and 'boys' refer to, accordingly, female and male children.

**FIG. 49** Shares of detected victims of trafficking, by age group and national income,\* 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration based on national data on detected trafficking in persons and World Bank data on income levels.

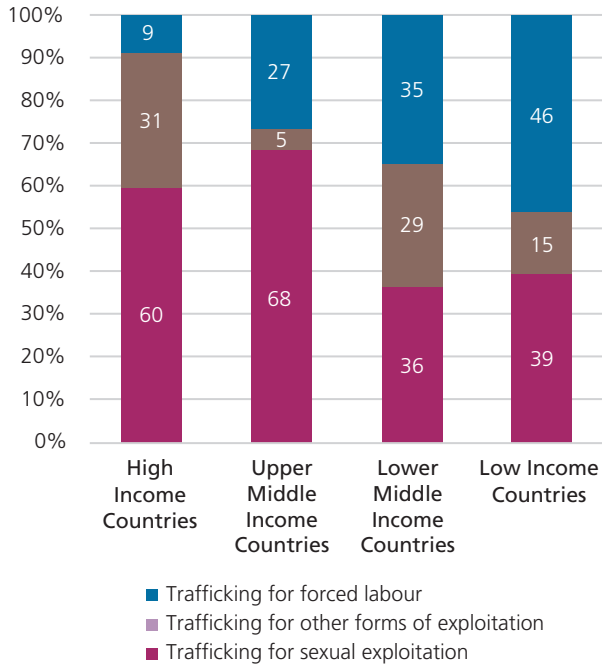
\*The World Bank groups countries according to their economic performance. Economies are divided into four income groupings: low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high. Income is measured using gross national income (GNI) per capita, in U.S. dollars, converted from local currency using the World Bank Atlas method. Estimates of GNI are obtained from economists in World Bank country units; and the size of the population is estimated by World Bank demographers from a variety of sources, including the UN's biennial World Population Prospects. For more on this see *How does the World Bank classify countries?* at the following link: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/378834-how-does-the-world-bank-classify-countries>

#### Children trafficked for forced labour

The phenomenon of child labour is conceptually different than child trafficking for forced labour or children in exploitative situations.<sup>140</sup> These two phenomena, however, appear to be inter-related and have similar determinants.

<sup>140</sup> According to the International Labour Organization Child Labour Conventions, "child labour" includes working children aged between 5 and 11, all children between 12 and 14 who are performing work not considered light and for more than 14 hours per week, and those between 15 and 17 performing hazardous work (International Labour Organization, *Global Estimates of Child Labour. Results and trends, 2012-2016*. ILO, Geneva, 2017, p.2).

**FIG. 50** Shares of detected child victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation and national income, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration based on national data on detected trafficking in persons and World Bank data on income levels.

Countries where children account for a larger share of the trafficking victims detected are also countries where child labour is more prevalent.<sup>141</sup> This trend is particularly relevant for West Africa.

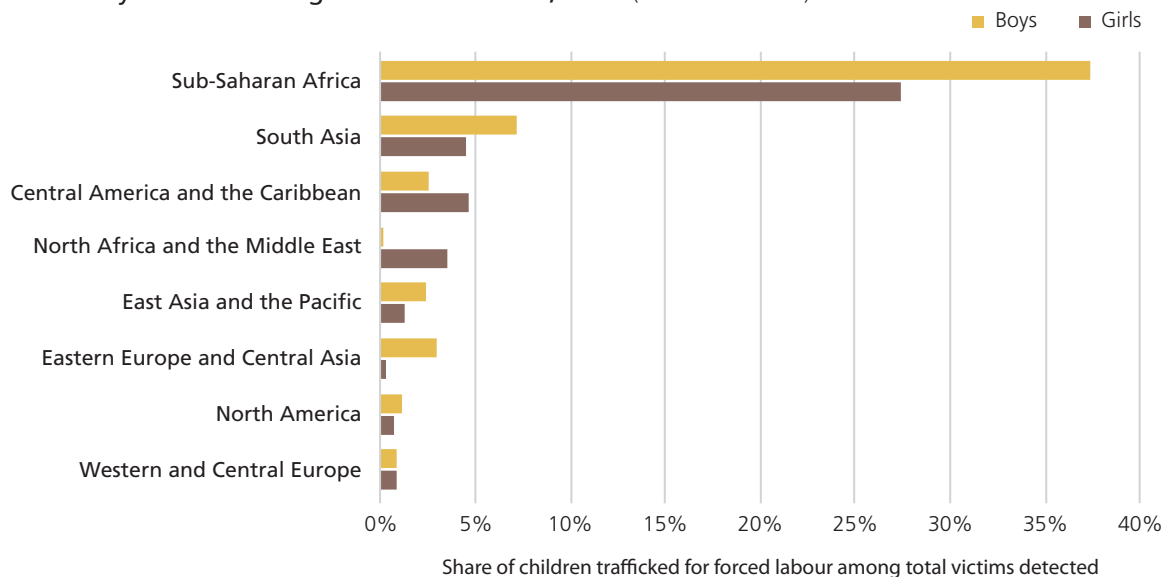
According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the African continent records the largest prevalence of children (between 5 and 17 years of age) in labour.<sup>142</sup> The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimates confirm this geographical pattern. Some countries in West Africa are estimated to have more than 40 per cent of the total population aged between 5 and 17 engaged in child labour.

The interlinkages between child trafficking and child labour are illustrated in field research conducted in West Africa, where child labour has been found to possibly deteriorate into children working in exploitative situations. One study in Burkina Faso documented how a significant share of children working in goldmining sites are not

141 There is a statistical correlation between prevalence of children in labour (ILO estimates) and share of children detected among total victims of trafficking (UNODC) – Pearson’s R +0.501, Sig 0,000 , N 80 countries.

142 International Labour Organization, *Global Estimates of Child Labour. Results and trends, 2012-2016*. ILO, Geneva, 2017.

**FIG. 51** Shares of child victims of trafficking for forced labour among total detected victims, by sex and subregions\* of detection, 2018 (or most recent)

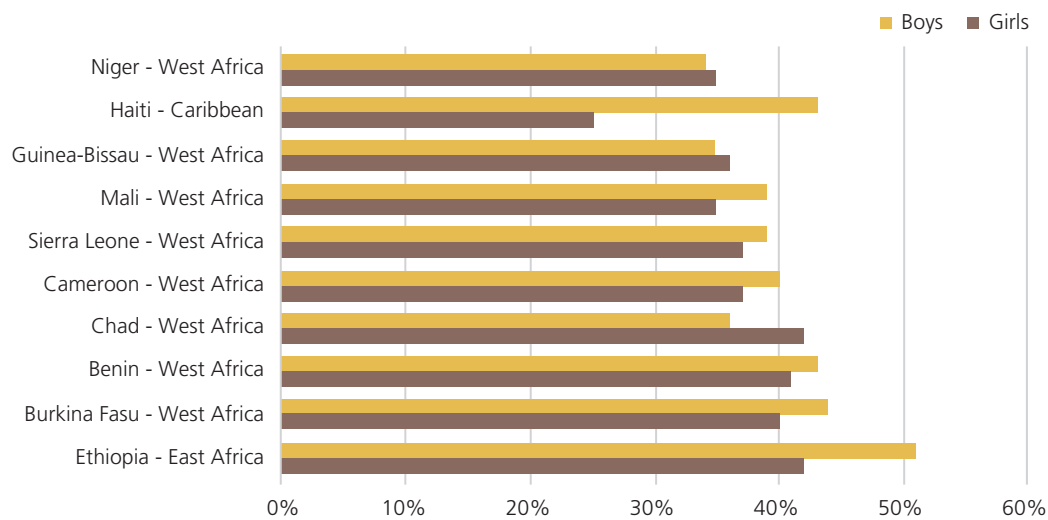


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*South America is not included in the analysis for lack of sufficient data



FIG. 52 Prevalence of child labour among total children in top 10 countries (%), 2010–2018



Source: UNICEF - Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)\*

\*The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) are periodical face-to-face household surveys conducted by trained fieldwork teams conduct on a variety of topics. See <https://mics.unicef.org/>

paid (14 per cent) or only provided with food and lodging (16 per cent), suggesting that exploitative practices and trafficking are part of these working sites where child labour is employed.<sup>143</sup> About half of those who were paid barely managed to cover food and lodging, while only one third of them managed to support their families.<sup>144</sup> In one case reported by Cote d'Ivoire, for example, authorities identified more than 30 children working on one cocoa plantation site. After assessing each individual case, authorities determined that about one third of these children were victims of trafficking.<sup>145</sup>

Broad cultural acceptance of the participation of children in the labour market can serve as a fertile ground for traffickers seeking children to exploit in labour activities. It is easier to exploit children in areas where communities are accustomed to sending children to work than in com-

munities where child labour is generally not an acceptable practice. In such settings, child trafficking victims may be hidden in plain sight.

In some socio-economic contexts, trafficking of children may occur on a community scale, often involving family members. Families in dire need may encourage their children to work and children may feel the pressure to economically contribute to the family, leaving them vulnerable to exploitative practices.<sup>146</sup>

143 Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale of Burkina Faso and UNICEF, *Rapport Nationale sur la Traite des Enfants au Burkina Faso*, 2015, p.49.

144 *Ibid.*

145 Court case 374 – Cote d'Ivoire 2015.

146 International Labour Organization, *Child Labour in Cotton*, a Briefing, ILO 2016; p 15.

Thorsen, D.; (2012) *Children Working in Mines and Quarries, Evidence from West and Central Africa*, UNICEF, Briefing Paper No. 4, 2012; p 4.

International Labour Organization, *Caracterizacion del trabajo infantil agricola en municipio seleccionados de los estados de Sinaloa, Oaxaca y Veracruz; uno estudio de la experiencias de las ninas, niños y adolescentes con enfoque particular en la educación, en lo origen étnico y la migración*, ILO, 2014. p.37.

International Labour Organization and National Statistical Office of the Republic of Malawi, *Malawi National Child Labour Survey 2016 Report*, 2017, p25.

Kumari M. (2013) *Child labour, a Sociological Study in Haryana, India*, International Research Journal of Social Science, Vol. 2 (8), 15-18 August 2013, p17.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, cases have been documented of children trafficked to work on different types of plantations,<sup>147</sup> in mines and quarries,<sup>148</sup> on farms (i.e. *les enfants bouvier*),<sup>149</sup> as well as being forced to sell different products in markets and on the streets<sup>150</sup> or to engage in domestic work (i.e. *vidomegon*).<sup>151</sup> In South Asia, it has been documented that children as young as 12 years of age are trafficked for forced labour in domestic work,<sup>152</sup> brick kilns,<sup>153</sup> small hotels<sup>154</sup>, the garment industry<sup>155</sup> or

agriculture.<sup>156</sup> Child trafficking cases have also been reported on South American plantation.<sup>157</sup>

There are no precise statistics on the age range of children trafficked for forced labour in general. Studies on children working in agriculture in South Asia indicate that one quarter of these children start to work between the ages of six and nine.<sup>158</sup> In West Africa, children trafficked for domestic labour are mainly females, with younger girls often doing childcare and older girls responsible for cooking.<sup>159</sup> Even in hazardous work settings, such as mines and quarries, some children may begin to learn the skills at the age of six or seven, while doing support functions for the adults they accompany to the mining site.<sup>160</sup> Younger children are normally involved in lighter activities, such as sorting or washing of the material extracted. Older children are tasked with digging and going down into the holes.<sup>161</sup> Deciding whether a boy is strong enough to become a digger depends on the child's physical strength and so, the age can vary.<sup>162</sup> Girls also work around these sites, usually carrying materials above ground.<sup>163</sup>

### Trafficking for sexual exploitation of children

Child victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (mainly girls) are identified in every part of the world, but largely concentrated in Central America and the Caribbean and East Asia.

As with trafficking for forced labour, countries with lower GDP per capita typically detect more children than adults among detected victims of sexual exploitation compared to countries that record a higher GDP per capita. This is confirmed even among countries parts of

147 Court case 373 – Cote d'Ivoire 2014, Court case 374 – Cote d'Ivoire 2015.

Global Research and Advocacy Group *Travail des Enfants dans les champs de coton et les mines d'or au Burkina Faso* Counterpart International, 2014 ; pp 24 -29.

148 Court case 306 – Guinée 2014.

Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale of Burkina Faso and UNICEF, *Rapport Nationale sur la Traite des Enfants au Burkina Faso 2015*, p.19;

Centre des Etudes et Recherches et des Formation pour le Développement Economique et Sociale (ERFODES) *Evaluation finale du projet «enfants dans les mines d'or et carrières artisanales dans cinq régions du Burkina Faso, 2009-2013*,

Thorsen, D. (2012) *Children Working in Mines and Quarries, Evidence from West and Central Africa*, UNICEF, Briefing Paper No. 4, 2012, pp 5-9;

Yaro, Y., Kabore, I., Kobanka, H. (2011) *Etude sur le travail des enfants sur les sites d'orpaillage et les carrières artisanales dans cinq régions du Burkina Faso*, Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale of Burkina Faso and UNICEF, 2011. Pp 8, 13;

Global Research and Advocacy Group *Travail des Enfants dans les champs de coton et les mines d'or au Burkina Faso* Counterpart International, 2014, pp 24 -29;

Terre des Hommes *The neglected link; effects of climate change and environmental degradation on child labour* Terre des Hommes International Federation, Child Labour Report 2017; pp 14-17.

149 General Assembly, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Mission to Gabon A/HRC/23/48/Add.2*, p5.

150 Court case 377 – Cote d'Ivoire 2017.

General Assembly, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Najat Maalla M'jid, Mission to Benin A/HRC/25/48/Add.3*, 2014, p.5

151 Thorsen, D. (2012) *Child Domestic Workers; Evidence from West and Central Africa*, UNICEF, 2012; pp7-9.

Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale of Burkina Faso and Unicef, *Rapport Nationale sur la Traite des Enfants au Burkina Faso*, 2015, p.19 .

General Assembly, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Mission to Gabon A/HRC/23/48/Add.2*, p5

Court case 302 – Niger 2016.

152 Bachpan Bachao Andolan and Others versus State [(2011) 177 DLT 198 (DB)], Kalpana Pandit versus NCT of Delhi, WP(crl) 696 of 2002, High Court of Delhi. Kalpana.

153 Nath Roy, S., Kunduri, F. (2018) *Migration to Brick Kilns in India, An appraisal*, Centre for Policy Research, 2018; Kumari, M. (2013) *Child Labour, a sociological study of Haryana*, International Research Journal of Social Sciences, Vol2(8), 15-18 August 2013.

154 Shrimali, R., Farmer, M. (2015) *A study on child labour in Gujarat State*, Abhinav Publication, Volume 4, Issue 3, March 2015.

155 Association for Stimulating Know How *Addressing Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu Textile Industry – A Feasibility Study Report* Freedom Fund, 2014.

156 United Nations Children's Fund, *Secondary Data Analysis of Trafficking of women and children in Assam*, UNICEF, Guwahati, Assam, India, 2014.

157 International Labour Organization and Ministério Público do Trabalho, *Cadeia Produtiva do Cacau. Avanços e Desafios Rumo à Promoção do Trabalho Decente: análise situacional* Working Paper, November 2018, ISBN: 978-92-2-133162-9.

158 Kumari, M. (2013) *Child labour, a Sociological Study in Haryana*, International Research Journal of Social Science, Vol. 2 (8), 15-18 August 2013, p17.

159 Thorsen, D, (2012) *Child Domestic Workers; Evidences from West and central Africa*, UNICEF, page 7.

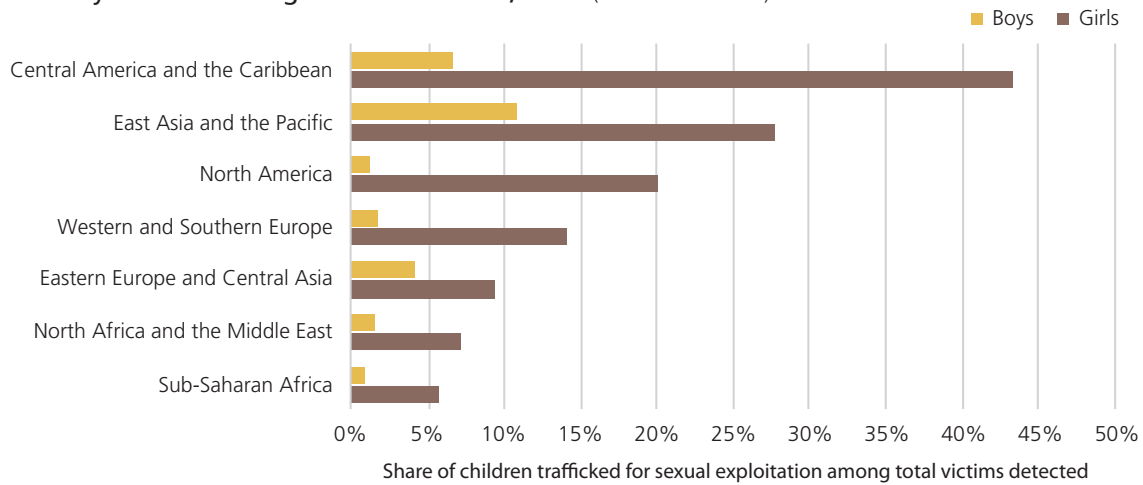
160 *Ibid.* page 10.

161 Terre des Hommes *The neglected link; effects of climate change and environmental degradation on child labour* Terre des Hommes International Federation, Child Labour Report 2017; page 17.

162 Thorsen, D, (2012) *Child Domestic Workers; Evidences from West and central Africa*, UNICEF, page 8.

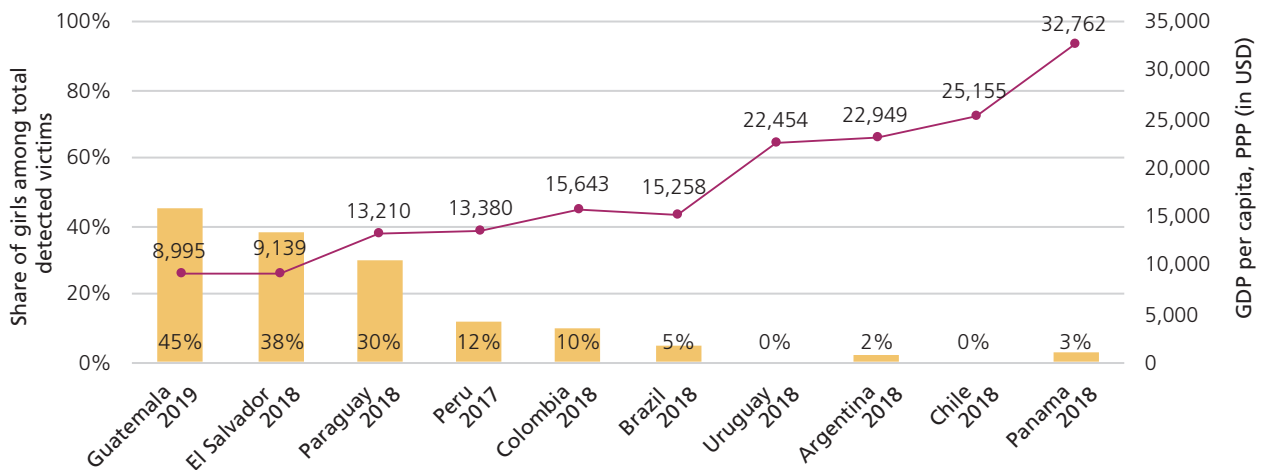
163 *Ibid.* page 17.

FIG. 53 Shares of child victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation among total detected victims, by sex and subregions of detection, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

FIG. 54 Shares of girls among total detected victims of trafficking and GDP per capita, in selected countries in Latin America



Source: UNODC elaboration on national data on trafficking in persons and International Comparison Program, World Bank | World Development Indicators database, World Bank Programme for GDP per capita.

the same subregion. The age profile of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation changes according to the national income.

Among children, girls aged between 14 and 17 years old appear to be particularly targeted.<sup>164</sup> This age pattern seems to be part of broader patterns of sexual and gen-

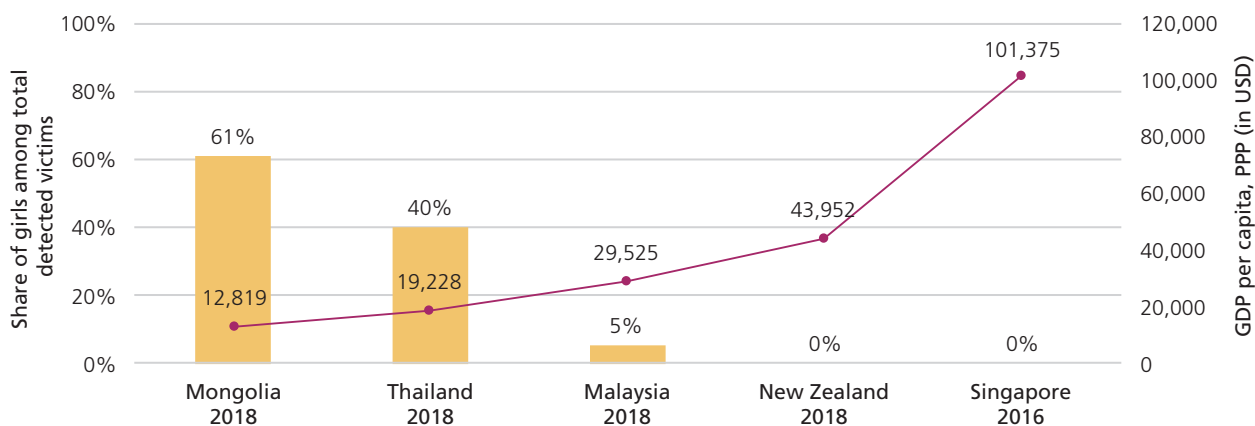
der-based violence that results in teenage girls also being particularly targeted as victims of other crimes, from bullying to sexual violence and murder.<sup>165</sup> Girls' risk of death as a result of violence increases from early to late adolescence and the first incident of sexual violence occurs most often between the ages of 15 and 19.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Not all countries systematically record the precise age of the victims beside being adults or minors. When this is recorded, there is not a standardised age group; Some countries consider teenagers are aged between 12 and 17 years old, some others consider teenagers starting from the age of 13 or 14.

<sup>165</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *A statistical snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls*, UNICEF, 2014, pp 3-15.

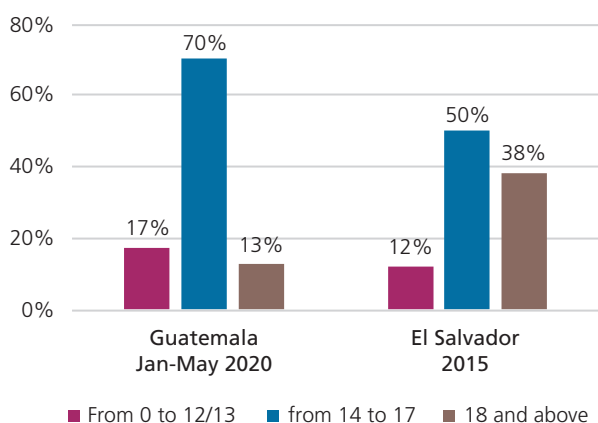
<sup>166</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *A statistical snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls*, UNICEF, 2014, p 11; UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*. Booklet 4 – Gender-related killing of women and girls (Vienna, 2019).

**FIG. 55** Shares of girls among total detected victims of trafficking and GDP per capita, in selected countries in South-East Asia



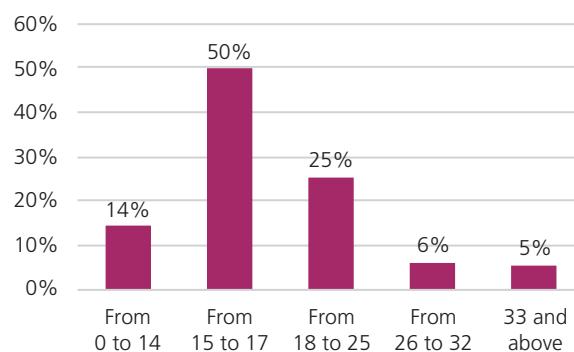
Source: UNODC elaboration on national data on trafficking in persons and International Comparison Program, World Bank | World Development Indicators database, World Bank Programme for GDP per capita.

**FIG. 56** Shares of total detected female victims of trafficking in persons, by age group; Guatemala and El Salvador



Source: Guatemala/ Informe de estado en materia de trata de personas - p95 - SVET; El Salvador/ Informe sobre Aplicacion de Ley especial contra la Trata de Personas en El Salvador. P. 127 CNCTP Consejo Nacional contra la Trata de Personas.

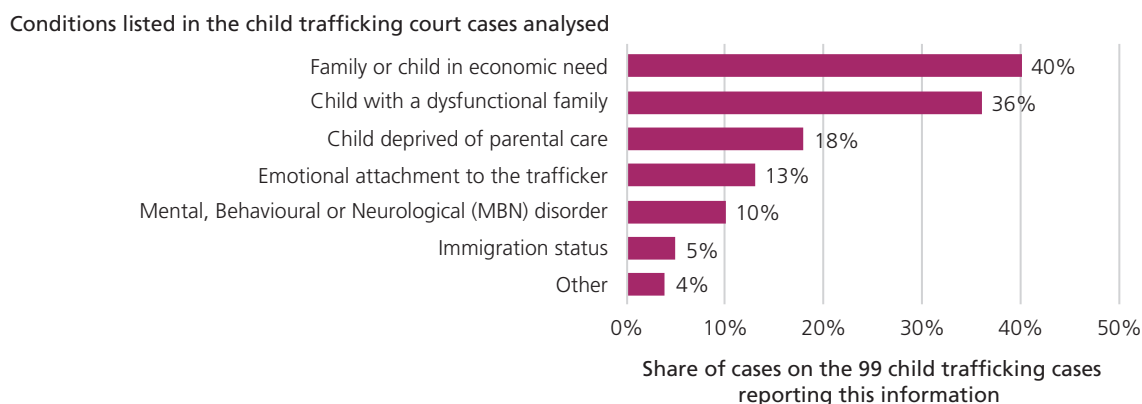
**FIG. 57** Age distribution of recorded potential victims of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation, Peru (2016)



Source: Peru: Estadísticas de Trata de Personas 2011 -2018 – Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. Ministerio del Interior/ Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática

**FIG. 58** Percentage of child trafficking cases by pre-existing factors that traffickers have taken advantage of, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*

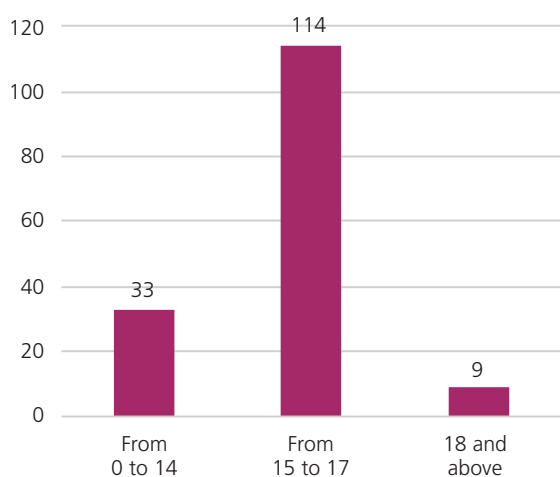
Some cases reported multiple conditions



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*This information was reported in 99 child trafficking court cases of a total of 489 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

**FIG. 59** Number of assisted victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group, Thailand (2017)



Source: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, Thailand's Country Report on Anti-Human Trafficking Response (1 January - 31 December 2017), p43

### Risks factors for and drivers of child trafficking

The profile of victims of child trafficking is often characterized by many intersecting vulnerabilities. The risks related to their young age are compounded by the socio-economic dimensions discussed earlier (see *Chapter 2 – The impact of socio-economic factors on victims' experiences and the risks of the COVID-19 Recession*), as well as other factors particularly relevant to children, such as behavioural and developmental needs, lack of parental care and/or dysfunctional families. Some studies in Central America, for example, suggest that domestic violence

and other forms of violence against women and children, as well as discrimination against ethnic minorities, potentially increase the risk of girls becoming victims of trafficking.<sup>167</sup>

A child victim's vulnerabilities are often connected to the child's family background. In extremely poor communities, socioeconomic context and cultural norms appear to play an important role in the trafficking of children. However, even in high income countries, children are vulnerable to traffickers too. This is particularly true among children experiencing dysfunctional parenting or with no parental care, as well as those living in poorer communities.

### Families' coping mechanisms may place children at risk of trafficking

Child trafficking in West Africa is often connected with the practice of parents sending children for employment outside of the household<sup>168</sup>. Similar findings emerge from studies in Latin America<sup>169</sup> and South Asia.<sup>170</sup> These practices are not trafficking *per se*, and in general they may not be harmful to children, but they can represent a significant risk factor for children to be trafficked into forced labour.

<sup>167</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation Purposes in Guatemala*, UNICEF, 2016.

<sup>168</sup> International Labour Organization, *Child Labour in Cotton; a briefing*, ILO 2016

<sup>169</sup> International Labour Organization, *Child Labour in the Primary Production of Sugarcane*, ILO, 2017. p.24

<sup>170</sup> Kumari M. (2013) *Child labour, a Sociological Study in Haryana, India*, International Research Journal of Social Science, Vol. 2 (8), 15-18 August 2013, p17.

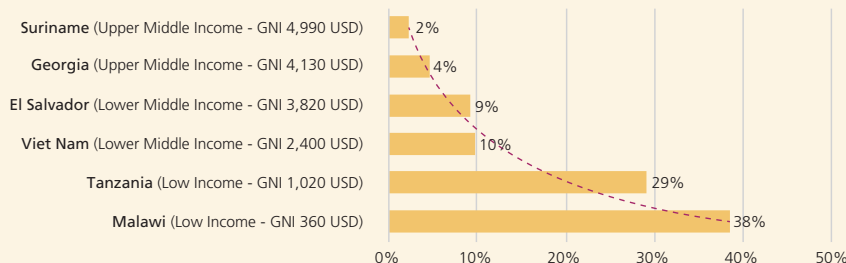


## The practice of sending children to work in context of extreme poverty

According to one ILO study conducted on child labour in the cotton farming industry, the work children do is often critical to the survival of poor households spending the bulk of their income to feed the family<sup>a</sup>. Many field studies in different parts of the world indicate a household's poverty as the greatest factor in determining whether children of school age are sent to work<sup>b</sup> and how these children's income contribution is important for a household's basic food security.<sup>c</sup> Some of these studies also report how these children can easily be targeted by traffickers.<sup>d</sup>

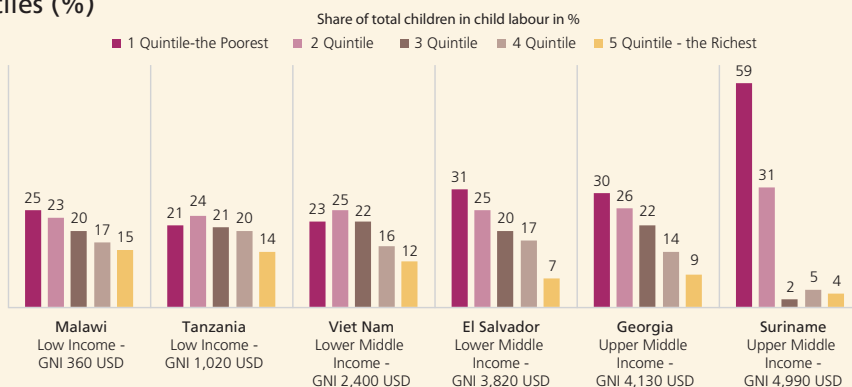
Child labour is not only prevalent in poor countries, but also among the poorest segments of richer societies. Suriname and Sri Lanka are upper-middle income countries that record child labour rates below the regional averages. In these countries, child labour is mainly concentrated among the poorest households.<sup>e</sup> This pattern is confirmed in a wide range of countries characterized by different cultural contexts and income levels. However, child labour decreases as the national economy improves.

**FIG. 60** Shares of children in child labour in selected countries, by Gross National Income (GNI)



Source: UNODC elaboration on ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) estimates on child labour and World Bank data on Gross National Income.

**FIG. 61** Shares of children in child labour in selected countries, by household cash income quintiles (%)



Source: UNODC elaboration on ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) estimates on child labour and World Bank data on Gross National Income.

a International Labour Organization, *Child Labour in Cotton, a Briefing*, ILO 2016 p 15  
 b Thorsen, D. (2012) *Children Working in Mines and Quarries, Evidence from West and Central Africa*, UNICEF, Briefing Paper No. 4, 2012; p 4.  
 c International Labour Organization, *Child Labour in Cotton, a Briefing*, ILO 2016 p 15  
 Thorsen, D. (2012) *Children Working in Mines and Quarries, Evidence from West and Central Africa*, UNICEF, Briefing Paper No. 4, 2012; p 4-7.  
 Thorsen, D. (2012) *Child Domestic Workers; Evidences from West and central Africa*, UNICEF, p 4.  
 Terre des Hommes *The neglected link; effects of climate change and environmental degradation on child labour* Terre des Hommes International Federation, Child Labour Report 2017; pp 16-17  
 United Nations Children's Fund and Ministere de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarite Nationale of Burkina Faso *Rapport Nationale sur la Traite des Enfants au Burkina Faso 2015*, UNICEF, 2015, p.49;  
 International Labour Organization, *Caracterizacion del trabajo infantil agricola en municipio seleccionados de los estados de Sinaloa, Oaxaca y Veracruz*

*rus; uno estudio de la experiencias de las ninas, niños y adolescentes con enfoque particular en la educación, en lo origen étnico y la migración*, ILO, 2014. p.37  
 International Labour Organization and National Statistical Office of the Republic of Malawi (2017), *Malawi National Child Labour Survey 2016 Report* p25  
 Surveys on child labour conducted in India indicate about 60 per cent of the children working in agriculture in the state of Haryana were encouraged by the child's family in order to cope with poverty. See Kumari M. (2013) *Child labour, a Sociological Study in Haryana, India*, International Research Journal of Social Science, Vol. 2 (8), 15-18 August 2013, p17.  
 d Thorsen, D. (2012) *Child Domestic Workers; Evidences from West and central Africa*, UNICEF; p 4.  
 e International Labour Organization, *Suriname Child Labour Survey 2017*, ILO, 2017. p88;  
 International Labour Organization and Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, *Report on Child Activity Survey 2016; Sri Lanka*, ILO, 2016. Pp 100-102.

The practice of sending children to work is generally reported as a coping mechanism for families to survive in conditions of extreme poverty.<sup>171</sup> According to a seminal study on the drivers of child labour, “parents withdraw their children from the labour force as soon as they can afford to do so” and “a family will send the children to the labour market only if the family’s income from non-child labour sources drops very low.”<sup>172</sup> This practice could easily deteriorate into child trafficking. A study on children trafficked for forced labour in brick kilns in South Asia, for example, refers to farm debts compelling families to send their children for work as one of the risk factors for child trafficking.<sup>173</sup>

When looking at high-income countries, the share of detected children trafficked for forced labour is limited. While these countries do not record significant levels of child labour, the few cases of reported of child trafficking for forced labour are characterized by a context of extreme economic need for these children and their families.<sup>174</sup>

Early marriage is a practice that is rooted in some cultures<sup>175</sup> and may sometimes be regarded as a family survival strategy.<sup>176</sup> This practice constitutes trafficking

when the girl is married off in return for some economic or other material benefit.<sup>177</sup> In some communities these practices are the results of bride-price arrangements between families.

Child trafficking for forced marriage is heavily dependent on the household’s income as it can be perceived as a way to generate income and assets, while reducing the costs associated with raising a daughter.<sup>178</sup> In South Sudan, for example, it has been documented how this practice is more common in periods of drought and economic hardship.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, in South Asia it has been documented how this practice is more pronounced after natural disasters like floods.<sup>180</sup>

Another practice that has been found to affect the risk of child trafficking is the sending of boys, and in some limited cases, girls, to residential religious schools. In North and West Africa<sup>181</sup>, some child trafficking for the purpose of forced begging have been linked to this practice. Cases of religious teachers (called *marabouts* or *mallams*) forcing students (referred to as *talibe* or *almajiris*) to beg have been reported by international organizations.<sup>182</sup> There are several reasons behind this widespread and complex phenomenon. Many studies indicate the need of poor households to provide some form of education, pressure on some of the boys to send additional money to their

171 Psacharopoulos, G. (1997) *Child labor versus educational attainment Some evidence from Latin America*. J Popul Econ 10, 377–386; Menon, N.; Rodgers, Y. (2018) *Child Labor and the Minimum Wage: Evidence from India* Journal of Comparative Economics, Beegle, K.; Dehejia, R., Gatti, R. (2006) Child labor and agricultural shocks Journal of Development Economics, Volume 81, Issue1, October 2006, Pages 80-96; Nam, S. (2013). Child Labor in Latin America. *Law & Bus. Rev. Am.*, 19, 523.

172 Basu, K.; Van, P.H. (1998) *The Economics of Child Labour* the American Economic Review, Vol. 88, No. 3 1998, pp. 412-427.

173 International Labour Organization *Unveiling the Full Picture of South Asia’s Brick Kilns and Building the Blocks for Change*, Geneva: ILO, 2017. 1; page 31.

174 Court case 60 – Norway 2012; court case 73 – Argentina 2015; court case 132 – Poland 2014; court case 172 – Serbia 2014; court case 244 – Chile 2016; court case 245 – Chile 2016; court case 300-Moldova 2016; court case 409 – Chile 2017; court case 401 – Chile 2018.

175 Authorities in Burkina Faso for example, reported about 1000 children, mostly girls, were victims of early marriages between 2013 and 2017 – See Ministère de la Femme, de la Solidarité nationale et de la Famille *Annuaire Statistique 2017 de l’Action Sociale*. A/HRC/25/48/Add.3 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Najat Maalla M’jid*, 2014, p.5; A/HRC/23/48/Add.2 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo*, p5; A/HRC/29/31/Add.1 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona*, 2015, p10.

176 A/HRC/25/48/Add.3 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Najat Maalla M’jid*, 2014, p.5; Tanzania Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, *National Survey on the Drivers and Consequences of Child Marriage in Tanzania*, 2017, p.33.

177 The United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol explicitly includes the purpose of exploitation for slavery-like practices as a form of trafficking in persons. The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery defines the practice of “a woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group” as a slavery-like practice. This includes early and forced marriages as part of the trafficking phenomenon. See Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1957. See the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, 5 August 2016, GA/71/303, page 12, para 33.

178 Brown, G. (2013) *Out of wedlock, into school: combating child marriage through education*, the Office of Gordon and Sarah Brown, 2013, page 15.

179 *Ibid.* page 14.

180 The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, *A Statistical Analysis of Child Marriage in India*, June 2017, New Delhi, page 81.

181 In Nigeria, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act does not include a separate offence for child begging. The number of such cases, or rescued victims in relation to this form, are not captured in official trafficking in persons data.

182 A/HRC/23/48/Add.2, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo*, p7. 2019, A/HRC/41/46/Add, *Report of Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, 2019, p.4. A/HRC/30/35/Add.1., *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Urmila Bhoola*, 2015, pp12-14.

families, and the demand among families for some education for their children.<sup>183</sup>

Although significantly more rarely reported than for children in forced labour or forced marriages, child trafficking for sexual exploitation may also be related to some form of tradition or cultural norms. Some families, under the ancient customs in South Asia, such as the *Devadasi*, the *Joginis* and others, maintain the tradition of forcing girls into sexual exploitation. These girls are not only trafficked within their communities but also in the large urban areas of the country.<sup>184</sup> Yet, the extremely poor socioeconomic context of the communities remains one of the main drivers behind the persistence of this form of sexual exploitation.<sup>185</sup>

### Children on their own

Court cases collected by UNODC include examples of traffickers targeting children who had no parental care.<sup>186</sup> The absence of a family is particularly prevalent in the cases of children trafficked for sexual exploitation,<sup>187</sup> but also reported in cases of trafficking for begging<sup>188</sup> and forced criminal activity.<sup>189</sup>

Some court cases in European countries reveal that traffickers specifically targeted “girls who had lived in orphanages”.<sup>190</sup> Similarly, a study on trafficking in persons in Sri Lanka indicated that traffickers target children deprived of parental care for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>191</sup> The absence of a family also has an economic connotation as these children have found a way to survive on their own. In a court case reported by the Dominican Republic, for instance, authorities reported a girl without parents, living in extreme poverty with no fixed home, as an easy target for a trafficker who sexually exploited her.<sup>192</sup> Homeless children are present in many urban areas of the world struggling on the streets, sometimes in a trafficking-like situation.<sup>193</sup> Traffickers may target street children for sexual exploitation or forced criminal activity in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, or other basic survival needs.

