

Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims. UNODC, as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto, assists States in their efforts to implement the [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#) (Trafficking in Persons Protocol).

[What is Human Trafficking?](#)

[Human Trafficking FAQs](#)

[UNODC's Response to Human Trafficking](#)

[UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking](#)

[Further Information](#)

What is Human Trafficking?

Article 3, paragraph (a) of the [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#) defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs

Elements Of Human Trafficking

On the basis of the definition given in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, it is evident that trafficking in persons has three constituent elements;

The Act (What is done)

Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons

The Means (How it is done)

Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim

The Purpose (Why it is done)

For the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.

To ascertain whether a particular circumstance constitutes trafficking in persons, consider the definition of trafficking in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the constituent elements of the offense, as defined by relevant domestic legislation.

Criminalization Of Human Trafficking

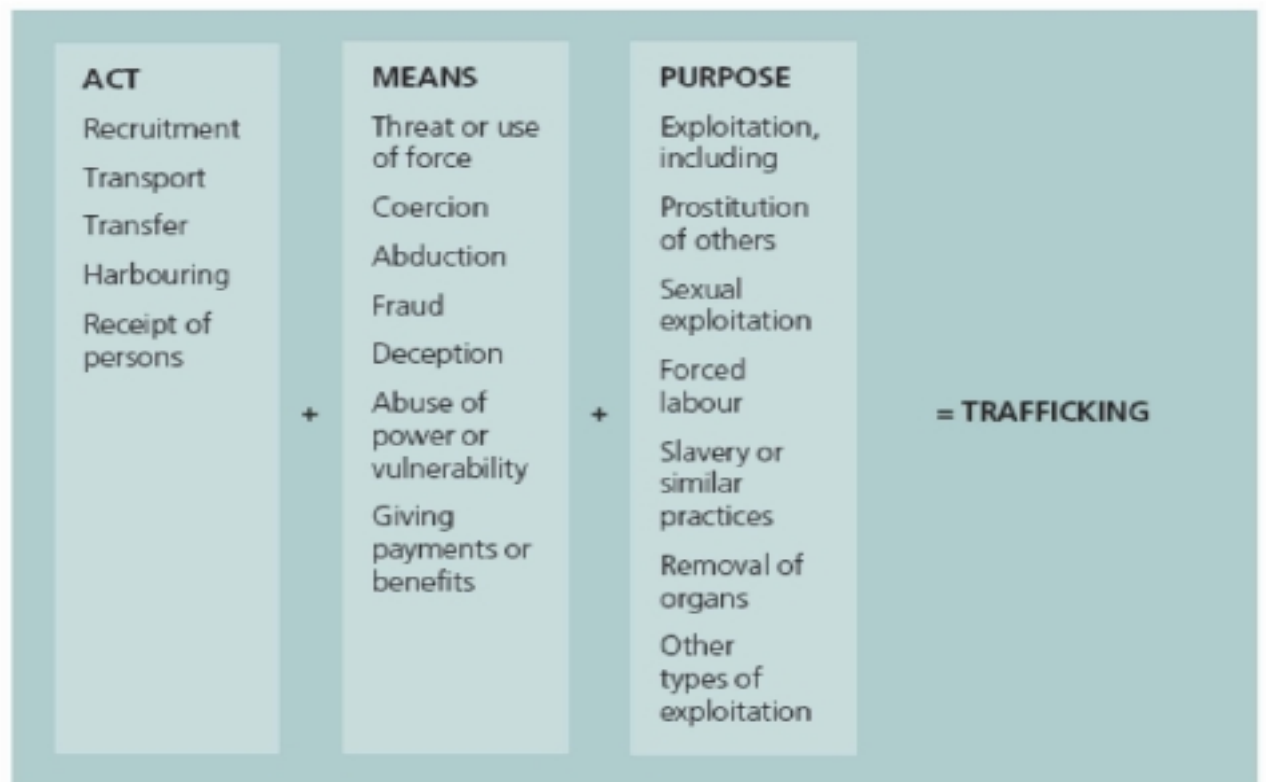
The definition contained in article 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol is meant to provide consistency and consensus around the world on the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. Article 5 therefore requires that the conduct set out in article 3 be criminalized in domestic legislation. Domestic legislation does not need to follow the language of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol precisely, but should be adapted in accordance with domestic legal systems to give effect to the concepts contained in the Protocol.

