



Tool 9.11 Rapid response: prevention during emergencies

Overview

This tool offers guidance on protecting vulnerable people from trafficking during crises, such as conflict or natural disaster.

Guidelines for protecting children during emergencies

UNICEF notes that in large-scale emergencies where it will be difficult to establish guardianship arrangements for individual children, the rights and best interests of children should be safeguarded and promoted by States and organizations working on behalf of children. Various actions are vital to contain the risk of children becoming victims of trafficking:

1. Conduct a rapid assessment of the situation of children. Within the appropriate mechanisms, monitor, advocate against, report and communicate on severe and systematic abuse, violence and exploitation.
2. Assist to prevent the separation of children from caregivers and facilitate the identification, registration and medical screening of separated children, particularly those under five years of age and adolescent girls. Governments should identify officers in charge of child protection in all major hospitals admitting child patients and in temporary camps.
3. Ensure that family-tracing systems are implemented, with appropriate care and protection facilities.
4. Interim care must be provided to separated children until they are reunited with their families, placed in foster care, or other long-term care arrangements have been made. Interim care should be consistent with the aim of family reunification, balanced with a best interests assessment, and should ensure children's protection and well-being.
5. Promote the child's recovery by providing psychosocial support to strengthen resilience, as well as meeting basic needs.
6. Establish procedures to ensure that children who are travelling during emergencies are with their parents or other primary caregivers. The Government can put a temporary moratorium on the adoption of children until all children can be properly identified and the process of family tracing is completed.

The international standard in a crisis is to keep children as close to their family members and community as possible. Staying with relatives in extended family units is generally a better solution than uprooting the child completely.

Child trafficking, sexual exploitation and extreme forms of child labour may be nothing new in the region affected by disaster and/or conflict. But the breakdown of institutions leaves an opening for unscrupulous and criminal exploitation of the most vulnerable. A quick response must be made by Governments to this threat in order to provide that protection.



Source: Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 6 (2005); UNICEF, *Emergency Field Handbook*, 2005. Printed in UNICEF, *Guidelines on the Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking*, September 2006, available at:

www.unicef.org/ceecis/0610-Unicef_Victims_Guidelines_en.pdf

Recommended measures to protect children during natural disasters

During times of natural disaster or conflict, children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Action plans to reduce the likelihood of child trafficking need to be immediately implemented.

UNICEF recommended the following five steps in response to the tsunami crisis:

1. **Register all displaced children.** Identify those who are unaccompanied, separated from their parents or caregivers or possibly orphaned, and know their exact location.
2. **Provide immediate safe care.** Children identified as unaccompanied or separated must be placed in the temporary care of adults who are accountable for the children's welfare. Their care and protection should be carefully monitored so they are not susceptible to further risk.
3. **Locate relatives.** Trace and reunite family members who have been separated during the chaos.
4. **Alert police and other authorities.** It is essential to educate police, border patrols, teachers, health workers and others to the threat of child exploitation and to enlist their support in protecting children.
5. **Take special national measures.** Temporary restrictions on children's movement may be necessary to thwart trafficking that could occur under the radar.



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF, *Combating Child Trafficking*, Handbook for Parliamentarians, No. 9, 2005, available at:

www.unicef.org/protection/files/child_trafficking_handbook.pdf

Promising practice

Action by the Government of Indonesia after the tsunami

After the tsunami, the Government of Indonesia was concerned about the possibility of child trafficking from affected areas. In response, it imposed a moratorium on international adoption of children from Aceh. Children under 16 were not allowed to leave the country without a parent. Surveillance was increased at airports and seaports in North Sumatra and Aceh until all children were properly identified and family tracing could be undertaken. The Government of Indonesia acted quickly to alert non-governmental organization partners in affected countries, warning them of the potential for trafficking of vulnerable children and asking them to diffuse this alert among relief workers and other relevant partners in Asia.

Counter-trafficking response of the International Organization for Migration to the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia

IOM engaged the help of Rafly, Aceh's best-known musician, to help raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking as part of a mass information campaign linked to Ramadan. Rafly produced public service announcements that were broadcast in both Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Aceh up to 35 times a day over two months, through seven radio stations. Additionally, IOM and Himpunan Ulama Dayah (Union of the Heads of Islamic Boarding Schools) developed scripts for Koranic monologues, read by religious leaders on radio, discussing safe migration, the risk of human trafficking and preventive measures from an Islamic perspective.

Counter-trafficking response of the International Organization for Migration to the tsunami in Nias, Indonesia

Nias is a predominantly Christian island off the coast of North Sumatra in Indonesia. IOM, in collaboration with the Centre for Study and Child Protection (PKPA), a non-governmental organization, designed information campaign materials, including stickers, leaflets, posters and radio public-service announcements, appropriate to the culture of Nias. Furthermore, IOM in collaboration with PKPA organized a workshop on mapping human trafficking in Nias. The workshop was attended by community and religious leaders as well as Government officials and representatives of civil society organizations. The workshop identified trafficking issues specific to Nias and selected agencies to act as the clearing-house for trafficking-related information, provide referrals when assistance was needed and formulate a plan of action to combat trafficking on the island.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Lebanon

In Lebanon there are more than 300,000 domestic workers originating from Asia and Africa, primarily Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Philippines. Even prior to the conflict in 2006 there were clear indications that many domestic workers were the victims of exploitation, criminal networks and human trafficking. As a result of the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, many domestic workers ran away or were left behind by their employers, leaving them more vulnerable to trafficking. It is estimated that after the conflict some 24,000 domestic workers were evacuated.

Through its technical cooperation project “Measures to prevent and combat trafficking in Lebanon”, UNODC supported an awareness campaign targeting in particular domestic workers from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Philippines to inform them about the risks of human trafficking. In close cooperation with the Government of Lebanon and the non-governmental organization Caritas Migrant Center (which operates a helpline for trafficking victims), UNODC prepared awareness-raising materials to distribute to shelters, embassies, churches, shops and markets.

The text for the awareness campaign was prepared in coordination with a local focus group and translated into three languages. Rather than using posters and leaflets, the message and hotline numbers were printed on bloc-notes which targeted beneficiaries were easily able to take with them. Through the UNODC juvenile justice project, young delinquents in a Beirut prison were involved in the finalization of the material, illustrating a positive example of synergies between projects.