

Forum	Human Rights Council
Issue	Human trafficking in the US
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Introduction

Human trafficking is a pressing issue in the United States, influencing thousands of individuals throughout the country. Modern slavery occurs when individuals are exploited for work or sexual causes. Human trafficking is a global issue, mostly affecting women, children, migrants, and individuals from vulnerable groups (UNICEF). Despite its illegality, human trafficking remains due to the fact that traffickers profit on societal flaws and an absence of transparency and awareness of this issue (Blue Campaign).

Human trafficking must be addressed to protect the integrity of society and human rights, in addition to ensuring that victims obtain justice. The importance of solving this issue comes from the long-term social consequences and its

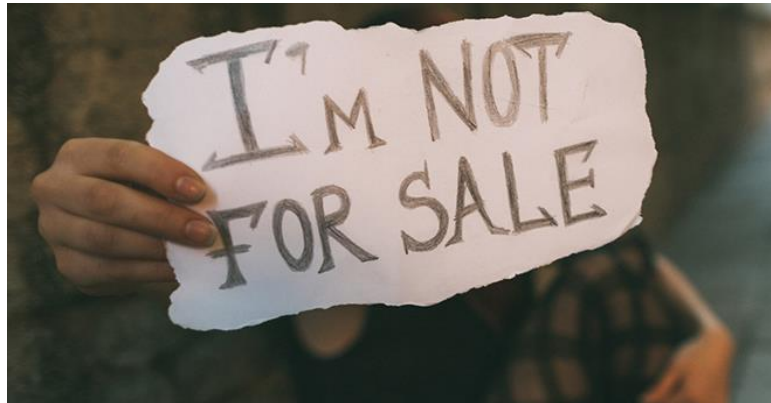


Figure 1: Person holds a sign reading "I'M NOT FOR SALE," protesting human trafficking

impact on the lives of individuals. In order to prevent exploitation, assist victims, and keep traffickers responsible for it, effective measures against human trafficking are necessary (Polaris). In order to reduce case of human trafficking, the United States must step up its efforts through international cooperation, victim assistance networks, and strengthened law enforcement, as it is a significant worldwide and regional matter.

Definition of Key Terms

Trafficker networks

Trafficker networks are organized criminal groups that facilitate human trafficking for profit. Such groups exploit individuals through forced labor, sexual exploitation, and variety of other means. These networks, varying from small local organizations to global networks, uses deception, violence, and manipulation in order to manipulate victims and evade law enforcement, which turning into significant contributors in trafficking activities (Gould).

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA)

In 2000, a federal law was passed in the United States to prevent trafficking, defend victims, and punish traffickers. The TVPA is the foundation of US anti-trafficking policy, as it presents victim assistance programs, enhances the punishments of traffickers, and promotes law enforcements to direct the issue.

Victim identification

It's a method of identifying and categorizing individuals who have been the victims of human trafficking. In order to identify signs of trafficking, evaluating the status of victims, and providing the necessary support, social services, law enforcement, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborate are essential. It is crucial to quickly and accurately identify victims to assist in their rescue, protection, and recovery (Rhoden).

History

Human trafficking in the US has historical roots, influencing both long-term structural challenges and pressing circumstances. For centuries, the nation has struggled with exploitation, from the ancient slave trade to modern-day trafficking, with vulnerable groups, such as minors, women, and immigrants, facing a greater impact. While slavery included outright ownership and forced labor of people, modern human trafficking is different in legal and structural features, continues to exploit vulnerable people. As industrialization and urbanization expanded, there was a greater need for low-cost labor through legal or illegal ways which fueled human trafficking (United States Department of Justice). The ending of slavery in the 19th century did not conclude the exploitation of vulnerable people but rather resulted in more illicit forms of forced labor and sexual exploitation. Immediate causes such as economic hardship, immigration regulations, the need for cheap labor, and sexual exploitation continue human trafficking. Despite various government initiatives to combat the problem, it remains and needs ongoing focus to successfully address the root causes and give sufficient care to victims (Giovagnoni).

Problems raised

Human trafficking in the US is a complex and ongoing problem that extends beyond individual cases of exploitation. It has raised crucial impact on society, resulting in economic instability, humanitarian issues, and political complications. The issue arises from a range of reasons, including inequality, the need for cheap labor, and insufficient legal barriers (Hartmann).

Humanitarian problems

Minors such as children and women, immigrants, and underprivileged individuals are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. These people often lack legal safeguards and social safety nets, making them targets for traffickers. Consequently, trafficking results in severe human rights violations for its victims. Human trafficking is an obvious violation of fundamental rights, including dignity, safety, and freedom. Victims frequently endure physical and psychological trauma as a consequence of forced labor and sexual exploitation. PTSD, anxiety, and depression, as well as physical injuries and long-term health concerns, would be severe mental health consequences for victims (Crisp). Although victim support and recovery are essential, numerous individuals encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary treatment, including legal assistance, medical services, and social reentry programs. Despite the topic that is going to be debated on focuses the US, human trafficking is a global humanitarian crisis that calls for international collaboration to protect and address the needs of victims worldwide (Human Trafficking Search). Foreigners may be trafficked in US, and US citizens may be trafficked to or in other countries. This indicates the widespread of human trafficking, in which victims are exploited regardless of their nationality.