In addition to the criminalization of trafficking, the Trafficking in Persons Protocol requires criminalization also of:

- Attempts to commit a trafficking offence
- Participation as an accomplice in such an offence
- Organizing or directing others to commit trafficking.

National legislation should adopt the broad definition of trafficking prescribed in the Protocol. The legislative definition should be dynamic and flexible so as to empower the legislative framework to respond effectively to trafficking which:

- Occurs both across borders and within a country (not just cross-border)
- Is for a range of exploitative purposes (not just sexual exploitation)



- Victimized children, women and men (Not just women, or adults, but also men and children)
- Takes place with or without the involvement of organized crime groups.

For a checklist of Criminalization under the Protocol, click [here](#).

For more resources, visit our [Publications](#) page.

To see how human trafficking is different to migrant smuggling, click [here](#).

Human Trafficking FAQs

See all FAQs on Trafficking in persons compiled here: [Human Trafficking FAQs](#).

[Top of Page](#)

UNODC's Response to Human Trafficking

UNODC offers practical help to States, not only helping to draft laws and create comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies but also assisting with resources to implement them. States receive specialized assistance including the development of local capacity and expertise, as well as practical tools to encourage cross-border cooperation in investigations and prosecutions.

The adoption in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children* marked a significant milestone in international efforts to stop the trade in people. As the guardian of the Protocol, UNODC addresses human trafficking issues through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons. A vast majority of States have now signed and ratified the Protocol. But translating it into reality remains problematic. Very few criminals are convicted and most victims are probably never identified or assisted.

For an overview of UNODC's work in the human trafficking field and the real-life complexities faced by people globally every day, please click on the following links:

[Prevention](#) of trafficking in persons

[Protection](#) of victims of human trafficking

[Prosecution](#) of trafficking offenders

Having worked on these issues since the late 1990s, UNODC has issued a [comprehensive strategy](#) setting out the complementary nature of UNODC's work in preventing and combating both human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and defining the immediate priorities for UNODC's future action and engagement on these crimes. The new strategy complements [UNODC's Thematic Programme Against Transnational Organized Crime And Illicit Trafficking \(2011-2013\)](#).

As the guardian of the Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, UNODC plays a leading role in strengthening and coordinating the criminal justice response to both human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

UNODC's [strategic approach to combating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants](#) is founded in the full and effective implementation of the Protocols, and can be best understood as having three interdependent and complementary components:

- (1) research and awareness raising;
- (2) promotion of the Protocols and capacity-building; and,
- (3) the strengthening of partnerships and coordination.

With regards to research and awareness-raising, UNODC will publish the next Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in December 2012, and biennially thereafter. UNODC also produces [research](#) and [issue papers](#) on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling and engages in both broad and targeted awareness-raising on these issues, notably through the Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking. UNODC's normative work on promoting the Protocols and capacity-building engages with Member States and working-level practitioners in providing legislative assistance, strategic planning and policy development, technical assistance for strengthened criminal justice responses, and protection and support to victims of trafficking in persons and smuggled migrants. Finally, UNODC initiatives on strengthening partnerships and coordination occur through its participation in inter-agency groups such as [ICAT](#), [UN.GIFT](#) and [GMG](#) and its management of the [UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking](#).



[UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking](#)



[Top of Page](#)

Further Information

For more visit [Human Trafficking FAQs](#)

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To learn about Migrant Smuggling, click [here](#)

To access UNODC video and audio **public service announcements** about human trafficking, visit our [human trafficking public service announcement page](#).



For further information please contact the [UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section](#) .

To join the **Blue Heart Campaign** against Human Trafficking, visit the [Blue Heart website](#)

To learn about the Global Initiative to fight Human Trafficking (**UN.GIFT**) visit the [UN.GIFT website](#)

Learn more about UNODC [Partnership Opportunities](#)

For more information about the Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons and the Global Programme against Smuggling of Migrants, [contact us](#).

Partnership Opportunities
Trafficking in Persons
and Smuggling of Migrants