

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

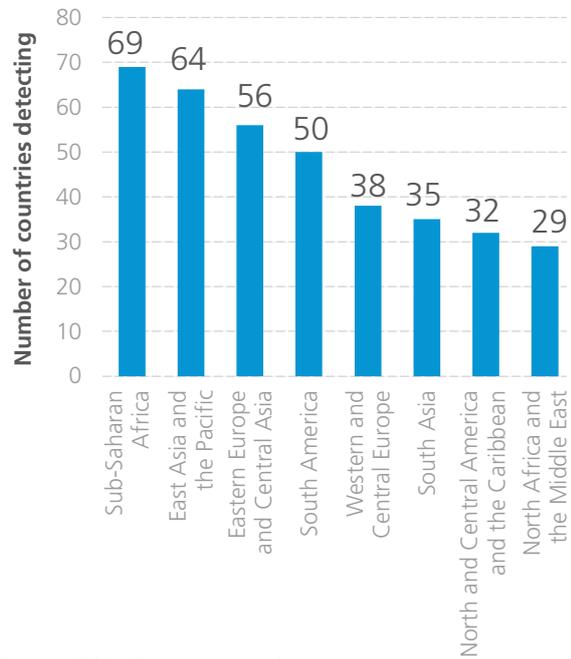
## 1) NO COUNTRY IS IMMUNE FROM TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Victims are trafficked along a multitude of trafficking flows; within countries, between neighbouring countries or even across different continents. More than 500 different trafficking flows were detected between 2012 and 2014.

Countries in Western and Southern Europe detected victims of 137 different citizenships. Affluent areas – such as Western and Southern Europe, North America and the Middle East - detect victims from a large number of countries around the world.

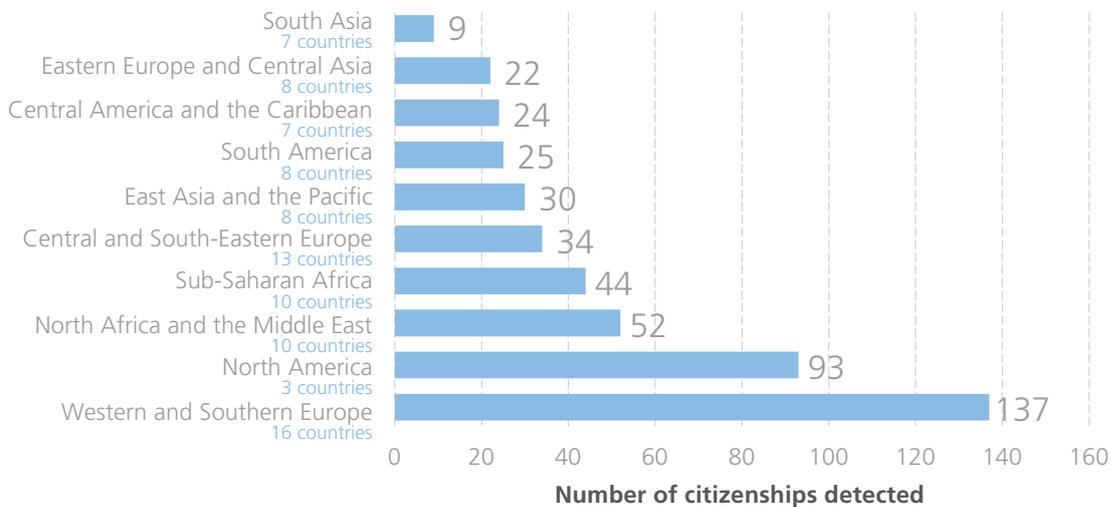
Trafficking victims from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia are trafficked to a wide range of destinations. A total of 69 countries reported to have detected victims from Sub-Saharan Africa between 2012 and 2014. Victims from Sub-Saharan Africa were mainly detected in Africa, the Middle East and Western and Southern Europe. There are also records of trafficking flows from Africa to South-East Asia and the Americas.

■ Diffusion of trafficking flows: number of countries where citizens of countries in the given subregions were detected, 2012-2014



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

■ Number of citizenships among victims detected in destination countries, by region of destination, 2012-2014



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## 2) HOW HAS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS?

