



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND COVID-19  
EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC  
ON VULNERABLE PERSONS, VICTIMS,  
AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKERS**

**AIESC, Sainte-Garde, 3 September 2021**

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[www.christusliberat.org](http://www.christusliberat.org)

[www.orderofmalta.int](http://www.orderofmalta.int)

[www.nohumantrafficking.orderofmalta.int](http://www.nohumantrafficking.orderofmalta.int)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

"Every year, thousands of men, women and children become innocent victims of **of labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, and organ trafficking**, and it seems that we have become so accustomed to it that we think human trafficking is something normal. This is bad, this is cruel, this is criminal!"

POPE FRANCISCUS, *Angelus* (July 30, 2017).



## 2. DEFINITION

### Human Trafficking :

In human trafficking, the focus is on the **exploitation of a human being, combined with coercion.**

**This coercion can be created by physical or psychological violence.** In most cases, however, it is physical violence.

The **different forms** of human trafficking :

<b>Forced labor</b>	Women, men, children, in industry, agriculture, fishing, etc.
<b>Child Recruitment</b>	Child Soldiers
<b>Forced sex</b>	Prostitution, surrogacy
<b>Purchase and theft of children</b>	For adoption or abuse
<b>Child pornography</b>	Mostly on the Internet
<b>Organ theft</b>	For transplantation
<b>Forced Crime</b>	Begging, theft, drug trafficking, terrorism

# 3. SOME DATA

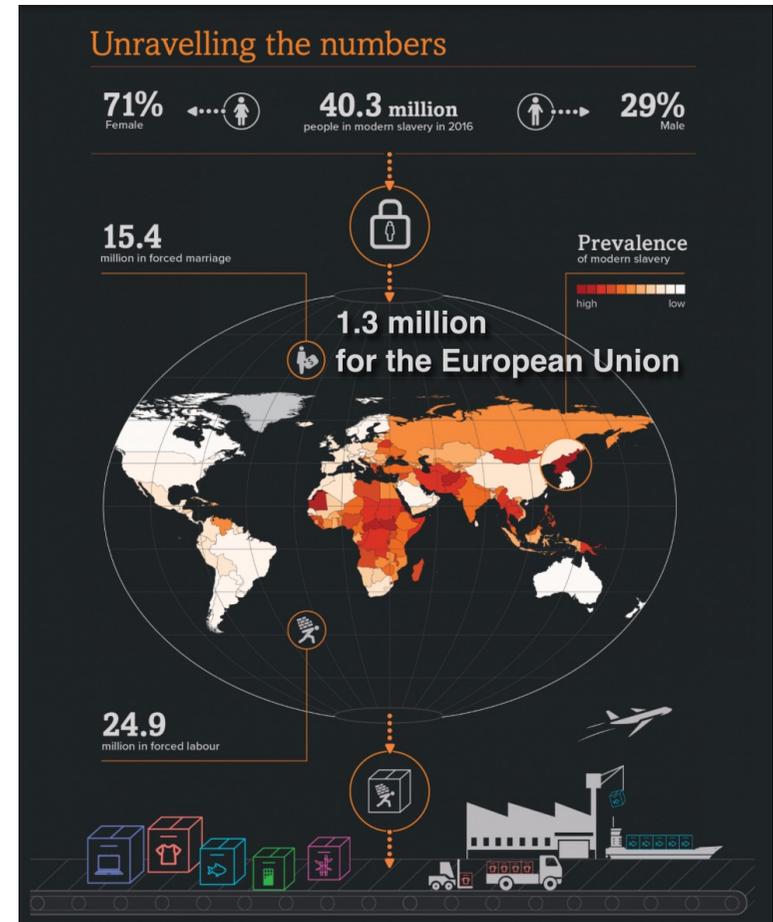
More than 40 million people are victims of human trafficking (1.3 million in Europe):  
**70% women 30% men**

- **50% Sexual exploitation**
- **40% Forced Labor**
- **6% Forced crime**

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



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.