A study conducted on children in a situation of homelessness in Juba, South Sudan reported that about 3,000 children living in the streets either on their own or with caregivers were unable to financially meet their basic needs. Among these, researchers identified large numbers of children who were victims of sexual exploitation, forced labour and/or trafficking.<sup>194</sup>

Field studies conducted in West Africa revealed the situation of some boys and girls, mostly teenagers, trafficked into sexual exploitation to cover basic needs for food and for a place to sleep.<sup>195</sup> Between 13 and 28 per cent of

183 Thorsen, D. (2012) *Les Enfants mendicant pour les maitres des ecoles coraniques ; Resultats d'une etude menee en Afrique de l'Ouest et central*, UNICEF, Briefing Paper No. 4, 2012; pp 7-8;

International Labour Organization, United Nations Children's Fund and World Bank *Enfants mendicants dans la region de Dakar*. Understanding Children's Work Project. Working Paper Series, p. 92; International Labour Organization, United Nations Children's Fund and World Bank *Comprendre le travail des enfants au Senegal, Resume analytique*, Understanding Children's Work Project. Working Paper SerieRapport de Pays, p. 32.

Babou, A. (2002) *Brotherhood solidarity, education and migration: The role of the Dabiras among the Murid Muslim community of New York*. African Affairs, Vol. 101, No. 403 (Apr., 2002), pp. 151-170.

184 Patkar, P. (2018) *A Research Report on The Situation of Child Trafficking in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana*, Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Bangalore, 2018.

185 Shingal, A. (2015) *The Devadasi System*, UCLA Women Law's Journal, 2015, page 15.

186 Court case 50 – Lithuania 2010; court case 63 – Poland 2012; court case 5 – Canada 2017; court case 3 – Republic of Korea 2015; court case 172 – Serbia 2104; court case 173 – Serbia 2014; court case 2 – Belgium 2012; court case 124 – Mexico 2014; court case 125 – Mexico 2015; court case 94 – Belgium 2014.

187 Clawson, H.J. and Grace, L.G. (2007), *Finding a path to recovery: residential facilities for minor victims for domestic sex trafficking*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Raphael, J. and Ashley, J. (2008), *Domestic sex trafficking of Chicago women and girls*, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, DePaul University College of Law.

Raphael, J. and Mayers-Powell, B. (2009), *Interviews with five ex-pimps in Chicago*, DePaul University College of Law.

188 Court case 261 – Egypt 2015; court case 219 – Armenia 2014; court case 275 – Serbia 2014.

189 Court case 311 – Norway 2017.

190 Court case 94 – Belgium 2014; court case 100 – Canada 2013; court case 173 – Serbia 2014; court case 174 – Serbia 2014; court case 191 – Dominican Republic 2014; court case 228 – Austria 2016, court case 342 – United Kingdom 2016.

191 UNODC *Assessment Report – Final Report of the Country gaps and needs assessment on the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 2019 – page 18.

192 Court case 191 – Dominican Republic 2014.

193 Noutsougan, A.K. (2010), *La réinsertion des enfants mendicants à Niamey: situation et perspectives* Centre d'enseignement et de recherche en action humanitaire de Geneve/Universite' de Geneve, 2010, pp9-10

Ballet, J., Bhukuth, A., Rakatonirinjanhary, F. et Rakatonirinjanhary, M. *Les Enfants Mendiant A Antananarivo : Quelle Logiques Familiales Sont a l'œuvre ?* Institute national d'études démographiques, CAIRN, 2010, p. 812

Xian, K., Chock, S., Dwiggins, D. (2017) *LGBT Youth and Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking*, in book Human Trafficking is a public health Issue (pp 141-152), February 2017.

194 Wright, H. L. S., 'Child Exploitation in Juba: A study on street children and child labour in Juba, South Sudan', September 2013.

195 Hounmenou, C.E. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Children in the West Africa region*, in Handbook of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery by Jennifer Bryson Clark and Sasha Poucki (Editors)., Publisher: Sage Publishing, pp.360-382, 2019. A/HRC/25/48/Add.3, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, Najat Maalla M'jid, Mission to Benin, 2014, p.5.

these children experienced the death of their parents, and between 30 and 80 per cent were not living with their parents.<sup>196</sup>

Children deprived of parental care in migratory situations face the same risks. Unaccompanied and separated children migrating, often along irregular migration routes, are exposed to traffickers, both along the route and upon arrival in transit and destination countries.<sup>197</sup>

### Dysfunctional families and behavioural disorders

While the absence of a family is a risk factor for child trafficking, children being raised with dysfunctional parenting may also present a vulnerability easily exploited by traffickers.

The literature and court files show cases of parents or siblings being directly involved in the trafficking of children.<sup>198</sup> Cases of child trafficking at the hands of the parents are reported in different parts of the world and for different forms of exploitation, though, mostly, these cases involve sexual exploitation.<sup>199</sup> In these cases, parents procure children directly to buyers for sexual intercourse in return for a payment. Field studies conducted in West Africa, for example, show that up to 35 per cent of children in sexual exploitation have a parent organizing their

exploitation.<sup>200</sup> Other than sexual exploitation, cases where parents are found to be involved in the trafficking of their children range in form of exploitation, including exploitative begging, forced marriage and child sexual abuse imagery (pornography).<sup>201</sup>

When children are not trafficked by their parents, they may still be easily targeted by traffickers as a result of a dysfunctional family. Literature reports children with family problems at home were recruited for the purpose of sexual exploitation and for forced criminal activity.<sup>202</sup> In these cases, traffickers appear to create some attachment with or sense of belonging for the victim.

The need to be part of a group seems to be one significant factor in attracting children to be recruited or deceived by the trafficker. For example, in the so-called “county lines” cases in the United Kingdom, traffickers target children of separated parents or those looked after by social services, including those with behavioural or developmental disorders.<sup>203</sup> Trafficked children, as well as victims emotionally attached to their traffickers, can also be incited to use drugs or alcohol, thereby increasing the control the traffickers have over them.<sup>204</sup>

196 Hounmenou, C.E. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Children in the West Africa region*, in Handbook of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery by Jennifer Bryson Clark and Sasha Poucki (Editors), Publisher: Sage Publishing, pp.370, 2019.

197 Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material; and trafficking in persons, especially women and children, 18 July 2017 A/72/164.

198 Noutsougan, A.K., (2010) *La réinsertion des enfants mendiants a Niamey: situation et perspectives* Centre d'enseignement et de recherche en action humanitaire de Geneve/Universite' de Geneve, 2010, pp9-10.

Ballet, J., Bhukuth, A., Rakatonirinjanhary, F. et Rakatonirinjanhary, M. (2010) *Les Enfants Mendiant A Antananarivo : Quelle Logiques Familiales Sont a l'œuvre ?* Institute national d'études démographiques, CAIRN, 2010, p. 812.

Court case 62 – Norway; court case 83 – Australia 2013; court case 124 – Mexico 2014; court case 133 – Poland 2013; court case 149 – South Africa 2013; court case 163 – Israel 2013 ; court case 175 – Serbia; court case 195 – Spain 2013; court case 221 – Australia; court case 332 – Ukraine; court case 252 – Czechia 2016; court case 255 – Dominican Republic 2017; court case 260 – Egypt 2015; court case 293 – Mexico 2016; court case 346 – Honduras; court case 358 – South Korea; court case 396 – Honduras 2015; court case 397 – Argentina; court case 360 – Croatia 2015; court case 381-Morocco 2017; court case 438 – Dominican Republic 2018.

199 Court case 83 – Australia 2013; court case 124 – Mexico 2014; court case 133 – Poland 2013; court case 149 South Africa 2013; court case 163 – Israel 2013; court case 172 – Serbia 2014; court case 195 – Spain 2013; court case 252 – Czechia 2016, court case 255 – Dominican Republic 2017; court case 260 – Egypt 2015; court case 293 – Mexico 2016; court case 360 – Croatia 2015; court case 381 – Morocco 2017; court case 396 – Honduras 2015; court case 438 – Dominican Republic 2018.

200 Hounmenou, C.E. (2019) *Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Children in the West Africa region*, in Handbook of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery by Jennifer Bryson Clark and Sasha Poucki (Editors), Publisher: Sage Publishing, pp.371, 2019.

201 Noutsougan, A.K., (2010) *La réinsertion des enfants mendiants a Niamey : situation et perspectives* Centre d'enseignement et de recherche en action humanitaire de Geneve/Universite' de Geneve, 2010, pp9-10

Ballet, J., Bhukuth, A., Rakatonirinjanhary, F. et Rakatonirinjanhary, M. (2010) *Les Enfants Mendiant A Antananarivo : Quelle Logiques Familiales Sont a l'œuvre ?* Institute national d'études démographiques, CAIRN, 2010, p. 812; Court case 147-South Africa; court case 163 – Israel; court case 175 – Serbia; court case 332 – Ukraine; court case 346 – Honduras.

202 Countryman-Roswurm, K.; Bolin, B. L. (2014). *Domestic minor sex trafficking: Assessing and reducing risk*. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 31(6), 521-538; Dank, M. L., Khan, B., Downey, P. M., Kotonias, C., Mayer, D., Owens, C., Yu, L. (2014). *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*. the Urban Institute; Oude Breuil, B.C., Schaap, A.L.M., & Merz, A. (2018). Financing of human trafficking in the Netherlands. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1765/114411>; Xian, K., Chock, S., & Dwiggins, D. (2017). *LGBTQ Youth and Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue* (pp. 141-152): Springer; National Crime Agency *County Lines Drug Supply, Vulnerability and Harm 2018*, NCA January 2019 pp3-4.

203 *National Crime Agency County Lines Drug Supply, Vulnerability and Harm 2018*, NCA January 2019 pp3-4.

204 *Ibid*. Dutch National Rapporteur *Trafficking in Human Beings; First report of the Dutch National Rapporteur 2002*, p62.









CHAPTER IV  
TRAFFICKING FOR FORCED LABOUR;  
THE ECONOMY OF COERCION





## CHAPTER 4

### TRAFFICKING FOR FORCED LABOUR; THE ECONOMY OF COERCION

Trafficking for the purpose of forced labour cannot be analysed as a single form of trafficking, as it includes a variety of different methods of exploitation, victim profiles and economic sectors. This form of trafficking is characterized by its infiltration in the legal economy and its possible interaction with daily life. Victims can be trafficked in sectors that are part of a population’s ordinary consumption, such as food production, construction and textile manufacturing. Traffickers involved in this form of exploitation may not necessarily work underground in illicit markets, but instead may be associated with officially registered companies or operate in a broader informal economic system where working conditions resort to exploitative practices to increase profits.

Trafficking for the purpose of forced labour accounts for about 38 per cent of the total trafficking cases detected globally in 2018. Some regions of the world, namely Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, detect more cases of trafficking for forced labour than other types of trafficking.

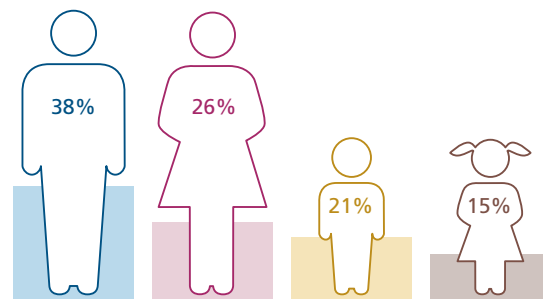
Globally, the majority of detected victims trafficked for forced labour are adult men. Meanwhile, adult women

account for about one fourth, while children account for more than one third of detected victims (15 per cent are girls and 21 per cent are boys). However, it is important to note that there are regional differences that affect these figures.

Sub-Saharan African countries mainly detect girls and boys trafficked for this purpose. Children, especially girls,

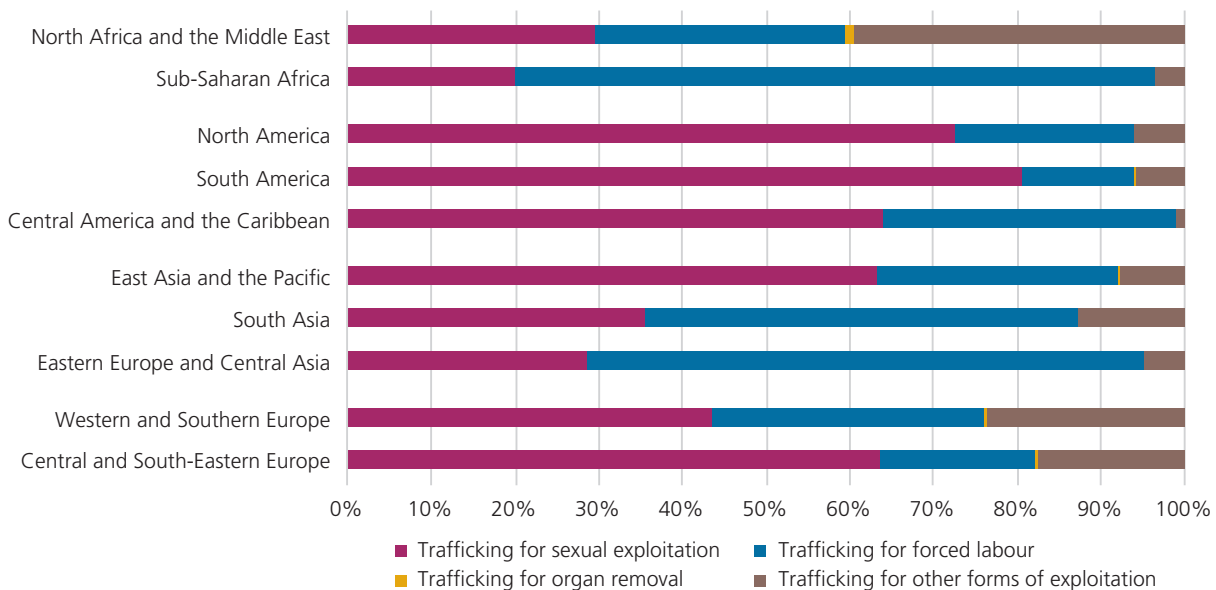
**FIG. 63** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

106 countries (n=6,530 victims whose form of exploitation by sex and age was reported)



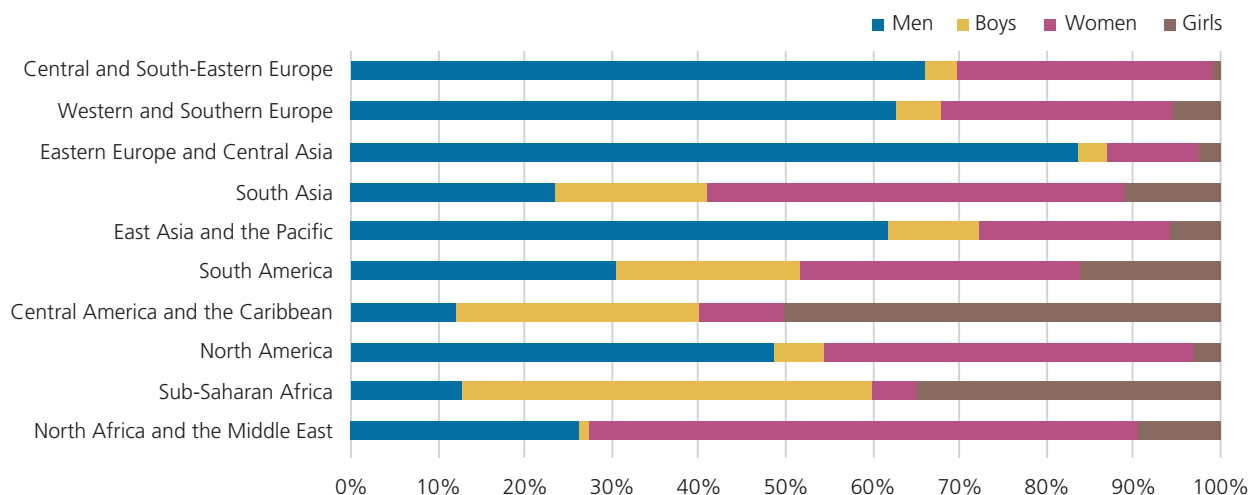
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 62** Shares of detected trafficking victims, by form of exploitation, by subregion, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 64** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, by subregion, (2018 or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

also represent the main profile identified as trafficked for forced labour in Central America and the Caribbean. Adult women represent the main profile of detected victims trafficked for forced labour in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. European countries mainly report adult men among detected victims of trafficking for forced labour.

The sex and age profiles of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour is connected to the types of employment where victims are exploited. Each sector presents different trafficking patterns, in terms of victim profile or type of organization of traffickers. It is difficult to provide an exhaustive list of all forms of labour activities where victims have been detected.

About 70 of the 489 court cases collected by UNODC for this Report concern trafficking for forced labour, involving about 900 victims exploited in 11 different types of work, including domestic work, car washing, textile production and street trading, among others. These cases represent only a limited set of examples, as the literature points to many other types of forced labour.

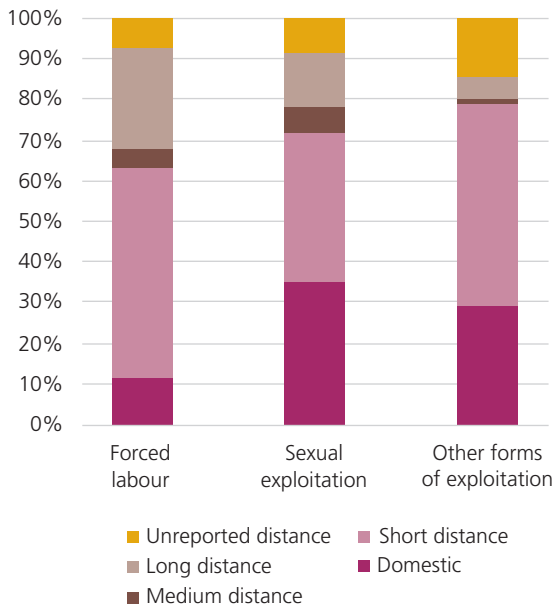
However, these examples reveal important dynamics of how different economic sectors present distinct exploitative patterns in terms of victim profile differing by type of industry.

On average, one case of trafficking for forced labour typically involves about 14 victims. Meanwhile, the average number of victims is six for sexual exploitation and around four for other forms of exploitation. The average number of victims, however, changes according to the economic sector.





**FIG. 65** Shares of cases, by forms of exploitation and trafficking flows, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*The information on the form of exploitation was reported in 401 court cases (69 cases of trafficking for forced labour, 260 cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation, 72 cases for other forms of exploitation) of a total of 489 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

Cases of domestic servitude are characterized by a lower number of victims, most of them adult women,<sup>205</sup> and in some cases, children, both girls and boys.<sup>206</sup> While only two cases reported to UNODC concerned trafficking in the fishing industry, they involved a large number of victims, mostly adult men.<sup>207</sup> Groups of adult men are also commonly exploited in construction work. Meanwhile, other forms of exploitation typically target children, and only a few at a time, such as is generally the case for trafficking for street trading.<sup>208</sup>

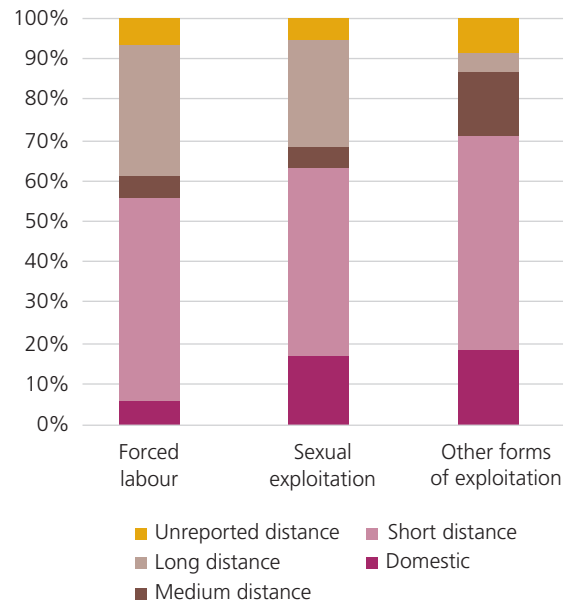
205 Court case 9 – Australia 2007; court case 21 – Brunei 2012; court case 22 – Brunei 2009; court case 40 – Israel 2012; court case 98 – Canada 2013; court case 189 – Austria 2015; court case 236 – Belgium 2017; court case 322 – Canada 2015; court case 341 – United Kingdom 2017; court case 344 – Paraguay 2015; court case 363 – Venezuela 2015; court case 461 – United States of America 2016; court case 462 – Malaysia 2018; court case 465 – Malaysia 2018; court case 488 – Colombia 2019; court case 489 – Colombia 2018.

206 Court case 70 – United States of America 2012; court case 73 – Argentina 2015; court case 171 – Serbia 2014; court case 282 – Israel 2016; court case 236 – Spain 2017.

207 Court case 44 – Thailand, 2016; court case 116 – Indonesia, 2014.

208 Court case 377 – Cote d'Ivoire, 2017; court case 397 – Argentina, 2018; court case 409 – Chile, 2017; court case 2018 – Chile, 2018.

**FIG. 66** Shares of victims reported in the cases collected, by forms of exploitation and trafficking flows, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries.

\*A total of 2,953 victims were reported in the 401 court cases that presented information on the form of exploitation. In details: 953 victims were reported in the collected cases of trafficking forced labour; 1681 victims were reported in the cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation; 319 victims were reported in the cases of trafficking for other forms of exploitation.

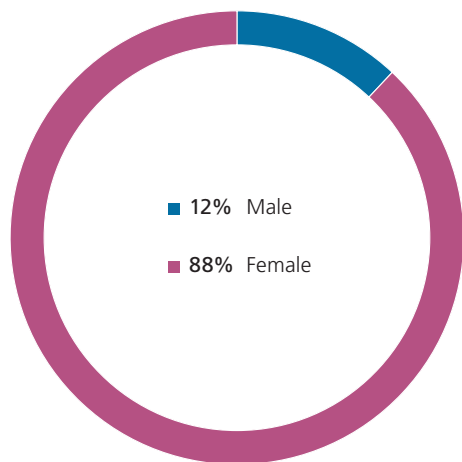
Another emerging pattern is that, in comparison to other forms of exploitation, this form of trafficking seems to be more frequently detected as a cross-border phenomenon rather than a domestic one. Most of the court cases of trafficking for forced labour analysed for this Report referred to episodes of cross-border trafficking – a much greater figure than for trafficking for sexual exploitation and for other forms of exploitation.

Although the number of cases considered is limited, the analysis of the cases suggests that, as a pattern, trafficking for the purpose of forced labour is closely connected with labour migration, particularly in high income countries.

### Different profiles trafficked in different economic sectors

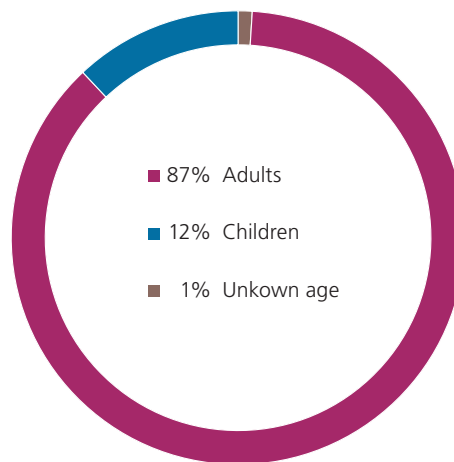
The following sections describe patterns of trafficking in selected economic sectors. Labour activities were selected on the basis of the reported relevance of these types of trafficking globally. Thus, the patterns of trafficking of victims in the following sectors were selected: domestic

**FIG. 67** Victims of trafficking in domestic servitude included in the IOM CTDC, by sex  
(Number of victims: 4,831)



Source: International Organization for Migration – Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative

**FIG. 68** Victims of trafficking in domestic servitude included in the IOM CTDC, by age  
(Number of victims: 4,831)



Source: International Organization for Migration – Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative

work, agriculture, construction and the fishing industry. Trafficking patterns recorded in these industries differ significantly from each other and may help to represent the wide variety of characteristics registered in trafficking for forced labour. Regarding other forms not included, while not lower in importance or severity, limited literature was found and/or the phenomenon was only reported in certain regions, making the potential for analysis more limited.

**Domestic work**

The preamble to the 2011 International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention (no. 189) describes domestic work<sup>209</sup> as “undervalued” and “invisible.” The Convention also notes how this type of work is normally conducted by members of disadvantaged communities particularly “discriminated” against in terms of working conditions. These sections explain how domestic work presents particular risks to workers becoming victims of human trafficking.

Domestic work is a significant industry globally. In 2013, it was estimated that about 67 million domestic workers

were employed worldwide, and of these, 11.5 million of them (about 8 per cent) were migrant workers.<sup>210</sup> Yet, this may very well be an underrepresentation of the size of this economic sector. Domestic work takes place inside private homes<sup>211</sup> and, in some cases, is carried out by undocumented migrants.<sup>212</sup> As with other migrants with undocumented status, domestic workers remain, to a large extent, under the radar of labour inspection.<sup>213</sup> These factors expose such workers, especially if they are migrants, to human trafficking.

Trafficking for the purpose of domestic servitude has been documented in all regions: from Europe<sup>214</sup> to the

209 The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) defines domestic work as “work performed in or for a household or households”. This work may include tasks such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, taking care of children or elderly or sick members of a family, gardening, guarding the house, driving for the family, and even taking care of household pets.

210 International Labour Organization, *Global estimates on migrant workers: results and methodology*; ILO 2015, page 5.

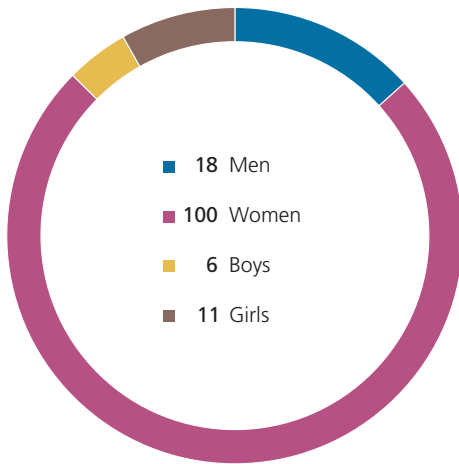
211 *Ibid.* Page 34

212 *Ibid.* Page 30; Palumbo, L. (2016) *Demand in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Domestic Work Sectors in Italy*, Demand-AT Country Study No. 5, page 9.

213 International Labour Organization, *Domestic workers across the world: global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection*; ILO 2013, Page v.

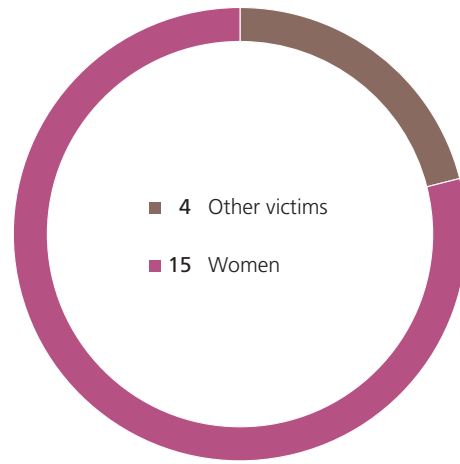
214 Palumbo, L. (2017) *Exploiting for Care: Trafficking and Abuse in Domestic Work in Italy*, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 15:2, 171-186, DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2017.1305473; United Kingdom Home Office, Modern Slavery Unit *United Kingdom Annual Report on Modern Slavery 2019*, Modern Slavery Unit, October 2019, page 10; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 44;

**FIG. 69** Detected victims of trafficking in persons for domestic servitude in the United Kingdom, 2016



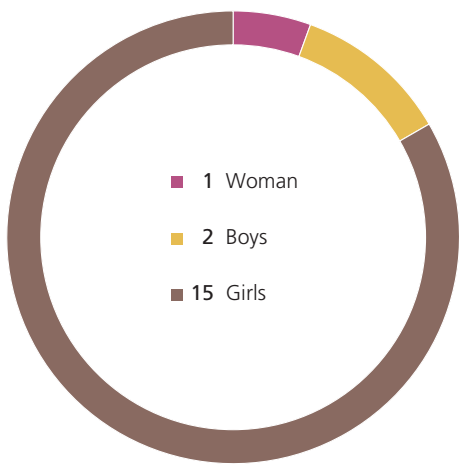
Source: National Crime Agency National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

**FIG. 70** Detected victims of trafficking in persons for domestic servitude in Australia, 2014–2016



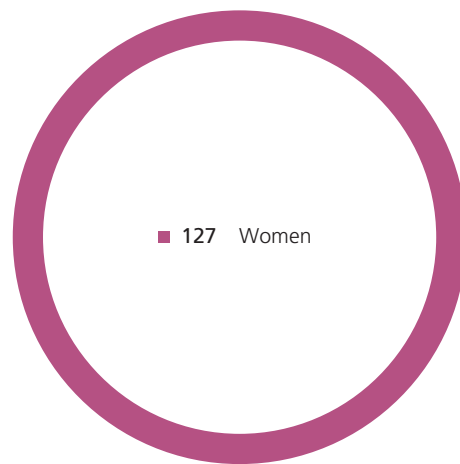
Source: Department of Social Services / Australian Red Cross

**FIG. 71** Detected victims of trafficking in persons for domestic servitude in Cote d'Ivoire, 2016



Source: Direction the la lutte contre le trafic des enfants et la délinquance juvénile.

**FIG. 72** Detected victims of trafficking in persons for domestic servitude in Madagascar



Source: Ministère de la Population, de la Protection Sociale et de la Promotion de la Femme

Middle East,<sup>215</sup> from the Americas<sup>216</sup> to Africa<sup>217</sup> and Asia.<sup>218</sup>

Trafficking for domestic servitude primarily affects women. The vast majority of domestic workers around the world are female (80 per cent),<sup>219</sup> which also explains why most detected victims of trafficking for domestic servitude are adult women. Further, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 88 per cent of the victims trafficked for domestic servitude included in the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) database are females.

Individual countries' data on the detected victims of trafficking in persons confirms that both in high- and low-income countries, most detected victims of trafficking for domestic servitude are females, largely adult women, though there are with larger proportions of girls in some countries and regions.

In terms of the nature of the trafficking itself, one pattern in particular appears to characterize trafficking for the purpose of domestic servitude: extremely high levels of violence, abuse and exploitation at the hands of persons not typically considered as "professional" criminals but rather as members of the household where the victim is employed and exploited.

While all forms of trafficking are frequently physically and/or psychologically violent (see section *The means used by traffickers: tools of control*), the analysis of the court cases examined for this Report, as well as the literature,

suggest that victims of domestic servitude are exposed to severe levels of sexual, physical and psychological abuse that is rarely seen in other – albeit still tragic – forms of trafficking.

The Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons reports that victims of domestic servitude may experience food deprivation, beatings with electrical wires or scalding with hot water.<sup>220</sup> Court cases report victims were constantly abused by those who employ them. For example, one case recorded that members of the household were “*hitting on victim’s mouth with a stone pestle, hitting victim with a hot iron on her face, hitting victim’s mouth with a milk bottle...pushing victim’s body and forehead to a door frame ... The victim’s nipples were also pinched and bit, and hot water was also poured on her chest...*”<sup>221</sup> This type of violence is frequently combined with harassment, psychological abuse, sexual assaults<sup>222</sup> and rape by the males of the households.<sup>223</sup>

According to the IOM CTDC database, about 15 per cent of the victims of trafficking for the purpose of domestic servitude are exposed to sexual abuse,<sup>224</sup> constituting a much higher likelihood of such abuse than those exploited in agriculture (3 per cent), construction (1 per cent) or manufacturing (6 per cent). According to fieldwork conducted in the European Union, more than 25 per cent of domestic workers, not necessarily victims of trafficking, reported being sexually harassed. Overall, domestic workers reported sexual harassment more often than female workers in other sectors.<sup>225</sup>

One factor that may contribute to the incidence of violence and sexual abuse in domestic work is the unique situation of cohabitation with the employer. Such a sit-

215 Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to Saudi Arabia* A/HRC/35/26/Add.3;

Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Jordan* A/HRC/35/26/Add.3;

Human Rights Council *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Kuwait*, A/HRC/35/37/Add.1, 21 April 2017

216 Court case 70 – United States of America 2012; court case 73 – Argentina 2015; court case 98 – Canada 2013; court case 344 – Paraguay; court case 363 – Venezuela 2015; court case 461 – United States of America 461; court case 488 – Colombia 2019; court case 489 – Colombia 2018.

217 African Human Rights Law Journal; *Domestic servitude and ritual slavery in West Africa from a human rights perspective* African Human Rights Law Journal. vol.17 n.1; Pretoria 2017; See NAP TIP Data Analysis Report 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2018.

218 National Crime Records Bureau, *National Crime Report in India 2019*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, page 978.  
Human Rights Council *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia* A/HRC/29/38/Add.1.

219 International Labour Organization, *Global Estimates on migrant workers: Results and methodology*; ILO, 2015.

220 A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia*.

221 Court case 20 – Brunei Darussalam 2012; court case 21 – Brunei Darussalam 2012; court case 70 – United States of America 2012. A/HRC/32/41/Add.1 *Report of the Special Rapporteur trafficking in persons, especially women and children on her mission to Jordan*, 2016, page 6.

A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia*, page 6.

222 A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia*.

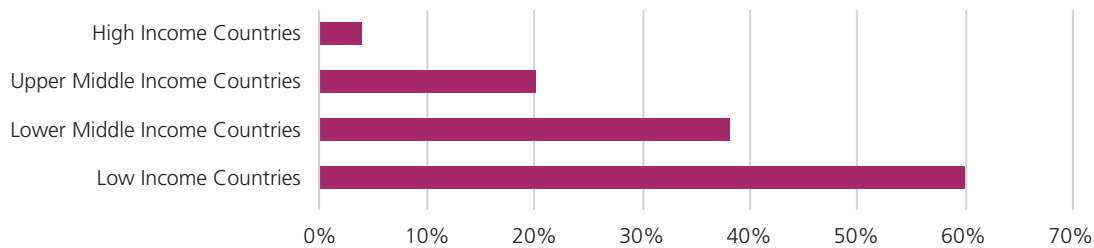
223 Court case 73 – Argentina 2015; court case 488 – Colombia 2019. Palumbo, L. (2016) *Demand in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Domestic Work Sectors in Italy*, Demand AT Country Study No. 5, page 11.

224 See the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative Global Data Hub on Human Trafficking <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/industry-sector-domestic-work> accessed 29 September 2020.

225 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 60

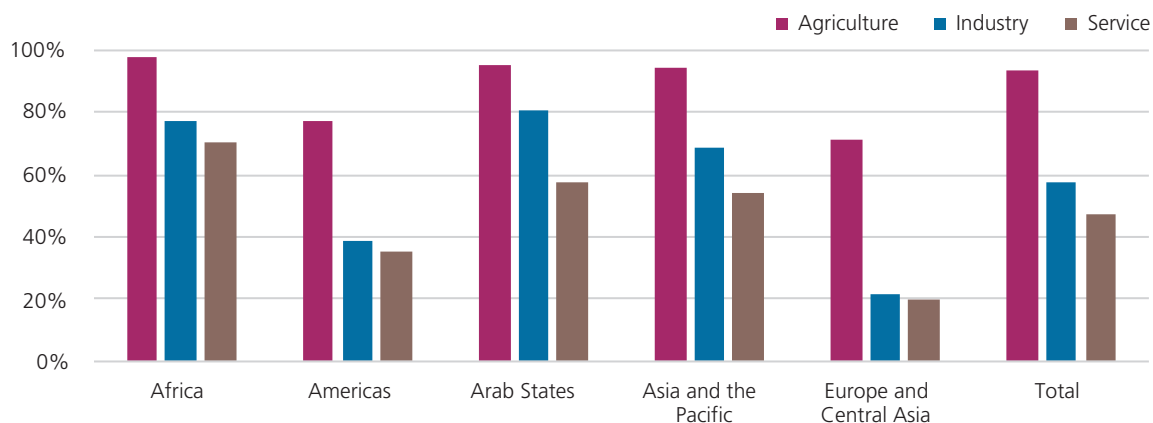


FIG. 73 Distribution of employment in agriculture, by World Bank income group, 2019



Source: International Labour Organization – ILOSTAT on Employment statistics, modelled estimates.

FIG. 74 Size and composition of the informal economy: a global picture (percentages, 2016)



Source: ILO calculations based on household survey micro dataset - Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture (third edition) / International Labour Organization – Geneva: ILO, 2018, page 26.

uation exacerbates the level of dependency<sup>226</sup> and may result in an increased level of intimacy among the people living under the same roof.<sup>227</sup> Cohabitation also can result in the isolation of domestic workers, often to the extreme of complete segregation.<sup>228</sup>

As a result, the combination of these elements makes trafficking for domestic servitude a crime in some instances more similar to domestic and gender-based violence rather than to a typical form of organized criminal activity.

226 *Ibid.* page 67.

Palumbo, L., (2016) *Demand in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Domestic Work Sectors in Italy* Demand AT Country Study No. 5, page 2.

227 Lutz, H. (2008), *Migration and domestic work: A European perspective on a global theme*. Aldershot, UK; Ashgate; Ricard-Guay, A (2016) *Trafficking in domestic work: looking at demand-side*. Working Paper, DemandAT Project.

228 Palumbo, L., (2016) *Demand in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Domestic Work Sectors in Italy* Demand AT Country Study No. 5, page 18.

### Trafficking in agriculture

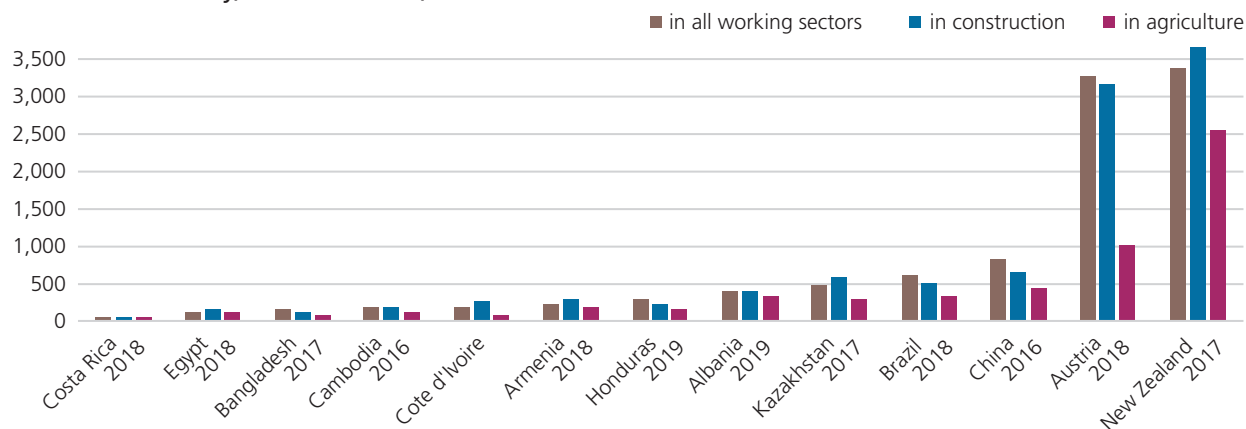
Agriculture employs 28 per cent of the total labour force globally and about 60 per cent in low income countries. It is an economic sector characterized by a high level of informal employment, and those employed in this sector are typically paid less compared to other workers. These factors make working in agriculture less attractive to a prospective worker than other sectors. In general, those employed in this sector often have few opportunities to choose other forms of employment, thus resulting in an increased vulnerability to trafficking.

The pervasiveness of trafficking in persons in this sector has been documented in all parts of the world and in varying types of agricultural operations, including large plantations in Africa<sup>229</sup> and in South-East Asia,<sup>230</sup> farms

229 Court case 373 – Cote D’Ivoire 2014; court case 374 – Cote D’Ivoire 2015.

230 See A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia*, 2015, page 5.

**FIG. 75 Mean nominal monthly earnings of employees by economic activity, harmonized series, annually, in US Dollars\*, in selected countries\*\***

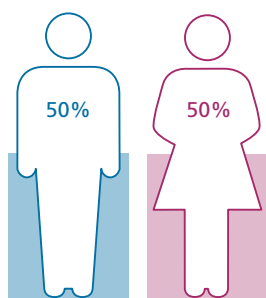


Source: International Labour Organization – ILOSTAT Database on wages.

\*The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the concept of earnings, as applied in wages statistics, as relating to gross remuneration in cash and in-kind contributions paid to employees, as a rule at regular intervals for time worked or work done, together with remuneration for time not worked, such as annual vacation, other type of paid leave or holidays.

\*\*Countries were selected according to data availability, regional and income level representation.

**FIG. 76 Victims of trafficking in agriculture included in the IOM CTDC, by sex**



Source: International Organization for Migration - Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative.

in North America,<sup>231</sup> different types of croplands in Latin America<sup>232</sup> and for the seasonal harvest of fruits, berries and vegetables in Europe.<sup>233</sup>

Moreover, the victim profile is also quite diverse. Victims of trafficking in persons in this economic sector are males and females,<sup>234</sup> both adults and children.<sup>235</sup>

231 Court case 33 – United States of America 2015; court case 459 – United States of America 2017.

Barrick, K., Lattimore, P.K., Pitts, W.J., Zhang, S. (2014). *When Farmworkers and Advocates See Trafficking but Law Enforcement Does Not: Challenges in Identifying Labor Trafficking in North Carolina*. Crime, Law and Social Change, 61(2) 205 - 214.

Zhang, S., Spiller, M.W., Finch, B.K., Qin, Y. (2014). *Estimating Labor Trafficking Among Unauthorized Migrant Workers in San Diego*. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 653(1) 65 - 86.

232 The Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization *Estudio regional sobre trabajo infantil en la agricultura en América Latina y el Caribe*, FAO and ILO, 2019, page 40

233 Court case 307 – The Netherlands 2016; court case 322 in Spain 2015. Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union *The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a human rights and gender based approach*, European Parliament, 2018.

