

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012* is one of the outcomes of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in 2010. The General Assembly tasked the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with data collection and biennial reporting on patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at the global, regional and national levels, to be carried out in close collaboration with national authorities. The present report is the first of its kind and marks the launch by UNODC of a series of global reports on trafficking in persons.

Previous UNODC reports on trafficking in persons have highlighted the lack of knowledge with regard to this crime and called for Member States and the international community to increase efforts towards obtaining a solid understanding of this complex crime of global reach. Some progress has been made. While the overall picture remains incomplete, as the capacity to detect and report on trafficking in persons continues to vary greatly from country to country, the pool of information available for researchers to draw upon has increased significantly in recent years. As a result, the findings presented in this report rest on an objective and relatively solid evidence base, although significant information gaps remain.

Following the mandate of the General Assembly in the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons of July 2010, the purpose of this report is to inform about human trafficking patterns and flows. For that, UNODC has based the analysis on a large sample of officially detected cases of trafficking in persons world wide. While this serves the purpose of assessing patterns and flows of trafficking, it cannot be used as a base for estimating the level of crime or number of victims (see textbox in Chapter II).

On the basis of mainly open source information, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour globally. This estimate includes victims of trafficking in persons; however, the number of victims of forced labour as a result of trafficking in persons remains unknown.

The report consists of three main chapters. Chapter I presents a global overview of the patterns and flows of trafficking in persons, including the profiles of the offenders and victims, the forms of exploitation that traffickers

employ and the nature of the myriad flows of trafficking victims that criss-cross the globe. Chapter II presents more detailed overviews of regional trafficking patterns and flows. Where the data allow, the regional sections are broken down into subregions to facilitate an even more detailed analysis, as the crime of trafficking in persons often has distinct features in specific geographic areas. Chapter III discusses the efforts countries have made to combat trafficking in persons and the progress that has been made since the Trafficking in Persons Protocol¹ entered into force in 2003.

Further material is available on the website of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (www.unodc.org/glotip). The website includes country profiles of all 132 countries covered as well as a methodological note explaining the methods of data collection and analysis used for this report.

Global trafficking patterns

The analysis of global patterns of trafficking in persons contained in this report takes into account the age and gender of the detected victims, the gender and origin (local or foreign, relative to the country of prosecution) of traffickers and the relative prominence of the various forms of exploitation.

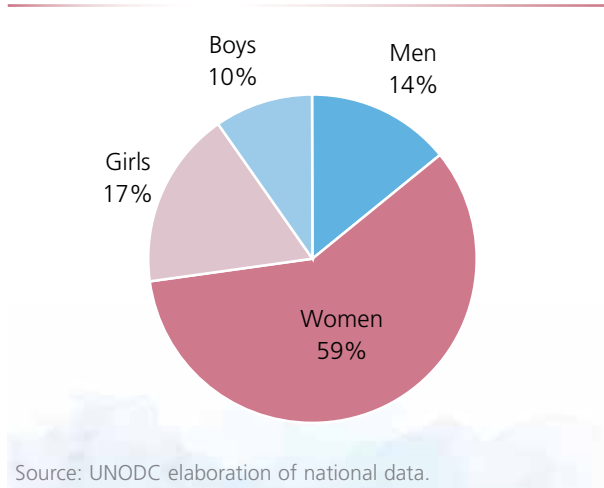
Victims

Between 2007 and 2010, women constituted the majority of victims of trafficking in persons detected globally. While the exact share of the total varies somewhat according to year, during the reporting period, between 55 and 60 per cent of the total number of detected victims were women.

Even though women comprise the majority of trafficking victims globally, their share of the total decreased somewhat during the reporting period. Over the period 2003-2006, more than two in three detected victims were women, as reported in the previous *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* published in 2009. However, the total share of females of all ages among trafficked persons has not changed dramatically, as the decrease in the number of women victims detected was partially offset by the

1 See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund/human-trafficking-fund.html.

FIG. 1: Gender and age profile of victims detected globally, 2009



increasing number of girl victims. The number of trafficked girls detected increased through the period 2007-2010, during which time girls constituted 15-20 per cent of the total number of detected victims.