# 3.SOME DATA

## Differences between traditional and modern slavery

Source: Kevin BALES, Blood and Earth (2016)

Central Europe & US	Estimated number of slaves	Population	%
Italy	145 000	61 373 000	0,24%
Netherlands	30 000	16 896 000	0,18%
Germany	167 000	80 738 000	0,21%
Portugal	26 000	10 384 000	0,25%
France	129 000	66 389 000	0,19%
United Kingdom	136 000	64 856 000	0,21%
Spain	105 000	46 513 000	0,23%
Finland	9 000	5 485 000	0,16%
Belgium	23 000	11 268 000	0,20%
Sweden	15 000	9 754 000	0,15%
Switzerland	14 000	8 267 000	0,17%
Austria	15 000	8 566 000	0,18%
Norway	9 000	5 188 000	0,17%
<b>TOTAL in 2018</b>	<b>823 000</b>	<b>395 677 000</b>	<b>0,21%</b> <span style="color: green;">+ 372%</span>
<b>TOTAL in 2017</b>	<b>220 900</b>	<b>395 677 000</b>	<b>0,06%</b>
US	403 000	320 821 000	0,13%
Canada	17 000	35 871 000	0,05%
<b>TOTAL in 2018</b>	<b>420 000</b>	<b>356 692 000</b>	<b>0,12%</b> <span style="color: green;">+ 654%</span>
<b>TOTAL in 2017</b>	<b>64 200</b>	<b>356 692 000</b>	<b>0,02%</b>

Old slavery	New slavery
Slavery not globalized	<b>Globalized slavery</b>
Legal ownership asserted	Avoidance of illegal and legal property
Long term relationship	<b>Short term relationship</b>
Racial differences significant	Racial differences less significant
High acquisition costs	Very low acquisition costs
Low profits	<b>Very high profits</b>
Lack of potential slaves	<b>Surplus of potential slaves</b>
Slaves held	<b>Slaves to throw away</b>
Slave trade organized	Vulnerability & Global Economy

Since 2014

In 2014 the ASSOCIATION'S technicians developed a platform structured for the monitoring of the net. *Meter* constantly continues to improve the monitoring tools and increases the research every year.