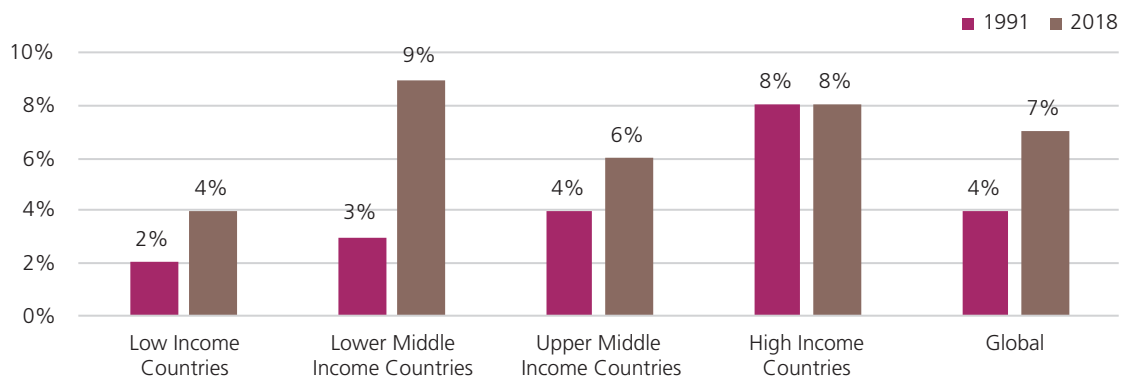
Council of Europe *Reply from Finland to the Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties*, 2018, page 6 and page 51.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 46.

234 Court case 33 – United States of America 2015; court case 459 – United States of America 2017. Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union *The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a human rights and gender based approach*, European Parliament, 2018.

235 Court case 33 – United States of America 2015; court case 459 – United States of America 2017.

FIG. 77 Distribution of employment in construction, out of total global employment, by World Bank income group, comparison between 1991 and 2018



Source: International Labour Organization – ILOSTAT Database on employment.

Furthermore, the modus operandi of the traffickers accordingly also is varied. Victims are trafficked and exploited in groups or individually. Similarly, there is not a specific pattern in the trafficker profile. There are cases where a single victim is trafficked by relatives, for example, to harvest lettuce and other vegetables.<sup>236</sup> In other cases, trafficking victims are exploited in groups,<sup>237</sup> on large farms<sup>238</sup> or in large-scale agricultural production facilities.<sup>239</sup> The Netherlands reported, for example, a case where a registered company and its managers were convicted for recruiting and exploiting migrants for mushroom picking.<sup>240</sup> Similarly, Israel reported a case where a company and three additional defendants were indicted for trafficking of foreign nationals to be exploited in agriculture.<sup>241</sup> Trafficking in the agriculture sector has also been documented involving more socially structured criminal organizations.<sup>242</sup>

236 Court case 459 – United States of America 2017.

237 Court case 102 – Czechia 2014.

238 Court case 333 – United States of America 2015.

239 Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union *The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a human rights and gender based approach*, European Parliament, 2018, page 31; Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, 2018, page 24-26

240 Court case 307 – The Netherlands 2016.

241 Court case 285 – Israel 2016.

242 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation *Threat Assessment – Italian Organized Crime* Europol, The Hague, June 2013; page 18. Direzione Investigativa Anti Mafia - 1st Semester 2019, *Relazione del Ministro dell'Interno al Parlamento; Attività svolta e risultati conseguiti dalla direzione investigativa antimafia*, p292; 2nd Semester 2018 *Relazione del Ministro dell'Interno al Parlamento Attività svolta e risultati conseguiti dalla direzione investigativa antimafia*; p102, p275, p335, p409.

Additionally, there is a range of means used by traffickers to exploit victims, spanning the spectrum from blunt explicit violence and isolation<sup>243</sup> to less violent, but equally coercive, threats of being reported to the authorities for being irregular migrants.<sup>244</sup>

#### Trafficking in the construction industry

Compared to other economic sectors, the number of people employed in the construction industry is limited but expanding. This expansion is particularly marked in lower-middle income countries, where the share of employment in the construction industry has tripled in less than 30 years. Over the same period, this share has doubled in low income countries and increased by 30 per cent in upper-middle income countries. This shows a rather sudden increased demand for construction workers, frequently filled by low-skilled and migrant workers.<sup>245</sup>

This form of employment is characterized by a lower level of mechanization compared to manufacturing<sup>246</sup> and is generally more dangerous than others. More people die while working in the construction sector than in any other

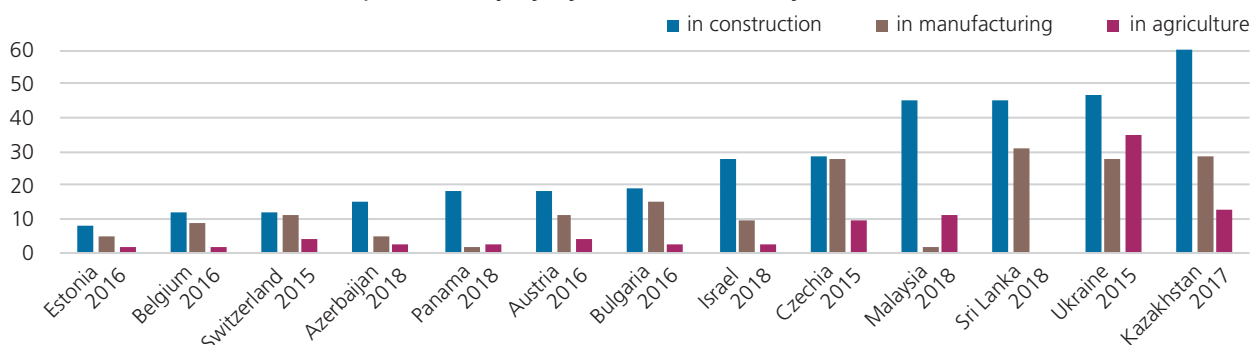
243 Court case 322 – Spain 2015 and Court case 354 – Poland 2016; 2nd Semester 2018 *Relazione del Ministro dell'Interno al Parlamento Attività svolta e risultati conseguiti dalla direzione investigativa antimafia*; p102, p275, p335, p409.

244 Court case 307 – The Netherlands 2016; court case 353 – Poland in 2015; court case 459 – United States of America 2017.

245 Buckley, M.; Zedel, A., Biggar, J., Frederiksen, L., Wells, J. *Migrant Work & Employment in the Construction Sector*, International Labour Organization, Sectoral Policies Department, Conditions of Work and Equality Department. – Geneva: ILO, 2016, page 1.

246 Buckley, M.; Zedel, A., Biggar, J., Frederiksen, L., Wells, J. *Migrant Work & Employment in the Construction Sector*, International Labour Organization, Sectoral Policies Department, Conditions of Work and Equality Department. – Geneva: ILO, 2016, page 3.

FIG. 78 Cases of fatal occupational injury by economic activity,\* annual in selected countries\*\*

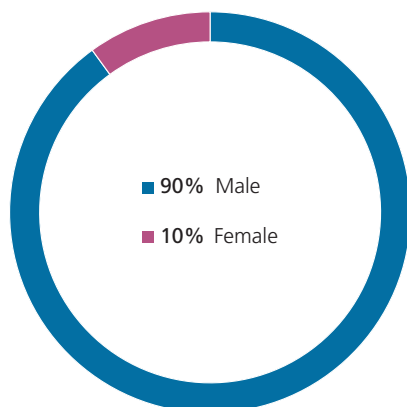


Source: International Labour Organization – ILOSTAT Database on fatal occupation injury.

\*The ILO defines a case of occupational injury as the case of a worker incurring an occupational injury as a result of an occupational accident. An occupational injury that is fatal is the result of an occupational accident where death occurred within one year from the day of the accident.

\*\*Countries were selected according to data availability, regional and income level representation.

FIG. 79 Victims of trafficking in the construction sector included in the IOM CTDC, by sex



Source: International Organization for Migration - Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative

er economic activity.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, the employment in this sector is often of a short term and of a project-based nature.<sup>248</sup>

Due to these characteristics, low-skilled national and migrant workers with few employment alternatives are structural facets of this industry.<sup>249</sup>

Working in the construction sector traditionally is a male dominated activity<sup>250</sup> and therefore, data and literature

on trafficking in this economic sector report mainly male victims.<sup>251</sup>

Court cases of trafficking in the construction sector collected for this Report describe a form of trafficking characterized by victims primarily exploited in groups by organized actors.<sup>252</sup>

Canadian authorities, for instance, reported a case of a criminal group engaged in trafficking victims from Central Europe to work on construction sites in Canada. Victims were recruited by means of deception and, once at destination, they were deprived of documents and subjected to exploitation. Traffickers were organized in a group characterized by family ties and operated in the origin and destination countries. The traffickers convicted were typically subcontracted to supply victims to construction sites in need of workers.<sup>253</sup>

Subcontracting is an important characteristic of employment in construction work. Yet, the practice can be flagged as a potential risk factor for human trafficking. When due diligence screenings of contractors are not implemented, subcontracting to “firms” whose main business is to supply cheap, non-unionized, flexible labour can open the gates to systematic exploitative practices.<sup>254</sup>

247 International Labour Organization *Explanatory Study of Good Practices in the Protection of Construction Workers in the Middle East*, White Paper, ILO, 2018; page 9.

248 Buckley, M.; Zende, A., Biggar, J., Frederiksen, L., Wells, J. *Migrant Work & Employment in the Construction Sector*, International Labour Organization, Sectoral Policies Department, Conditions of Work and Equality Department. – Geneva: ILO, 2016, page 9.

249 Wells, J. (1996). *Labour migration and international construction*. Habitat International, 20(2), 295-306.

250 International Labour Organization, *Women at work: Trends 2016*, ILO, page 23 and page 61.

251 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 96.

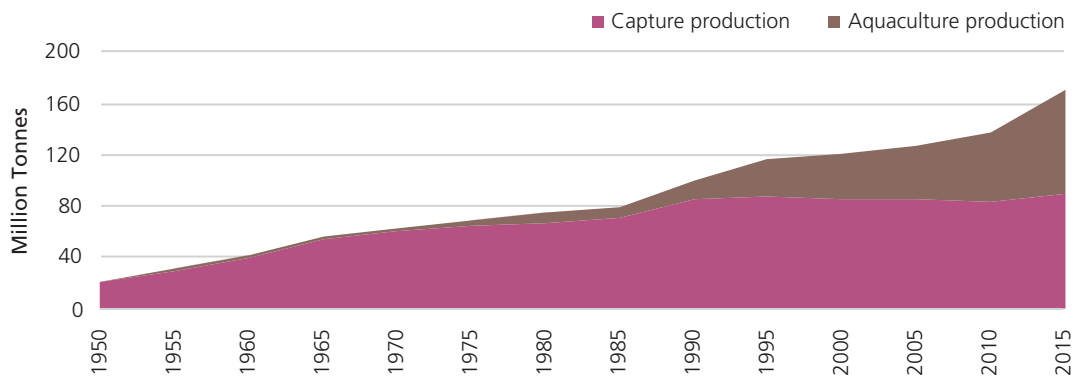
252 Cockbain, E., Brayley-Morris, H., (2018) *Human Trafficking and Labour Exploitation in the Casual Construction Industry: An Analysis of Three Major Investigations in the UK Involving Irish Traveller Offending Groups*, Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, Volume 12, Issue 2, June 2018, Pages 129–149,

253 Court case 24 – Canada 2010.

254 Buckley, M.; Zende, A., Biggar, J., Frederiksen, L., Wells, J. (2016) *Migrant Work & Employment in the Construction Sector*, International Labour Organization, Sectoral Policies Department, Conditions of Work and Equality Department. – Geneva: ILO, 2016, page 9.

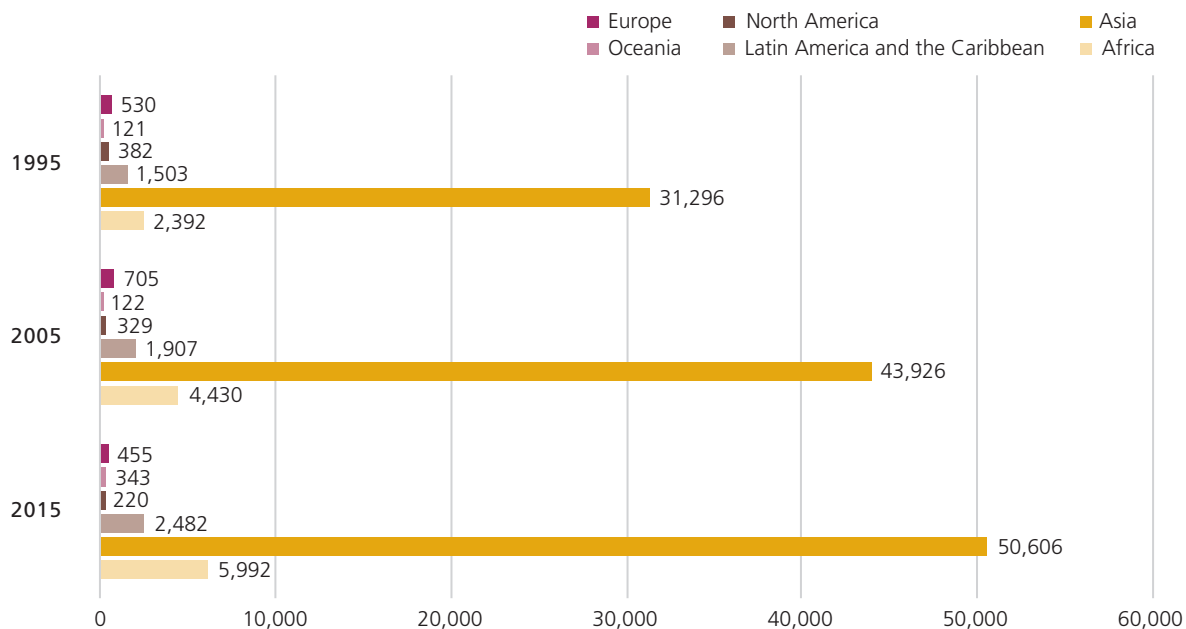


FIG. 80 World capture and aquaculture production, 1950-2018



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

FIG. 81 Number of people employed in the fishing industry, in selected years, by regions



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

As the construction industry continues to expand globally, the prevalence of this form of trafficking may continue to grow.

### Fishing industry and Trafficking

The global consumption of fish has been steadily increasing over the last 70 years, the result of both the growing world population and corresponding fish consumption per capita.<sup>255</sup> Similarly, over the last few years, the world has re-

corded an increase in the market price of fish.<sup>256</sup> Therefore, the overall business in this industry has increased.

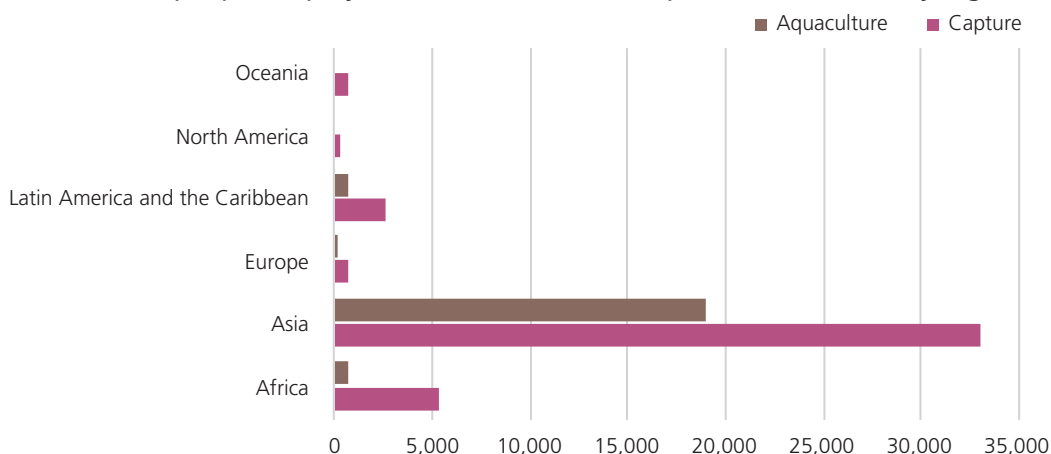
In addition, the fishing industry has diversified as it has expanded. Over the last 15 years, the industry has been introduced to new sources of supply with advances in aquaculture production, or the farming of aquatic organisms.<sup>257</sup> Old-fashioned capture production is more labour

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, page 63.

<sup>257</sup> Aquaculture is understood to mean the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants. Farming implies some form of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators, etc. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/global-aquaculture-production/en>, accessed 02-03-2020.

<sup>255</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018 - Meeting the sustainable development goals*. FAO, Rome, 2018, page 4.

FIG. 82 Number of people employed in the fisheries and aquaculture in 2016, by regions



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

intensive than modern aquaculture.<sup>258</sup> Yet, capture production continues to be prevalent, and people employed in the most labour-intensive sector of the industry are concentrated in Asia and Africa. The African continent records a high share of non-motorised vessels (about 77 per cent, as opposed to 35 per cent in Asia), suggesting African production is even more labour-intensive than in other parts of the world.<sup>259</sup>

Some features put this industry at risk for human trafficking: workers are typically underpaid, working under hazardous conditions, with rampant informal employment present.<sup>260</sup>

A structural factor exacerbating the exposure of workers to trafficking is overfishing. The increasing consumption of fish, although compensated by aquaculture, has led to the depletion of fish stocks in traditional fishing areas. Faced with the scarcity of fish along the coastlines, over the last decade, fishing vessels have started working further out in waters away from shore, in order to locate more abundant fish stocks.<sup>261</sup> Distant captures require

crews to stay prolonged periods at open sea, increasing costs for a catch while reducing the possibilities of labour or police inspections.<sup>262</sup> Overall, these factors have favoured the use of trafficking victims in this sector.

Trafficking in persons for forced labour in the fishing industry has been widely documented all over the world.<sup>263</sup> As discussed previously, given the specific geography of this industry, most reports and studies of trafficking in the fishing industry are recorded in Asia<sup>264</sup> and Africa,<sup>265</sup> and to lesser extent in other regions.

262 *Ibid.*

263 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6), page 104; See the Nexus Institute webpage <https://nexusinstitute.net/publications/trafficking-for-fishing/>, accessed 02/11/2020.

264 International Organization for Migration *Trafficking of Fishermen in Thailand* IOM, Bangkok, 2011; International Labour Organization, *Ship to Shore Rights: Baseline Research Findings on Fishers and Seafood Workers in Thailand*, ILO, 2018; United Nations Interagency Project on Human Trafficking, *Estimating Labour Trafficking: A Study of Burmese Migrant Workers in Samut Sakhon, Thailand*. UNIAP Regional Management Office, Bangkok, 2011. Sarah R. Meyer et al, *Trafficking, Exploitation and Migration on the Thailand-Burma Border: A Qualitative Study*, 53 International Migration (2014), page 37; Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016. A/HRC/29/38/Add.162, Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia. (23 -28 February 2015), page 5.

265 Hamenoo ES, Sottie CA (2015) *Stories from Lake Volta: the lived experiences of trafficked children in Ghana*. Child Abuse & Neglect Volume 40, February 2015, Pages 103-112; International Labour Organization *Caught at sea: Forced labour and trafficking in fisheries*, ILO, 2013, page 5, page 11; Environmental Justice Foundation (2012). *Pirate Fishing Exposed: The Fight against Illegal Fishing in West Africa and the EU* EJF, London, 2012.

258 Food and Agriculture Organization, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018 - Meeting the sustainable development goals*. FAO, Rome, 2018, page 30.

259 *Ibid.* Page 71.

260 Food and Agriculture Organization, *Scoping study on decent work and employment in fisheries and aquaculture: Issues and actions for discussion and programming*, FAO, 2016, Rome, page 1 and page 28

261 International Labour Organization *Caught at sea: Forced labour and trafficking in fisheries*, ILO, 2013, page 5; Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016, page 23. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) *Guidance on Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture*, FAO and ILO, 2013.

According to a study by IOM and Indonesian authorities, 10 per cent of all inspections recorded in vessels operating in Indonesian waters reported violations of trafficking in persons and forced labour in 2016.<sup>266</sup> A 2018 ILO study conducted in South-East Asia reported that 24 per cent of fishermen interviewed had experienced their pay being withheld and 34 per cent reported having had their documents taken by employers.<sup>267</sup> Other studies estimate that 33 per cent of seafood workers in Asia's principal processing region have been trafficked.<sup>268</sup>

There is no clear information on the sex of victims of trafficking exploited in this economic sector. The vast majority (86 per cent) of people employed in fish capture are males,<sup>269</sup> which explains why most studies on trafficking in this industry refer to male victims.<sup>270</sup> In some rural communities, however, girls are exploited in other parts of the industry, such as mending nets, but not in the capture phase.<sup>271</sup> Most identified victims, as with many other forms of trafficking for forced labour, are migrant workers.<sup>272</sup>

Victims are typically exploited in large groups by organized actors, including officially licensed companies. Court cases and literature refer to crews exploited for years with no pay by companies operating in international waters.<sup>273</sup> Some investigations highlight how the levels of organization of certain groups can be very sophisticated, including utilizing a country's systemic corruption along with the use of supply ships to exchange the catch for food, water and fuel in order to keep the crew permanently at sea and fraudulent documentation to mask the true identity of trafficked migrants.<sup>274</sup> According to these cases, thousands of fishery workers have been documented to have been recruited in a variety of different countries in South-East Asia and operating in distant waters up to the African coasts.<sup>275</sup>

In addition, there are also cases of victims exploited in smaller fishing vessels by unregulated operators active along the coastlines.<sup>276</sup> Patterns of children trafficked in small numbers in the context of local fishing communities are also reported. In these cases, children are exploited in rudimentary wooden rowing boats, most of which have no motors.<sup>277</sup>

Whether victims are exploited by large companies or by local fish suppliers, it appears that, like in other industries, recruiting agencies and intermediaries between the labour supply and demand sides play a role. Large investigative cases resulting in the detection of thousands of victims identify the role of recruitment companies supplying crews from different parts of the world to the fishing companies that then exploit them.<sup>278</sup> Similarly,

266 Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016, page 17.

267 International Labour Organization, *Ship to Shore Rights: Baseline Research Findings on Fishers and Seafood Workers in Thailand*, ILO, 2018, page 5.

268 United Nations Interagency Project on Human Trafficking (2011). *Estimating Labour Trafficking: A Study of Burmese Migrant Workers in Samut Sakhon, Thailand*. UNIAP Regional Management Office, Bangkok, 2011.

269 Food and Agriculture Organization, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018 - Meeting the sustainable development goals*. FAO, Rome, 2018, Page 33.

270 R Surtees, *At Home: Family reintegration of trafficked Indonesian men*, Anti-Trafficking Review, issue 10, 2018, pp 70–87.

Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016.

Sarah R. Meyer et al, *Trafficking, Exploitation and Migration on the Thailand-Burma Border: A Qualitative Study*, 53 International Migration (2014);

International Labour Organization, *Ship to Shore Rights: Baseline Research Findings on Fishers and Seafood Workers in Thailand*, ILO, 2018, page 5;

Surtees, R. (2014) *In African waters. The trafficking of Cambodian fishers in South Africa*, IOM/Nexus Institute.

271 Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shabinian, Mission to Ghana (22–29 November 2013)* page 27–38

272 Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016; Page 43, page 52.

273 Court case 116 – Indonesia 2014;

Surtees, R. (2014) *In African waters. The trafficking of Cambodian fishers in South Africa*, IOM/Nexus Institute page 63;

Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016; page 20.

274 International Organization for Migration (2011) *Trafficking of Fishermen in Thailand* IOM, Bangkok, 2011.

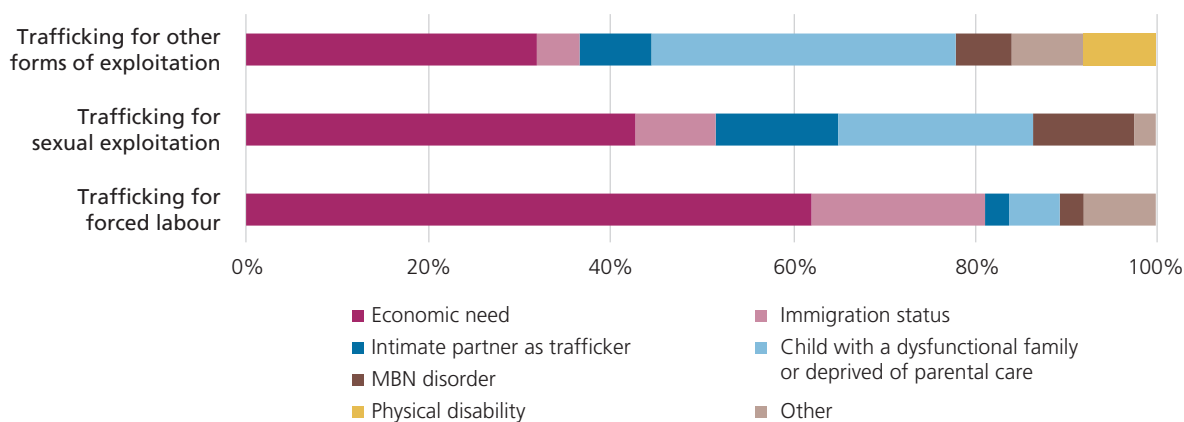
275 Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016.

276 See Thailand's Country Report on Anti-Human Trafficking Response (1 January – 31 December 2016), page 66 and 67.

277 Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shabinian, Mission to Ghana (22–29 November 2013)* page 27–38

278 Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Indonesia Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal Fishing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Coventry University (2016); *Report on Human Trafficking, Forced Labour and Fisheries Crime in the Indonesian Fishing Industry*, IOM, Jakarta, 2016; Page 43, page 52.

**FIG. 83** Shares of cases, by condition of the victim before being trafficked, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*The information on the form of exploitation and victim’s condition before trafficking was reported in 233 court cases of a total of 489 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

children in rural communities in Africa are also recruited by intermediaries who provide money to the child’s parent to supply these children to fishermen.<sup>279</sup>

As the fishing industry continues to grow and diversify, victims may be exploited in different ways and in different areas in the global fishing supply chain. Yet, it is likely that traffickers will continue to rely on the very nature of fishing and its remoteness in the world’s oceans to exploit victims, in particular migrants.

**Risk factors**

Investigating patterns and vulnerabilities in trafficking for forced labour is extremely complex given its multi-dimensional nature that cuts across criminal activities, social norms, labour relations and the macroeconomic dynamics of different economic sectors.

Some elements that may contribute to the incidence of trafficking in persons for forced labour emerge from the analysis presented above. These elements include workers’ individual vulnerabilities, such as being an undocumented migrant or lacking alternatives for income generation, as well as structural dynamics connected with the working environment itself, such as being low paid, labour intensive, short-term and/or dangerous. Further, some factors relate to the labour market, such as the presence of recruitment agencies or a limited labour supply. However, one element in particular seems to be a com-

mon pattern recorded in different forms of trafficking for forced labour: the drastically asymmetric relationship between employer and employee, resulting in a lack of realistic alternatives for workers other than to accept risky job offers and remain in exploitative labour situations.

**Lack of alternatives to exploitative wages, excessive working hours and few or no rights**

Overall, trafficking for forced labour is more frequently detected in those countries characterized by low salaries,<sup>280</sup> longer working hours<sup>281</sup> and high informal employment.<sup>282</sup> Workers in informal employment are often not union-

280 Correlation between UNODC-Share of TiP for forced labour to total detected victims and ILO reported wages (parity purchasing power) is Pearson’s -.431, Sig.:0.000, N 79.

Correlation between UNODC-Share of TiP for forced labour to total detected victims and ILO reported wages on extra-hours worked (parity purchasing power) is Pearson’s -.440, Sig.:0.000, N 79.

281 Correlation between UNODC-Share of TiP for forced labour to total detected victims and ILO reported extra working hours is Pearson’s +.355, Sig.:0.001, N 79.

282 Correlation between UNODC-Share of TiP for forced labour to total detected victims and ILO Informal Employment to total employment is Pearson’s +.584, Sig.:0.000, N 81.

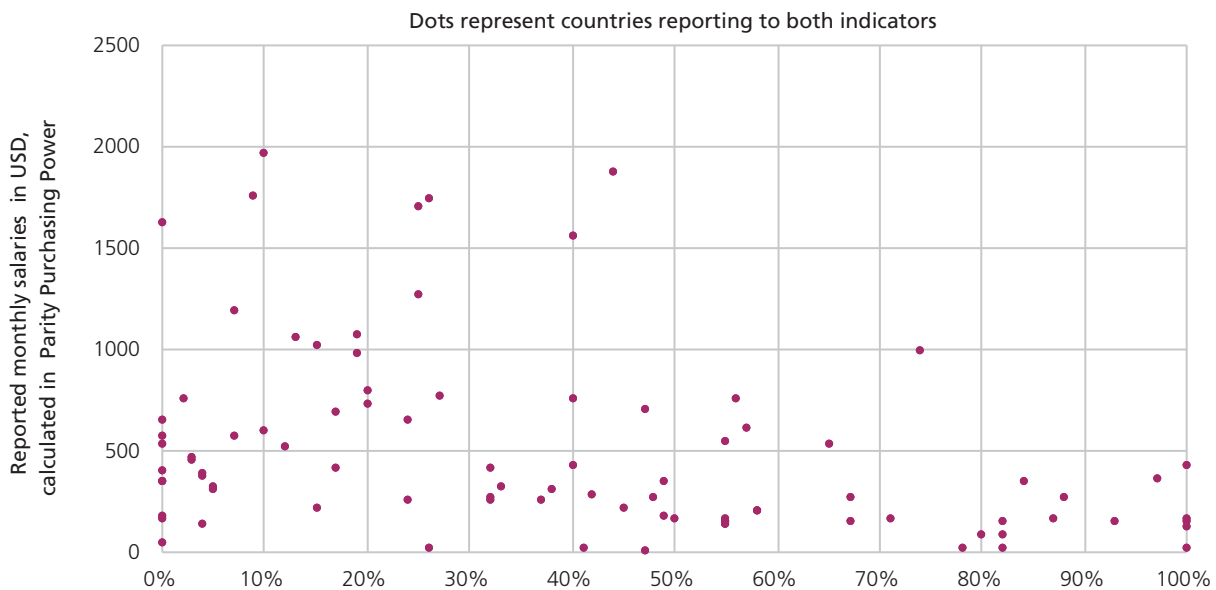
ILO defines informal employment as comprising the total number of informal jobs, whether carried out in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or households, during a given reference period; informal employment comprises: Own-account workers and employers employed in their own informal sector enterprises; Contributing family workers; Employees holding informal jobs, Members of informal producers’ cooperatives; Own-account workers engaged in the production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household.

See Hussmanns, R. (2003) *Statistical definition of informal employment: Guidelines endorsed by the Seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians* Bureau of Statistics International Labour Organization, Geneva, page 6.

279 Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shabinian, Mission to Ghana (22-29 November 2013)*, page 27-38.



**FIG. 84** Relation between countries' shares of victims exploited in forced labour to total victims detected and countries' average wages

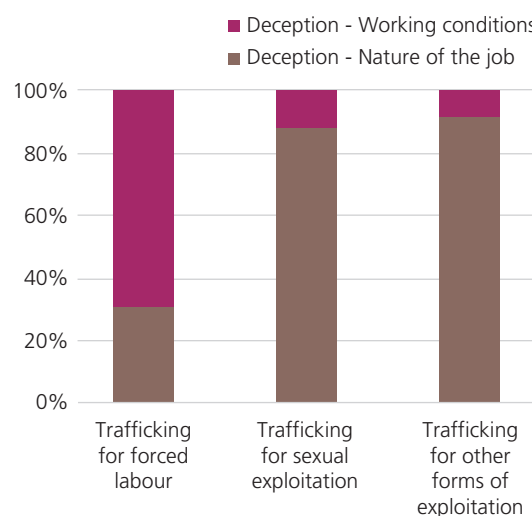


Source: Elaboration on UNODC data on trafficking in persons and ILO survey data on monthly salaries.

ized and are invisible to existing systems of labour protections.<sup>283</sup> In general, those in informal employment typically work more<sup>284</sup> and are paid less<sup>285</sup> than workers doing the same job in formal employment. For these workers, the informal nature of their job may include the absence of social security coverage, annual paid leave or paid sick leave, employment contracts as well as a lack of awareness or choice to not comply with the requests of the employer.<sup>286</sup> Not everyone in informal employment is a

victim of trafficking, of course, but informality is a context that is more prone to exploitation. Furthermore, the World Bank has assessed that the Pandemic recession will greatly and negatively impact those surviving in informal employment, raising additional concerns over the exacer-

**FIG. 85** Shares of cases, by type of deception and forms of exploitation, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*The information on the form of exploitation and type of deception was reported in 175 court cases of a total of 489 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this Report.

283 Harkins, B.; Lindgren, D; Suravoranon, T (2017) *Risks and rewards: Outcomes of labour migration in South-East Asia*, International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration, 2017, page 61.

284 According to ILO survey statistics, close to 45 per cent of all workers in informal employment are working more than 48 hours a week compared to 30 per cent of workers in formal employment. About 14 per cent of those in informal employment are working more than 60 hours, while only 7 per cent of those formally employed work that amount. *Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture (third edition)* / International Labour Organization – Geneva: ILO, 2018, page 61-65, page 156.

285 Informal wage employees earn less than formal wage employees. Wages of informal employees are in some cases up to 65 per cent lower than wages of formal employees for the same job; ILO. *World Employment and Social Outlook: The changing nature of jobs* (Geneva), page 41.

286 International Labour Organization, *Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture (third edition)* ILO, 2018, page 61-65; Harkins, B.; Lindgren, D; Suravoranon, T (2017) *Risks and rewards: Outcomes of labour migration in South-East Asia*, International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration, 2017. Palumbo, L. (2016) *Demand in the context of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Domestic Work Sectors in Italy*, Demand-AT Country Study No. 5, page 6.

bated effect of COVID-19 on trafficking in persons.<sup>287</sup> One element of importance is that, while victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are normally promised a job unrelated to sexual activities, victims of trafficking for forced labour are more frequently deceived about the working conditions, but not about the nature of the job, which is a likely indicator of low salaries or dangerous activities. Yet, their intrinsic vulnerability makes them accept these risky choices.

### **Out of sight; confined in remote areas with few or no inspections**

Traffickers can avoid labour regulations by segregating their victims in remote areas or in private apartments. The “invisibility” of some sectors, such as domestic work, fish capture in open sea, agriculture or mining in remote areas where workers have no contact with the rest of the community, facilitates exploitative practices. In the absence of labour inspections, law enforcement and social control, trafficking goes unpunished more easily and traffickers may operate relatively freely with impunity.

The most evident case of hidden labour is domestic work. According to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants in regard to domestic workers, “*Many migrant women work as domestic workers. However, labour inspections are not carried out in private households. That leaves domestic workers unprotected and therefore vulnerable to abuse and exploitation*”.<sup>288</sup> This is confirmed by field studies indicating inspections as being virtually non-existent in the domestic work sector.<sup>289</sup>

What makes combatting trafficking particularly challenging in domestic work is that victims are segregated from the rest of the community, forced to live in the same location where their exploitation takes place. In the same way, similar situations have been reported for people trafficked to work in restaurants<sup>290</sup> and garment “sweatshops.”<sup>291</sup>

287 World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2020. The World Bank, page 40. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9>

288 A/HRC/35/25/Add.1, 2017, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants on his mission to Angola*, page 13.

289 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, Page 74; International Labour Organization Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, ILO, 2019, page 24-25.

290 Court case 7 – Australia 2012; court case 190 – Dominican Republic 2014.

291 Court case 398 – Argentina 2017.

Working in remote areas increases the risk of exploitative conditions. Ukraine, for example, reported a case of trafficking where victims were trafficked from South Asia to be exploited in stone processing. Further compounding their situation was the fact that they were living and working in the production plant in a remote province.<sup>292</sup> Such isolation and thus increased risk of being exploited, sometimes for years, is also commonly the case in the fishing industry, as discussed previously.<sup>293</sup>

Similarly, people trafficked in agriculture can often be found in remote rural areas. In a case reported in the European Union, for example, a group of migrant workers from Eastern Europe were exploited on a remote farm, far from any populated areas with no access to transportation, and relying entirely on their exploiters for basic supplies.<sup>294</sup> This pattern emerges in several European countries, where migrants trafficked in the agriculture sector are found to live in rudimentary accommodation close to the fields and isolated from local communities.<sup>295</sup> Moreover, spatial segregation in slums and abandoned farmhouses facilitates the concealment of the victims’ living and working conditions and reduces the risks of intervention by authorities.<sup>296</sup> The same methods are reported for trafficking of workers in the mining sector.<sup>297</sup> As mining often takes place in remote areas where law enforcement and social control is weak, the resulting conditions create immense opportunities for traffickers to exploit children and adults in the extraction of minerals and metals.<sup>298</sup>

The involvement and control of national authorities in an area can also play a significant role in traffickers’ abili-

292 Court case 329 – Ukraine, 2016.

293 International Labour Organization, *Ship to Shore Rights: Baseline Research Findings on Fishers and Seafood Workers in Thailand*, ILO, 2018.

294 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 49.

295 Court case 333 – United States of America 2015. Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, 2018, page 9.

296 *Ibid.* page 23.

297 International Labour Organization, *Combating forced labour and trafficking in Africa*, Background paper Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), ILO, 2013 page 22-25; Schipper, I.; de Haan, E. (2015) *Gold from children’s hands, the use of child-mined gold by electronic sector*, Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO) Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, Amsterdam, 2015.

298 A/HRC/35/25/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants on his mission to Angola*, 25 April 2017, page 13.

ty to act with impunity. Avoiding the risks of being overseen by national authorities can be achieved in any location if law enforcement and labour inspectors' controls are limited, corrupted or focus on migration status rather than labour standards.<sup>299</sup> Authorities' lack of controls over employers facilitates the perpetration of exploitative practices against employees.<sup>300</sup>

Qualitative research conducted in the European Union showed that 132 out of 237 workers participating in the study had not witnessed nor heard of inspections at the workplace. Almost none of those employed as domestic workers witnessed inspections, nor the majority of those working in construction or catering. Those who had witnessed labour inspections perceived them to not have been properly conducted.<sup>301</sup>

There are indications that labour inspections are generally reducing in number<sup>302</sup>. Despite the increases in working populations or national GDPs, reduction in the number of labour inspections is a trend recorded in 31 countries from a total of 62 where information was available.<sup>303</sup>

### Migration and precarious legal status

People can also be exploited in plain sight, especially when they are marginalised, discriminated against and/or are afraid of being reported because they have an irregular migration status.

Particularly in wealthy countries, trafficking for forced labour is more commonly identified among migrants than national citizens. Traffickers abuse different vulner-

abilities of migrants, starting with the fact migrants may not always have a regular status to work or legal permission to stay in the country of exploitation.

According to official data on 71 cases of trafficking for forced labour prosecuted in Argentina between 2009 and 2013, about 70 per cent of the 516 victims were foreigners, and 56 per cent of them were in a precarious legal situation, such as experiences of illegal entry into the country (26 per cent).<sup>304</sup> From the investigations in these cases, it emerges that traffickers use this irregular status to exploit victims.<sup>305</sup> Similarly, research conducted in the European Union among irregular migrants shows that residence status is perceived as the most important factor contributing to labour exploitation.<sup>306</sup>

Traffickers typically threaten to report victims to migration authorities if they do not comply with exploitative working conditions.<sup>307</sup> In a court case provided by Israel, the persons convicted for trafficking restricted the movement of a domestic worker, warning her she could be arrested if she left the house as she did not have her travel documents in order.<sup>308</sup> Many countries report similar cases.<sup>309</sup> The fear of being returned to their country of origin may discourage migrants with irregular residence status from seeking support or justice, even in extremely exploitative situations.<sup>310</sup>

As with many forms of trafficking, labour traffickers may be involved in facilitating the irregular migration of the victims. This typically happens on the basis of a

299 Shin Y. J.; (2017) *A Transnational Human Rights Approach to Human Trafficking: Empowering the Powerless*, Studies in Intercultural Human Rights, Volume 8, Brill, 2017.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 74.

300 International Labour Organization, *Strengthening action to end forced labour*, International Labour Conference, 103rd Session, 2014, page 57.

301 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 73.

302 Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, 2018, page 21.

303 International Labour Organization reports the number of labour inspection visits to workplace during the year. The variable is described as the "physical presences of a labour inspector in a workplace for the purpose of carrying out a labour inspection and which is duly documented as required by national legislation".

According to this data, for 62 countries where information was periodically available from 2010 to 2018, 31 countries recorded a decreasing number of annual inspections. About 14 countries recorded an increasing trend of inspections per year, while for 17 countries the trend was stable or unclear.

Available at: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

304 Procuraduría de Trata y Explotación de Personas *Trata laboral en Argentina. El tratamiento judicial de los casos en el fuero federal*, 2014, page 35.

305 International Labour Organization and Procuraduría de Trata y Explotación de Personas *La trata de personas con fines de explotación laboral. Estrategias para la detección e investigación del delito*. Dirección de Relaciones Institucionales - Ministerio Público Fiscal de la Nación, page 46.