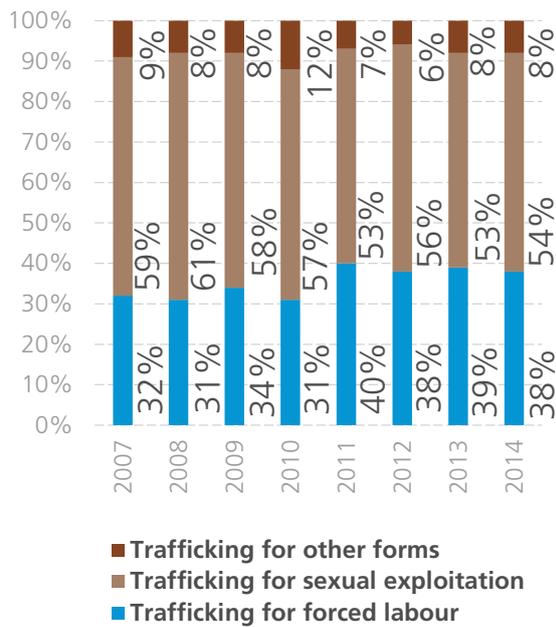
Over the last 10 years, the profile of detected trafficking victims has changed. Although most detected victims are still women, children and men now make up larger shares of the total number of victims than they did a decade ago. In 2014, children comprised 28 per cent of detected victims, and men, 21 per cent.

In parallel with the significant increases in the share of men among detected trafficking victims, the share of victims who are trafficked for forced labour has also increased. About four in 10 victims detected between 2012 and 2014 were trafficked for forced labour, and out of these victims, 63 per cent were men.

The share of detected trafficking cases that are domestic – that is, carried out within a country’s borders – has also increased significantly in recent years, and some 42 per cent of detected victims between 2012 and 2014 were trafficked domestically. While some of the increase can be ascribed to differences in reporting and data coverage, countries are clearly detecting more domestic trafficking nowadays.

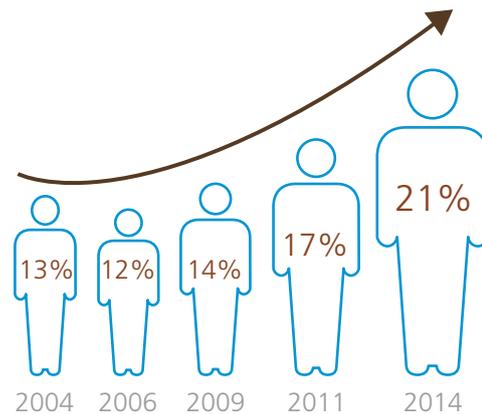
These shifts indicate that the common understanding of the trafficking crime has evolved. A decade ago, trafficking was thought to mainly involve women trafficked from afar into an affluent country for sexual exploitation. Today, criminal justice practitioners are more aware of the diversity among offenders, victims, forms of exploitation and flows of trafficking in persons, and the statistics may reflect this increased awareness.

■ Trends in the forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, 2007-2014



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

■ Trend in the share of men among the detected victims of trafficking in persons, selected years



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

### 3) VICTIMS AND TRAFFICKERS OFTEN HAVE THE SAME BACKGROUND

Traffickers and their victims often come from the same place, speak the same language or have the same ethnic background. Such commonalities help traffickers generate trust to carry out the trafficking crime.

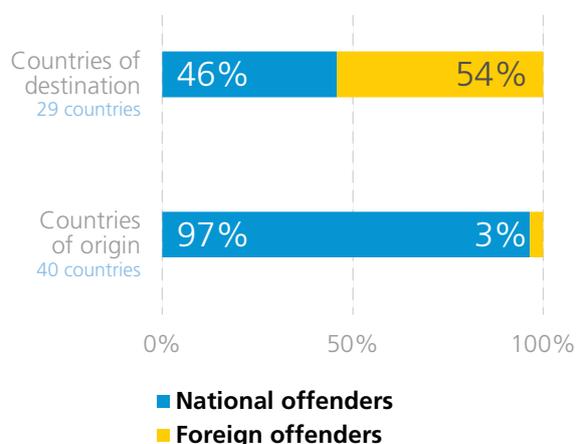
Traffickers rarely travel abroad in order to recruit victims, but they do travel to destination countries to exploit them. As general pattern, traffickers in origin countries are usually citizens of these countries. Traffickers in destination countries are either citizens of these countries or have the same citizenship as the victim(s) they trafficked.