During the same period, the number of trafficked men remained stable or increased slightly: 14-18 per cent of detected trafficking victims were men. The number of boys trafficked was relatively stable over the reporting period. Boys comprised 8-10 per cent of the total number of detected victims.

The trafficking of children appears to be increasing. Of the detected victims whose age profile was known and reported in the period 2007-2010, some 27 per cent were children. To compare, in the period 2003-2006, about 20 per cent were children. However, this trend was not homogenous at the global level. Many countries reported a marked increase in the share of detected cases of child trafficking between 2003 and 2010, whereas others reported no increase or a decrease in cases. Among the child victims, there were more detected cases of trafficking of girls than of boys: two of every three trafficked children were girls.

From region to region, there are significant differences in the gender/age profile of detected victims. While European and Central Asian countries report that 16 per cent of detected victims are children, in Africa and the Middle East approximately 68 per cent were children.

Traffickers

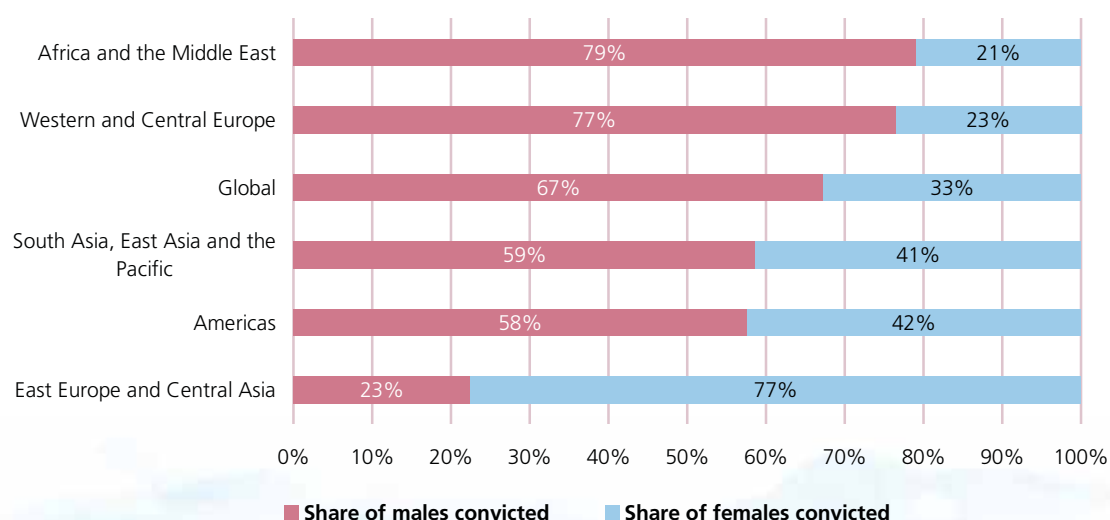
Information from more than 50 countries shows that of persons prosecuted for and/or convicted of trafficking in persons in the period 2007-2010, roughly two thirds are men. That proportion is nearly identical for prosecutions and convictions. These findings are similar to what was reported in the 2009 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*.

Although the majority of trafficking offenders are men,

FIG. 2: Share of child victims detected by region, 2007-2010



FIG. 3: Shares of persons convicted of trafficking in persons, by gender, regional/subregional averages, 2007-2010



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

the participation of women is higher for this crime than for most other crimes. Most countries report overall female offending rates below 15 per cent of the total for all crimes, with an average of some 12 per cent; while 30 per cent of trafficking in persons prosecutions and convictions are of women offenders. Statistical analyses show that the involvement of women in trafficking is more frequent in the trafficking of girls. Qualitative studies suggest that women involved in human trafficking are normally found in low-ranking positions of the trafficking networks and carry out duties that are more exposed to the risk of detection and prosecution than those of male traffickers.

There are clear regional and subregional differences regarding the involvement of women in trafficking in persons. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, more than three fourths of those convicted of trafficking in persons offences are women. Although female conviction rates are also relatively high in Asia (although well below 50 per cent), the very high rate in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is exceptional.