306 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, pp 67-68.

307 *Ibid.* p 57, p 65.

308 Court case 282 – Israel 2016.

309 Court case 68 – United States of America 2010; court case 72 – United States of America 2013; court case 134 – Poland, 2013; court case 181 – United States of America 2014; court case 232 – Belarus; court case 461 – United States of America 2016; court case 459 – United States of America 2017.

310 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 57, page 65;

David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration, page 38; A/HRC/35/25/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants on his mission to Angola*, page 13.

debt these victims have to pay back to cover the costs for being smuggled into the country.<sup>311</sup> Charging migration fees is not only practiced by migrant smugglers, but also widely used in regular migration processes and by officially registered companies. Many migrant workers fall victim to debt bondage when they take on an initial debt for the migration journey as part of the terms of a regular registered employment contract.<sup>312</sup> In some instances, the fees charged for regular migration are more expensive than those for irregular migration.<sup>313</sup>

Linking labour contracts and migration status makes migrant workers bound to their employer. In some countries of the Middle East, for example, migrant workers are not allowed to leave the country without the employer's permission. The employer can legally withhold the passport of the employee until the migration debt is paid.<sup>314</sup>

Similarly, studies conducted in Europe highlight the risk of immigration policies that tie a residence permit to a specific employment contract. These policies can result in leaving the worker with no choice other than to accept exploitative working conditions in order to renew legal residence or legalise status.<sup>315</sup> For example, Norway reported a case involving three Indian migrants trafficked to work as cooks in a restaurant. The victims had residence permits allowing them only to work in that spe-

cific restaurant. This created a complete dependency of the victims on the employer, who abused this power by coercing the victims into exploitative conditions. In an interesting distinction, the court ruled that a fourth person, an Afghan man with irregular status, also exploited with the three Indians, did not constitute trafficking for forced labour in lieu of the fact as he was not bound to remain with the same employer.<sup>316</sup>

Yet, migration status is not the only risk factor that may expose a worker to labour exploitation. Migrants are also targeted because they are generally unfamiliar with their labour rights,<sup>317</sup> are unaware of available support mechanisms<sup>318</sup> and/or are unable to understand the language of the countries where they are exploited.<sup>319</sup>

Further compounding the issue, studies have shown that law enforcement or labour inspectors may not always be so keen in protecting migrants' rights due to widespread discrimination by the community or state authorities of the countries where they have settled.<sup>320</sup>

#### **Lack of due diligence; intermediation, sub-contracting and involvement of legal companies**

As reported above, migrant workers often rely on some

311 David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration, page 30.

312 A/HRC/29/38/Add.162. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on her mission to Malaysia*, page 5. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 35, page 43; International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, pp 48-55.

313 Harkins, B.; Lindgren, D.; Suravoranon, T (2017) *Risks and rewards: Outcomes of labour migration in South-East Asia*, International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration, 2017; Page 36.

314 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, page 48-55.

315 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 65; Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department for Citizen's right and constitutional Affairs, Women Rights & Gender Affairs *The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a Human Rights and Gender based approach*, page 22; David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration, page 38

316 Court case 433 – Norway 2019.

317 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, pp 67-68; International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, page 42.

318 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 78,

319 *Ibid.*; David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration, page 40; Court case 181 – United States of America 2014; A/HRC/35/25/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants on his mission to Angola*, page 13; A/HRC/23/48/Add.1, Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, 22 February 2013, page 6.

320 Shin Y. J.; (2017) *A Transnational Human Rights Approach to Human Trafficking: Empowering the Powerless*, Studies in Intercultural Human Rights, Volume 8, Brill, 2017; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 74; Chea, P., (2014) *Migration and Human Security of Cambodian Workers in Thailand*, in *Irregular Migration and Human Security in East Asia*, ed. by Song and Cook, 2014. McCormack, S.; Larsen, J.J.; Abul Husn, H. (2015) *The Other Migrant Crisis: Protecting Migrant Workers against Exploitation in the Middle East and North Africa*, Walk Free and International Organization for Migration. A/HRC/35/25/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants*, page 13.



form of intermediation in order to access the labour market abroad. This normally implies a cost that the migrant is bound to pay back, such as a reduction in the agreed upon salary.<sup>321</sup>

Recruitment fees applied by intermediaries may cover the acquisition of an employer/employee, travel and immigration documents, transportation, housing and other possible services.<sup>322</sup> Recruitment agencies have been reported to charge a worker up to the equivalent of four months' salary along certain migration routes,<sup>323</sup> but in some cases, these costs may amount to up to 11 months' salary for the worker.<sup>324</sup> Recruitment agencies sometimes induce people to believe that it will be easy for them to repay the debt based on the salaries promised in destination countries, but this is often not the case.<sup>325</sup>

As a matter of fact, this debt is a burden for the migrant worker who is forced to give up most of the salary that was promised, turning this recruitment mechanism into a debt bondage scheme resulting in trafficking in persons. Furthermore, in South-East Asia, a study reports about 65 per cent of those migrant workers who had to pay a recruitment fee saw their identification document withheld by their employer.<sup>326</sup>

321 David, F.; Bryant, K.; Larsen, J.J. (2019) *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour*, International Organization for Migration, page 11; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 32;

International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives *Presence of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Labour Migration-Sri Lanka*, International Labour Organization, 2019, page 39-41.

322 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practices of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons* UNODC, Vienna, 2015;

International Labour Organization *What's the incentive? Comparing regular and irregular migrant work experiences from the LAO People's Democratic Republic of Thailand* ILO, 2018, page 23;

Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, page 14.

323 Martin, P. (2016) *What do Migrant Workers Pay for Foreign Jobs?* KNOMAD Data and SDG Indicator 10.7.1

University of California, 5 November 2016;

Harkins, B.; Lindgren, D.; Suravoranon, T. (2017) *Risks and rewards: Outcomes of labour migration in South-East Asia*, International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration, 2017, page 40.

324 Martin, P. (2016) *What do Migrant Workers Pay for Foreign Jobs?* KNOMAD Data and SDG Indicator 10.7.1

University of California, 5 November 2016; page 7-8.

325 A/HRC/23/48/Add.1 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo*, 22 February 2013, page 5.

326 International Labour Organization (ILO), *Recruitment fees and related costs: What migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar pay to work in Thailand*, 2020, page 77.

While some recruitment companies are officially registered, others are not.<sup>327</sup> Dealing with an officially registered recruitment/intermediation agency, however, does not necessarily mean there are no risks of trafficking involved. Indonesian authorities, for example, reported the case of a registered worker placement company whose owner and affiliates were convicted for trafficking in persons. In this case, the recruitment company recruited a large number of people to be “dispatched” or “sold” to other licensed recruitment/placement companies located in different East Asian countries. Workers were recruited, “stocked” in compounds, segregated and forced to pay their recruitment debts to these companies before being released and sent to work abroad.<sup>328</sup>

The role of agents in the recruitment and exploitation of the victims is documented in all economic sectors and in all regions. For example, employment agencies operating between Asia and the Middle East are reportedly involved in the recruitment of domestic workers to be placed with middle- and high-income households. These companies typically charge employers for their services, and then in turn, employers charge the workers to pay back this cost. Documents are withheld and the migrant is not allowed to leave the employer until this recruitment fee is paid back. In some cases, the employment agencies have active roles in the trafficking by threatening the domestic worker and discouraging them to report to national authorities.<sup>329</sup>

Cases of trafficking where licensed recruitment or placement companies were involved or complicit with the exploitation of victims were reported also in agriculture.<sup>330</sup> Many agricultural and other economic activities require an expanded labour force during certain periods of the production cycle, and thus the use of intermediaries facilitates a flexible labour supply.<sup>331</sup>

327 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 32;

Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, page 14; International Labour Organization (ILO), *Recruitment fees and related costs: What migrant workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar pay to work in Thailand*, 2020, page 20.

328 Court case 117 – Indonesia 2015.

329 A/HRC/35/37/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, 21 April 2017, page 5;

A/HRC/32/41/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, 2016, page 5;

A/HRC/23/48/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, 22 February 2013, page 7.

330 Court case 285 – Israel 2016, court case 307 – the Netherlands 2016.

331 Corrado, A. (2018), *Is the Italian agriculture a pull factor for irregular migration – and, if so, why?*, European University Institute, page 14.

Recruitment or placement agencies, whether legal or illegal, often have the power to intercept salaries paid by the company where workers are placed.<sup>332</sup> In these cases, the exploitation scheme is operated by the intermediary and not by the employer at the workplace.

Belgian authorities, for example, reported a trafficking case where Eastern European trafficking victims were recruited by service providers in the cleaning sector. These workers were 'sublet' to clean toilets in petrol stations through a legal service contract. Petrol stations paid the agency providing the cleaning service. The workers, meanwhile, were segregated and threatened, with their payments retained. Authorities estimated the trafficking group made profits of up to 1.3 million euros during three years of activity.<sup>333</sup> Similar cases were reported in different regions and economic sectors.<sup>334</sup>

Outsourcing the labour force is a flexible form of labour arrangement that allows employers to adapt to the volatility of the markets.<sup>335</sup> When labour is outsourced, however, there is no direct contractual link between the contractor and the workers, and the contractor has no responsibility for the working conditions of their employment.<sup>336</sup> This often results in opacity and fragmentation of responsibilities, where it is unclear who is accountable for the labour conditions of the worker. These contexts become susceptible to trafficking practices under the guise of a legitimate business.<sup>337</sup>

The same principle applies when the supply chain is externalised and delocalised. Manufacturing corporations that import final or semi-final products from other companies located in other countries where labour costs are lower and where there is less enforcement may involuntarily become accomplices to trafficking for forced labour. While legal and well-reputed corporations may apply proper labour standards, those supplying services downstream may not.<sup>338</sup> This mechanism is how trafficking in persons may infiltrate the globalized legal economy.

332 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 44.

333 Court case 93 – Belgium 2012.

334 Court case 69 – United States of America 2011, court case 101 – Czechia 2012. A/HRC/32/41/Add.1, *Report of the Special Rapporteur trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Jordan*, 2016, page 5.

335 Bamu, P.H.; Godfrey, S (2009) *Exploring labour broking in the South African construction industry*, Labour and Enterprise Policy Research Group, University of Cape Town, Report commissioned on behalf of Building Workers International, 2009.

336 Wells, J. *Exploratory study of good policies in the protection of construction workers in the Middle East – ILO white paper* / International Labour Organization, Regional Office for Arab States. - Beirut: ILO, 2017, page 6.

337 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union*, FRA, Vienna, 2015, page 44; page 67; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector*, OECD, 2015, page 22; Martin, P. (2017) *Merchant of labor; Recruiters and international labor migration*, Oxford ed., 2017, page 218.

338 Quayson, A.; Arhin, A. (2012) *Labour Migration, Human Trafficking and Multinational Corporations; the commodification of illicit flows*, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2012., page 2-5.











CHAPTER V  
TRAFFICKERS USE OF THE INTERNET





## CHAPTER 5

### TRAFFICKERS USE OF THE INTERNET; DIGITAL HUNTING FIELDS<sup>339</sup>

As the world continues to transform digitally, internet technologies are increasingly being used for the facilitation of trafficking in persons. With the rise of new technologies, some traffickers have adapted their modus operandi for cyberspace by integrating technology and taking advantage of digital platforms to advertise, recruit and exploit victims.

Everyday digital platforms are used by traffickers to advertise deceptive job offers and to market exploitative services to potential paying customers. Victims are recruited through social media, with traffickers taking advantage of publicly available personal information and the anonymity of online spaces to contact victims. Patterns of exploitation have been transformed by digital platforms, as webcams and livestreams have created new forms of exploitation and reduced the need for transportation and transfer of victims.

With the help of the internet, traffickers have learnt to adapt their strategies to effectively target specific victims, by actively ‘hunting’ those who they deem as vulnerable to falling victim to trafficking, or passively ‘fishing’ for potential victims by posting advertisements and waiting for potential victims to respond.

To analyze these new emerging patterns, UNODC has gathered the narratives of 79 court cases of trafficking containing an element of internet technology. Some of these cases were directly collected by UNODC to produce the *Global Report*. Others were collected from the UNODC Case Law Database, *Sherloc*, to expand the information at the base of this analysis.<sup>340</sup>

<sup>339</sup> The initial findings of the research were reviewed at an Expert Group Meeting hosted by UNODC in Vienna on 25-27 November 2019. The meeting gathered practitioners, experts and academics to review the overall approach, verify findings and discuss additional perspectives.

<sup>340</sup> The research is based on court material gathered by UNODC since 2012, which has been compiled into a Court Case Database. Out of the 489 cases included in the database, 45 were selected based on the criterion of containing an element of internet usage in the narrative. In order to expand the evidence base, an additional 34 cases from the UNODC ‘SHERLOC’ Case Law database were included in the analysis of this Chapter. In total, the final dataset comprises information from 79 cases of trafficking in persons reporting the use of internet during the criminal offence. The cases involved a total of 491 victims and covers more than 30 national jurisdictions. The dataset provides sex and age-specific information on a subset of cases. In total, the dataset provides information on 26 boys, 65 girls, 287 women and 41 men. In selected cases, full transcripts have been identified and analyzed, which is referenced in the foot notes where relevant.

The following pages make use of a definition of *Internet Technologies or Internet Usage* to describe technology elements in the reviewed court cases. The term broadly refers to technologies in form of social media platforms and applications, webpages, communication apps or other applications designed to transfer money, pictures or text between individuals. The more precise term of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) is not used since it refers to all communication including telecommunications, which would be overly broad for this research.

The following chapter presents an analysis of the collected court cases, illustrating how internet technologies are applied by traffickers to perpetrate their crimes in the digital age.

#### Digital platforms and markets: The use of technology to advertise, recruit and exploit

Among the cases collected by UNODC for this thematic chapter, the first which reports the use of internet dates to 2004. This case described how traffickers used a free-standing webpage to promote sexual services and to connect with interested consumers in a tourist destination.<sup>341</sup>

Nowadays, internet-based trafficking has become increasingly varied; spanning from simple setups of advertising victims online, to traffickers’ use of communications platforms to broadcast exploitation abroad, to interacting with potential victims or transferring money between trafficking group members.<sup>342</sup> There have been cases of traffickers who have coerced victims into establishing rapport with customers in chat rooms monitored by the traffickers,<sup>343</sup> and there is ample evidence of the

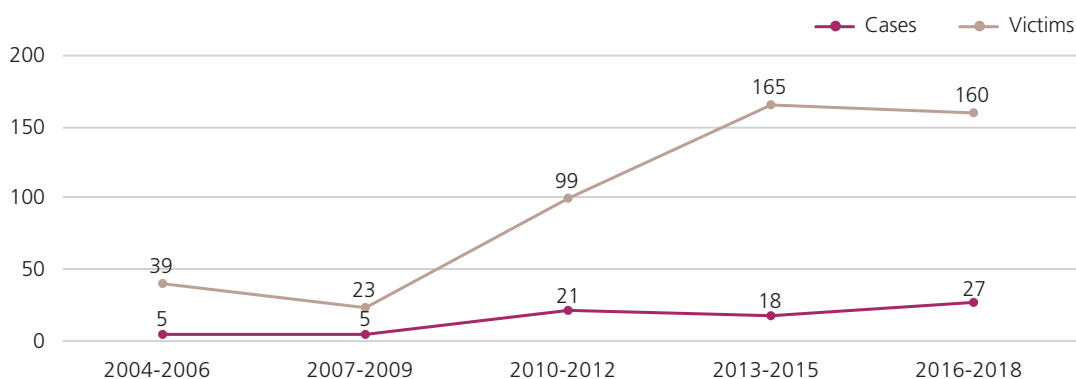
<sup>341</sup> United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2004, Case no. BRA004. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/criminalgroupcrimetype/bra/2007/processo\\_n\\_2004.81.00.18889-0.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/criminalgroupcrimetype/bra/2007/processo_n_2004.81.00.18889-0.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

<sup>342</sup> Court case 230 – Belarus, 2017; United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (Vienna, Austria, 2018).

<sup>343</sup> Regional Trial Court of Misamis Oriental, the Philippines, 10th Judicial Region, Branch 41, CRIM Case No. 2009-337



**FIG. 86** Number of cases perpetrated with the help of internet technologies and identified number of victims, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases, 2004-2018



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

growth of child sexual abuse material online<sup>344</sup> of which some is related to trafficking in persons.<sup>345</sup> Traffickers have coerced their victims into forced crime, forced labour or have used internet technologies to advertise the selling of organs, such as kidneys harvested from impoverished individuals.

**Advertisement**

Through the internet, traffickers easily gain access to an increased pool of customers, particularly sex buyers. One court case is particularly illustrative: a single trafficker, working alone, managed to sexually exploit and connect one victim with over 100 sex buyers over a period of 60 days using online advertisement.<sup>346</sup>

344 European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, *Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, (2019).

345 Court case 329 – Thailand, 2016.

346 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2013, case no. CAN016. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law\\_doc/traffickingpersons/crimetype/can/2013/r\\_v\\_byron.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law_doc/traffickingpersons/crimetype/can/2013/r_v_byron.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

Traffickers increasingly use internet technologies to advertise the services resulting from their victims’ exploitation. Examples of advertisements used to exploit victims include those on classified listing sites, such as *Backpage*<sup>347</sup> and similar, or on social media platforms and applications (apps).

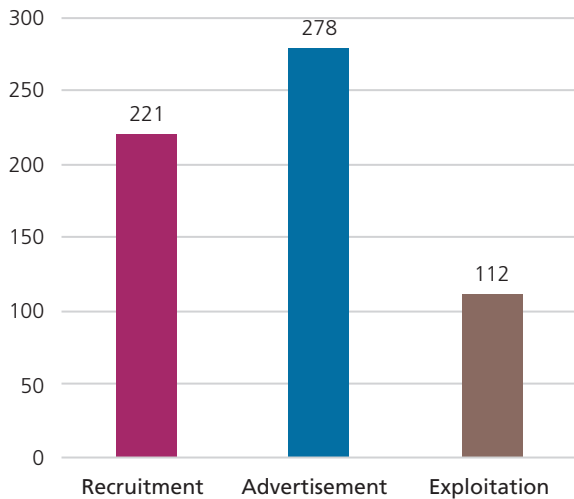
From the 79 court cases selected for this chapter, 44 cases included some form of online advertisement with 278 victims affected (from a total of 491 victims in this dataset). The remaining 35 cases and 213 victims did not use any form of online advertisement.

In some cases, traffickers hide exploitative services behind legitimate activities to avoid detection by law enforcement while targeting their client base. Carefully crafted language with coded keywords and pictures are

347 The classified listing site, [www.backpage.com](http://www.backpage.com), was seized by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in April 2018. URL: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-leads-effort-seize-backpagecom-internet-s-leading-forum-prostitution-ads>



**FIG. 87** Number of trafficking victims\*, by types of activities carried out with the use of technology, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases, 2004-2018



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

\*One victim could have experienced more than one type of activity.

used to attract potential clients.<sup>348</sup> In some cases, advertisements are addressed to a close circle of clients, such as the case of child sexual exploitation advertised via social media platforms.<sup>349</sup> In other cases, exploitation services are advertised in more organized ways via free-standing webpages which, on one occasion, publicized the exploitation of 89 victims through an escort service featuring approximately 2,800 advertisements.<sup>350</sup>

Through this type of activity, traffickers can be more direct. For example, one case described the use of a social media site as resembling the experience of ‘window shopping’, whereby customers could inspect which victims they intended to ‘buy’.<sup>351</sup>

The platforms used for advertisements tend to be broadly accessible. The analysis of court cases report that regular online marketplace sites, on which anyone can post or browse advertisements to sell or buy any service (from

job vacancies to the sale of equipment, cars and clothes), are being used to advertise services obtained from victims of human trafficking.

### Recruitment

The internet is also used by traffickers to connect with the targeted victims. Recruitment practices are widely reported upon, when it comes to both sexual exploitation and forced labour.<sup>352</sup> Several methods have been identified, from direct contact to more devious and deceptive ploys. 31 out of the 79 court cases considered for this chapter report an element of online recruitment, affecting almost half of the total victims included in the database.

Technology-based recruitment hinges on the anonymity of communications via the internet. It may prove difficult to identify the author of online advertisements or the genuine identity of people writing from social media accounts. An example of internet manipulation is described in one court case, where the trafficker used multiple online profiles to recruit the victims. The trafficker stayed in contact with each victim through two fake identities: one was used to write abusive text messages, while the other was used to express understanding and compassion. This technique was instrumental in building trust with the victims.<sup>353</sup>

The disclosure of personal information on social media platforms may easily be misused by traffickers. One group of traffickers, for instance, used *Facebook* to browse through user profiles and, on basis of the information that people shared, selected potential victims who could be more susceptible to being courted and tricked into exploitation.<sup>354</sup>

Other examples illustrate that job advertisements are also used as recruitment fronts. Examples of advertisements used to attract victims often include wording

348 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2011, case no. ARG040.

349 Court case 365 – Russian Federation 2015; Court Case 218 – Armenia 2014.

350 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2011, Court case no. USA126. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2011/united\\_states\\_v\\_robert\\_c\\_daniels\\_.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2011/united_states_v_robert_c_daniels_.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

351 Court case 316 – Panama, 2014; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2011, case no. ARG040. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/arg/2011/case\\_n\\_2338.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/arg/2011/case_n_2338.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

352 University of Southern California, *Technology and Labor Trafficking in a Network Society*, 2015; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, and Tech Against Trafficking, *Leveraging Innovation to Fight Trafficking in Human Beings: A comprehensive analysis of technology tools*, (Vienna, 2020); European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, *Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, (2019).

353 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2016, case no. SGP003. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/sgp/2016/pp\\_v\\_muhammad\\_khairulanwar\\_bin\\_rohmat.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/sgp/2016/pp_v_muhammad_khairulanwar_bin_rohmat.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

354 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2014, case no. BEL034. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/bel/2014/case\\_n\\_210814.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/bel/2014/case_n_210814.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

that describes the possibility of living a luxurious life or promising jobs in industries such as modelling or entertainment.<sup>355</sup>

### Internet based exploitation

Internet technologies also play a role in the exploitation of victims. The internet can be used to broadcast or livestream acts of exploitation, reaching a large base of consumers in different locations throughout different regions of the world.

In one case, a group of traffickers organized and managed a “cybersex den” to exploit victims through coerced performances in front of webcams. The four male traffickers coerced 21 female victims into ‘cybersex’, harbouring them in an apartment where some rooms were used for dance performances. The performances were livestreamed, reaching paying costumers all over the world.<sup>356</sup> Other court cases describe forms of trafficking that involve child sexual abuse ‘on demand’. One court case reported by Norwegian authorities, for example, reported one male trafficker who was found guilty of forcing children, both girls and boys, into sexual performances, which were livestreamed over Skype.<sup>357</sup> Similar cases have been detected in other countries, but not necessarily prosecuted as trafficking, rather as sexual assault or rape.<sup>358</sup>

The internet can also be used to traffic victims to exploit them into the commission of crime. One court case describes how a group of traffickers successfully recruited people with the purpose of coercing them to commit identity theft and data fraud.<sup>359</sup> The victims were kept in an abandoned building and forced to live under inhumane conditions. They were given fake identities to procure and lease products from companies by abusing credit card information on websites, fraudulently using digital signatures to file tax returns.<sup>360</sup>

<sup>355</sup> Court case 317 – Singapore, 2016.

<sup>356</sup> Regional Trial Court of Misamis Oriental, the Philippines, 10th Judicial Region, Branch 41, CRIM Case NO. 2009-337.

<sup>357</sup> Court case 312 – Norway, 2016.

<sup>358</sup> European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, *Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, (2019).

<sup>359</sup> Court case 414 – Denmark, 2017; Eastern District Court of Denmark, Case numbers: AM2017.05.29H; AM2017.06.30Ø, AM2016.03.14B, AM2017.11.10B, AM2018.01.19Ø, AM2016.07.12B. Conviction, 2016 – 2018. URL: <https://vidensbasen.anklagemyndigheden.dk/h/6dfa19d8-18cc-47d6-b4c4-3bd07bc15ec0/VB/61db3c73-f3c2-49c5-a551-b755b9f-cfc31?showExact=true> ; Denmark, City Court, ref. 9-3441/2015, conviction 14 December 2015.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

These cases reveal how technology has become integrated in exploitation and has introduced new ways for traffickers to expand their businesses. While these types of cases are not often detected, they make up a significant share of the total number of victims included in the database. In total, 12 out of 79 cases, corresponding to 112 victims, involved the use of digital technology in the exploitation of the victim. Out of the 112 victims, 11 were boys, 32 were girls, 40 were men and 23 were women. Six remained undefined in terms of sex and age.

### Evolution of the internet platforms used

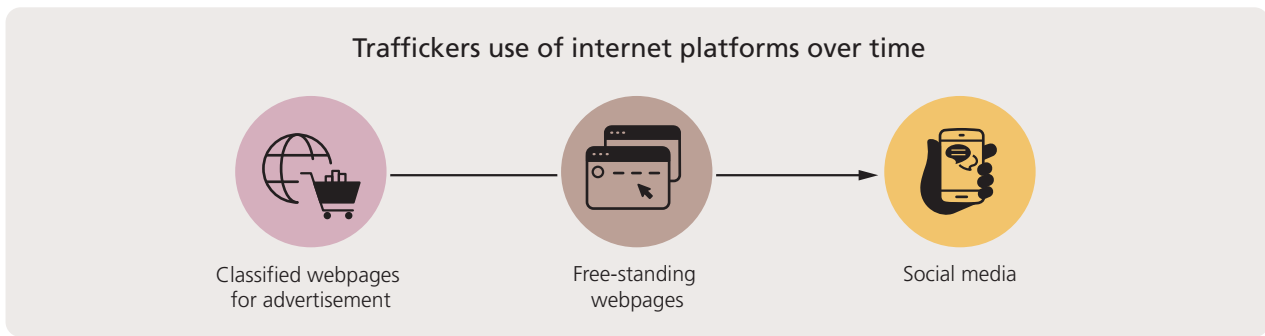
An analysis of the court cases suggests that different types of internet platforms are used by traffickers. For the purposes of this chapter, three broad typologies of platforms have been identified:

- **Social media**, including *Facebook, Myspace, Skype, WhatsApp* and *Vkontakte*;
- **Classified webpages for advertisement**, referring to generic websites where individuals post advertisements or browse for items or services to buy or sell;
- **Free-standing webpages**, referring to websites created by traffickers that do not form part of larger domains.

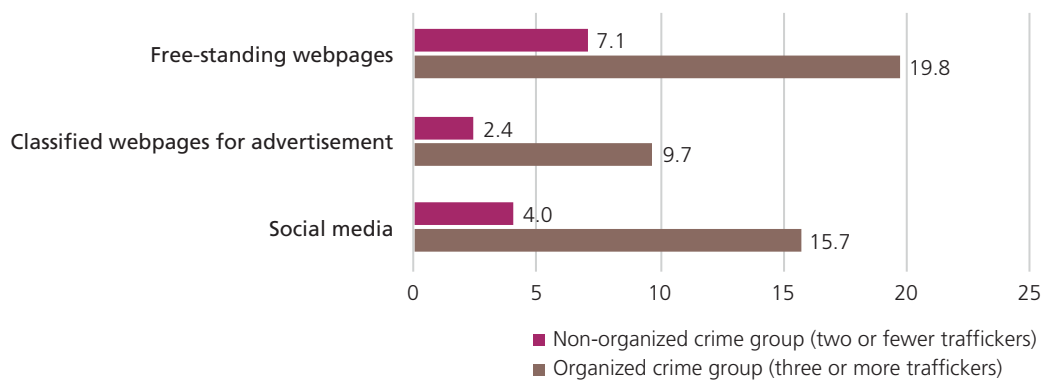
Trafficking methods and the profiles of victims and perpetrators seem to differ according to the platform used. As reported in the section on the structure of traffickers’ operations, organized crime groups are able to traffic more victims per case compared to criminals operating alone or in pairs (see section *Traffickers; how they operate*). This is also confirmed for cases of trafficking in persons where the use of the internet is reported.

Whether they are operating in groups or not, traffickers that make use of free-standing webpages are typically able to traffic more victims per case. The number of victims per case recorded for trafficking using social media, however, is still significant. As technology-based trafficking has become more commonplace, social media has been increasingly used by traffickers, making this method of trafficking an emerging threat, especially for youth.

Online classified sites or free-standing webpages are more frequently used to post fake job listings with the purpose of recruiting victims, or to publicize the services offered by exploited victims. These platforms were among the most used digital outlets in the mid-2000s. Over the



**FIG. 88** Average number of victims per single case, by type of platform and size of trafficking group, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases)

\*Out of the 79 cases of trafficking in persons reporting the use of internet during the criminal offence, 51 cases reported the type of platform used by traffickers and the number of traffickers involved.

years, they have been replaced in popularity with social media platforms, which have also become the main space for job advertisements.

This trend is also reflected in trafficking patterns. Since 2009, the share of victims trafficked using a form of social media has grown from zero to 51 per cent among the 79 cases. However, it is important to note that this figure is based on a limited dataset of court cases and does not necessarily represent all trafficking cases.

The dynamism of social media platforms makes them useful for criminal business activity that requires quick responses and the ability to connect with people without delay. The rapid pace of communication on social media is instrumental to the recruitment victims,<sup>361</sup> but also enables traffickers to easily link up with clients interested in purchasing an exploitative service. Since a significant amount of social activity has migrated to the digital sphere, traffickers use these platforms to easily blend in and move around, searching for victims.

<sup>361</sup> Court case 241 – Canada 2016.

The use of different platforms appears to relate with the age profile of the victims. Younger victims are reported in cases of trafficking through social media as compared to trafficking perpetrated across other platforms.

The average age of those using internet-based tools is decreasing; more children have started using the internet from an early age.<sup>362</sup> Children and teenagers are often ‘courted’ by traffickers on social media platforms<sup>363</sup> and they appear to be susceptible to deceptive ploys in the search for acceptance, attention or friendship. These behaviours are easily abused by traffickers, who take advantage of younger victims not necessarily aware of the dangers of exploitation when approached by strangers online.

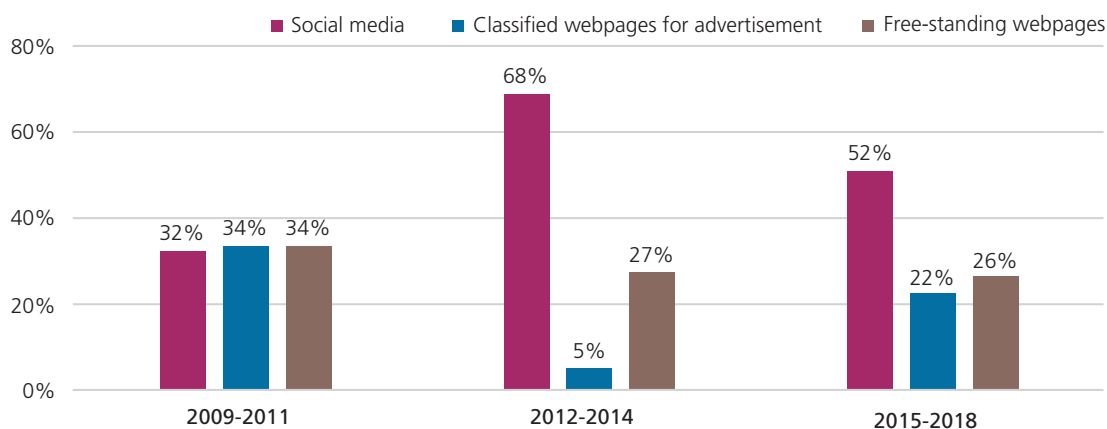
Adult victims are more exposed to trafficking through free-standing websites such as escort sites, where advertising of victims is not hidden. These public sites do

<sup>362</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *The State of the World’s Children: Children in a Digital World*, 2017.

<sup>363</sup> Myria, *2017 Annual Report: Trafficking and smuggling of human beings: Online*, 2017.

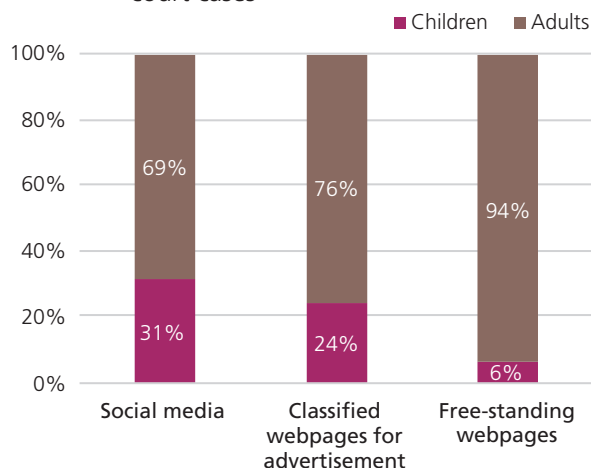
**FIG. 89** Shares of identified victims in court cases including an element of internet usage by type of platforms used, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases

(N. 423 victims)



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

**FIG. 90** Age of the victims and platform used by traffickers to recruit, exploit or advertise, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

\*Out of the 79 cases of trafficking in persons reporting the use of internet during the criminal offence, 51 cases reported the type of platform used by traffickers and the age of the victims.

not typically involve child victims, possibly due to the heightened risk of drawing the attention of law enforcement or because traffickers who exploit children prefer more clandestine ways of operating.

Yet, although the use of public sites for child exploitation is limited, the availability of such materials is not limited. In addition to the platforms here considered, the so-called “dark-web” has gained the interest of criminals to facilitate their illegal trades. Among the information col-

lected for the purpose of this Report, there are no cases of trafficking in persons where traffickers operated over the dark-web. There are, however, reports of criminal organizations making use of this platform to distribute child sexual abuse material.<sup>364</sup>

According to Europol, the distribution of child sexual abuse material continues to grow and is available on various internet platforms, including the non-indexed part of the internet that is not accessible through mainstream search engines.<sup>365</sup> Although distribution of this abusive material does not, in itself, constitute trafficking in persons, the production of images of child sexual abuse is very often the result of trafficking children for sexual exploitation.

### New geographies of trafficking in persons

Internet technology has broadened the geographical scope of traffickers’ operations. The internet helps traffickers to operate across borders and in multiple locations at the same time, while physically exploiting the victims in a single location.

### Cyber flows

By making use of internet technologies, traffickers are able to overcome geographical distances using the ‘cyber-space’ to connect themselves, victims and the final consumers of exploitative services. This form of trafficking may or may not require the transportation of the victim,

<sup>364</sup> European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2020.

<sup>365</sup> European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment, (2019).



### CYBER FLOWS

Cyber flows connect perpetrators, victims and consumers at multiple locations



although some cases have shown that victims may be transferred between countries.

The cyber flows are often characterized by victims held and coerced into video performances, allowing the perpetrators to connect with potential clients living abroad. This type of trafficking has been identified in several countries and typically relies on the availability of video equipment and digital recording devices to broadcast victims' exploitation.

The examined court cases did not describe many cases of cyber flows, yet those reported appeared to be significant in terms of numbers of victims and customers. Internet technologies allow for exploitation in front of larger audiences than is generally possible with traditional trafficking.<sup>366</sup>

UNICEF reported how children may be at increased risk to exploitation in front of webcams—connecting with abusers based elsewhere, and in many cases, with their parents unaware.<sup>367</sup> While this does not constitute trafficking in persons as such, it describes how abusive material is easily disseminated through digital tools, connecting victims and perpetrators in cyberspace.

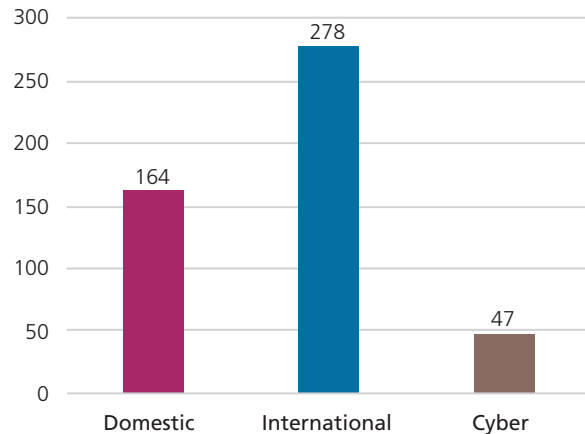
#### International flows

Traffickers may use internet technologies to facilitate the movement of people between countries. Of the 79

<sup>366</sup> Bergen District Court, Norway, TBERG-2016-61974, Conviction 12 July 2016; Regional Trial Court of Misamis Oriental, the Philippines, 10th Judicial Region, Branch 41, CRIM Case NO. 2009-337.

<sup>367</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *The State of the World's Children: Children in a Digital World*, 2017.

**FIG. 91** Victims\*trafficked by means of Internet, by domestic or cross-border trafficking, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

\*Out of the 164 victims that were trafficked domestically with the help of internet technologies, 35 were girls, 8 were boys and 102 were women. Of the 278 victims that were trafficked internationally, 184 were women, 41 were men and 34 were girls. The 47 victims trafficked via cyberflows included 14 boys, 17 girls and 16 women.

\*\*Note: The figure also includes victims trafficked online through webcams and digital equipment, captured under the term 'cyber'.

examined court cases involving an aspect of internet usage, 34 involved victims who were transported across borders between two or more countries, amounting to 57 per cent of the total victims identified in the dataset. Internet-based technologies may prove particularly useful for assisting flows across borders, as they provide efficient and convenient ways also to facilitate international money transfers.

Cross-border trafficking facilitated by technology typically requires the involvement of several connected perpetrators. For example, as demonstrated by one case, trafficking can be facilitated by one organizer, with one recruiter in the country of origin and another person acting as the enforcer in the country of destination where the victims are exploited.<sup>368</sup>

#### Domestic flows

Trafficking operations facilitated by the internet may also be confined within national borders. Court cases include examples of traffickers that have coerced relatives into exploitation and advertised their services online. Other examples demonstrate people in vulnerable

<sup>368</sup> Court case 283 – Israel 2017.

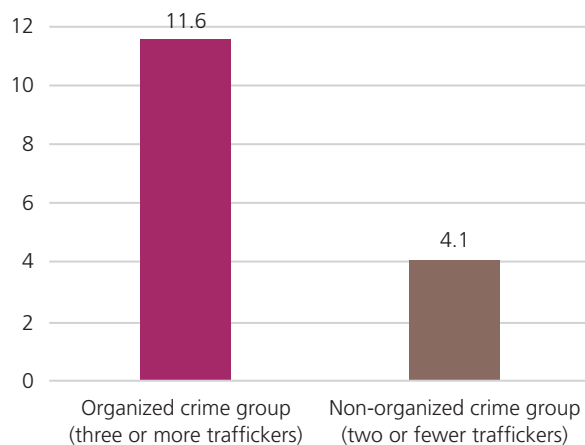
situations who have been abused by their friends, and similarly coerced into exploitation, which is then advertised on internet sites.

Victims may be recruited online with the exploitation taking place offline. One court case refers to a trafficker who gradually built an emotional relationship with the targeted victim, to the point of having complete control over the victim. Eventually, the victim was coerced into exploitation, which unfolded offline.<sup>369</sup> Another example involved a trafficker that coerced a female victim into sexual exploitation, advertised her online and transported her to different cities in response to online demand.<sup>370</sup> In these cases, the use of internet technologies during the recruitment of victims is a key element, mostly due to the ease of moving the victim out of his or her community.

### Cyber traffickers

The way internet technologies are used to commit trafficking in persons changes according to the profile, group size and level of ‘cyber expertise’ of the traffickers themselves. Most trafficking cases facilitated by the internet are conducted on a small scale. As for trafficking that occurs offline, lone traffickers can assert control over their victims in several ways. An analysis of the court cases reveals

**FIG. 92** Average number of victims per case where the use of Internet was reported, by size of trafficking group, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases (79 cases)



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

369 Court Case 218 – Armenia 2014.

370 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2004, Case no. USA021. Also available at URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2004/united\\_states\\_v.\\_gates.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2004/united_states_v._gates.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

traffickers working alone through the internet generally recruit and exploit their victims in their countries of residence. Out of the 35 cases in the dataset involving a single trafficker using the internet, just six involved the international transfer of victims.

A significant number of court cases (24) involving use of internet technology were perpetrated by groups of traffickers working in groups of three or more. While comprising just around one third of the 79 identified cases involving technology, the cases involving groups of traffickers included over half of the identified victims. From the court cases, it is clear that larger trafficking groups are able to traffic larger numbers of victims. These results are broadly in line with the average number of victims trafficked by organized crime groups compared to non-organized crime traffickers reported for all forms of trafficking (see section *Traffickers; how they operate*).

### Cyber experts

Traffickers may possess different levels of computer literacy. Some use rather unsophisticated internet-based technologies. For example, many of the reviewed court cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation were perpetrated with a smartphone equipped with a camera.

