

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING: NOT A NEW, BUT A CRUCIAL ISSUE

Sitting on our comfortable couches, laying down on our beds thinking we are safe and sound, but are we really? In a world where annually circa 1,000,000 people, 27% being children, are being kidnapped, pressured, tortured, and trafficked from one continent to another, how can we be 100% sure that we will not be the next? This vast humanitarian crisis is in urgent need of more attention, and thus, we are here to shed light on this topic and voice the unheard.

In order to fully understand the crime, we first have to figure out what cross-border crimes are. They consist of many distinct forms of illegal actions such as smuggling of stolen vehicles, drugs, mineral oils, alcohol, tobacco products, firearms, trafficking of hazardous material, and human trafficking. (1) Well, neither smuggling of illegal goods nor human trafficking is something new. They have always been in the world scene. Thousands, even millions of people, have become the victims of this horrible crime for decades and unfortunately, the world, besides all of the preventative measures that have been taken, still could not achieve to fully eradicate this issue.

Human trafficking does not have a single form. It can appear in various different concepts, thus making it much harder for the authorities to detect the crime. Forced labor, debt bondage, domestic servitude, organ removal, forced begging, recruitment of child soldiers, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation are defined as distinct forms of human trafficking by the UNODC. (2)

Moreover, sex exploitation is stated to be the most prevalent form of human trafficking, shaping 58% of all trafficking activities worldwide. Even though men and women both suffer from the sex trade, statistics show that women, including underaged female children, are more prone to become the targets of traffickers. Human traders deceive and lure people by using their weaknesses, pains, and addictions. Physical/sexual abuse, blackmail, and emotional manipulation are also present, causing victims to feel desperate, lonely, and unworthy. (3)



Karly Church (4), who was once a sex slave, got rescued from the hands of the criminal gangs. It was a long, challenging journey; however, she managed to survive. Now, she works as a counselor at a regional support service for victims of human trafficking. “I will continue to remind survivors of human trafficking how powerful they are.”, she states and adds that her story instills a bit of hope for those who feel trapped. She is determined to continue to raise more awareness among the community and rescue as many victims

as she can. If you are interested, you can read her full story [here](#).

Maybe we cannot tackle human trafficking on our own; however, we can play a crucial role in change. By raising awareness and listening to the victims’ stories, we can help people empathize with each other, and by doing that, we can assure that no one feels alone and desperate once again. Survivors should know that they are not alone and always welcomed.