Being of the same gender can also enhance trust. Data from court cases indicate that women are commonly involved in the trafficking of women and girls, in particular. Most of the detected victims of trafficking in persons are females; either women or underage girls.

While traffickers are overwhelmingly male, women comprise a relatively large share of convicted offenders, compared to most other crimes. This share is even higher among traffickers convicted in the victims' home country. Court cases and other qualitative data indicate that women are often used to recruit other women.

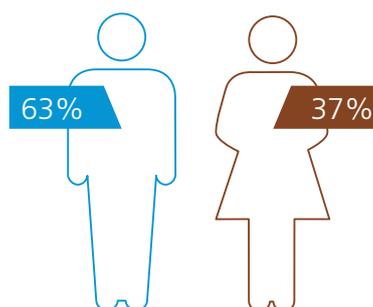
Family ties can also be abused to carry out trafficking crimes. For instance, this is seen in cases of relatives entrusted with the care of a family member who break their promise and profit from the family member's exploitation.

#### ■ Shares of national and foreign citizens (relative to the convicting country) among convicted traffickers, by countries of origin and destination, 2014 (or most recent)



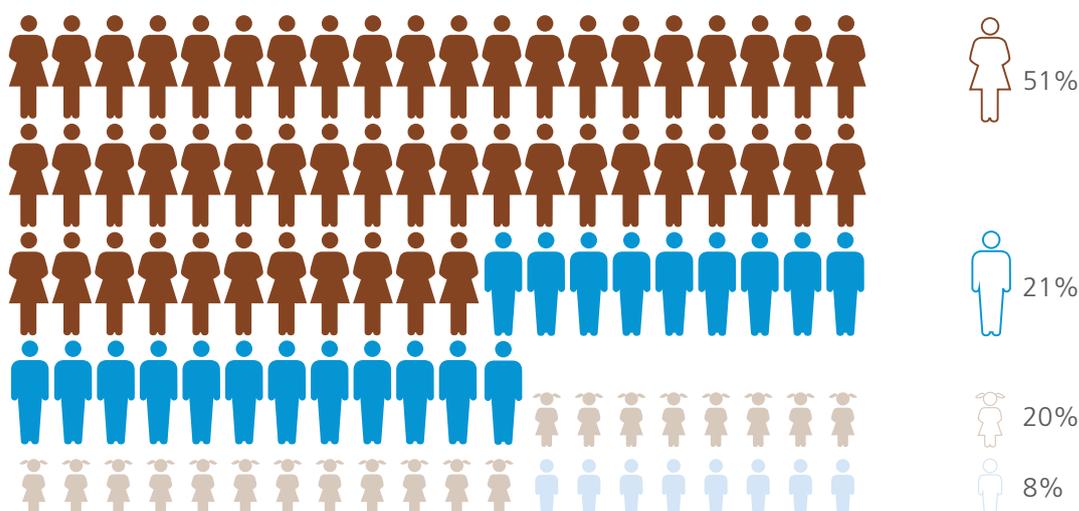
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

#### ■ Shares of persons convicted of trafficked in persons, by sex, 2014 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

#### ■ Trafficking victims can be women, men, boys and girls



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

#### 4) PEOPLE ARE TRAFFICKED FOR MANY EXPLOITATIVE PURPOSES

Trafficking for sexual exploitation and for forced labour are the most prominently detected forms, but trafficking victims can also be exploited in many other ways. Victims are trafficked to be used as beggars, for forced or sham marriages, benefit fraud, production of pornography or for organ removal, to mention some of the forms countries have reported.