2019:  
**16- 18 million**  
sexually abused  
children in Europe

- Social networks
- Deep Web
- Dark Web

Reported photos

**16,003,014**

Reported videos

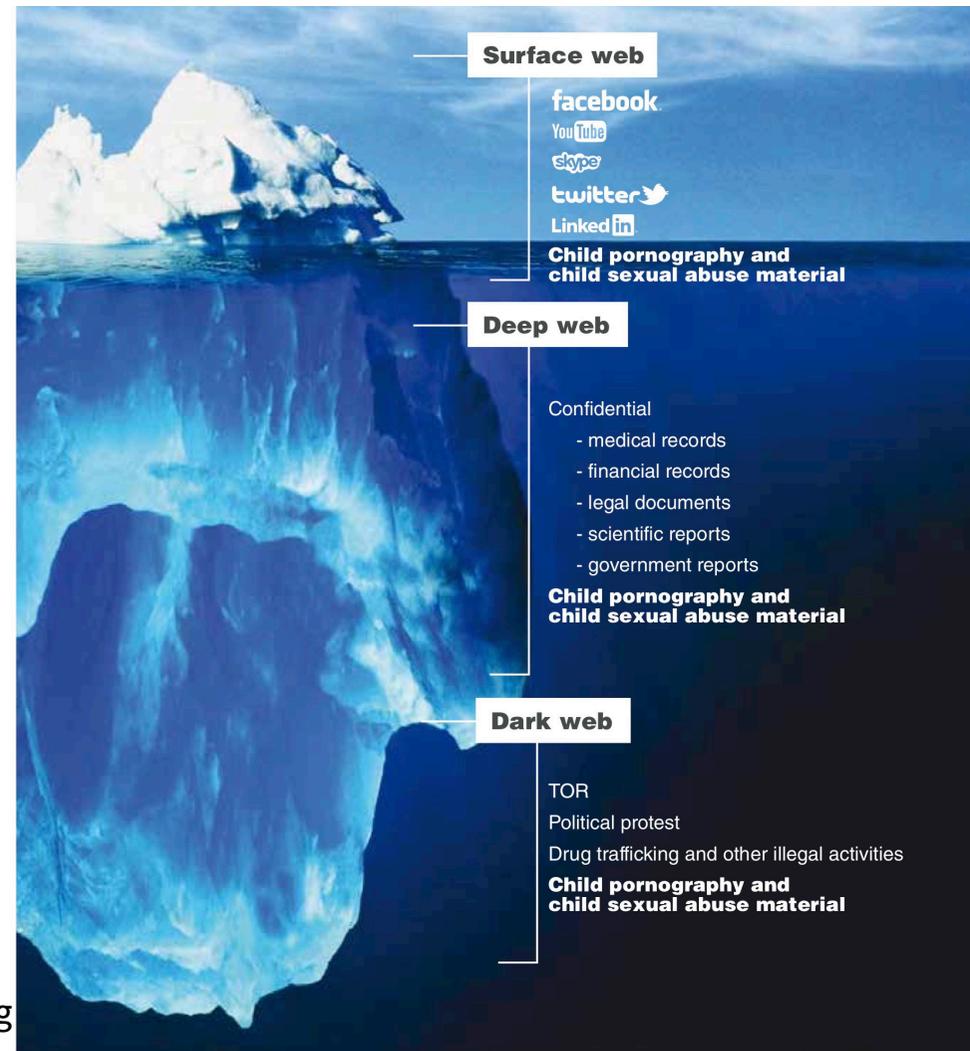
**3,469,196**

INTERNET MONITORING



**ANNUAL REPORT 2019**  
pedophilia and child abuse material

<https://associazionemeter.org>



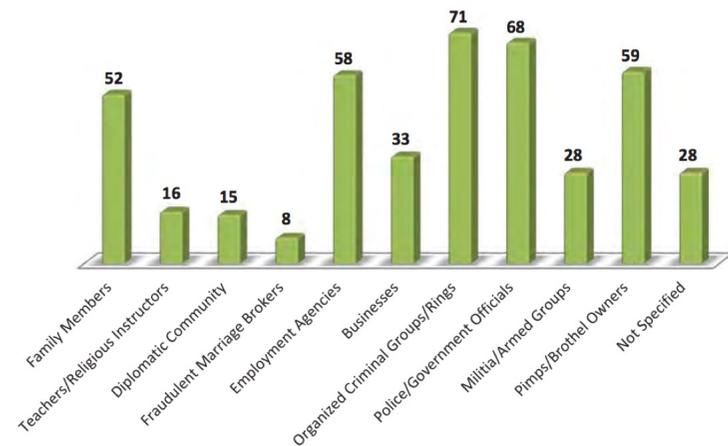
Source: [bit.ly/METER-ANNUALREPORT-2019](https://bit.ly/METER-ANNUALREPORT-2019)

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# 4. CHALLENGES & DIFFICULTIES

- **Civilisation** of limitless power, profit and pleasure, of waste, of completely disposable human beings and natural resources with no more religious, ethical or legal restraints
- Unlimited power of a **small number of individuals**, corporations, countries for profit
- **Human Trafficking Victims** of (Source The Protection Project, US TIP Report 2014)

1. Organised Criminal Groups
2. Police/Government Officials
3. Brothel Owners
4. Employment Agencies
5. Family Members
6. Businesses
7. Militias/Armed Groups
8. Teachers/Religious Instructors
9. Diplomatic Community
10. Fraudulent Marriage Brokers



- **Widespread Failure by Governments** in Tackling Modern Slavery
- **Adopting and implementing international and domestic legal instruments** to address demand and control supply chains and promote decent work and business

## 5. COVID & DIGITAL

"The COVID-19 pandemic has not blunted the determination of organized criminal groups to target the vulnerable in order to profit from this crime, too often at the cost of victims' lives" INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock.