With regard to the nationalities of those convicted of human trafficking, local nationals (from the perspective of the country of prosecution) comprised the vast majority of perpetrators. Although there were significant differences from country to country, foreign nationals constituted approximately one quarter of those convicted. That rate of foreign offenders is higher than for most other crimes.

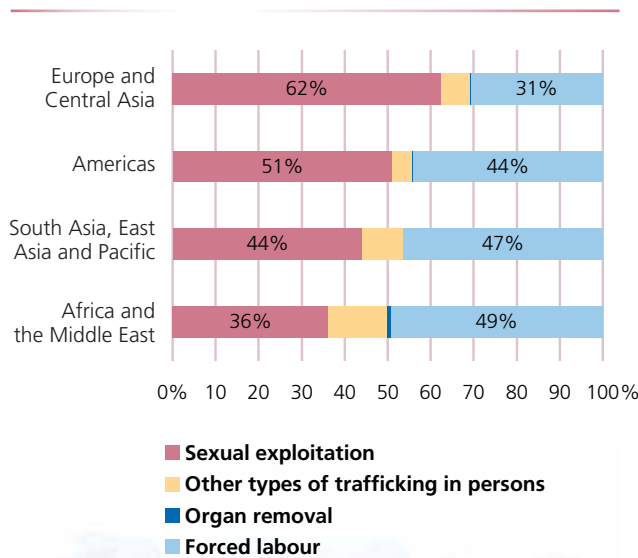
There are large differences between regions and subregions. Compared with the rest of the world, countries in Europe and the Middle East report more foreign nationals among the detected offenders. Countries within the same region may also register differences according to the role of the country in the trafficking flow, as destination countries generally report a larger share of foreign nationals among the persons convicted of trafficking in persons than do source countries.

Forms of exploitation

Among the regions considered in this report, Africa and the Middle East, as well as South and East Asia and the Pacific, detect more cases of forced labour compared to other forms of exploitation. More cases of sexual exploitation than forced labour were detected in the Americas and Europe and Central Asia. Among all detected cases worldwide, trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation is more frequent than trafficking for forced labour. That statistic is likely to be biased, however, as European countries detect more victims than do any other region. Thus, exploitation patterns prominent in Europe may be disproportionately reflected in global totals. This means that the global proportion of trafficking for purposes of forced labour reported in the present report (36 per cent) is likely underestimated.

Among the detected forms of exploitation, forced labour is increasing rapidly. This may be due to improvements

FIG. 4: Forms of exploitation, shares of the total number of detected victims, by region, 2007-2010



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

in many countries' capacities to detect trafficking for forced labour and to legislative enhancements adopted to ensure that this type of trafficking is covered by law. Compared with the 18-per-cent share reported for the period 2003-2006, detections of trafficking for forced labour doubled, reaching 36 per cent in the period 2007-2010.

Detections of other forms of trafficking remain relatively rare. Trafficking for the removal of organs, for example, comprised 0.2 per cent of the total number of detected cases in 2010. While this constitutes only a fraction of all cases, the geographical spread of those detected cases is significant: cases of trafficking for purposes of organ removal were reported by 16 countries in all regions considered in this report. Trafficking for purposes not specifically mentioned in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, including begging, forced marriages, illegal adoption, participation in armed combat and the commission of crime (usually petty crime/street crime), accounted for 6 per cent of the total number of detected cases in 2010, including the 1.5 per cent of victims who were exploited for begging. The data reflect the wide variety of types of trafficking (domestic, intraregional and interregional) as well as forms of exploitation that in some cases have clear geographical connections, as in the case of trafficking of children on the African continent to be used as child soldiers and for rituals, a few cases of which have also been recorded in other regions.

Global trafficking flows

Trafficking in persons is a global crime affecting nearly all countries in every region of the world. Between 2007 and 2010, victims of 136 different nationalities were detected in 118 countries across the world, and most countries were affected by several trafficking flows. About 460 distinct trafficking flows around the world were identified during the reporting period.