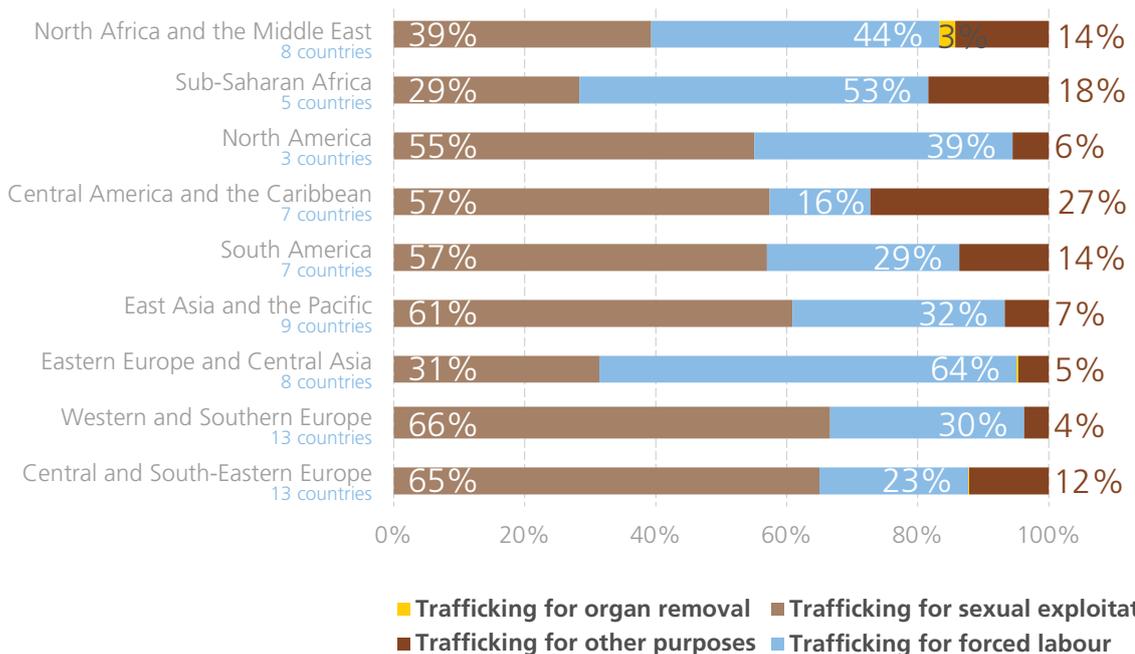
Trafficking for various types of marriage has been sporadically reported in the past, but is now emerging as a more prevalent form. In South-East Asia, this often involves forced marriages, or unions without the consent of the woman (or girl). Trafficking for sham marriages mainly takes place in affluent countries.

Trafficking for forced labour in the fishing industry is commonplace in several parts of the world. This can happen, for example, on board big fishing vessels on the high seas, carried out by large companies that trade fish internationally, or in on-land processing facilities. It can also happen more locally, such as in African lake areas where the fishing tends to be small-scale and the catch is sold in street markets.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation and for forced labour in a range of economic sectors are reported nearly everywhere. At least 10 countries have reported trafficking for the removal of organs. Other forms of reported trafficking, such as the ones mentioned above, are sometimes locally acute, but less internationally widespread.



■ Share of forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, by region of detection, 2012-2014 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## 5) CROSS-BORDER TRAFFICKING FLOWS OFTEN RESEMBLE REGULAR MIGRATION FLOWS

Although many cases of trafficking in persons do not involve the crossing of international borders – some 42 per cent of the detected victims are trafficked domestically – there are some links between cross-border trafficking and regular migration flows. Certain trafficking flows resemble migration flows, and some sizable international migration flows are also reflected in cross-border trafficking flows.

The analysis of country-level data on detected trafficking victims and recently arrived regular migrants reveals that trafficking in persons and regular migration flows broadly resemble each other for some destination countries in different parts of the world.

Many factors can increase a person's vulnerability to human trafficking during the migration process, however. The presence of transnational organized crime elements in the country of origin, for instance, is significant in this regard, and a person's socio-economic profile can also have an impact.

### ■ Main destinations of transregional flows and their significant origins, 2012-2014



Source: UNODC.

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

## 6) CONFLICT CAN HELP DRIVE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

People escaping from war and persecution are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking. The urgency of their situation might lead them to make dangerous migration decisions. The rapid increase in the number of Syrian victims of trafficking in persons following the start of the conflict there, for instance, seems to be one example of how these vulnerabilities play out.