Other cases refer to more complex applications, such as the case of a trafficking group sexually exploiting large numbers of children and producing several hundred thousand images for online distribution through illicit sites.<sup>371</sup> Other examples indicate how social media can be used to facilitate money transfers between traffickers<sup>372</sup>, or how traffickers use the internet to monitor their clients on the ‘digital streets’ of chat rooms.<sup>373</sup>

Sophisticated technologies allow traffickers to scale up their activities. It has been documented that organized criminal networks have attempted to recruit hackers or cyber experts to support their operations.<sup>374</sup> One court case describes how a trafficking network had one ‘dedicated’ person responsible for online advertisement.<sup>375</sup>

371 Court case 329 – Thailand 2016.

372 Court case 230 – Belarus 2017.

373 Republic of the Philippines Regional Trial Court of Misamis Oriental, Branch 41, CRIM.CASE No. 2009-337.

374 Lusthaus, J. & Varese, F. (2017). *Offline and Local: The Hidden Face of Cybercrime*. Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice: <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pax042>.

375 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2011, Case no. SWE014. Also available at URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/swe/2011/case\\_no\\_b\\_87-11.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/swe/2011/case_no_b_87-11.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

Another case involved the use of the application *Money Gram*<sup>376</sup> to transfer money, along with other applications to recruit or communicate with victims. This shows how a reliance on internet technologies may remove the need for physical interactions between traffickers and victims. The use of multiple applications also indicates that traffickers are aware of the risk of monitoring and surveillance when using technology. Traffickers may initially contact potential victims on open groups in social media and move communication to encrypted or anonymized services, such as *WhatsApp* messaging on cellular phones.<sup>377</sup>

Traffickers seem to master the intricacies of linking means of coercive control with digital technologies. They can convince victims to share revealing pictures of themselves under the guise of assessing their suitability for some modelling job and then in turn, use the same pictures to maintain control over the victims by threatening their distribution. Some traffickers use social media to monitor the profiles of their victims and to track their whereabouts.<sup>378</sup> In one case, a victim was lured to go home with a perpetrator whom she met online. She was later drugged and raped. The trafficker recorded the rape and threatened its distribution as leverage to coerce the victim into sexual exploitation.<sup>379</sup>

### Modus operandi: The strategies used

Traffickers appear to adopt different approaches in the way they use internet technologies. The reviewed court cases highlight two distinct types of strategies: one in which traffickers proactively look for a specific type of victims (*'hunting'*), and the other in which traffickers attract potential victims (*'fishing'*).

#### Hunting strategies

Traffickers may proactively target specific victims or clients in a strategy that can be referred to as *'hunting'*. Hunting strategies are used both for getting access to victims and establishing connections with potential buyers of exploitative services.

In this approach, the targets of the traffickers are not random, but are chosen based on specific characteristics,

<sup>376</sup> Court case 230 – Belarus, 2015.

<sup>377</sup> Di Nicola, A., Baratto, G. & Martini, E., (2017) *Surf and Sound: The Role of the Internet in People Smuggling and Human Trafficking*, eCrime Research Reports 03, pp. 39-40. Middleborough, United Kingdom, 2017.

<sup>378</sup> Republic of the Philippines Regional Trial Court of Misamis Oriental, Branch 41, CRIM.CASE No. 2009-337.

<sup>379</sup> Court case 241 – Canada 2016.

### Hunting and Fishing Strategies



**Hunting strategies**  
Perpetrators actively approach victims in online spaces



**Fishing strategies**  
Perpetrators wait for victims or consumers to respond to ads

such as economic, emotional or other vulnerabilities, which consequently make them more susceptible to exploitation or abuse.

Hunting strategies were identified in 21 cases collected by UNODC for the purpose of this chapter. Out of these, 18 cases referred to victims' recruitment, while four cases traffickers targeted potential clients interested in the services of exploited victims, with one case including the hunting of both victims and clients. A key characteristic of the hunting strategy is that the trafficker proactively pursues the victim or the potential customer online.

Social media provides traffickers with a large pool of potential targets and the ability to collect personal information on individuals whom they might otherwise never meet. In the cases where a hunting strategy was used by perpetrators, almost all involved the use of social media. This may be due to the accessibility of personal information shared on these platforms, which enables perpetrators to identify vulnerable individuals relatively easily, assess their situation and approach them to build relationship.

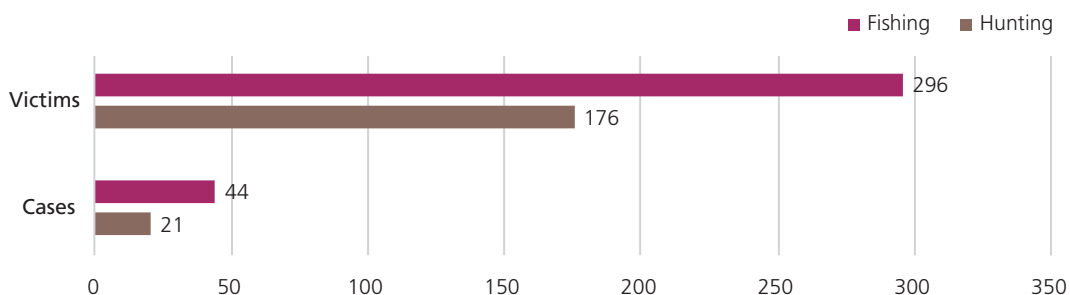
#### Fishing strategies

Conversely, the fishing strategies involve traffickers posting advertisements online and waiting for potential clients or victims to respond. According to the cases collected by UNODC, this strategy was more commonly used than hunting. Fishing strategies were identified in 45 cases, representing the majority of the cases in the dataset used in this Chapter.

Traffickers use fishing strategies to recruit victims by advertisements accessible to everyone, typically offering well paid jobs, prompting potential victims to make initial contact with traffickers.

In several of these cases, perpetrators used deception to attract victims by advertising jobs in a foreign country.

**FIG. 93** Number of victims, by the type of strategy used by the traffickers, as reported in the GLOTIP court cases\*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries (supplemented with UNODC SHERLOC cases).

In one case, traffickers used fake profiles on the social media platform *Vkontakte* to advertise modeling jobs in a foreign country. Traffickers eventually sexually exploited the women who were deceived by the advertisements. In this single case, approximately 100 women were recruited through fishing strategies.<sup>380</sup>

Fishing strategies are also used to attract potential clients. In these cases, traffickers typically post advertisements for escort services or prostitution, and invite interested customers to contact them. In one example, traffickers set up two websites advertising ‘escort services’, which were actually sexually exploitative services.<sup>381</sup> Clients would call or send messages over the internet to make appointments for prostitution services. In this case, more than 30 women were advertised online and forced to engage in sexual activities with customers. This case highlights the main advantage of fishing strategies for human traffickers: through the internet, perpetrators can reach many potential victims or clients with minimal risk, while simultaneously increasing the scale of their operations through minimal effort.

Fishing strategies are commonly used by traffickers to advertise victims to potential clients.<sup>382</sup> They typically use online classified advertisements,<sup>383</sup> social media platforms<sup>384</sup> or specialized websites dedicated to sexual services.<sup>385</sup> In a smaller number of cases, perpetrators advertise victims on websites which they set up themselves,<sup>386</sup> though this trend seems to be diminishing in favour of more mainstream platforms.<sup>387</sup>

380 Court case 230 – Belarus 2017.

381 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2004, case no: USA021. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2004/united\\_states\\_v.\\_gates.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/traffickingpersonscrimetype/usa/2004/united_states_v._gates.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

382 38 out of 45 fishing cases involved use of advertisements.

383 11 out of 45 fishing cases made use of online classifieds.

384 Court case 283 – Israel 2016; court case 316 – Panama 2014.

385 15 out of 45 fishing cases made use of free-standing escort or prostitution websites.

386 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Case Law Database, SHERLOC, 2007, case no: BRA004. URL: [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/criminalgroupcrimetype/bra/2007/processo\\_n\\_2004.81.00.18889-0.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/case-law-doc/criminalgroupcrimetype/bra/2007/processo_n_2004.81.00.18889-0.html?lng=en&tmpl=sherloc)

387 See figure above cited “Share of identified victims in court cases including an element of internet usage by type of platforms used (423 victims from 2009 to 2018). In the dataset, the period from 2004 to 2008 had 11 cases with 95 percent of the victims being trafficked using free-standing webpages.













CHAPTER VI  
REGIONAL OVERVIEWS







## CHAPTER 6 - REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

### WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE<sup>388</sup>

- Most detected victims are adult women, but men and boys are being increasingly detected.
- Sexual exploitation remains the most detected form of trafficking, however, trafficking for forced labour and trafficking for other purposes, mainly for criminal activity and exploitative begging, are being increasingly detected.
- Convicted traffickers are mainly adult men. The majority are comprised of citizens of the country of conviction. However, a large share of persons convicted for trafficking in persons is made up of foreigners.
- Most detected victims are foreigners. Central and South-Eastern European victims are less commonly detected when compared to the past. Victims from Sub-Saharan Africa remain a significant share of the victims detected in this subregion.
- Countries in this subregion are increasingly detecting their own nationals as victims of trafficking.

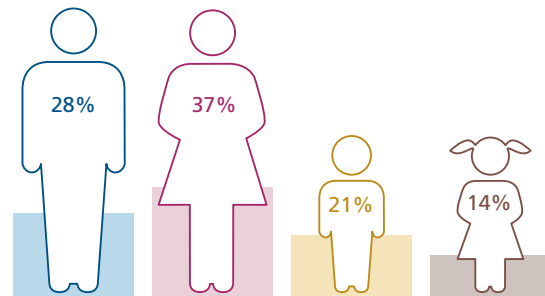
#### Profile of the victims

While the relative majority of the trafficking victims detected in this subregion continue to be women (37 per cent), the share of boys increased from 6 per cent in 2016 to 21 per cent recorded in 2018. This can mainly be explained by a few countries in the subregion, which reported a significant number of boy victims compared to other victim profiles. One example of this pattern is the increasing detection of boys trafficked for the purpose of drug trafficking in the United Kingdom (see the text box on *Trafficking for exploitation in criminal activities – a double victimization* on page 50).

Overall, Western and Southern Europe reported the greatest shares of male victims globally, both men and boys, comprising 49 per cent of the total. Moreover, this

<sup>388</sup> This subregion consists of the following countries: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

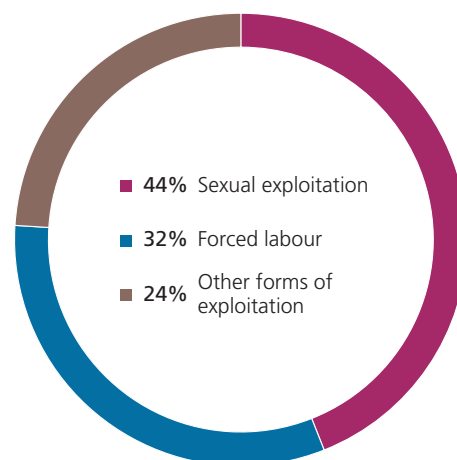
**FIG. 94** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Western and Southern Europe,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the sex and age of 11,839 victims detected in 21 countries in Western and Southern Europe.

**FIG. 95** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Western and Southern Europe,\* by forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the form of exploitation for more than 11,330 victims detected in 19 countries in Western and Southern Europe.

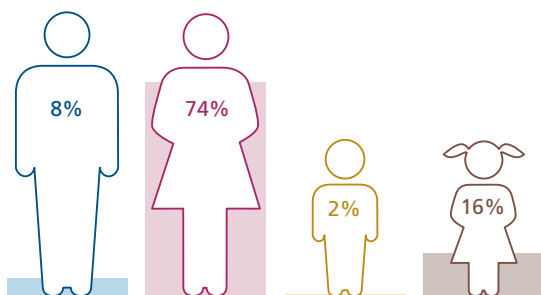
subregion recorded an increase of 10 percentage points in detected child victims from 2016 to 2018 (25 per cent to 35 per cent).

#### Forms of exploitation

Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation continues to be the most commonly detected form in this subregion, followed by forced labour. However, trafficking for “other purposes” experienced the greatest increase,

**FIG. 96** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

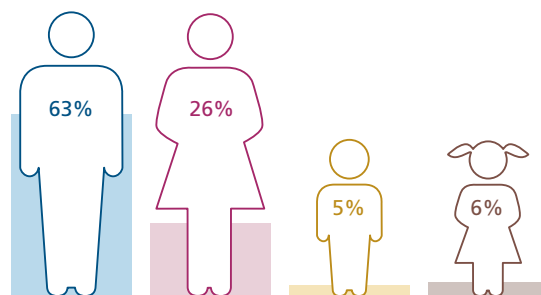
12 countries (n=2,016 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 97** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

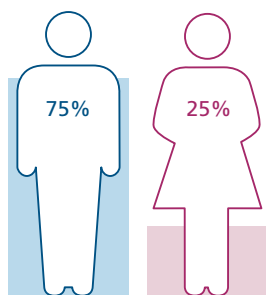
12 countries (n=874 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 98** Shares of persons investigated or arrested for trafficking in persons, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

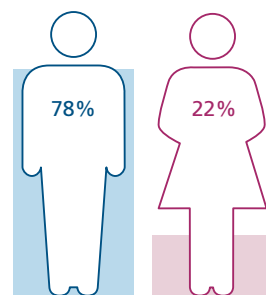
10 countries (n=3,365)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 99** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

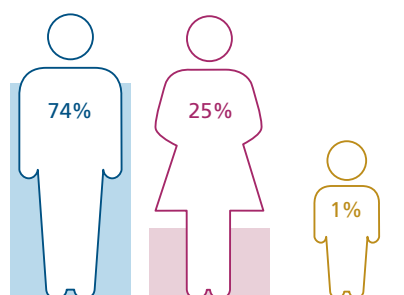
9 countries (n=2,441)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 100** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

11 countries (n=1,092 persons convicted)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

rising from 7 per cent in 2016 to 25 per cent in 2018, more than double the global average of 12 per cent. This increased share is mainly due to high numbers of victims exploited in forced criminal activity and exploitative begging, as detected in some countries in the subregion.

The share of victims trafficked for the purpose of forced labour did not vary greatly from 2016, though Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal and the United Kingdom reported more victims of trafficking for forced labour than for sexual exploitation.

The subregional breakdown of detected forms of exploitation for forced labour did not significantly change, with the share of forced labour cases increasingly moderately to 32 per cent in 2018, compared to 27 per cent of the total cases of exploitation detected in 2016.

Most detected victims of sexual exploitation continue to be women, amounting to 74 per cent of the subregional total in 2018. When looking at breakdowns of detected male victims trafficked for sexual exploitation,

there tends to be more men than boys reported in general. Conversely, men make up the majority of detected victims who were trafficked for forced labour in this sub-region (63 per cent).

### Profile of the offenders

The vast majority of those investigated/arrested, prosecuted and/or convicted for trafficking in persons in this subregion are males. In 2018, the share of males in each of these categories made up more than 75 per cent of offenders and was more than double that of females. The ratio of males to females prosecuted and convicted remained similar to that of the last reporting period. About one per cent of total persons convicted were boys.

Most of the traffickers (64 per cent) who are convicted in Western and Southern Europe are foreigners in the countries of conviction. These foreigners are mainly other European citizens, the majority from South-Eastern Europe with smaller numbers from other Western and Southern European and Central European countries. Other recorded offenders are mainly citizens of East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. As with other patterns in trafficking in persons, these profiles did not significantly change over the last few years.

### Trafficking flows affecting Western and Southern Europe

In line with the global trend, the detection of own nationals as trafficking victims has been increasingly recorded across the countries of Western and Southern Europe. The flow of detected victims from Central and South-Eastern Europe has drastically declined since 2014, however, victims from these countries are still detected in most countries in Western and Southern Europe. The share of victims from Sub-Saharan Africa has overall remained stable over the last ten years. Notably, Sub-Saharan Africa is the largest non-European region of origin of detected trafficking flows into Western and Southern Europe.

The largest proportion of the flow from Sub-Saharan Africa remains victims trafficked from West Africa, with about 13 per cent of the total victims detected from this subregion, similar to the values recorded in 2016 (15 per cent). Meanwhile, the share of the flow from East Africa has increased from 3 per cent to 6 per cent. While victims from West Africa are detected in almost every country of Western and Southern Europe, victims from East Africa are reportedly mainly trafficked to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and a few other countries.

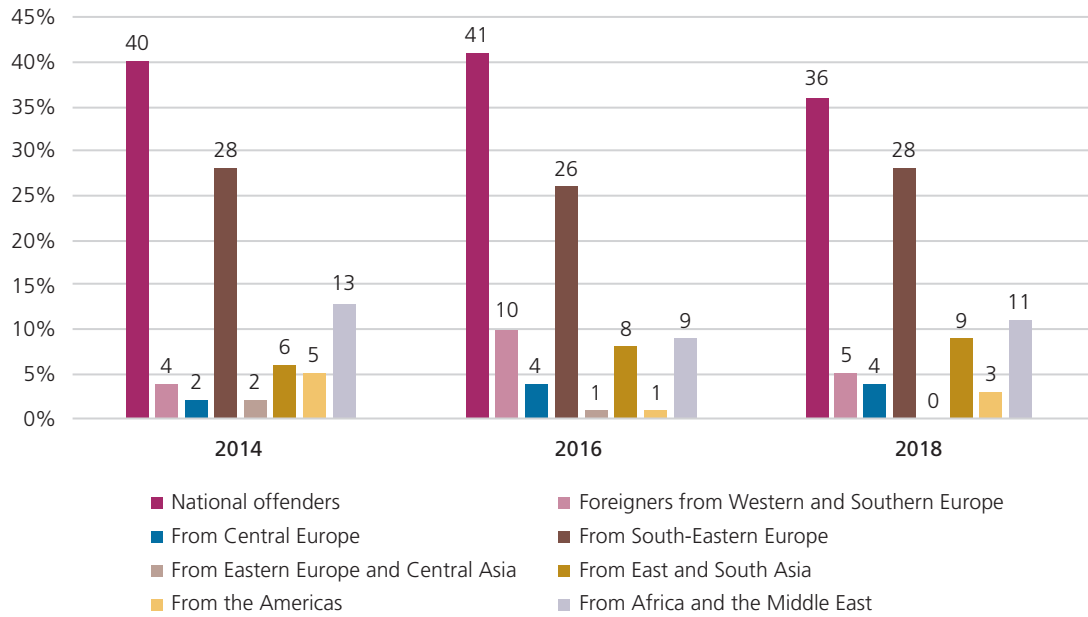
**MAP. 9** Shares of traffickers convicted in Western and Southern Europe, by region of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)  
10 countries (n=1,015 persons convicted)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

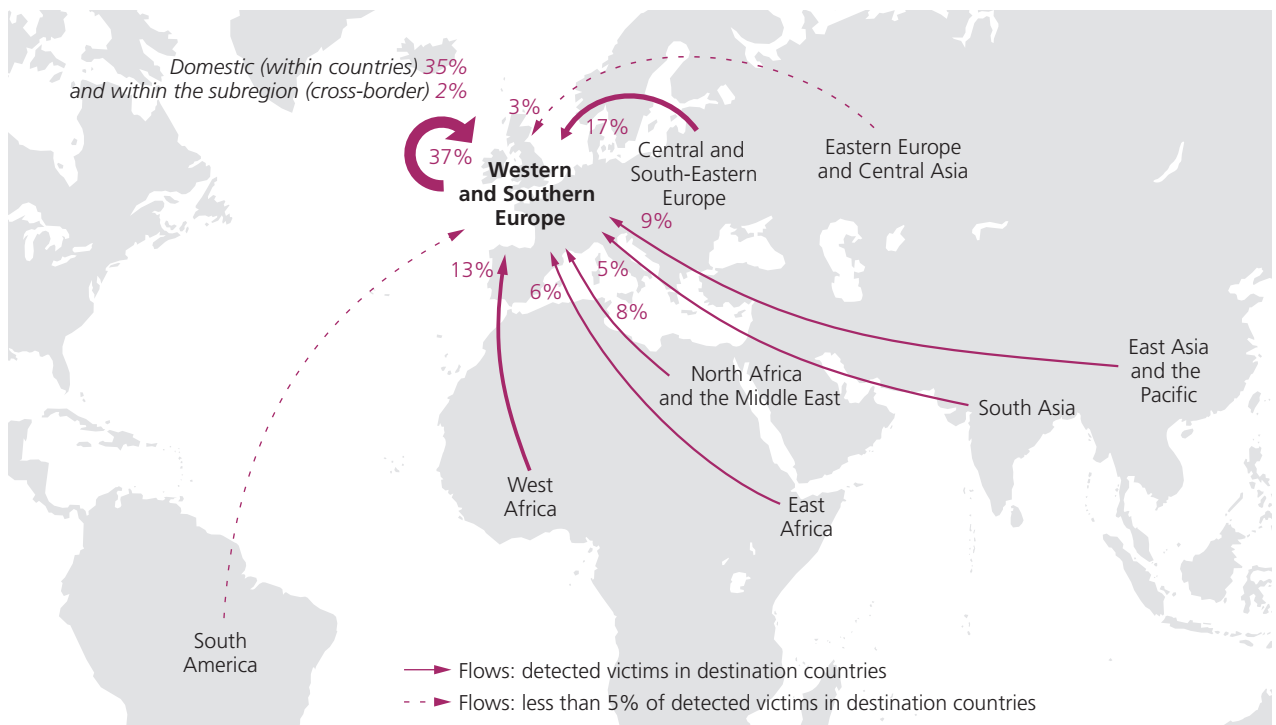
Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**FIG. 101** Trend in the shares of traffickers convicted in Western and Southern Europe, by region of citizenship, 2014, 2016 and 2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**MAP. 10** Shares of trafficking victims detected in Western and Southern Europe, by major areas of origin,\* 2018 (or most recent)



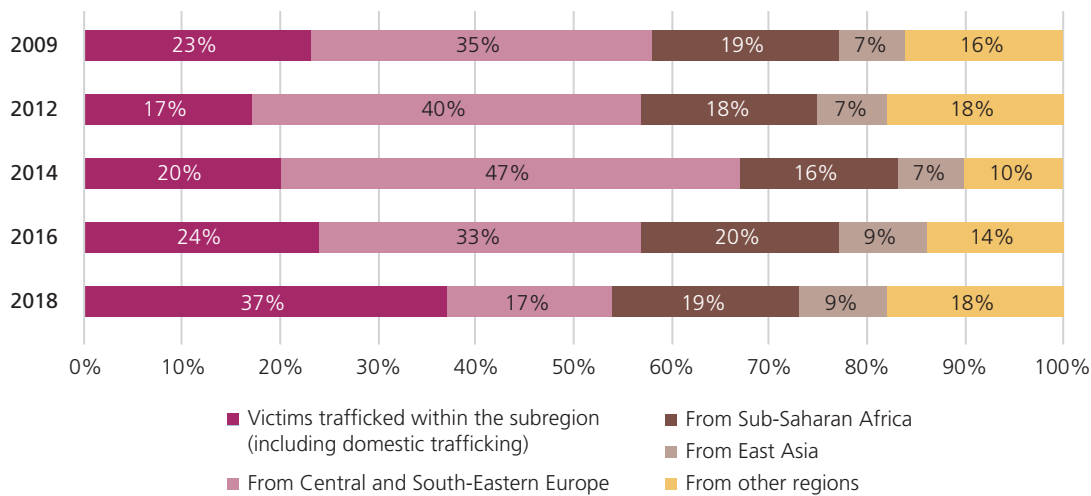
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

\*Based on information on the citizenship of 7,810 detected victims detected in 20 countries in Western and Southern Europe.



FIG. 102 Trends in shares of trafficking victims detected in Western and Southern Europe, by major areas of origin, 2009-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

At the same time, victims from East Asia have been detected in almost every country of this subregion, although as a relatively low share compared to the total detected victims. Despite the low percentage, most countries in this subregion report at least a small number of detected victims mainly from South-East Asia.

This is similarly the case with the flow from South Asia. While the overall proportion remains at about 5 per cent, most countries in Western and Southern Europe reported detected victims from South Asia, even if in small numbers. Over the period measured, Western and Southern European countries recorded an increasing number of detected victims from North Africa (6 per cent), including victims from the Maghreb and Sudan.

Relatively low numbers of victims from Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been detected. Low numbers of victims from the Middle East have also been detected. The proportions of victims from South America, Central America and the Caribbean detected in Western and Southern European countries continue to be minimal.

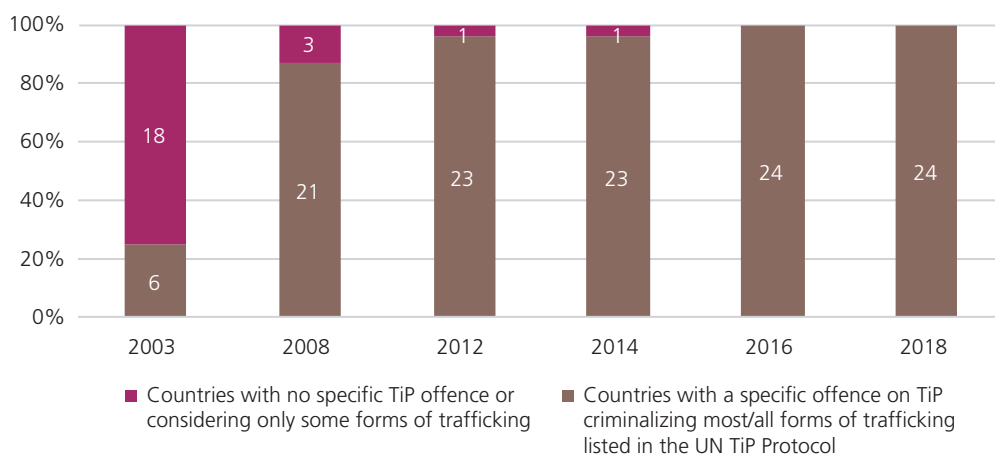
### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

Most of the countries of Western and Southern Europe introduced the specific offence of trafficking in persons after the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force in December 2003. By November 2008, most of these countries had legislation criminalizing trafficking in persons as defined in the Protocol.

The number of convictions recorded in this subregion is above the global average, and conviction rates have generally increased since 2011. However, it is below the levels recorded in Eastern Europe and Central Asia or in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

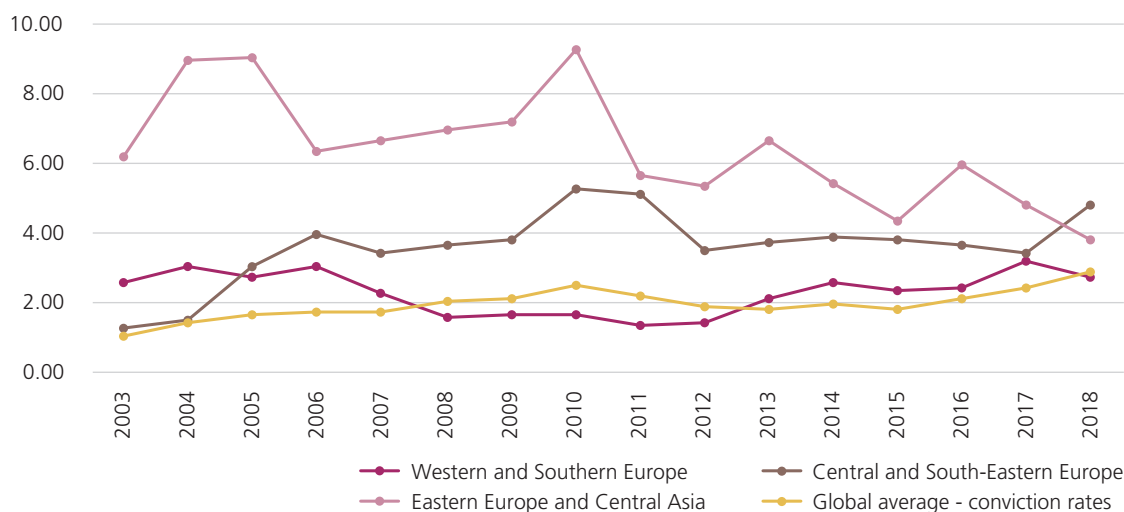
Similar to conviction rates, the number of victims detected per 1,000,000 has generally increased since 2010.

**FIG. 103** Number of countries in Western and Southern Europe introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003 –August 2018



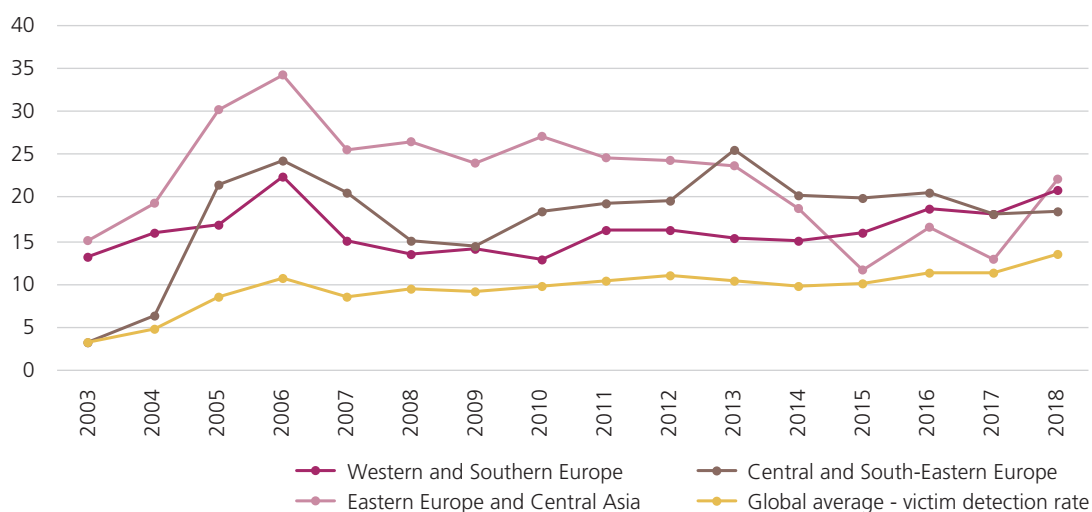
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 104** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 105** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE<sup>389</sup>

- Most detected victims are adult women. The profile of the victims does not appear to have changed significantly over the years.
- The majority of detected victims continue to be trafficked for sexual exploitation, though there have been minor increases in the shares of victims trafficked for forced labour.
- Convicted traffickers are mainly adult men. The largest citizenship group is nationals of the country of conviction.
- This subregion is a significant origin of trafficking in persons for Western and Southern Europe. Victims from these countries are rarely detected in other parts of the world.
- This subregion is characterized by significant levels of domestic trafficking, though victims from East Asia and from Eastern Europe have also been detected in these countries.

### Profile of the victims

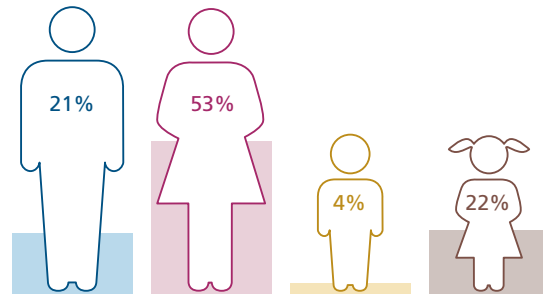
The age and sex composition of detected victims in this subregion remains similar to 2016. In 2018, there was a slight decrease in girl victims and a slight increase in men victims detected. Yet, this subregion continues to report among the lowest shares of male victims globally, with women and girls together comprising about 75 per cent of the total detected victims.

### Forms of exploitation

In Central and South-Eastern Europe, most detected victims continue to be trafficked for sexual exploitation, though there were minor increases in the shares of victims trafficked for forced labour or for other purposes from 2016. Croatia, for example, recorded more detected victims trafficked for forced criminal activity than any other form, while Poland similarly recorded more victims trafficked for forced labour than any other form. Bulgaria

<sup>389</sup> This subregion consists of the following 16 countries: Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia (Central Europe) and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia (South-Eastern Europe).

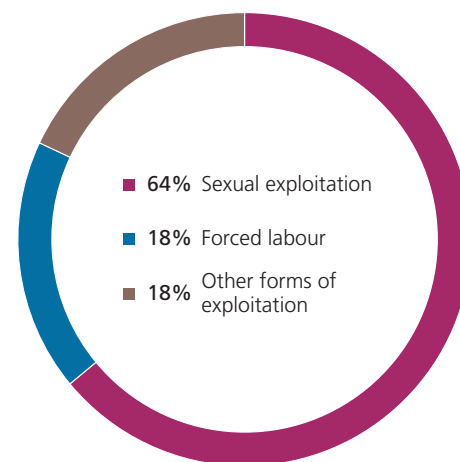
**FIG. 106** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Central and South-Eastern Europe,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the sex and age of 1,732 victims of trafficking in persons detected in 16 countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

**FIG. 107** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Central and South-Eastern Europe,\* by forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



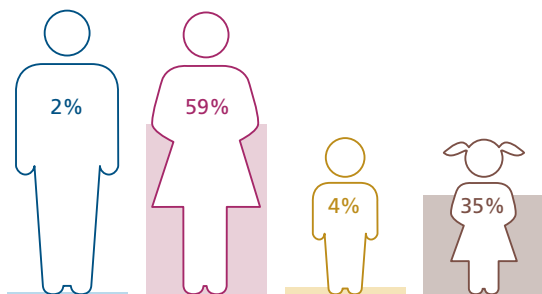
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the form of exploitation for 2,138 victims of trafficking in persons detected in 16 countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

recorded cases of trafficking of pregnant women for the purpose of selling their babies for illegal adoption. The vast majority of detected victims who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation in this subregion continue to be females. This number is mostly comprised of women, with some countries detecting a significant number of girls as victims of this form of trafficking. Males are detected in far smaller numbers, with boys being reportedly more trafficked than men for sexual exploitation. While trafficking for forced labour mainly affects men, the percentage of female victims – who are largely women – is relatively high, amounting to about 30 per cent of victims in this subregion.

**FIG. 108** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group and sex of the victims, 2018 (or most recent)

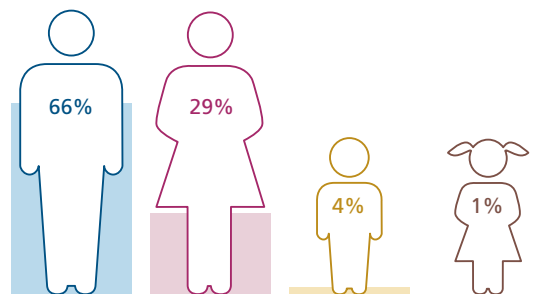
12 countries (n=1198 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 109** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex of the victims, 2018 (or most recent)

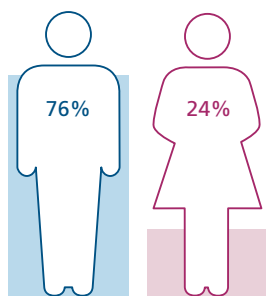
12 countries (n=228 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 110** Shares of persons investigated or arrested for trafficking in persons in Central and South-Eastern Europe, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

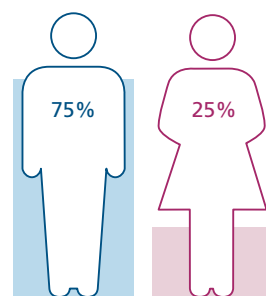
12 countries (n=530)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 111** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in Central and South-Eastern Europe, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

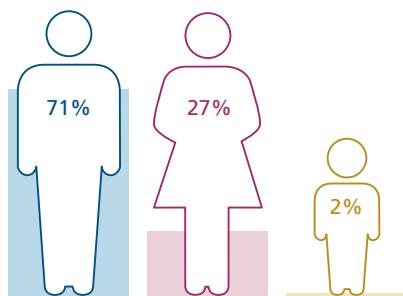
12 countries (n=390)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 112** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Central and South-Eastern Europe, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

10 countries (n=88)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

National authorities in the subregion also detected victims trafficked for other purposes including forced criminal activity, exploitative begging and forced marriages. Trafficking for exploitation in begging was recorded in the Western Balkans, as well as in other parts of this subregion. Trafficking for forced criminal activity was reported by both the Baltic and Western Balkan countries.



### Profile of the offenders

As in other parts of Europe, far more males are investigated/arrested, prosecuted and/or convicted for trafficking in persons in Central and South-Eastern Europe than females. 71 per cent of persons convicted were men and about 2 per cent were boys. The proportion of male and female offenders remains stable from the previous reporting period.

The vast majority of the people convicted of trafficking in persons in this subregion are citizens of the country of conviction (84 per cent). Of the foreigners convicted, most of them are citizens of other countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe or from Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The charts below show the difference in the citizenship profiles of convicted traffickers in Western and Southern Europe and in Central and South-Eastern Europe. This can be understood by recognition of the different positions these two subregions have in the trafficking process: the former is primarily a destination for trafficking victims, while the latter acts primarily as a source.

### Trafficking flows affecting Central and South-Eastern Europe

Central and South-Eastern Europe is primarily a subregion of origin for detected victims who are trafficked to Western and Southern Europe. In 2018, 17 per cent of the victims detected in Western and Southern Europe were citizens of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Victims from this subregion have also been detected in other countries within Central and South-Eastern Europe (10 per cent); Victims have also been detected and repatriated from Eastern Europe.

While half of all victims detected in the subregion are citizens of the country of detection, Central and South-Eastern Europe is also a destination for cross-border victims of trafficking. A significant flow originates from the countries of East Asia. Lower numbers of victims originating from Eastern Europe are also detected.

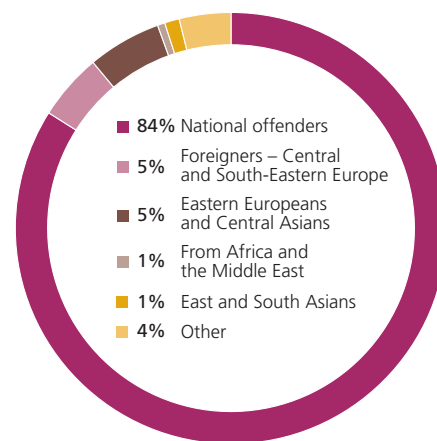
### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

All countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe had introduced the offence of trafficking in persons in line with the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol by August 2012. Most of them had already introduced such an offence before Protocol came into force in December 2003. Many of the countries in this subregion have long-standing legislation regarding trafficking in persons.

The number of convictions recorded in this subregion is above the global average. It is above the level recorded in the countries in Western and Southern Europe and, in 2018, higher than Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Conviction rates have generally increased since 2003.

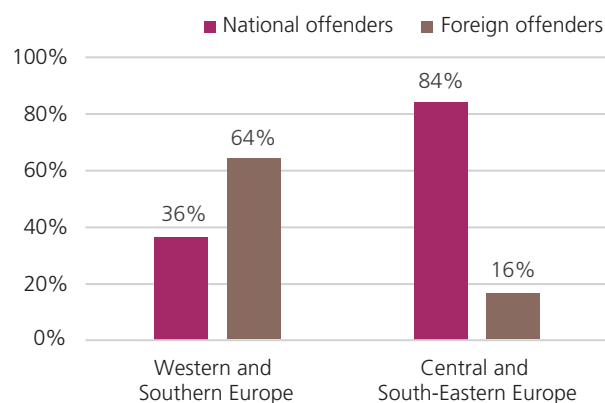
The number of victims detected per 1,000,000 has also generally increased since 2003, though a more stable trend has been recorded since 2010. This is in line with a general rise in conviction rates.