Most of the trafficking flows are intraregional (i.e. trafficking within a region), with almost half of detected victims being trafficked from a country in the same region as the country of destination. Nearly one fourth of victims were trafficked between regions, and some 27 per cent of victims were trafficked domestically (i.e. within their country of origin).

Geographical distance between source and destination countries plays a role in the severity of the trafficking flows, as do economic differences. In general, victims are trafficked from relatively poorer areas to more affluent areas. That broad pattern can be found in many regions and subregions worldwide. However, most countries do not function solely as a country of origin or destination country for trafficking in persons but as a mixture of both roles.

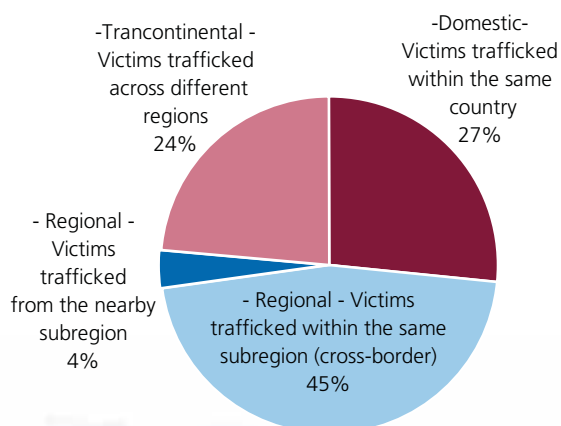
Trafficking flows at destination

As stated above, nearly half of all trafficking is intraregional. More than 75 per cent of the trafficking flows considered are either short or medium range. This may be explained largely in terms of convenience and risk minimization for the traffickers, because shorter distances make it easier to manage the trafficking process.

From the vantage point of trafficking destinations, this means that the bulk of trafficking victims are trafficked within the region of origin. This is true for all regions and nearly all subregions. Countries in South and East Asia and the Pacific, as well as in Africa and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, detect almost exclusively victims from within the region (including domestic trafficking), whereas several countries in the Middle East, North America and Western and Central Europe have a relatively high proportion of victims from other regions or subregions.

Countries of Western and Central Europe reported the greatest variety of origins and the greatest distances spanned by trafficking flows. During the reporting period, victims detected in those two subregions were of 112 different nationalities, from all regions of the world. Nevertheless, 64 per cent of the victims were trafficked from Western and Central European countries.

FIG. 5: Distribution of domestic, regional and transregional flows, as share of the total number of trafficking flows, 2007-2010



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

In North America, the situation is broadly similar: one third of detected victims come from outside the region, while a large majority of the victims are trafficked from North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

The Middle East is the part of the world where long-distance trafficking is most prominent, as about 70 per cent of the victims detected in the subregion come from other regions. In the Middle East between 2007 and 2010, victims of about 40 different nationalities were detected, including nationals of about 20 countries outside Africa and the Middle East (mainly Asians and Europeans).

Trafficking flows at origin

With respect to the countries of origin of human trafficking victims, there are also significant regional differences. Nationals of Western and Central European countries are almost exclusively detected in Europe. Similarly, victims from North America, Central America and the Caribbean and North Africa and the Middle East were not frequently detected outside their region of origin.

East Asians, South Asians, South Americans, sub-Saharan Africans and Eastern Europeans, meanwhile, were detected in many countries outside their region of origins. However, there are significant differences between those flows in terms of the volume of the flows and the geographical diffusion. The trafficking of sub-Saharan Africans, for example, is intense in Africa and the Middle East, as well

as Western Europe, but it is largely confined to those destinations.

South American and Eastern European victims are detected in a variety of countries in different regions and subregions, including the Middle East, East Asia, Europe and the Americas. However, these victims are detected in limited numbers outside their region of origin.

East Asian victims are detected in relatively large numbers in many countries across the world, making the flow from East Asia the most prominent transnational trafficking flow worldwide.

Domestic trafficking

Domestic trafficking accounted for more than 25 per cent of the total number of victims detected globally, and such trafficking has been reported by more than 60 of the 83 countries providing information on the nationality of victims. An increasing number of cases of domestic trafficking have been detected and reported in recent years. The percentage of human trafficking cases that were domestic trafficking cases rose from 19 per cent in 2007 to 31 per cent in 2010.