Conflicts create favourable conditions for trafficking in persons, but not only by generating a mass of vulnerable people escaping violence. Armed groups engage in trafficking in the territories in which they operate, and they have recruited thousands of children for the purpose of using them as combatants in various past and current conflicts. While women and girls tend to be trafficked for marriages and sexual slavery, men and boys are typically exploited in forced labour in the mining sector, as porters, soldiers and slaves.



**Refugees** escaping wars and persecution **are easily targeted** by traffickers who leverage their desperation to deceive them into exploitation.

The presence of large numbers of **troops creates demand for labour and sexual services.** In connection with degraded rule of law and weak institutions, this demand generates trafficking flows into the conflict or post-conflict zones.



**Armed groups recruit or abduct children to use them as combatants.**

Children are found in villages, urban areas and in refugee camps. Thousands of victims have been documented in different conflicts, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

In conflict zones, **armed groups** recruit or abduct women and girls **for forced marriages, domestic work and sexual slavery.**

Similarly, they recruit or abduct men and boys **for forced labour**, for instance, in the exploitation of natural resources, as soldiers or **for slavery.**

## 7) TRAFFICKING THE MOST VULNERABLE: CHILDREN

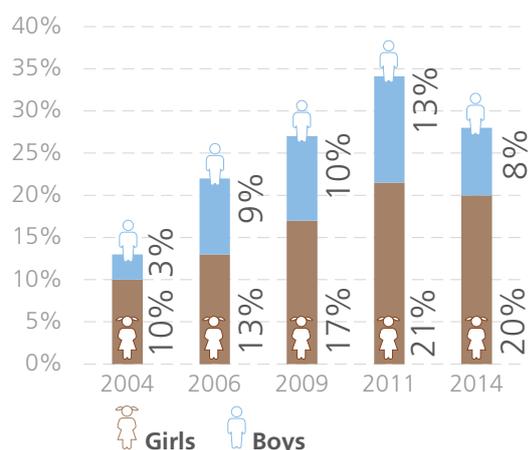
The share of detected child victims has returned to levels last seen in 2009, after seven years of increases. Despite this trend, still more than a quarter of the detected trafficking victims in 2014 were children.

In Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America and the Caribbean, a majority of the detected victims are children. There are several reasons, such as demographics, socio-economic factors, legislative differences and countries' institutional frameworks and priorities. There seems to be a relation between a country's level of development and the age of detected trafficking victims. In the least developed countries, children often comprise large shares of the detected victims.

There are clear regional differences with regard to the sex of detected child victims. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa detect more boys than girls, which seems to be connected with the large shares of trafficking for forced labour, child soldiers (in conflict areas) and begging reported in that region. In Central America and the Caribbean and South

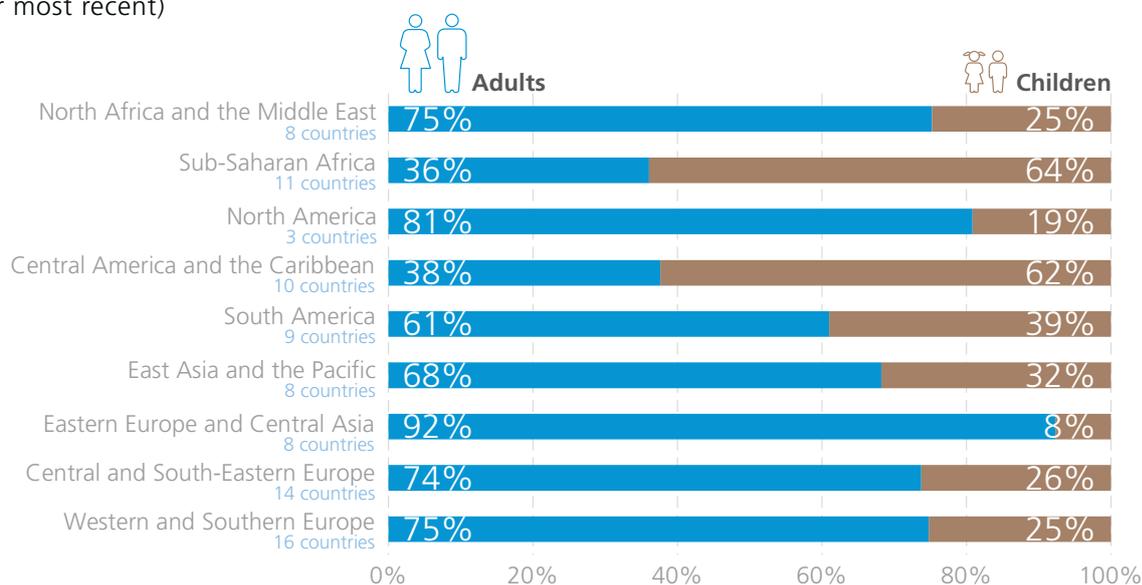
America, on the other hand, girls make up a large share of the detected victims, which could be related to the fact that trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most frequently detected form there.