FIG. 113 Shares of offenders convicted in Central and South-Eastern Europe, by citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)  
14 countries (n=168)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

FIG. 114 Comparison of the shares of national and foreign citizens convicted in Western and Southern Europe and in Central and South-Eastern Europe, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

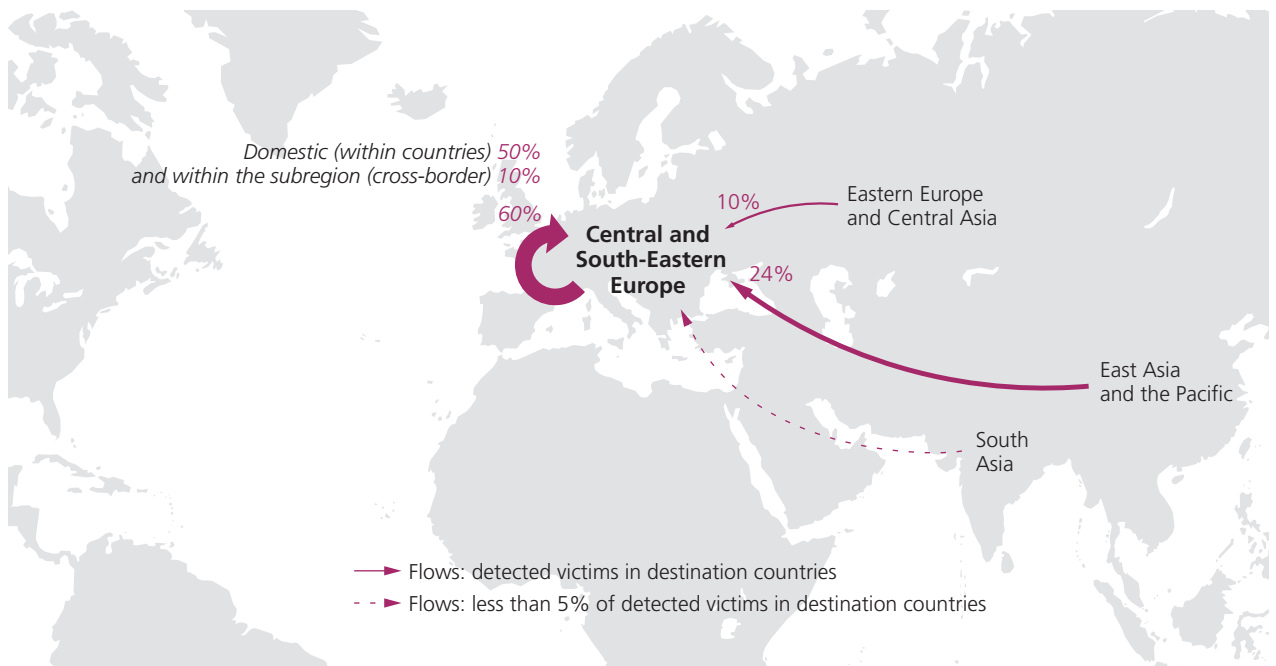
**MAP. 11** Destinations for trafficking flows from Central and South-Eastern Europe, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**MAP. 12** Shares of victims detected in Central and South-Eastern Europe,\* by subregion, 2018 (or most recent)

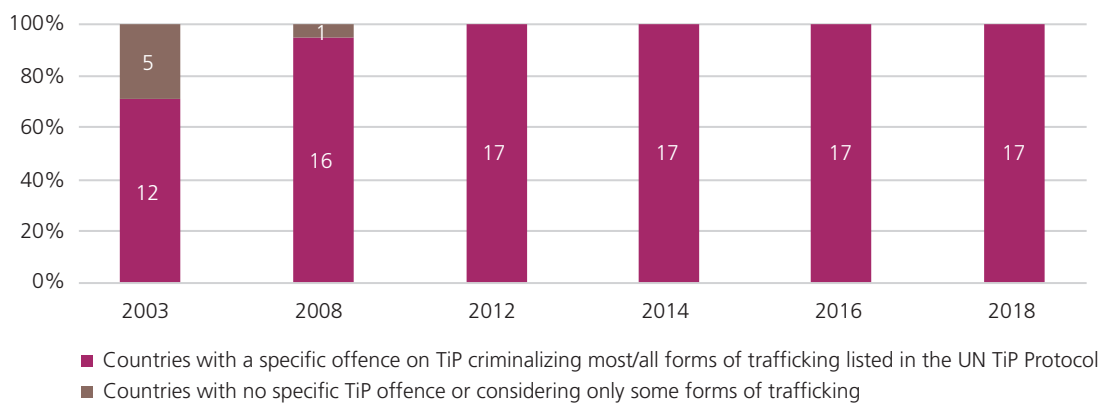


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

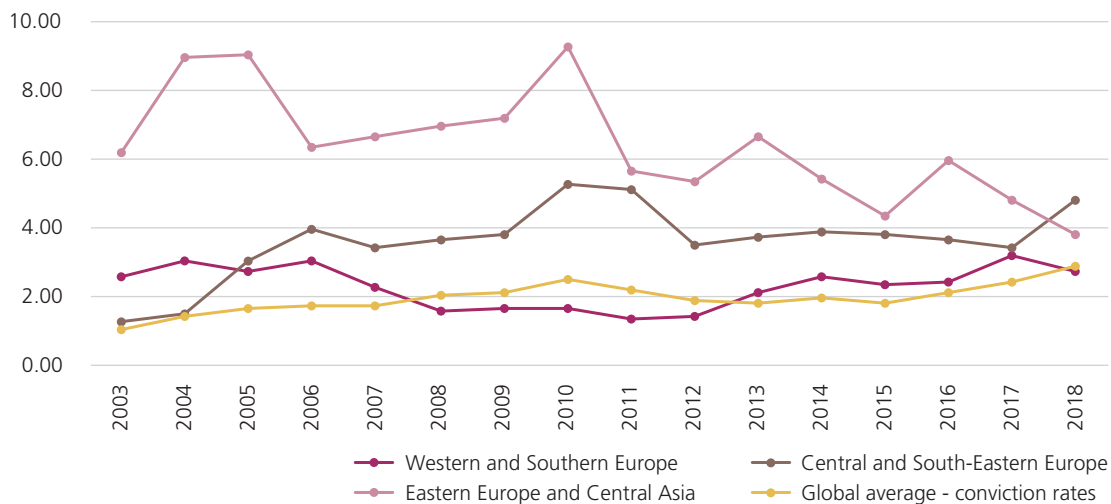
\*Based on information on the citizenship of 843 victims of trafficking in persons detected in 16 countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

**FIG. 115** Number of countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2018



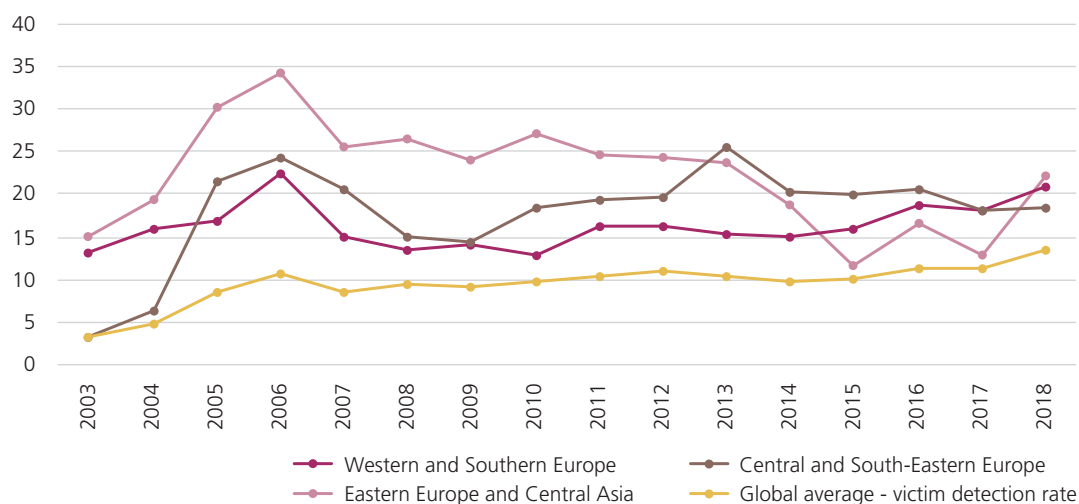
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 116** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 117** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA<sup>390</sup>

- Most detected victims are adult women, though adult men have also been significantly detected. Detection of minors as victims of trafficking remains limited compared to adults.
- The majority of detected victims are trafficked for forced labour.
- This subregion is characterised by a considerable share of women prosecuted and convicted for trafficking in persons.
- Countries in this subregion are characterized by significant levels of domestic trafficking.
- This subregion is a relevant origin of trafficking in persons for Central and South-Eastern Europe. Victims from these countries are detected in Western and Southern Europe and in the Middle East.

### Profile of the victims

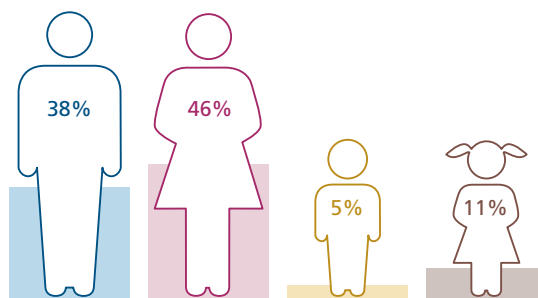
The majority of the victims detected in Eastern Europe and Central Asia continue to be adults, in particular women. On the whole, however, the subregion continues to report a greater share of men victims in comparison to other areas (the global average being 20 per cent). Across the subregion, the share of detected child trafficking remains minimal compared to other parts of the world. Regarding the sex of the detected child victims, the countries in Central Asia continue to report more victims who were boys than girls. Meanwhile in Eastern Europe, the number of detected victims who were girls was generally higher than that of boys. Yet, countries in Eastern Europe and countries in Central Asia broadly record the same patterns in victim profile.

### Forms of exploitation

The majority of the detected victims in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in 2018 were trafficked for forced labour. Countries in Central Asia are characterized by a

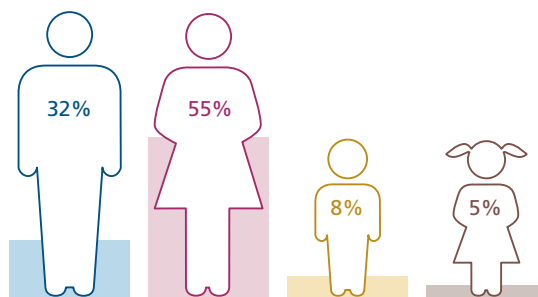
<sup>390</sup> This subregion comprises of 7 countries in Eastern Europe and of 5 countries in Central Asia. Eastern Europe consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Central Asia includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

FIG. 118 Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Eastern Europe,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



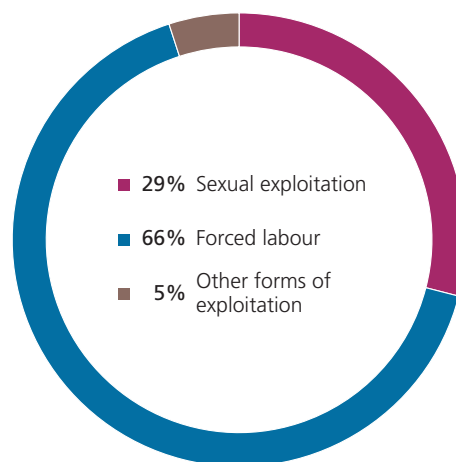
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on information on the sex and age of 866 victims of trafficking in persons detected in seven countries in Eastern Europe.

FIG. 119 Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Central Asia,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on information on the sex and age of 710 victims of trafficking in persons detected in five countries in Central Asia.

FIG. 120 Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia,\* by forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)

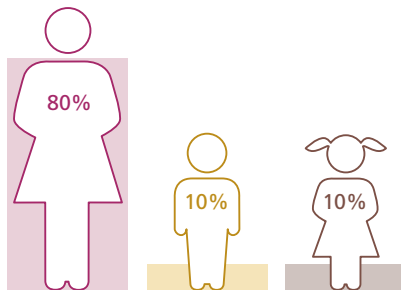


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on information on the forms of exploitation for 2,475 detected victims in 12 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.



**FIG. 121** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group and sex, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2018 (or most recent)

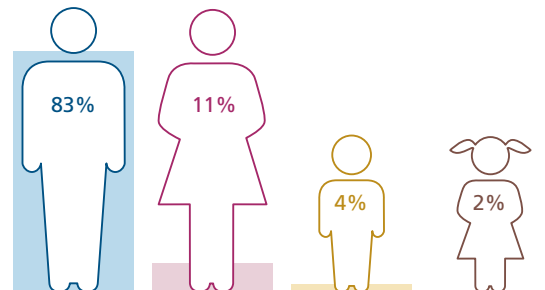
6 countries (n=281 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 122** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2018 (or most recent)

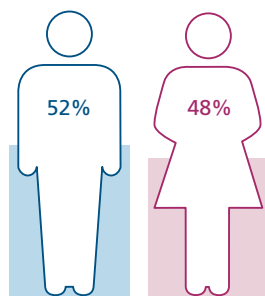
6 countries (n=470 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 123** Share of persons investigated or arrested for trafficking in persons in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

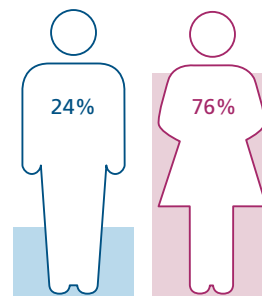
4 countries (n=118)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 124** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

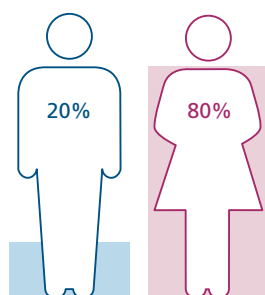
5 countries (n=493)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 125** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

6 countries (n=475)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

larger share of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, compared to Eastern Europe. However, it is important to note that together, Eastern Europe and Central Asia report one of the greatest shares of victims who were trafficked for forced labour.

Other forms of exploitation detected in this subregion include mainly trafficking for exploitative begging and, to a lesser extent, trafficking for mixed exploitation. Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are women, with girls detected to a lesser extent. Females made up nearly all (90 per cent) of the detected victims for this form of trafficking. Nearly all victims of trafficking for forced labour are adults, with a far larger share of men (83 per cent) than women.

**Profile of the offenders**

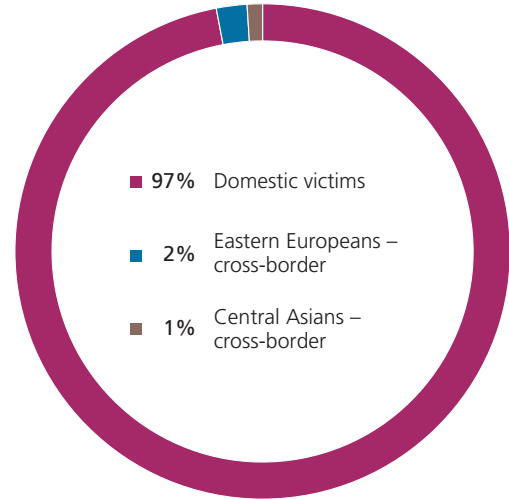
This region reports among the highest numbers of females prosecuted and convicted globally. Females comprised 76 per cent of those prosecuted and 80 per cent of those convicted during the reporting period (see *Profile of the offenders* in chapter 1). The proportions of males and females investigated or arrested for trafficking remained nearly equal. All persons investigated/arrested, prosecuted and/or convicted for trafficking in persons in this region were all adults.

The overwhelming majority (97 per cent) of those convicted of trafficking in 2018 were citizens of the country of conviction in the six countries in the subregion that reported on offender citizenship.

**Trafficking flows affecting Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Eastern Europe and Central Asia is primarily a subregion of origin for victims trafficked within their national borders (domestic trafficking) and within the subregion. Victims from Eastern Europe are also detected in countries of Western, Central and South-Eastern Europe, such as Germany, Czechia, Poland and Slovenia, for instance, while victims from Central Asia have been detected in Turkey.

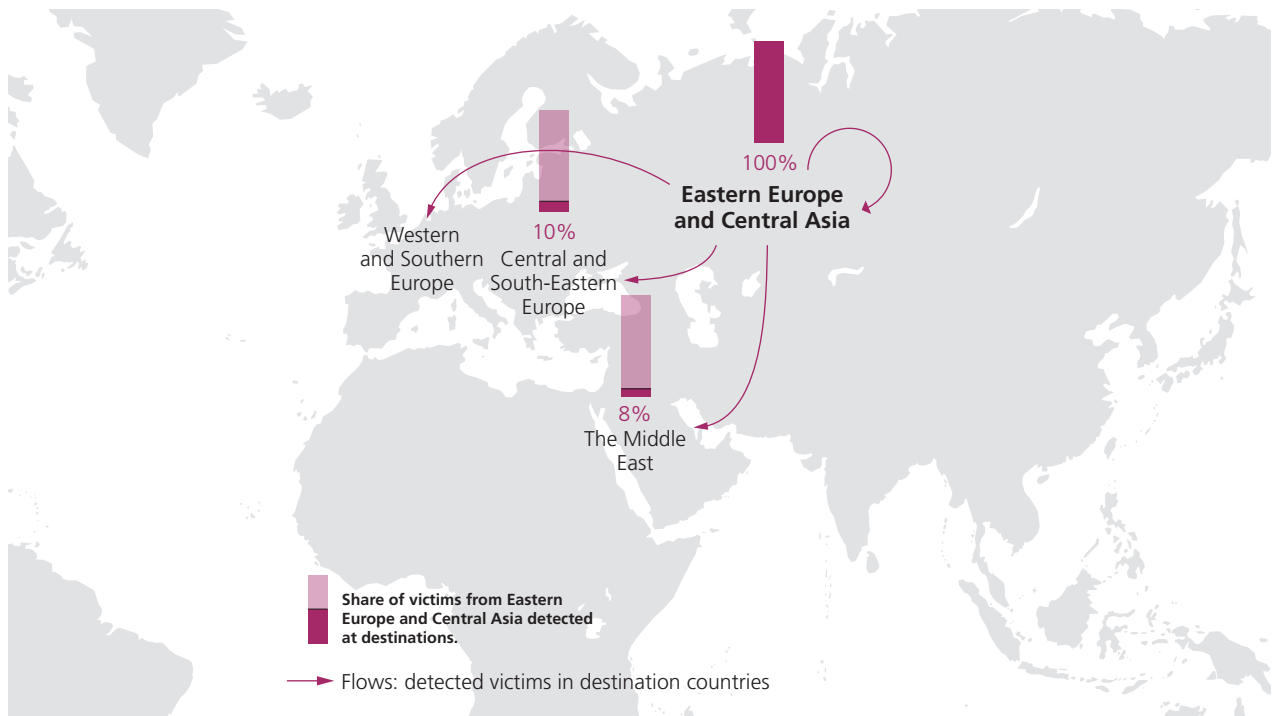
**FIG. 126** Shares of trafficking victims detected in Eastern Europe and Central Asia,\* by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the citizenship of 456 detected victims in 11 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**MAP. 13** Destinations for trafficking flows from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Victims from this region have also been detected in the Middle East, and in smaller numbers in North America. However, in general, the flows of victims to countries outside of Europe are limited.

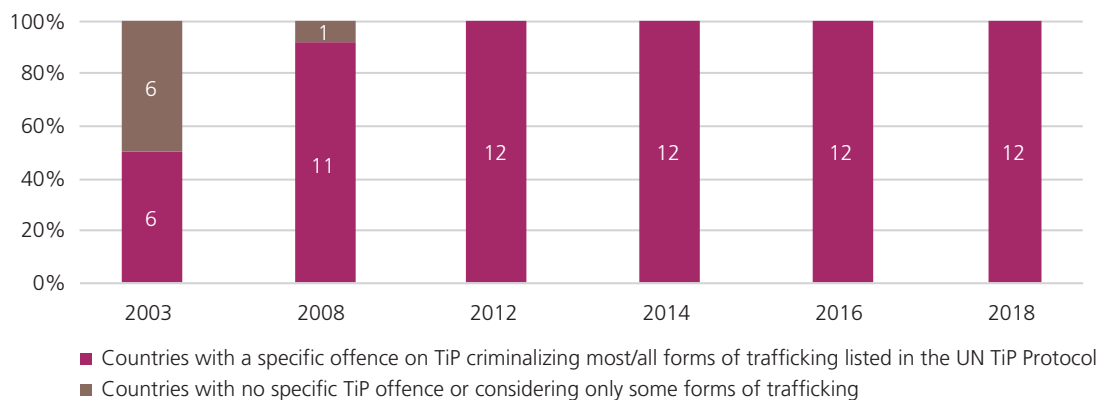
### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

All countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia had introduced a specific offence of trafficking in persons in line with the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol by August 2012. Six countries had already introduced such an offence in the process of ratification of the protocol, and five did so right after the Protocol came into force.

The number of convictions recorded in this region has been the highest level recorded globally since 2003. However, the conviction rate per 1,000,000 has been generally decreasing over the last 10 years. Nevertheless, today, the conviction rate in the region remains among the highest in the world.

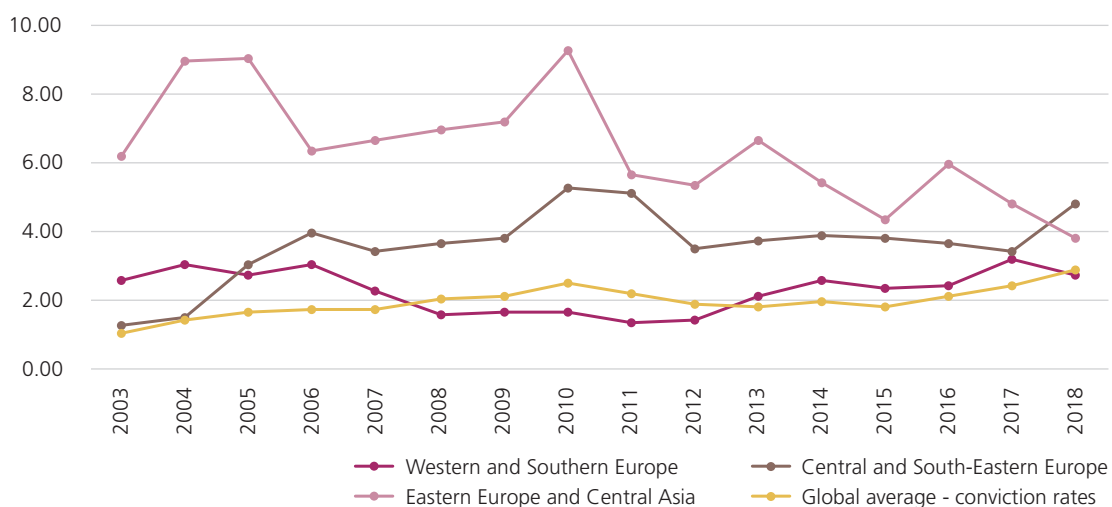
The number of victims detected per 1,000,000 has also generally decreased over the last 15 years, similar to the conviction rate. However, the number of victims detected in relation to the population remains among the highest globally.

**FIG. 127** Number of countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2018



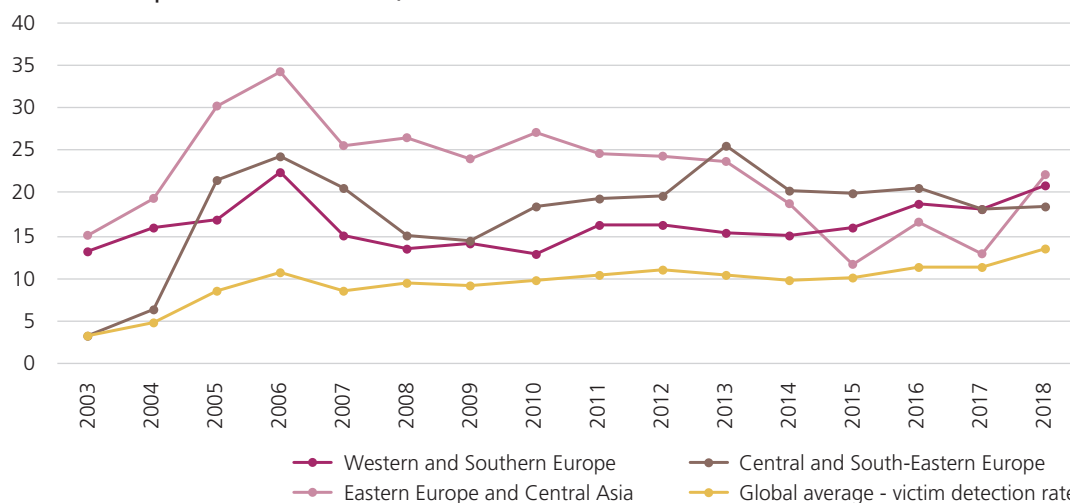
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 128** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 129** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Europe and Central Asia, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## SOUTH ASIA<sup>391</sup>

- Children and adult women are almost equally detected, accounting for 45 and 44 per cent of total victims detected respectively.
- The majority of detected victims are trafficked for forced labour.
- Victims from this subregion are commonly detected in the Middle East. Victims are also trafficked to East Asia, Western and Southern Europe and North America.
- Countries in this subregion are characterized by significant levels of domestic trafficking.

### Profile of the victims

The largest group of detected victims continues to be women, with a large share of children, both girls and boys. This region records among the highest share of children among total victims detected, second only to Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Forms of exploitation

The information on the forms of exploitation for trafficking cases detected in South Asia were reported by India,

Nepal and Sri Lanka. Based on this information, it appears that the detected victims of trafficking for forced labour make up more than half the share of victims in this subregion. Notably, trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage is recorded as a main form of exploitation after sexual exploitation and forced labour. Trafficking for the purposes of exploitative begging and forced criminal activity were also reported in the region.

### Profile of the offenders

There is no available information regarding the sex profiles of the persons convicted of trafficking in South Asia, and very limited information regarding the profiles of those arrested or prosecuted for trafficking in persons for the reporting period. Of those arrested, based on information from Nepal, males comprised 74 per cent of the total.

### Trafficking flows affecting South Asia

The majority of detected victims in South Asia are citizens of the country of detection or are trafficked from another country within the subregion.

South Asia is an origin area for trafficking to the rest of the world. The main destinations appear to be the Middle East, East Asia and the Pacific, Western and Southern Europe and North America. South Asian victims were also detected, in limited numbers, in East and Southern Africa.

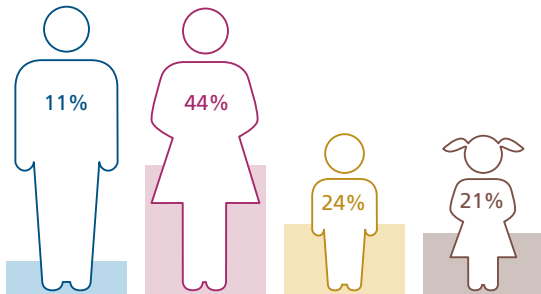
### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

Most South Asian countries introduced the specific offence of trafficking in persons in line with the UN definition after December 2003, when the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force.

<sup>391</sup> This subregion includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

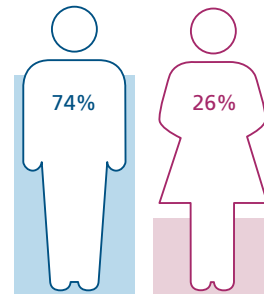


**FIG. 130** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in South Asia,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



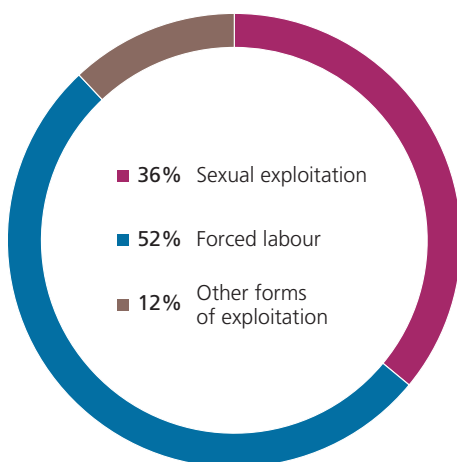
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on information on the age and sex profile of 7,644 victims of trafficking detected in seven countries.

**FIG. 132** Shares of persons arrested for trafficking in persons in Nepal, by sex, 2018



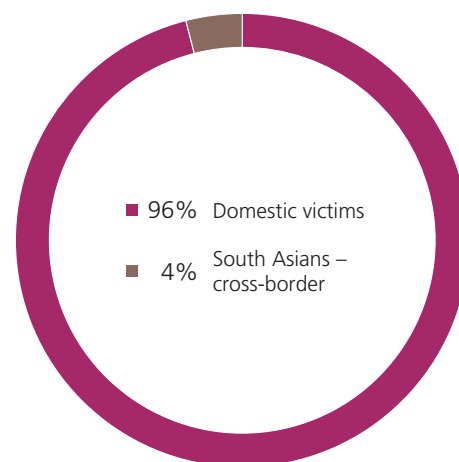
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 131** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in South Asia,\* by form of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



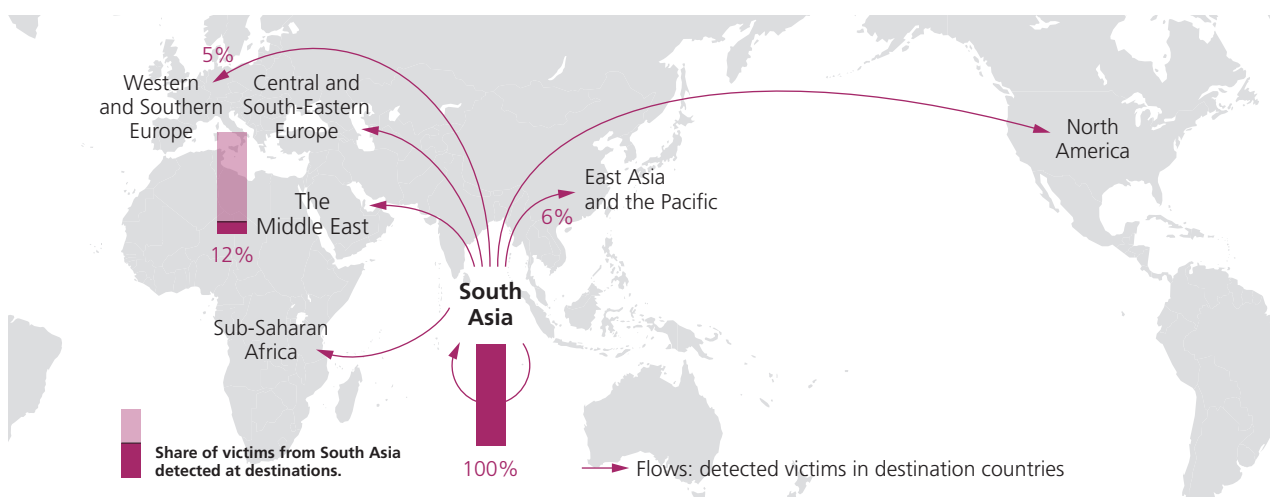
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on information on the forms of exploitation for 5,124 victims of trafficking detected in three countries.

**FIG. 133** Shares of trafficking victims detected in South Asia, by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)



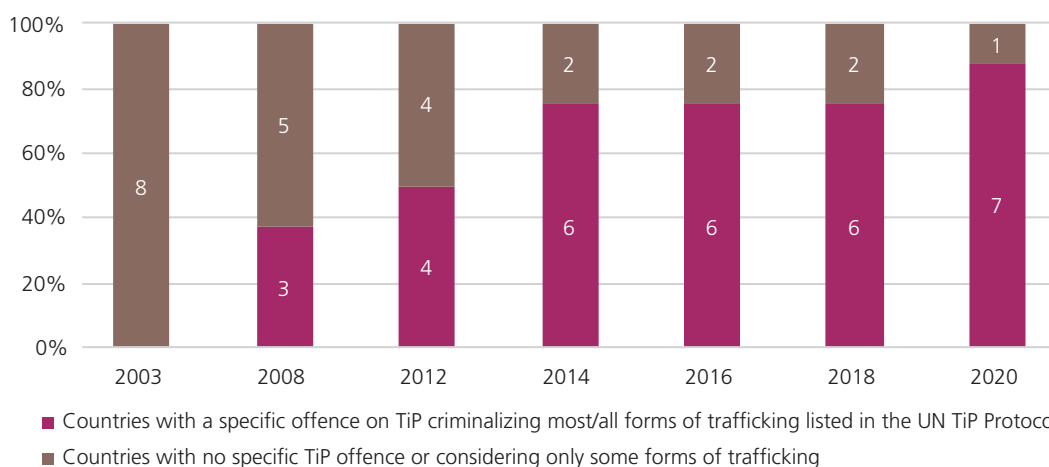
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**MAP. 14** Destinations for trafficking flows from South Asia, 2018 (or most recent)



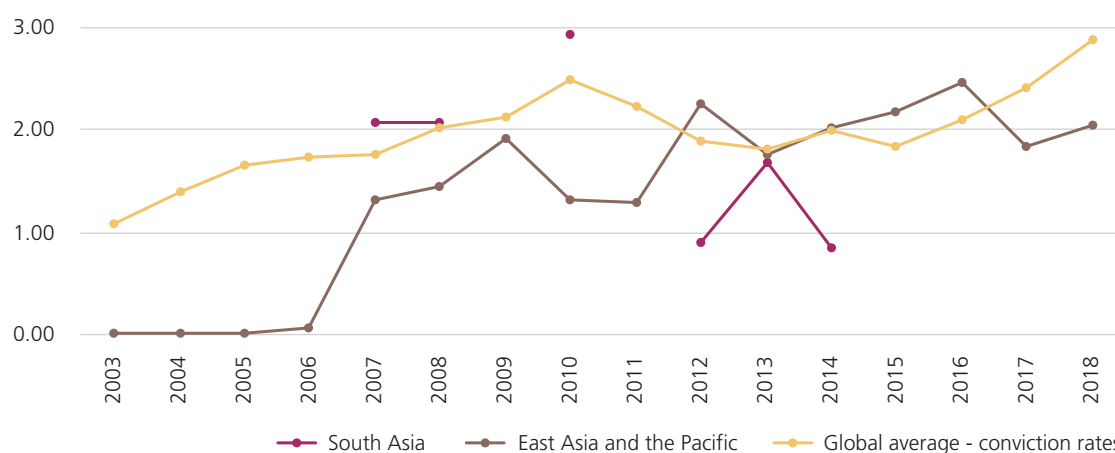
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**FIG. 134** Number of countries in South Asia introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



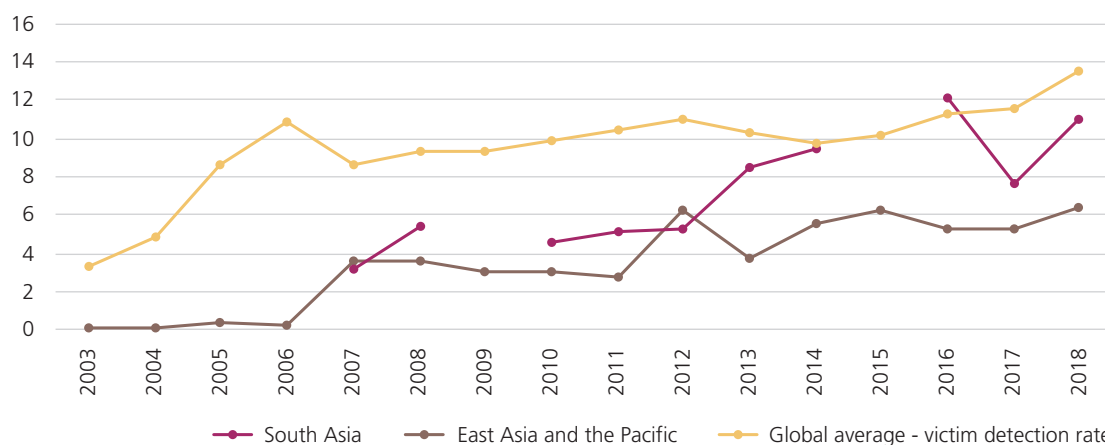
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 135** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally, in South Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 136** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally, in South Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC<sup>392</sup>

- About a half of the detected victims in this region are adult women. Children account for about one third of total detected victims.
- The majority of detected victims in East Asia and the Pacific continue to be trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- Women account for the majority of persons investigated and prosecuted, and about a half of those convicted for trafficking in persons.
- Victims from East Asia and Pacific have been detected in all regions and most subregions globally. Victims from East Asia have largely been detected within East Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas.
- This region is characterized by significant levels of both domestic and intraregional trafficking.

### Profile of the victims

In East Asia and the Pacific, women represent the largest share of detected victims. Children account for about one third of the victims detected in 2018, while one in five detected victims is an adult man. East Asian countries reported women or girls more frequently. The information received from the countries in the Pacific refers to large shares of girl victims of trafficking in the Solomon Islands, men detected in New Zealand and women, girls and men detected in Australia.

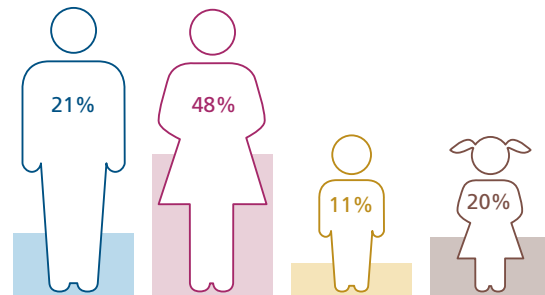
### Forms of exploitation

Countries in East Asia and the Pacific detect large numbers of victims who were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Less than one third of the victims are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour.

Among the other forms of exploitation detected, victims trafficked to produce sexual abuse material (pornography) and trafficking for forced marriage have been reported.

<sup>392</sup> This subregion comprises 13 countries in East Asia and 6 countries in the Pacific. East Asia consists of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste. The Pacific includes Australia, Cook Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau and Solomon Islands.

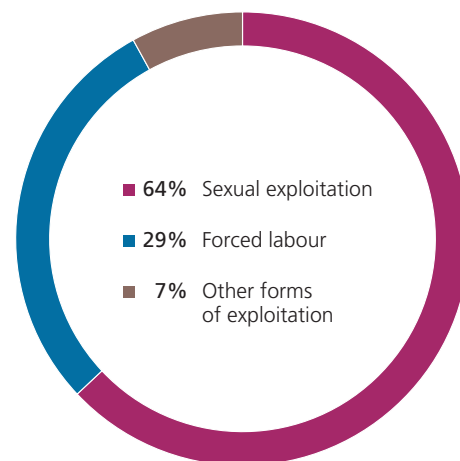
**FIG. 137** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the sex and age of 5,969 victims detected in 19 countries and territories.

**FIG. 138** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific,\* by form of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the form of exploitation for 5,144 victims detected in 16 countries.

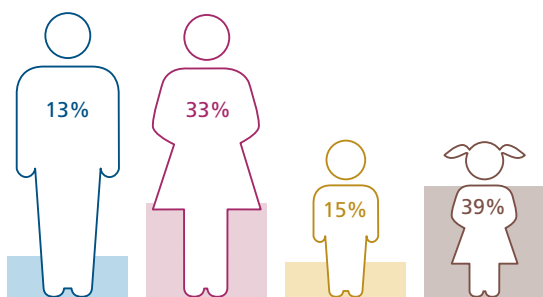
Countries in this subregion report a higher share of girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Adult men are mainly reported to be trafficked into forced labour. The subregion, however, records a relatively high and equal share of males (men and boys) trafficked for sexual exploitation and females (women and girls) for forced labour, at 28 per cent.

### Profile of the offenders

Countries in East Asia and the Pacific report a large share of females prosecuted and convicted for trafficking in persons. Females accounted for 56 per cent of prosecu-

**FIG. 139** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

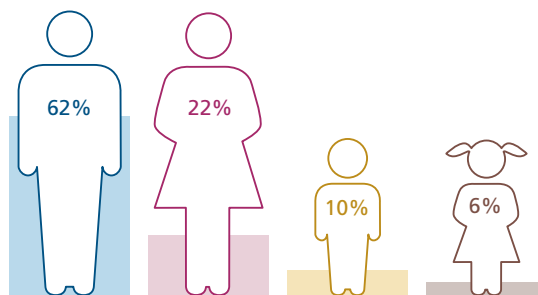
9 countries (n=1435 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 140** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

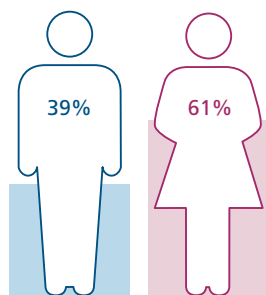
9 countries (n=473 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 141** Shares of persons investigated and/or arrested for trafficking in persons in East Asia and the Pacific, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

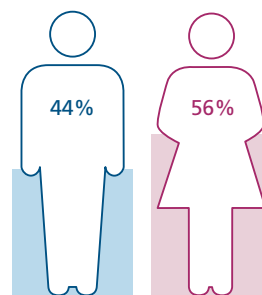
7 countries (n=1,236)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 142** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in East Asia and the Pacific, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

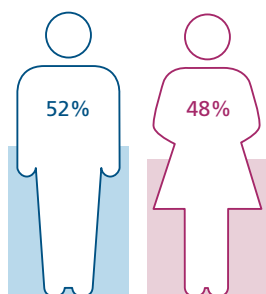
9 countries (n=1,233)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 143** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in East Asia and the Pacific, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

9 countries (n=888)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

tions in the reporting period while males accounted for 52 per cent of the convictions. Far more females were suspected of or arrested for trafficking in persons (61 per cent) than males (see *Profile of the offenders* in chapter 1). The vast majority of convicted traffickers are citizens of the country of conviction, while some 5 per cent are foreigners, mainly from other countries in the subregion.

**Trafficking flows affecting East Asia and the Pacific**

Victims from East Asia and the Pacific have been detected in all regions and most subregions globally – in about 60 different countries. Both the diversity of the flows and the number of victims detected indicate that trafficking from East Asia has a global dimension. The flows from countries in East Asia to the Middle East and the European subregions are particularly significant. Victims have



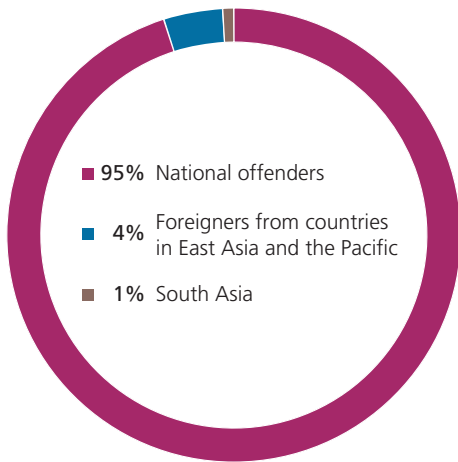
also been detected in North America, with a few detected in Central and South America. In addition, victims from East Asia have been repatriated from Sub-Saharan Africa.

This region is also an important destination for subregional cross-border trafficking and domestic trafficking flows. Affluent countries of East Asia tend to be destinations for victims trafficked within the subregion, usually from neighboring countries. For example, Malaysia is a

destination for victims trafficked from other South-East Asian countries, and Thailand is a destination for victims trafficked from countries of the Greater Mekong area. Australia and Malaysia report detection of victims of domestic trafficking, as well as victims from South-East Asia and from South Asia.