- **The pandemic has had a devastating impact on those most vulnerable to forced labour and human trafficking** – particularly migrants - and things could get even worse.
- **Increased use of digital tools and the Internet during the pandemic has created new models of work, destroying existing working places and rendering delocalization and exploitation easy**
- **Digital tools, particularly social networks, are taking on an important role in the trafficking and smuggling phenomena:**
  - Victims are even more affordable and vulnerable via the Internet
  - Children and adolescents (educated at a distance because of the pandemic) spent a lot of time on social networks  
→ use of platforms (Tiktok, Instagram) that traffickers use
  - Victims are more easily deceived, increase in child pornography images
  - Relationships and transactions between victims and criminals are facilitated
  - Facilitates the access of migrants to traffickers (Facebook, housing platforms, carpooling)
  - Transportation and falsified documents are the main services offered by migrant smugglers.
- **Prosecution of criminals is made more difficult:** COVID-19 sanitary restrictions implementation becomes priority. Increased impunity for traffickers who can act more easily, quickly and with less risk (false identity, untraceable transactions, accounts used for recruitment deleted very quickly...)

# Sources : United Nations (UN)

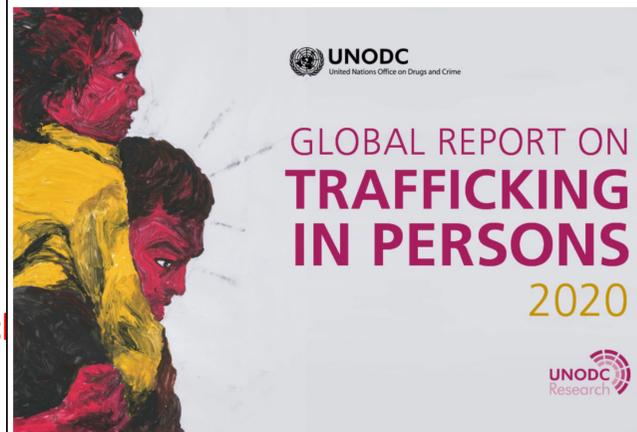
- UNODC (Vienna)

<https://www.unodc.org>

**COVID-19  
sees deterioration  
of the overall trend  
in human trafficking**

**" The percentage of children,  
who are victims of human traffic  
trafficking has tripled in the last  
15 years tripled,  
while the proportion of boys  
has increased fivefold "**.

## COVID-19 Seen Worsening Overall Trend in Human Trafficking



@ Yasser Rezahi

Vienna (Austria), 2 February 2021 – The share of children among detected trafficking victims has tripled while the share of boys has increased five times in the past 15 years. Girls are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation, while boys are used for forced labour, according to the [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#), launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) today.

In 2018 about 50,000 human trafficking victims were detected and reported by 148 countries. However, given the hidden nature of this crime, the actual number of victims trafficked is far higher. The [Report](#) shows traffickers particularly target the most vulnerable, such as migrants

and people without jobs. The COVID-19-induced recession is likely to expose more people to the risk of trafficking.



## General Assembly

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### Human Rights Council

#### Forty-seventh session

21 June–9 July 2021

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **International solidarity in aid of the realization of human rights during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic**

#### **Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor**

#### *Summary*

This is the fourth report prepared for the Human Rights Council by the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor. In the present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 44/11, the Independent Expert discusses how international solidarity in aid of the fuller realization of all categories of human rights has, or has not, been expressed by States and other actors in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. He discusses the serious threats to the enjoyment of human rights posed by the pandemic and the measures put into place to control it. He articulates the moral and legal rationale for an international solidarity obligation, including in the context of the pandemic, discusses examples of gaps in the enjoyment of international solidarity and identifies and highlights positive expressions of such solidarity by States and non-State actors, including best practices.

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