### ■ Share of children among detected victims of trafficking in persons, by gender, selected years



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

### ■ Shares of adults and children among detected trafficking victims, by region, 2014 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

## 8) SOLID LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS, BUT STILL VERY FEW CONVICTIONS

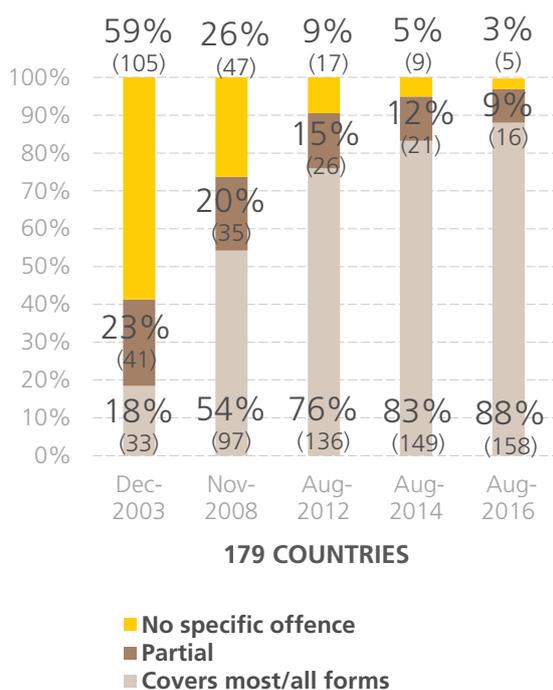
The number of countries with a statute that criminalizes most forms of trafficking in persons in line with the definition used by the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol increased from 33 in 2003 (18 per cent) to 158 in 2016 (88 per cent). This rapid progress means that more victims are assisted and protected, and more traffickers are put behind bars.

However, most national legislation is recent, having been introduced during the last eight to 10 years. As a consequence, the average number of convictions still remains

low. The longer countries have had comprehensive legislation in place, the more convictions are recorded, indicating that it takes time and dedicated resources for a national criminal justice system to acquire sufficient expertise to detect, investigate and successfully prosecute cases of trafficking in persons.

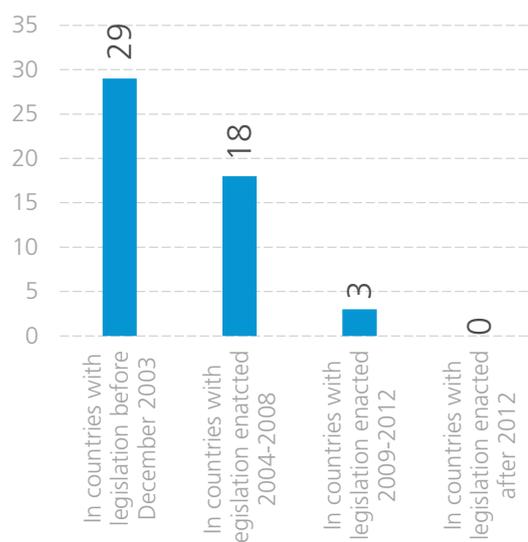
The ratio between the number of traffickers convicted in the first court instance and the number of victims detected is about 5 victims per convicted offender. Although most countries now have the appropriate legal framework for tackling trafficking crimes, the large discrepancy between the number of detected victims and convicted offenders indicates that many trafficking crimes still go unpunished.

**Criminalization of trafficking in persons with a specific offence covering all or some forms as defined in the UN Protocol, numbers and shares of countries, 2003-2016**



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

**Average number of trafficking convictions in 2014, by year of introduction of a specific trafficking in persons offence**



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.