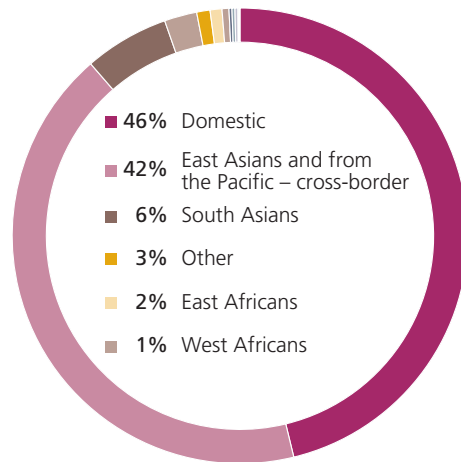
Relatively few victims were detected as being from Sub-Saharan Africa and South America.

**FIG. 144** Shares of traffickers convicted in East Asia and the Pacific, by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)  
9 countries (n=916)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 145** Shares of victims of trafficking detected in East Asia and the Pacific,\* by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on information on the sex and age of 1,429 victims detected in 19 countries.

**MAP. 15** Destinations for trafficking flows from East Asia and the Pacific, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

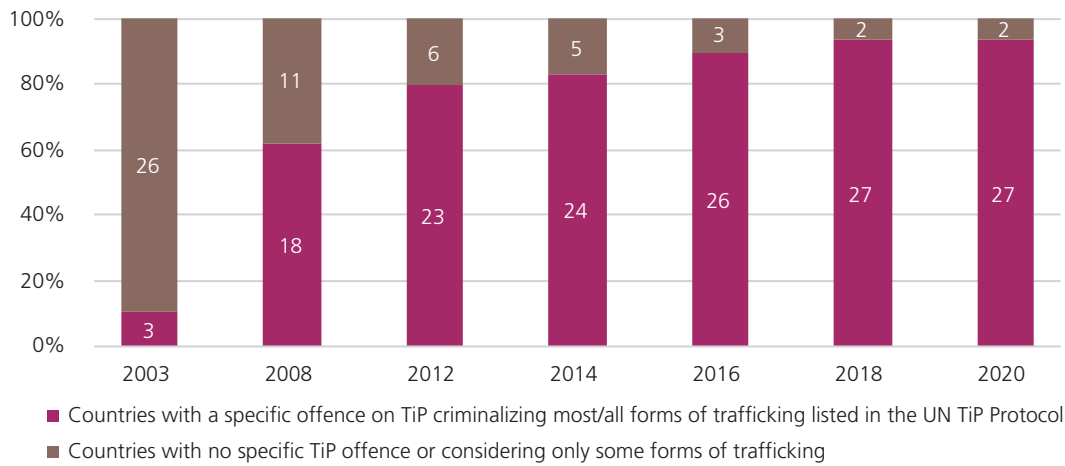
**Criminalizing trafficking in persons**

Most of the countries in East Asia and the Pacific introduced the specific offence of trafficking in persons according to the UN definition immediately following the entry into force of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol in 2003. Nine countries introduced a specific offence on trafficking in persons over the last ten years.

The number of convictions per 1,000,000 people recorded in this subregion has generally been lower compared to European levels. However, the conviction rate per 1,000,000 has been generally increasing over the last 15 years.

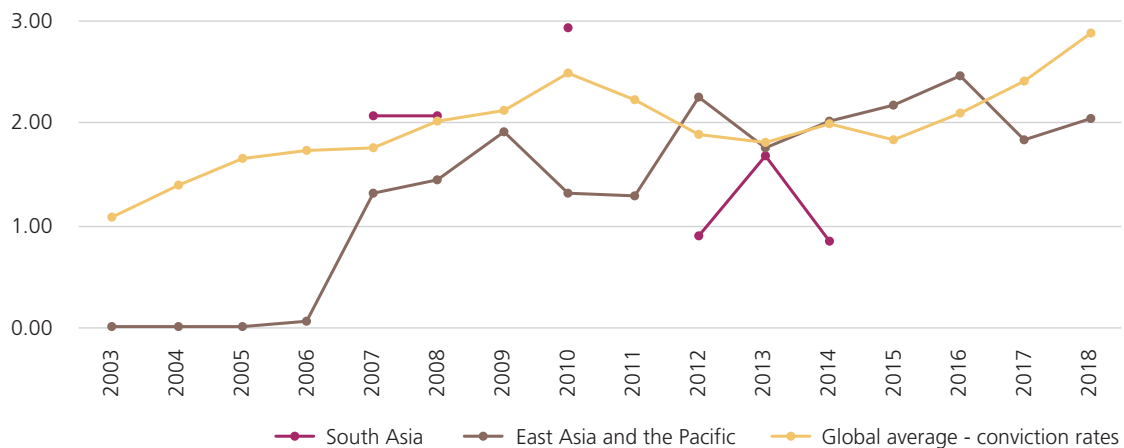
Correspondingly, the number of victims detected per 1,000,000 has also increased since the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force. Nevertheless, the number of victims detected in relation to the population remains at a lower level compared to other parts of the world.

**FIG. 146** Number of countries in East Asia and the Pacific introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



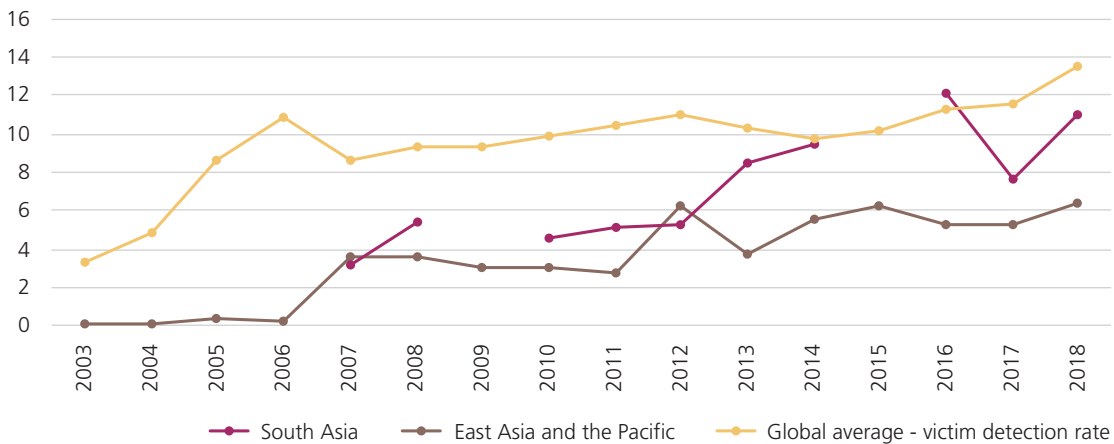
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 147** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally, in South Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 148** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally, in South Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

### NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN<sup>393</sup>

- Countries in North America detect more adult women than any other victim profile, while Central America and the Caribbean is characterized by a substantial detection of underage girls and adult women.
- The majority of detected victims in North America, Central America and the Caribbean are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
- North American countries are characterized by an increasing share of victims trafficked within their own countries; mainly female victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- Countries in Central America and the Caribbean detect own nationals and victims from some countries in South America. At the same time, victims from these countries are detected in the richer countries of North and South America.

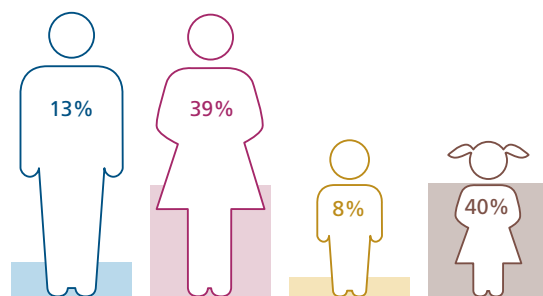
<sup>393</sup> These subregions comprises 3 countries in North America and 9 countries in Central America and the Caribbean. North America consists of Canada, Mexico and the United States of America. Central America and the Caribbean includes the Bahamas, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago.

#### Profile of the victims

In Central America and the Caribbean, most of the detected victims in 2018 are girls and women, equalling 79 per cent of the total detected trafficking victims in this subregion. In particular, the share of girls as a proportion of the total detected victims, at 40 per cent in 2018, remains among the largest percentage of girl victims of trafficking recorded worldwide.

In North America, females continue to account for an even larger share of detected victims than in Central America and the Caribbean during the reporting period. This pattern was observed in all three countries in this subregion and follows the global trend for the reporting period.

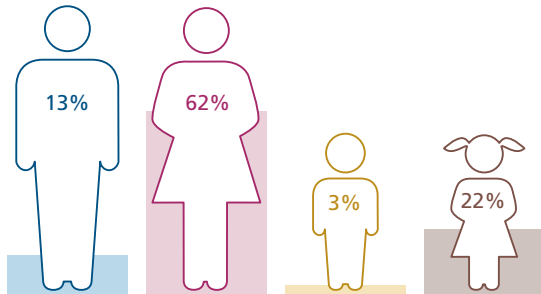
**FIG. 149** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on data on sex and age of 506 victims detected in 9 countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

**FIG. 150** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in North America,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



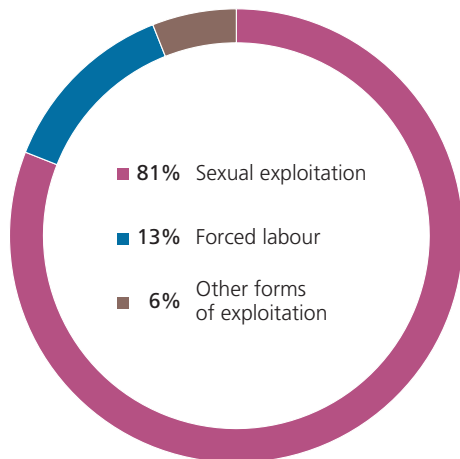
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Based on data on sex and age of 9,301 victims detected in three countries in North America.

**Forms of exploitation**

In North America, Central America and the Caribbean, sexual exploitation is the most commonly detected form of trafficking (over 70 per cent), which is among the highest recorded globally. The share of detected victims trafficked for forced labour ranges between 13 and 22 per cent in the two subregions.

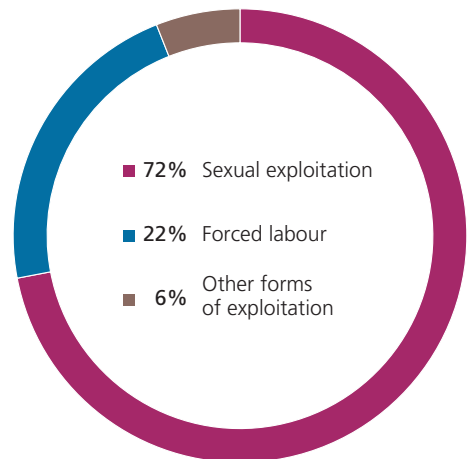
In North America, victims are also trafficked for mixed forms of exploitation (sexual and forced labour), as well as for exploitative begging, forced criminal activity and forced marriage. In Central America and the Caribbean, children are also trafficked for the purpose of exploitative begging, for forced criminal activity and for some forms of illegal adoption.

**FIG. 151** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean,\* by form of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Based on data on form of exploitation for 645 victims detected in seven countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

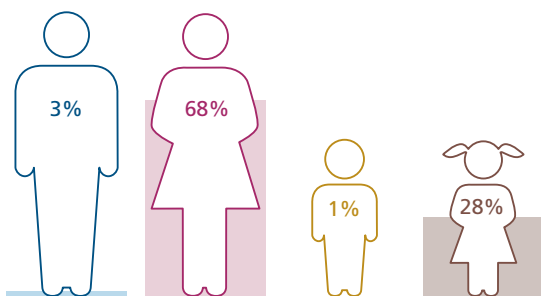
**FIG. 152** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in North America,\* by form of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Based on data on form of exploitation for 8,490 victims detected in three countries in North America.

**FIG. 153** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in North America, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

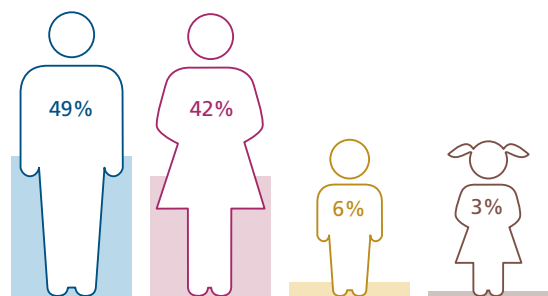
3 countries (n=6,183 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 154** Shares of detected victims of trafficking for forced labour in North America, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)

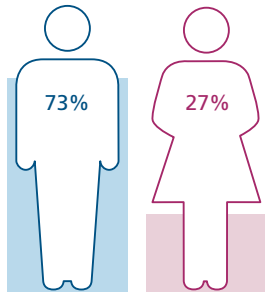
3 countries (n=1,831 victims whose sex, age group and form of exploitation was reported)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

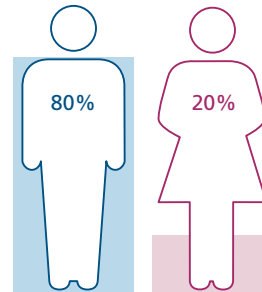


**FIG. 155** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in Mexico and Canada, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
(n=256)



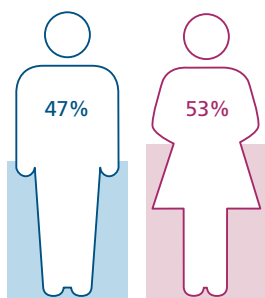
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 156** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Mexico and Canada, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
(n=85)



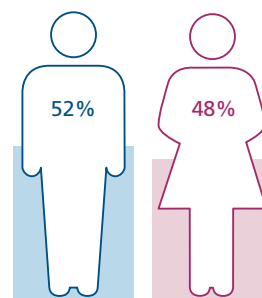
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 157** Shares of persons investigated and/or arrested for trafficking in persons in Central America and the Caribbean, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
4 countries (n=217)



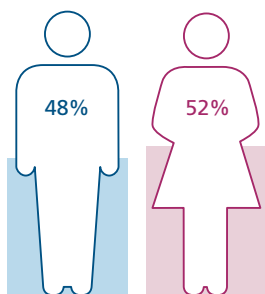
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 158** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in Central America and the Caribbean, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
6 countries (n=564)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 159** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Central America and the Caribbean, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
4 countries (n=71)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

As far as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are concerned, most victims in North America are adult women, while a higher share of girls is reported in Central America and the Caribbean. In North America, detected victims who are trafficked for forced labour are mainly adults, with men and women detected in similar shares. The victims detected in Central America and the Caribbean who are exploited in forced labour are girls and boys.

### Profile of the offenders

Countries in Central America and the Caribbean continue to report large shares of female offenders, particularly in Central America. The proportions of males and females suspected of, arrested for and/or convicted of trafficking are similar, with a slightly greater share of females (see *Profile of the offenders* in chapter 1).

In North America, Mexico and Canada reported information on the sex of persons going through criminal

justice system procedures for trafficking in persons, with most of them are males.

In Central America and the Caribbean, data collected from six countries indicates that 85 per cent of convicted traffickers were citizens of the country of conviction with the remaining 15 per cent made up of offenders from other countries in Central America and the Caribbean or South America.

**Trafficking flows affecting North America**

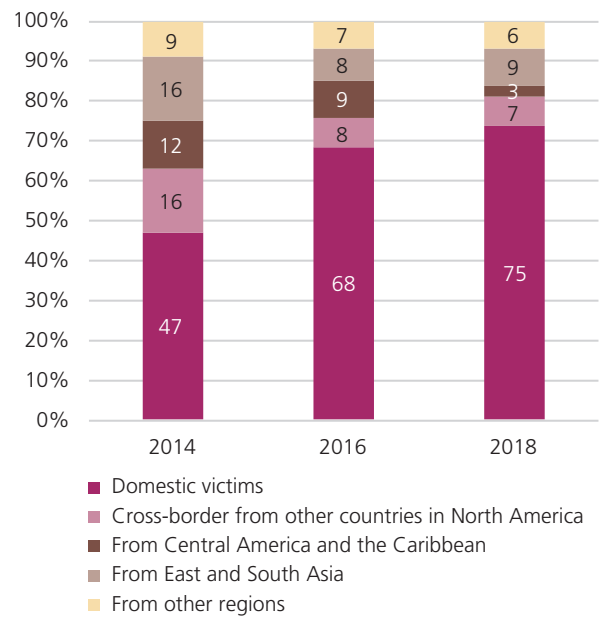
North America is a significant destination for both intraregional and transregional trafficking flows. Despite this, most detected victims were citizens of the country of detection. While this was the case for all three countries in the subregion, the United States, in particular, reports a large share of their own nationals as victims of trafficking.

In terms of transnational trafficking, the most significant flows into North America originate from countries in other parts of the Americas, though the number of victims from Central America and the Caribbean appears to be declining (from 9 per cent in 2016, to 3 per cent in 2018). A significant trafficking flow to North America originates from countries in Asia. The key origin countries are in South-East Asia, but also consist of other Asian countries on a smaller scale.

Yet, at the same time, very few North American victims are detected in other subregions of the world.

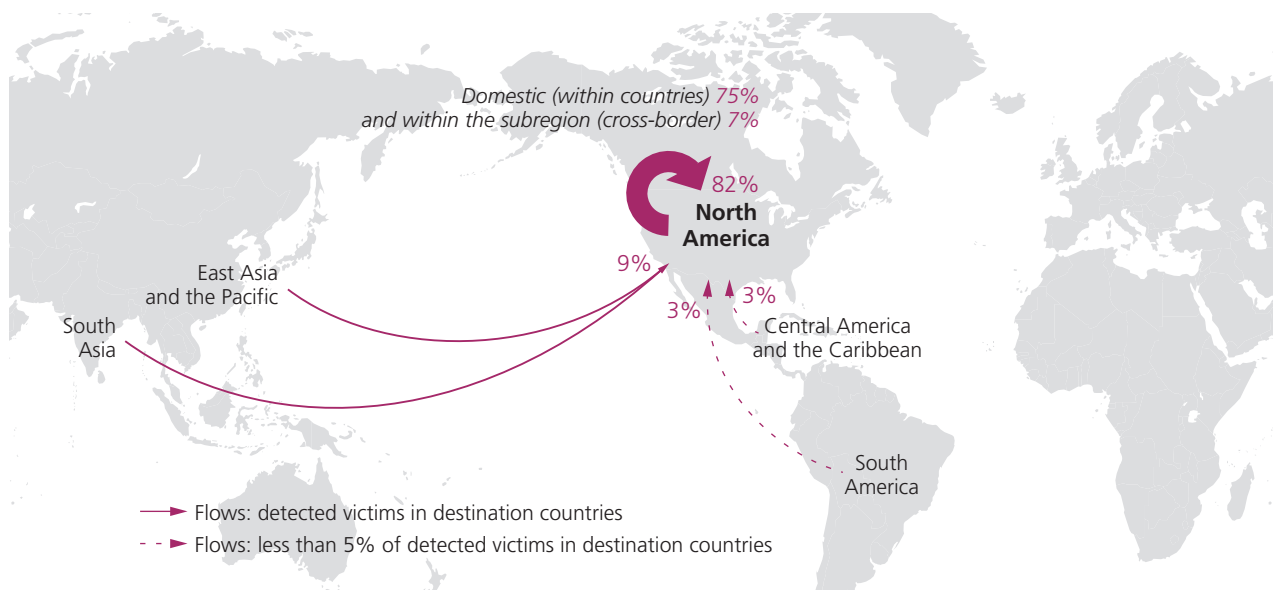
Countries in North America have been detecting increasing shares of domestic victims compared to past years. At the same time, more victims have been detected from other regions, such as South America (3 per cent) and Africa and the Middle East (2 per cent).

**FIG. 160** Trend in shares of trafficking victims detected in North America, by area of citizenship, 2014 – 2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

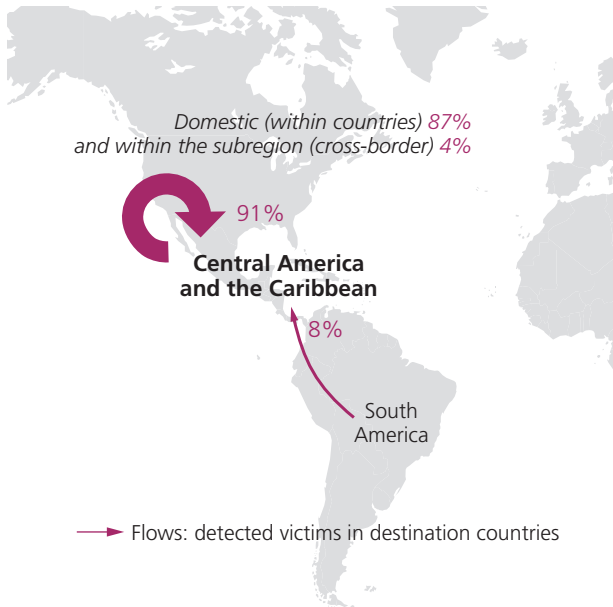
**MAP. 16** Origins of trafficking victims detected in North America, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**MAP. 17** Origins of trafficking victims detected in Central America and the Caribbean, by subregion, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

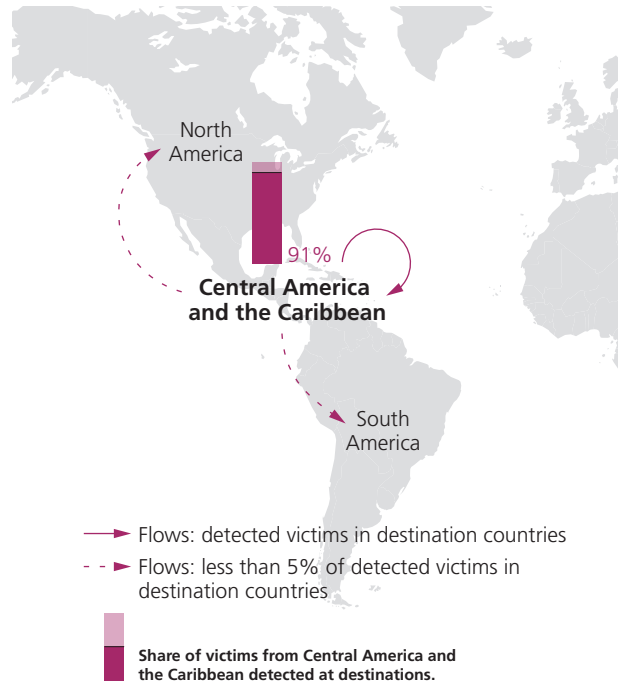
### Trafficking flows affecting Central America and the Caribbean

Victims detected in Central America and the Caribbean are primarily citizens of the country of detection. The other significant flows are from South America and other countries in the subregion. These flows mainly move from south to north, from relatively poorer countries towards relatively richer countries across the border. As an illustration, victims from the northern part of Central America are trafficked to Mexico and to the United States. At the same time, victims from the northern parts of South America are trafficked to the southern countries of Central America. Overall, the trafficking flows affecting Central America and the Caribbean continue to be confined to the Americas, both in terms of their origin and destination.

### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

The vast majority of countries of Central America and the Caribbean, and all three countries in North America, have an offence of trafficking in persons that follows the

**MAP. 18** Destinations for trafficking flows from Central America and the Caribbean, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

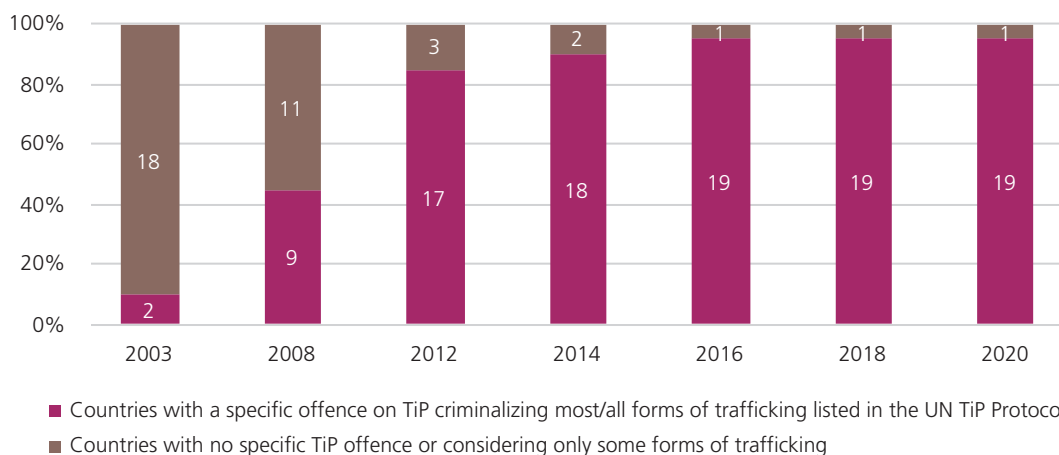
Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

United Nations Trafficking in Persons definition. Most of these countries introduced the offence of trafficking in persons between the end of 2008 and August 2012. Only one country in this subregion continues to have only a partial offence for trafficking in persons.

The number of convictions per 1,000,000 people recorded in North America indicates a general increase in conviction rates in the subregion since 2009. Similarly, conviction rates have been increasing in the subregion of Central America and the Caribbean, almost reaching the global average in 2018.

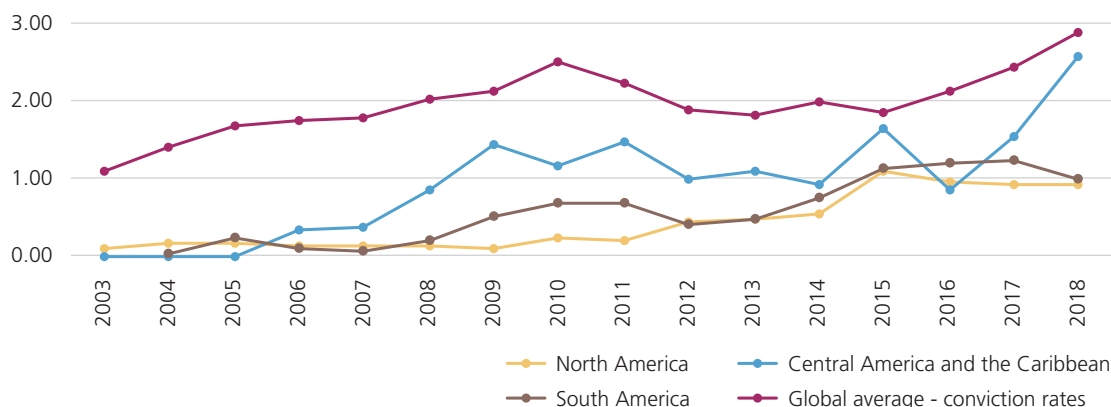
Similarly, both subregions have recorded an increase in the number of victims detected per 1,000,000 since the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force.

**FIG. 161** Number of countries in North America, Central America and the Caribbean introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



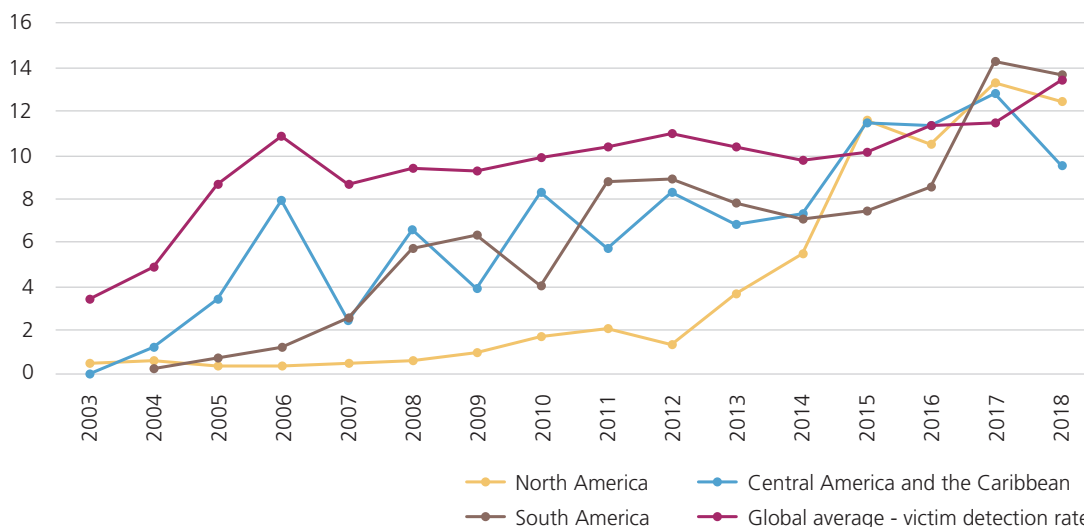
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 162** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in the Americas, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 163** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in the Americas, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.



## SOUTH AMERICA<sup>394</sup>

- Women represent the majority of victims detected in South America, while one in four detected victims is a man.
- The majority of detected victims in South America are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, while more than one third are trafficked for forced labour.
- Victims from South America have been detected in large numbers within South America and in Central America and the Caribbean.
- Victims from this subregion have also been detected or repatriated from North America, Europe, the Middle East and East Asia.

### Profile of the victims

In this subregion, the vast majority of the detected victims of trafficking are females, making up 69 per cent of the total in 2018. While women make up the overwhelming majority, there was an increase from 12 per cent in 2016, to 25 per cent in 2018 in men detected as victims in this subregion.

### Forms of exploitation

In line with the forms recorded in the previous years, there is an increasing trend for the majority of detected victims in South America to be trafficked for sexual exploitation (from 58 per cent in 2016 to 64 per cent in 2018).

Data from eight countries reporting this information in the subregion show that the overwhelming majority (96 per cent) of these victims are females, with more women than girls.

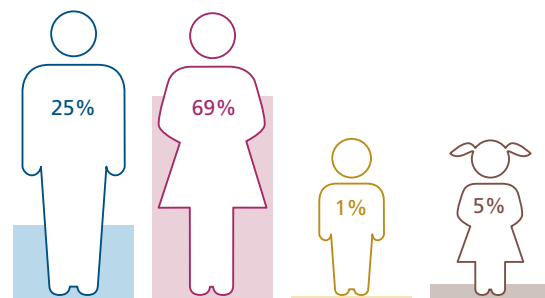
The second most commonly reported form is trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, although the share has remained at a similar level to 2018. Argentina and Chile reported more victims who had been trafficked for this purpose than for sexual exploitation.

This form of trafficking affected all groups of victims – women, men, girls and boys – in broadly similar numbers.

Data collected in this subregion show that, compared to other subregions, the share of female victims who were

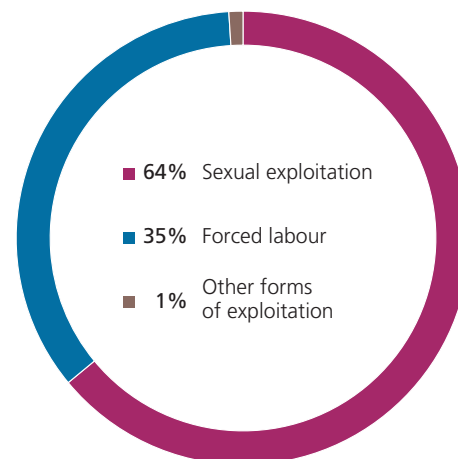
<sup>394</sup> This subregion includes Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

**FIG. 164** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in South America,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on data on sex and age of 3,421 victims detected in 10 countries in South America.

**FIG. 165** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in South America,\* by forms of exploitation 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
\*Based on data on forms of exploitation for 3,091 victims detected in 9 countries in South America.

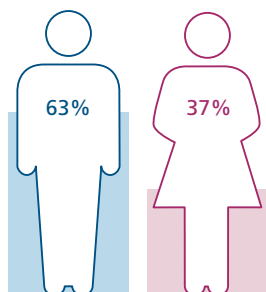
trafficked for forced labour in 2018 was large. About half of the detected victims of this form for trafficking are females, near-equally split between women and girls.

### Profile of the offenders

The majority of offenders in South America continue to be men, accounting for around two thirds of those investigated/arrested, prosecuted and/or convicted of trafficking in 2018 in the subregion. While the share of female offenders remains low, the proportion is in line with the global average.

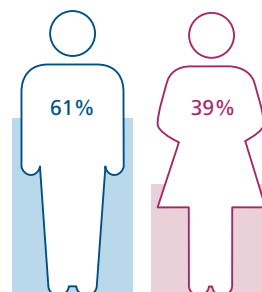
In terms of citizenships of convicted traffickers, over 80 per cent of those convicted in the court of first instance in six South American countries were citizens of those countries. Most of the remaining 16 per cent of offenders convicted were from other countries within the subregion.

**FIG. 166** Shares of persons investigated and/or arrested for trafficking in persons in South America, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
6 countries (n=409)



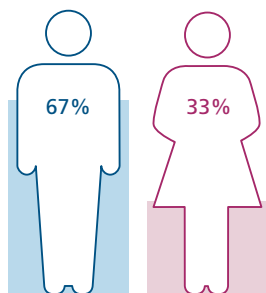
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 167** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in South America, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
8 countries (n=575)



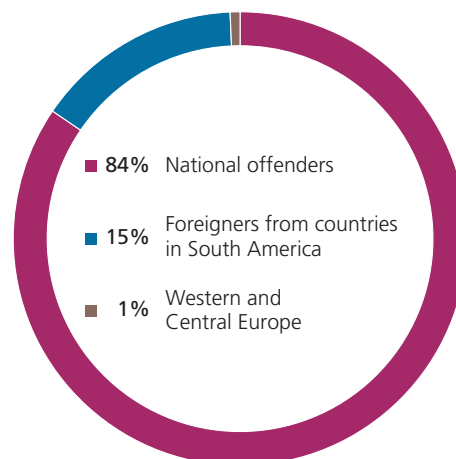
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 168** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in South America, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
6 countries (n=149)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 169** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in South America, by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)  
6 countries (n=139)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

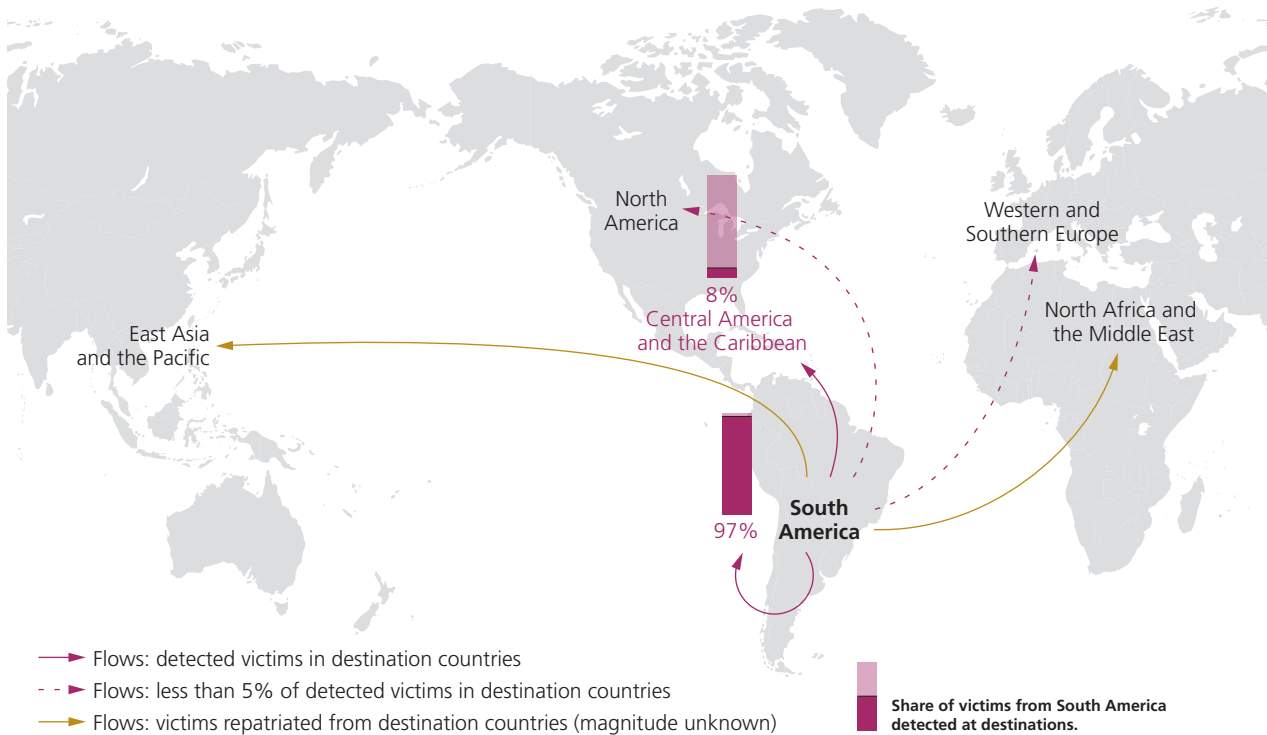
### Trafficking flows affecting South America

The large majority of victims detected in South America are victims of domestic trafficking. These countries are also destinations for cross-border trafficking flows within South America. However, within the subregion, there is no clear pattern of origin and destination countries. For example, victims from Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have been detected in Argentina, while victims from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have been detected in Colombia and Peru. Brazil and Chile are also destinations for victims from Bolivia and Peru, among other states of origin, and Peru is also a destination for victims trafficked from neighbouring countries. Consequently, the trafficking flows within South America appear rather complex, but are also limited in terms of geographical reach, as most are limited to a nearby country. One exception seems to be the trafficking flows

originating from the Caribbean directed to the countries of the Southern Cone.

Flows out of South America are mainly directed to Central America and the Caribbean. In particular, victims from the northern part of South America are detected in the more affluent countries of the neighbouring subregion. South American victims have also been detected in North America and Western and Southern Europe. Repatriation data, however, show trafficking of South American victims is also directed to East Asia and the Gulf countries of the Middle East.

MAP. 19 Destination for trafficking flows from South America, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

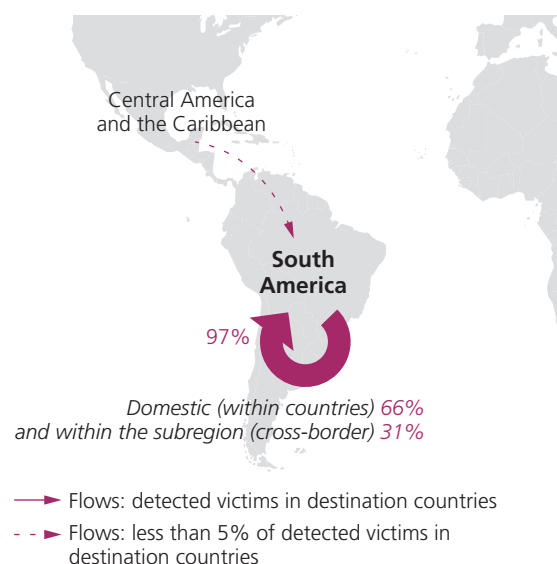
### Criminalizing trafficking in persons

Most South American countries have a specific offence of trafficking in persons, in line with the United Nations Trafficking in Persons definition. The majority of countries introduced a specific offence on trafficking in persons between 2004 and 2012. As of August 2018, only one country in the subregion had partial legislation, with all other countries having introduced a specific offence for all forms of trafficking in persons.

The number of convictions per 1,000,000 people recorded in this region has been lower compared to Central American countries. However, the conviction rates per 1,000,000 have been generally increasing over the last 15 years.

Correspondingly, the number of victims detected per 1,000,000 in South American countries has also increased since the entry into force of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in line with the rise in conviction rates.

MAP. 20 Origins of trafficking victims detected in South America,\* by subregion, 2018 (or most recent)

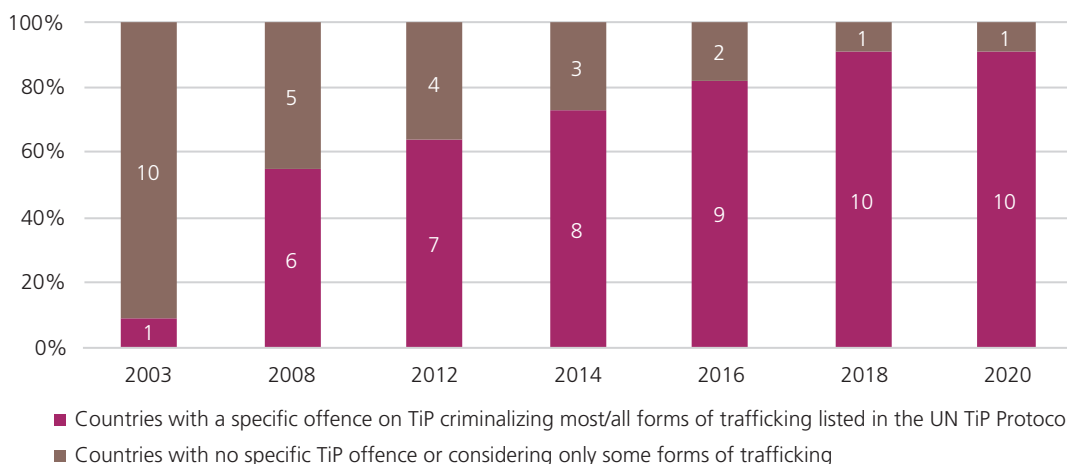


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

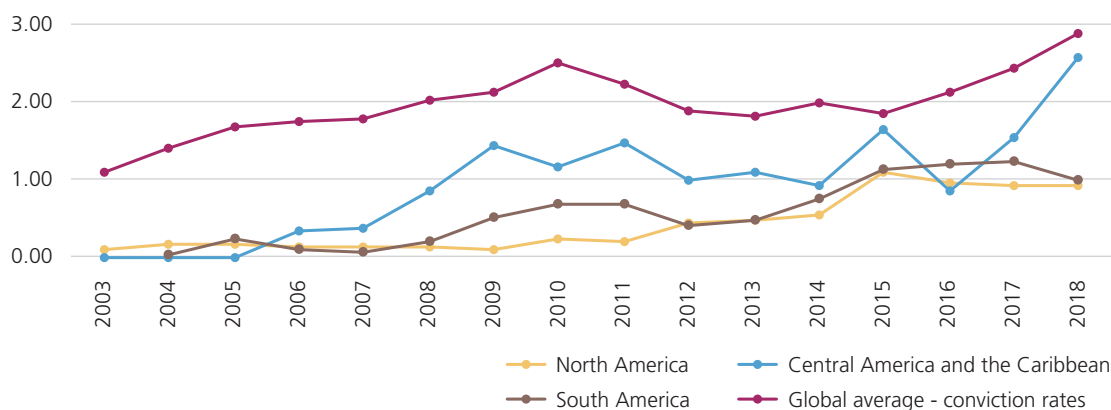
\*Numbers refer to 3,243 detected victims in 11 countries of South America.