Regional patterns and flows

Europe and Central Asia

A large proportion of the victims of trafficking detected in Europe and Central Asia were women, while child trafficking victims accounted for about 16 per cent of the total. The detection of child trafficking increased somewhat during the reporting period. The most commonly detected type of trafficking was trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.

The most common origin of victims of cross-border trafficking in Western and Central Europe is the Balkans: 30 per cent of victims of cross-border trafficking are nationals from that area. Other significant origins for trafficking in Western and Central Europe are West Africa (14 per cent of total victims), East Asia (7 per cent), the Americas (7 per cent), Central Europe (7 per cent) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (5 per cent). Domestic trafficking accounts for about one fourth of the victims detected.

Victims detected in Eastern European and Central Asian countries were almost exclusively from that same subregion. Victims from Eastern Europe and Central Asia were also detected in Western Europe and the Middle East. There are indications that trafficking of victims from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to other parts of the world is decreasing.

Americas

Most victims detected in the Americas are female. Children account for about 27 per cent of detected trafficking victims in the region. Forced labour is common in the Americas, accounting for 44 per cent of cases of detected victims. Sexual exploitation was involved in slightly more than half of detected cases.

Most trafficking flows involving countries in the Americas remain within the region. During the years considered, authorities in countries of North and Central America mainly detected victims from North and Central America who had been trafficked either within the country or across borders. Similarly, victims detected in South American countries mainly originated in the same country or another country of the subregion.

In terms of interregional flows, victims from South and East Asia were widely detected across the Americas, accounting for about 28 per cent of victims in North America, Central America and the Caribbean and about 10 per cent in South America. Victims originating in the Americas, in particular South America, Central America and the Caribbean, were detected in significant numbers in Western and Central Europe.

South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific

The majority of the victims detected in South and East Asia and the Pacific were female, and there is a comparatively high rate of women convicted for trafficking in persons offences in that region, where exploitation for forced labour is more common (47 per cent of victims) than sexual exploitation (44 per cent) and exploitation for domestic servitude is frequently reported.

While most of the trafficking flows affecting South and East Asia and the Pacific remain within the region (including those within a single country), the region is also a significant area of origin of interregional trafficking. East Asians were detected in 64 countries worldwide, often in relatively large numbers. South Asian victims were also detected in a broad range of destination countries.

Africa and the Middle East

Some two thirds of the victims detected in Africa and the Middle East were children. Almost half of the victims were exploited in forced labour, and 36 per cent of victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation. Other forms of trafficking, including for use as child soldiers, for rituals and for other purposes, accounted for 14 per cent of cases in the region.

There are significant differences between the subregions in terms of trafficking flows. The Middle East is primarily an area of destination for trafficking victims, particularly for East Asians, who constituted 35 per cent of the victims detected in the Middle East during the reporting period, and for South Asians (23 per cent of victims). The other significant areas of origin of victims detected in the Middle East are sub-Saharan Africa (20 per cent) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (10 per cent).

Most of the victims detected in sub-Saharan Africa are trafficked within the country of origin or within the subregion. Trafficking of West African victims accounts for a significant share of trafficking in Europe, while East Africans constitute a significant portion of the victims detected in the Middle East.

The global criminal justice response

Much progress has been made in the fight against trafficking in persons, particularly since the entry into force of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol in 2003. One hundred and thirty-four countries and territories in the world have criminalized trafficking by establishing a specific offence, in line with the Protocol. Moreover, the number of countries still without an offence criminalizing trafficking in persons fell by more than half between 2008 and 2012.

Progress in convictions remains limited. Of the 132 countries covered in this report, 16 per cent did not record a single conviction for trafficking in persons between 2007 and 2010. However, more countries reported increases than reported decreases in the number of convictions between 2007 and 2010.

Significant challenges remain in the efforts to fully implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. Three areas stand out: knowledge and research, capacity-building and development, and monitoring and evaluation. Progress on those fronts will help the international community realize the ambitious goal set forth in the Global Plan of Action: to end the heinous crime of trafficking in persons.