

# Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons is a heinous crime and human rights abuse. The most vulnerable members of the global community, those who have limited access to social services and protections, are targeted by traffickers for exploitation. Steps have been taken, however, to locate victims, reinstate their inherent rights, provide them with protection and services, and prosecute offenders.

No country is immune from human trafficking. Victims are forced into prostitution or to work in quarries and sweatshops, on farms, as domestics, as child soldiers, and in many forms of involuntary servitude. Traffickers often target children and young women. They routinely trick victims with promises of employment, educational opportunities, marriage, and a better life.

(U.S. Department of State. 2004. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.)

Human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity, following only drug and arms trafficking. An estimated 9.5 billion is generated in annual revenue from all trafficking activities, with at least \$4 billion attributed to the worldwide brothel industry. (Ibid.)

## Human Trafficking: Available Statistics

Due to the "hidden" nature of trafficking activities, gathering statistics on the magnitude of the problem is a complex and difficult task. The following statistics are the most accurate available, given these complexities, but may represent an underestimation of trafficking on a global and national scale.

Each year, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders (some international and non-governmental organizations place the number far higher), and the trade is growing.

(U.S. Department of State. 2004. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.)

Of the 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year, 70 percent are female and 50 percent are children. The majority of these victims are forced into the commercial sex trade. (Ibid.)

Each year, an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States. The number of U.S. citizens trafficked within the country each year is even higher, with an estimated 200,000 American children at risk for trafficking into the sex industry.

(U.S. Department of Justice. 2004. *Report to Congress from Attorney General John Ashcroft on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2003*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

The largest number of people trafficked into the United States come from East Asia and the Pacific (5,000 to 7,000 victims). The next highest numbers come from Latin America and from Europe and Eurasia, with between 3,500 and 5,500 victims from each.

(U.S. Departments of Justice, Health & Human Services, State, Labor, Homeland Security, Agriculture, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. 2004. *Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

## The U.S. Response to Trafficking

The United States government has taken steps to address trafficking both nationally and globally. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), and its reauthorization in 2003 (TVPRA), provides extensive protections and services for victims of trafficking found in the United States regardless of nationality. This statute defines "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as:

- Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. (106 PL. 386: 114 Stat. 1470, Sec. 103 (8))

Victims of trafficking are eligible for benefits through several government channels. In addition, non-governmental, community, and faith-based organizations around the country continue to provide a wide range of social services for both U.S. - and foreign-born trafficking victims. American citizens who are victims of domestic trafficking are eligible for social services such as Medicaid, food stamps, and housing subsidies. Foreign-born victims can access similar services as they move through the "certification" process, which gives such victims legal immigrant status under the TVPA.

Foreign victims receive services from grantee organizations who receive funds from OVC and Health and Human Services. The services funded by these offices not only provide victims with the essentials for day to day living, but also the training and educational opportunities that will allow them to become self-sufficient in this country.

## U.S Government Trafficking-Related Links

THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

[www.state.gov/documents/organization/10492.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10492.pdf)

THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

[www.state.gov/documents/organization/28255.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/28255.pdf)

ASSESSMENT OF U.S ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (AUGUST 2003)

[www.state.gov/documents/organization/23598.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/23598.pdf)

OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT TRAFFICKING EFFORTS  
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/astvict.htm>

OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME TRAFFICKING EFFORTS  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help/tip.htm>

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