**FIG. 170** Number of countries in South America introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



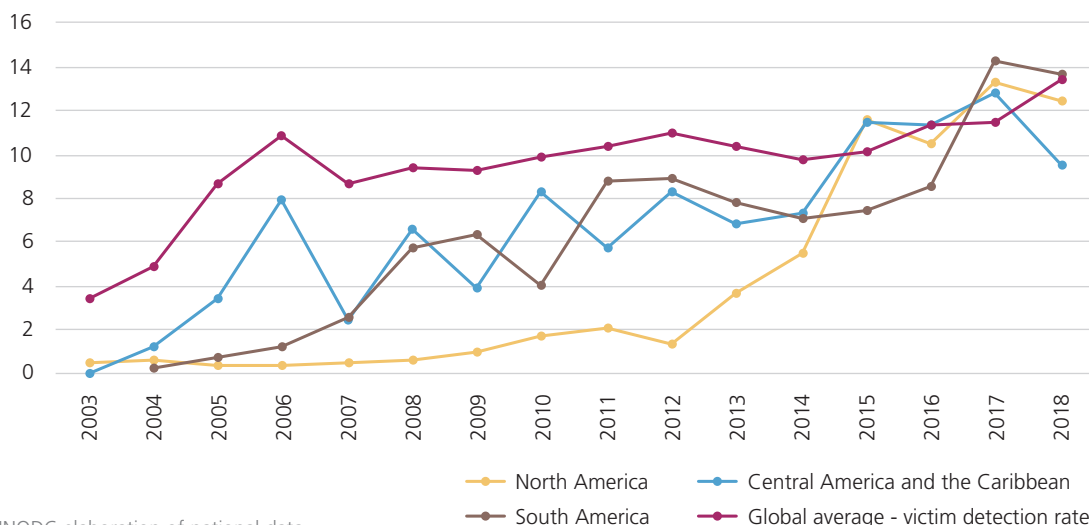
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 171** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in the Americas, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 172** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in the Americas, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.



## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA<sup>395</sup>

- Children represent the majority of victims detected in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in West Africa. Southern African and East African countries tend to detect more adults than children.
- The majority of detected victims in Sub-Saharan Africa are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour.
- Trafficking flows out of Sub-Saharan Africa have a global dimension, with victims detected in Western and Southern Europe, in North Africa and in the Middle East. Victims from Sub-Saharan countries are also detected in North America and East Asia.
- As a destination of trafficking flows, most of the victims detected in this subregion are trafficked within their own countries or across the border from neighbouring countries.

### Profile of the victims

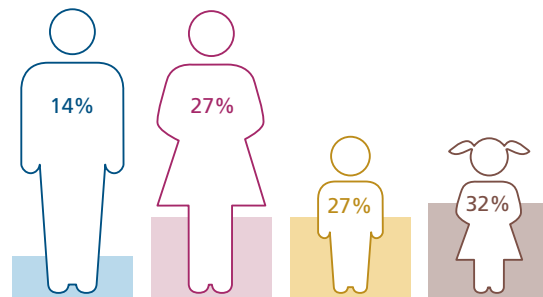
Most of the detected trafficking victims in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be children, at about 60 per cent, with both boys and girls detected in significant proportions.

However, analysing the data by geographical areas shows that child trafficking continues to be more commonly detected in West Africa than in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. East and Southern African countries continue to detect larger shares of adults. East African countries have detected more adult males, while Southern African countries detect more women.

Countries in West Africa tend to detect more victims than other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a consequence, regional analyses regarding the profiles of victims largely reflect data from this part of the African continent.

<sup>395</sup> This subregion includes 35 countries, which for analytical purposes can be divided into three areas, namely West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo), East Africa (Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania) and Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia).

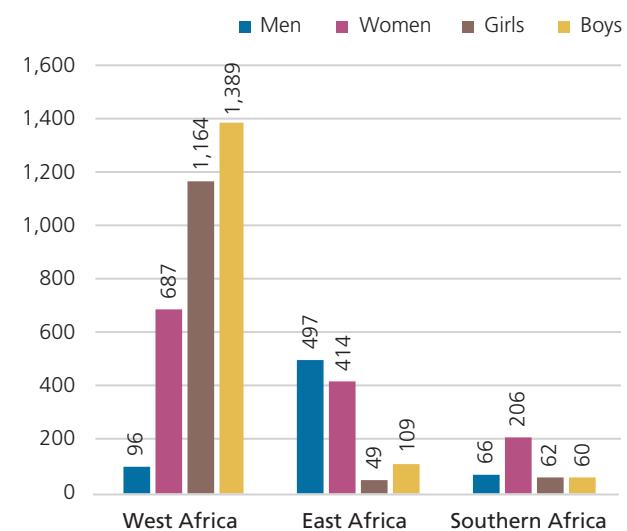
**FIG. 173** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on data on sex and age of 4,799 victims detected in 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**FIG. 174** Numbers of detected victims of trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa, by age group, sex and subregion,\* 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

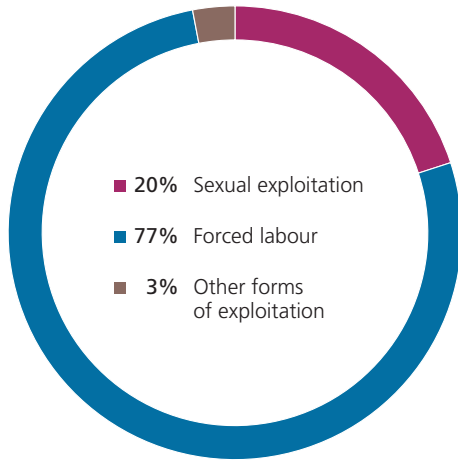
\*Based on data on sex and age on victims detected in 13 countries in West Africa, 6 countries in East Africa, 7 countries in Southern Africa.

### Forms of exploitation

Most of the victims detected in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2018 were trafficked for forced labour.

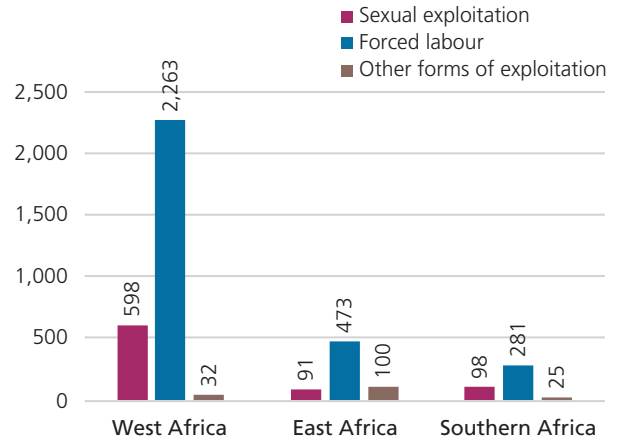
In spite of differing capacities to detect, record and report victims, the proportions of the different forms of exploitation remain largely the same in West, East and Southern Africa, with a predominance of victims of trafficking for forced labour in all areas. Among the other forms of exploitation, countries in this region reported trafficking for forced criminal activity, forced marriages and mixed forms of exploitation.

**FIG. 175** Share of detected victims of trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa,\* by forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



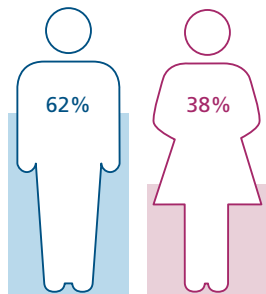
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Based on data on forms of exploitation for 4,835 victims detected in 22 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**FIG. 176** Number of detected victims of trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa,\* by forms of exploitation and subregion, 2018 (or most recent)



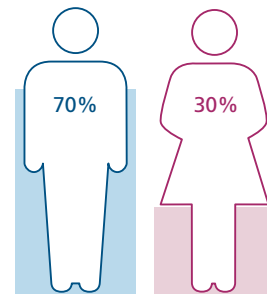
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 \*Based on data on forms of exploitation of detected victims in 10 countries in West Africa, 3 countries in East Africa and 7 countries in Southern Africa.

**FIG. 177** Shares of persons investigated or arrested for trafficking in persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
 7 countries (n=1,092)



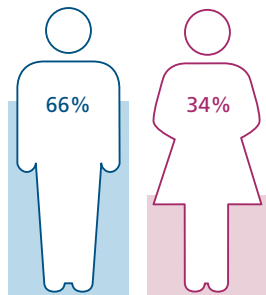
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 178** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
 9 countries (n=348)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 179** Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)  
 7 countries (n=121)



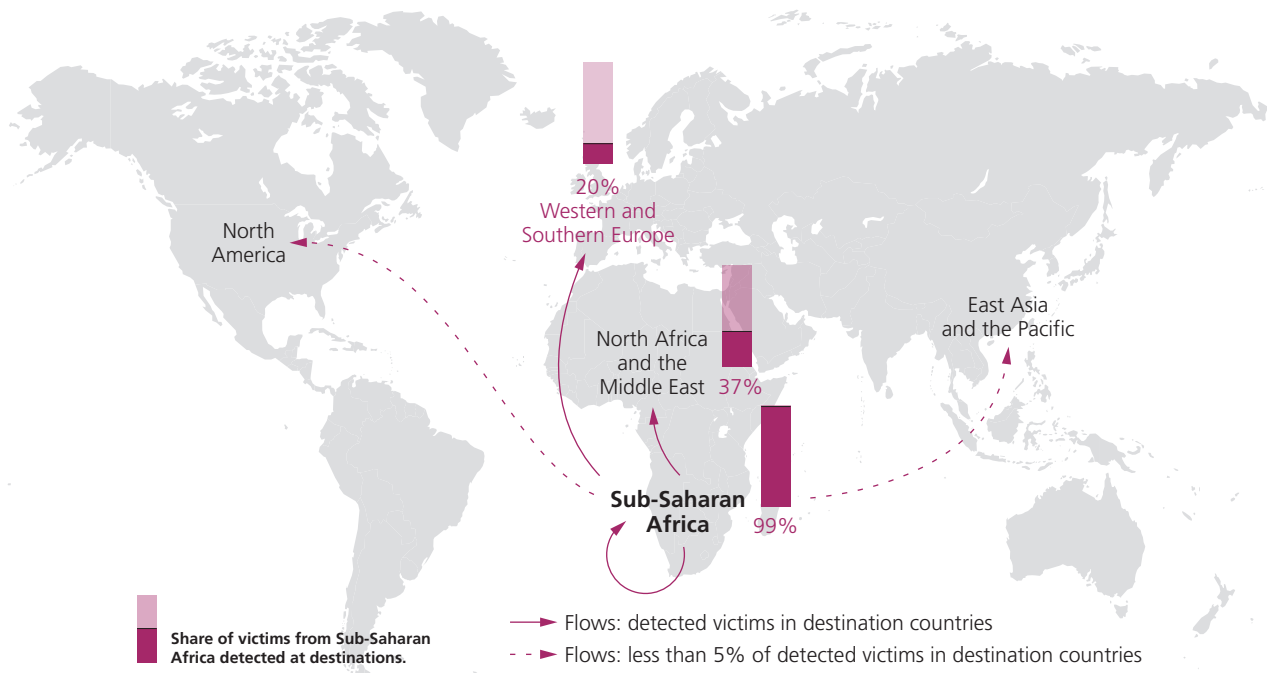
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**Profile of the offenders**

Most traffickers in this subregion continue to be males, in proportions broadly similar with global patterns. Countries in West Africa reported the highest share of females investigated/arrested for, prosecuted for and/or convicted of trafficking. Conversely, countries in Southern Africa reported the highest share of male offenders. Countries in East Africa reported that around 70 per cent of the offenders were males.

Data on the citizenship of the persons convicted of trafficking show that most are citizens of the country where they were convicted. In 2018, 12 countries in Sub-Saha-

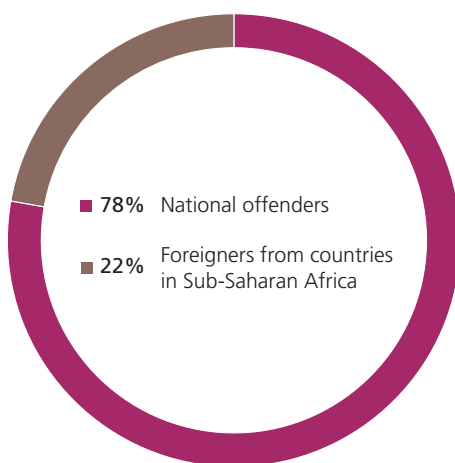
MAP. 21 Destinations for trafficking flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

FIG. 180 Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Sub-Saharan Africa reported that 78 per cent of convicted traffickers were citizens of these countries while 22 per cent were citizens of other countries in the subregion.

### Trafficking flows affecting Sub-Saharan Africa

During the reporting period, victims from Sub-Saharan Africa were detected in, or repatriated from, countries in most subregions across the globe, making it a relevant region of origin for detected cases of trafficking in persons globally. Victims from all areas of Africa were detected in Western and Southern Europe in significant flows. Victims from West and East Africa were frequently detected in North Africa and the Middle East, including in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Victims from West and East Africa were also detected in East Asia and North America.

Most of the victims detected in Sub-Saharan Africa are either citizens of the country of detection or citizens of other Sub-Saharan African countries. Furthermore, trafficked victims are generally trafficked within the same geographical area. For example, West African countries detect only victims from West Africa or victims who were domestically trafficked. Countries in East Africa detect foreign victims from other countries in East Africa, with very small numbers from West and Southern Africa along with victims trafficked from South Asia. The picture is similar in Southern Africa in terms of cross-border trafficking, including some victims trafficked from West and East Africa and from Asia.

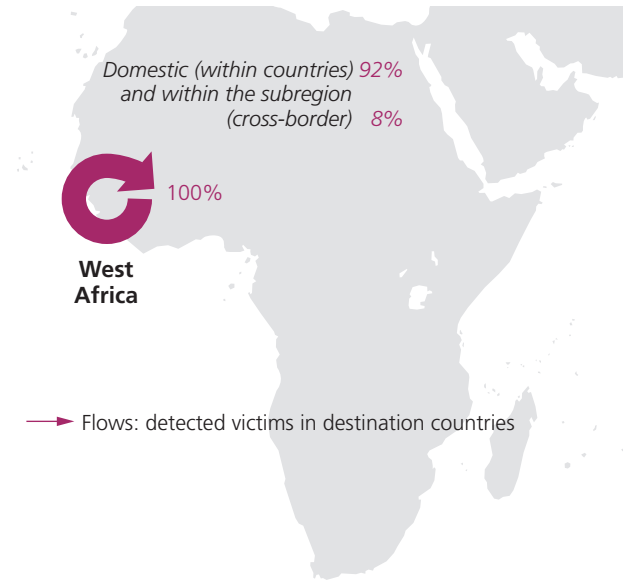
**Criminalizing trafficking in persons**

In the region, four countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have legislation that only criminalizes trafficking in children, while one country has no specific offence addressing this crime. Most other countries in this subregion introduced a specific offence in line with the United Nations Trafficking in Persons definition after 2009.

The number of convictions per 1,000,000 people recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa has been generally lower compared to the rest of the world. In addition, over the last 15 years, the conviction rate per 1,000,000 has been fluctuating between 0 and 1 persons, with no marked increase recorded.

The number of victims detected per 1,000,000 in Sub-Saharan African countries has increased since the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force. The number of detections, however, remains among the lowest compared to other regions.

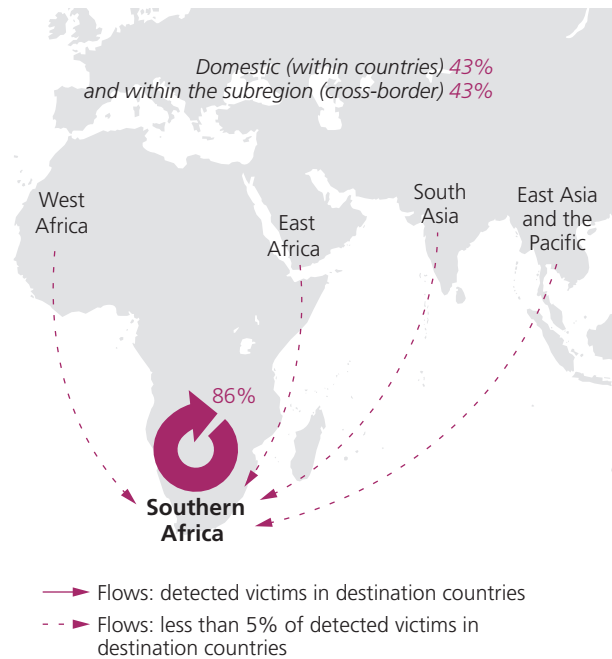
**MAP. 22** Origins of trafficking victims detected in West Africa, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

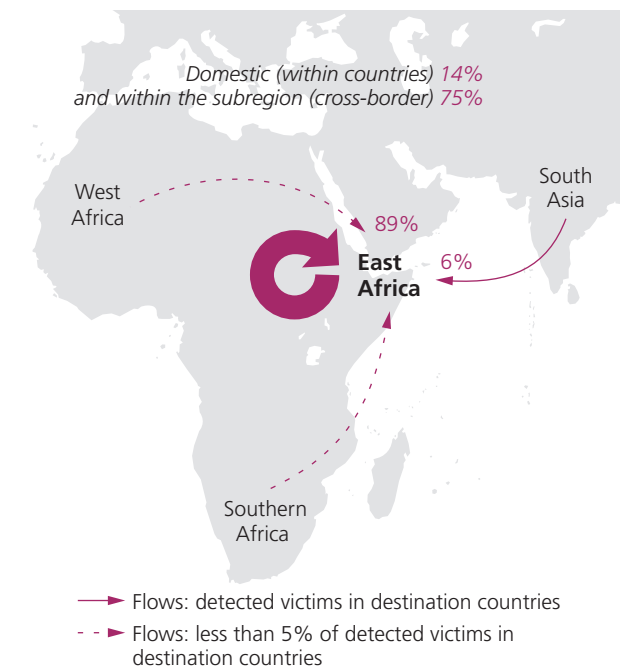
**MAP. 23** Origins of trafficking victims detected in Southern Africa, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**MAP. 24** Origins of trafficking victims detected in East Africa, 2018 (or most recent)

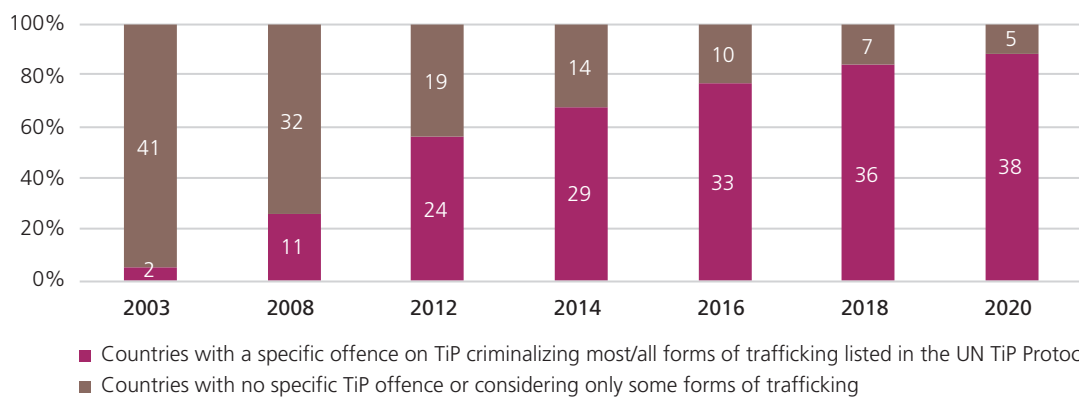


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

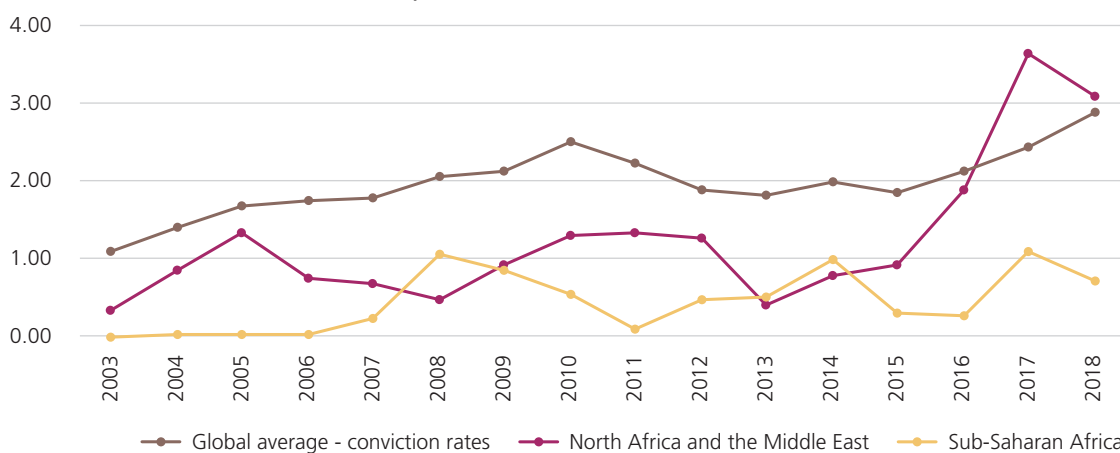


**FIG. 181** Number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



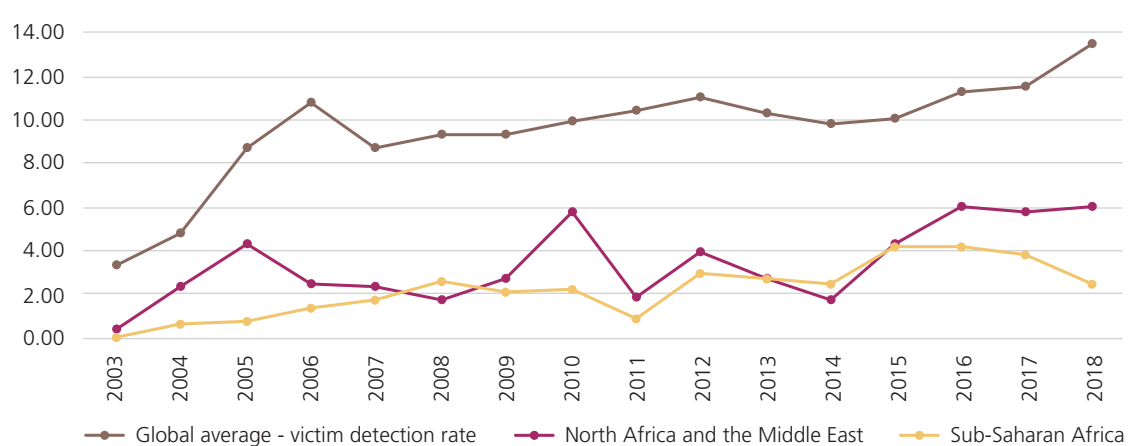
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 182** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Africa and the Middle East, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 183** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Africa and the Middle East, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST<sup>396</sup>

- Adult women and men are more frequently detected as victims of trafficking in North Africa and the Middle East. The detection of children is more frequent in North African countries than in the rest of the subregion.
- Detected victims in North Africa and the Middle East are trafficked for sexual exploitation, for forced labour and for exploitative begging in almost equal proportions.
- The majority of the victims detected in North African countries are domestically trafficked. Relevant flows into these countries originate from East and West Africa.
- Countries of the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council are destinations for victims trafficked from Asia, from Sub-Saharan Africa and from Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

### Profile of the victims

In North Africa, the majority (69 per cent) of detected victims are adults. Among children, girls and boys were detected in equal shares. North African countries tend to detect more children than the rest of the region (31 per cent). The majority of victims in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were men, whereas other countries in the Middle East detected mainly women.

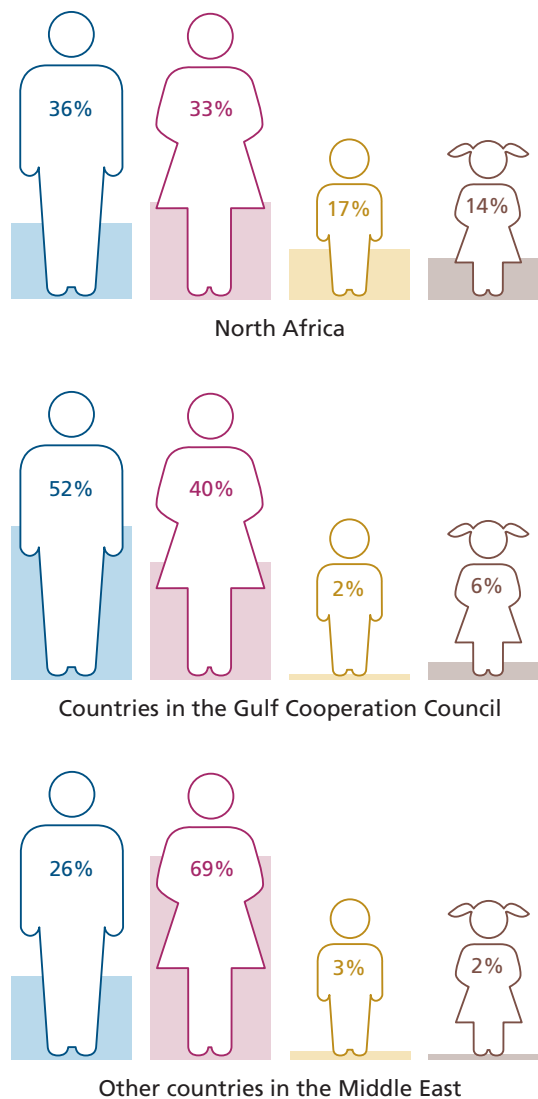
### Forms of exploitation

During the reporting period, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour and for the purpose of exploitative begging was reported in nearly equal shares. Trafficking for exploitative begging was detected in North Africa as well as in the GCC countries. Trafficking for forced criminal activity and for the removal of organs is also reported in the subregion.

Females comprise most of the victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, and two thirds of the victims trafficked

<sup>396</sup> This subregion includes 16 countries and comprises North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) and the other countries of the Middle East (Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic).

FIG. 184 Shares of detected victims of trafficking in North Africa and the Middle East,\* by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

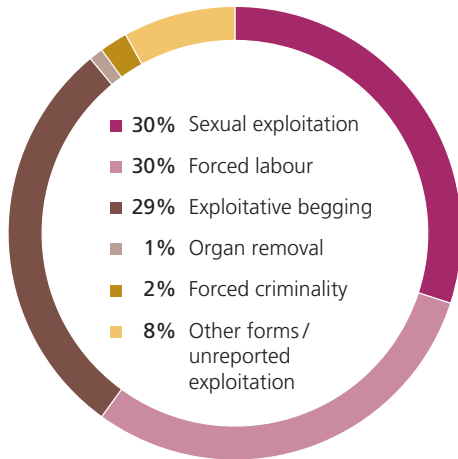
\*Based on data on sex and age of 1,690 victims detected in 13 countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

for forced labour. At the same time, most of the victims trafficked for the purpose of organ removal were men.

### Profile of the offenders

The vast majority of traffickers in North Africa and the Middle East continue to be male. More than 70 per cent of the persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in 2018 were males, with seven countries reporting that over 80 per cent of those convicted were males.

**FIG. 185** Shares of detected victims of trafficking in North Africa and the Middle East,\* by forms of exploitation, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

\*Based on data on forms of exploitation for 1,121 victims detected in 12 countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

As for the citizenship profiles of the traffickers, the data show that the majority of those convicted of trafficking in 2018 were citizens of the country of conviction, at 70 per cent. The remaining 30 per cent were mostly offenders from other countries in the subregion.

### Trafficking flows affecting North Africa and the Middle East

In line with the results for the profiles of victims and the forms of exploitation, the three areas that make up this region are also dissimilar in terms of inbound trafficking flows.

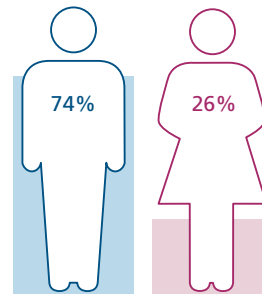
North African countries have mainly detected domestic victims, along with victims from East and West Africa. This is also confirmed by West African countries reporting their own citizens trafficked to, and then repatriated from North African countries.

Countries in the Middle East detect significant shares of victims from East Africa, Eastern Europe and South Asia. Meanwhile, GCC countries detect large numbers of Asian victims, victims from other countries of the Middle East, as well as victims from East Africa.

In terms of flows out of North Africa and the Middle East, significant flows to Western and Southern Europe were detected – 6 per cent of the victims detected in Western and Southern Europe are North African and 2 per cent are from the Middle East.

**FIG. 186** Shares of persons investigated and/or arrested for trafficking in persons in North Africa and the Middle East, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

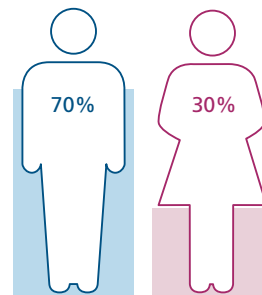
8 countries (n=850)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 187** Shares of persons prosecuted for trafficking in persons in North Africa and the Middle East, by sex, 2018 (or most recent)

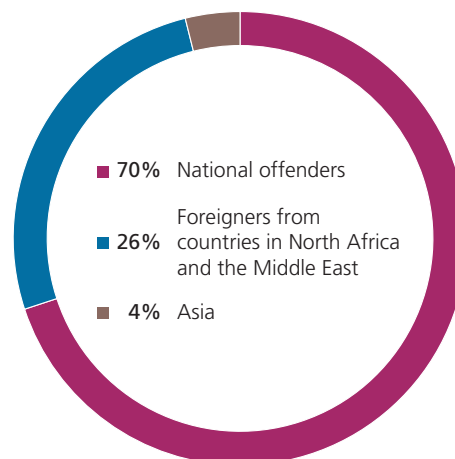
10 countries (n=901)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 188** Shares of traffickers convicted in North Africa and the Middle East, by area of citizenship, 2018 (or most recent)

7 countries (n=386)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Countries in the Middle East rarely reported victims of domestic trafficking. Some intraregional cross-border trafficking has been detected in the GCC countries as well as in other countries of the Middle East.

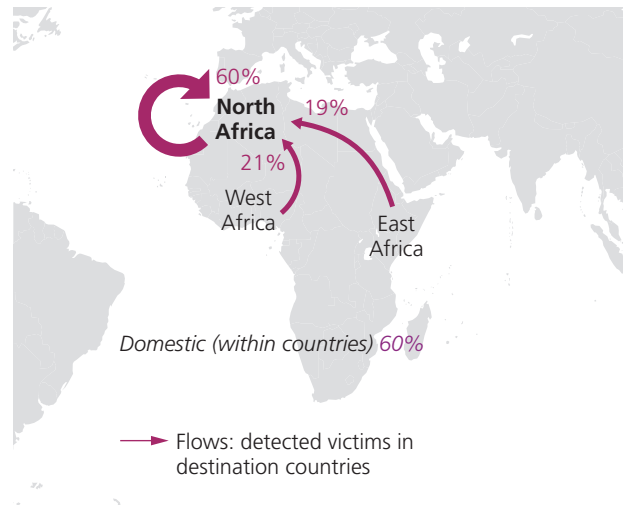
**Criminalizing trafficking in persons**

Most of the countries in North Africa and the Middle East introduced specific offences criminalizing trafficking in persons after the year 2009. As of August 2020, among the 17 countries assessed, only two countries lack legislation criminalizing trafficking in persons.

The number of convictions per 1,000,000 people recorded in North Africa has been lower compared to the rest of the world. Meanwhile, countries in the Middle East tend to record more convictions than North African countries. Over the last 15 years, the registered conviction rate per 1,000,000 persons in North Africa and Middle East has generally increased.

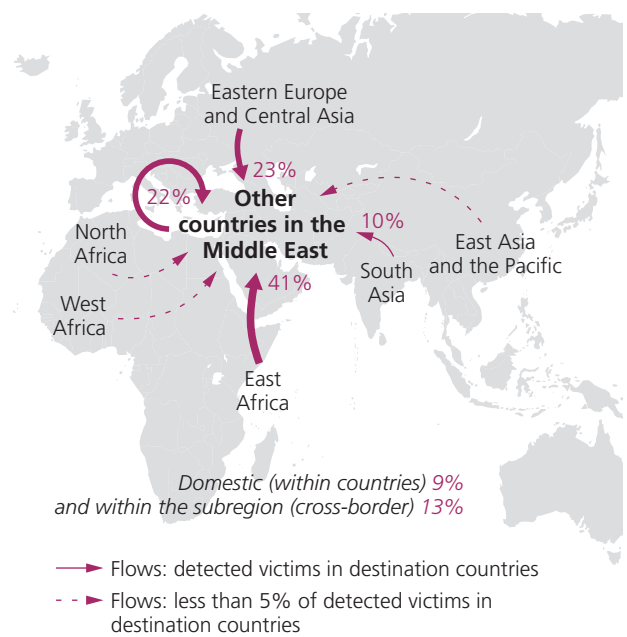
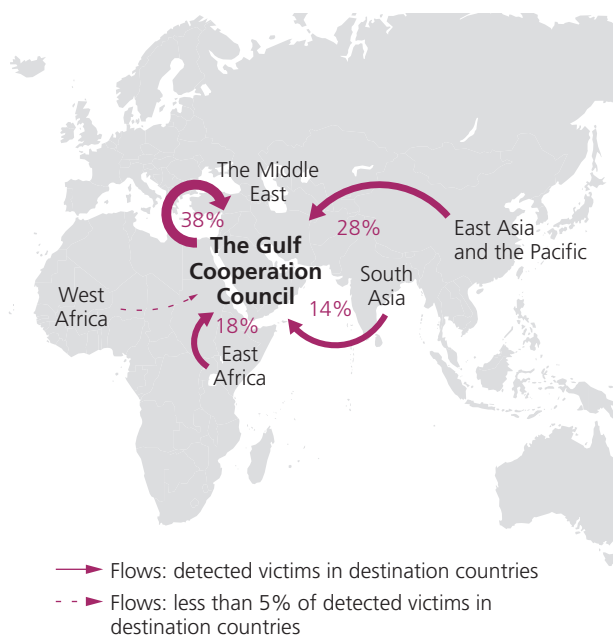
The number of victims detected per 1,000,000 in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East has been fluctuating, but generally increasing since the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol entered into force. The number of detections, however, remains among the lowest compared to other regions.

**MAP. 25** Origins of trafficking victims detected in North Africa, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

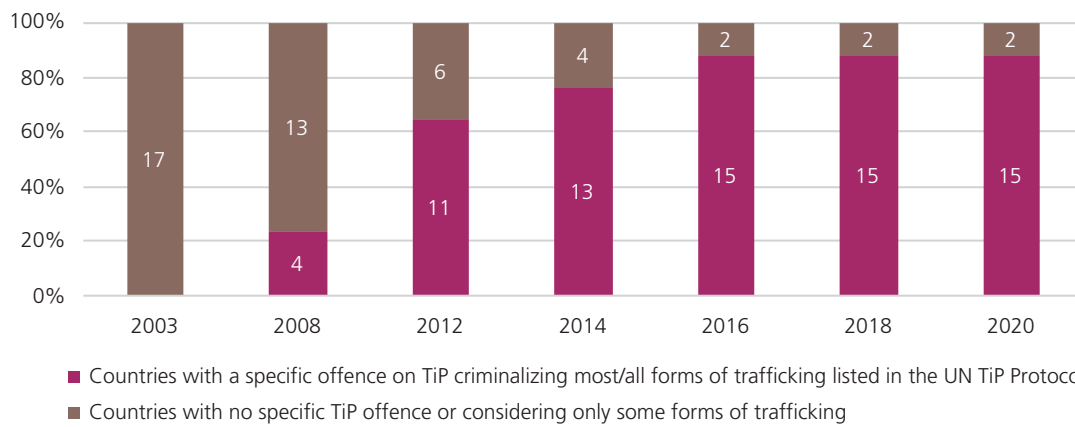
**MAP. 26** Origins of trafficking victims detected in the Middle East, 2018 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.  
 Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

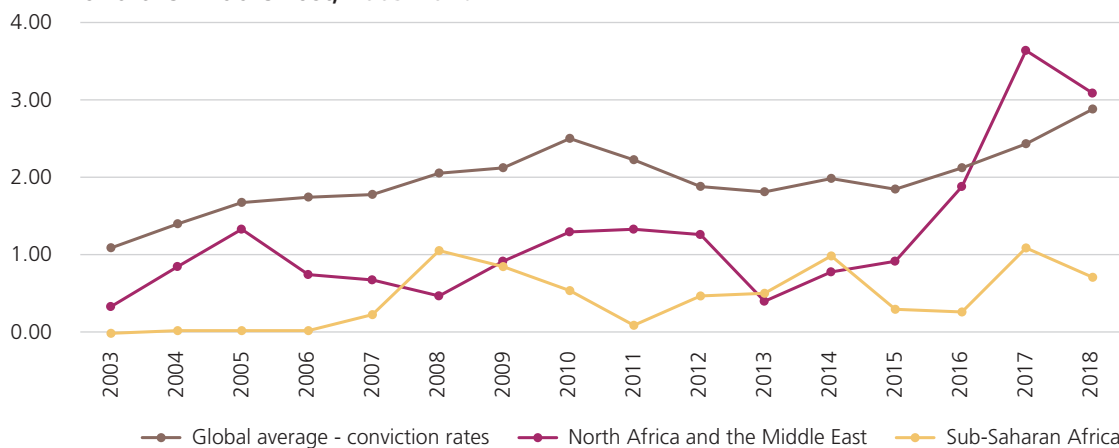


**FIG. 190** Number of countries in North Africa and the Middle East introducing a specific offence on trafficking in persons, December 2003-August 2020



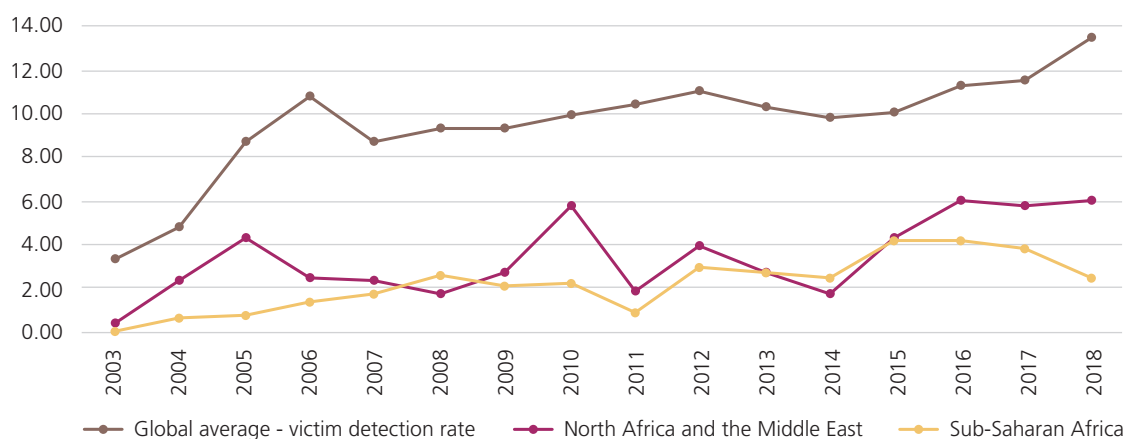
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 191** Average conviction rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Africa and the Middle East, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**FIG. 192** Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in Africa and the Middle East, 2003-2018



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.





# UNODC

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Six years ago, the international community reaffirmed its political will and commitment to the international legal framework to combat trafficking in persons. In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Global Plan reiterated the collective effort behind the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol and gave UNODC the mandate to collect data and report biennially on trafficking in persons patterns and flows at the national, regional and international levels. This edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* is the third publication following this mandate. It covers 136 countries and provides a comprehensive analysis of the crime of trafficking in persons and how countries are responding to it.

This and previous editions of the *Global Report* are also available at the Report webpage: [www.unodc.org/glotip](http://www.unodc.org/glotip).



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