Economic problems

The primary cause of human trafficking is economic exploitation. Traffickers creates billions of dollars annually by exploiting victims who have been trafficked. US is responsible for \$150 billion in annual global forced labor creation, estimated by the International Labor Organization (ILO) (Dottridge). Traffickers exploit vulnerable individuals, resulting in an illegal economy that disrupts traditional labor markets. In industries such as agriculture, construction, and domestic labor, trafficked persons are often paid below the minimum wage or not at all, lowering wages for legal workers. Approximately 10,000 individuals are trafficked annually in the agricultural sector, resulting in economic losses and contributes to inequality.

Socioeconomic impacts of human trafficking do not only profits of the traffickers. \$35 billion annually is allocated by the US government to trafficking-related law enforcement, healthcare, and victim services, which is significant portion of government spending. Furthermore, items made by trafficking labor may reach global markets, generating concerns regarding the origin of products marketed throughout the world. The long-term consequences for victims include severe economic challenges, with many survivors encountering challenges to reintegration into the economy as a result of trauma and a lack of education or employment possibilities (Crisp). These constraints foster poverty and inequality, worsening the cycle of trafficking.

Political problems

The US government has made significant legal measures to fight human trafficking, including the TVPA of 2000, which established the groundwork for prevention, prosecution, and victim protection activities. Although these regulations are crucial, law enforcement encounters challenges in discovering trafficking acts due to the fact that many victims are unwilling or unable to provide information for fear of retribution or deportation. In 2019, the National Human Trafficking Hotline reported more than 11,000 cases, but experts believe actual number of cases would be significantly higher (Gould). With organizations like as Polaris advocating for stricter laws and greater victim assistance, political aspects are critical to direct. Since the TVPA's creation, federal funding for anti-trafficking measures has expanded, with the Department of Justice spending \$51 million in 2020 for victim assistance and improved law enforcement actions (Dottridge).

However, immigration and border control rules limit attempts to prevent trafficking because trafficker exploits vulnerable people inside these systems. Strict immigration rules may compound the problem by making it more difficult for prospective victims to seek assistance, emphasizing the need for balanced immigration changes. Foreign diplomacy is necessary in the global combat against human trafficking, such as through creating legal frameworks and exchange information (Hartmann). Corruption in political and judicial bodies may weaken anti-trafficking efforts, as traffickers commonly build connections with corrupt officials who assist them in evading detection. The protection of victims and the effective enforcement of trafficking laws depend on the practical application of anti-corruption policies and transparency (Homeland Security).

Major Parties Involved

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The FBI takes role in minimizing the incidence of human trafficking in the US. It is responsible for the investigation of trafficking cases, gathering information, and the collaboration with law enforcement agencies. The FBI's primary aims to identify and dismantle trafficking networks, offer assistance to victims, and the prosecute traffickers.

Polaris

Polaris is a nonprofit organization that commits to the prevent human trafficking in the US. It manages the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which provides confidential assistance to victims and individuals who desire to report trafficking cases (National Human Trafficking Hotline). It cooperates with legislators and law enforcement to improve victim assistance and advocate for stricter laws. Also participates in awareness campaigns and

partnerships with other organizations to prevent trafficking and advance sustainable solutions (Blue Campaign).

Timeline

Date	Description of Event
October 28, 2000	Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) Enacted
December 7, 2007	Establishment of the National Human Trafficking Hotline
May 2013	International Labor Organization (ILO) Report on Forced Labor
April 2015	Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) Passed
October 2018	Increase in Awareness Campaigns and Law Enforcement Training
January 2020	Department of Justice Allocates \$51 Million for Anti-Trafficking Programs
February 2021	Launch of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Successful

National Human Trafficking Hotline (ongoing)

National Human Trafficking Hotline was established on December 7th, 2007 in US to prevent human trafficking. It is link between victims and support organizations and law enforcement by providing a secure system for individuals to report human trafficking incidents. Given its importance in identifying trafficking incidents and providing urgent assistance to victims, the National Human Trafficking Hotline is considered one of the most effective efforts to prevent human trafficking in the U.S (National Human Trafficking Hotline).

Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) (Ongoing)

In April 2015, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) have passed. The JVTA was implemented to enhance the protections of trafficking victims, increase the penalties for traffickers, and enhancing law enforcement. It helped the identification

of significant flaws in the legislative framework for combatting human trafficking, resulting in more assistance for victims and stricter legal action against traffickers (Office on Trafficking in Persons). The JVTAs were a significant step forward in the US government's attempts to address trafficking more broadly.

Unsuccessful

Awareness campaigns and law enforcement training (ongoing)

However, not all attempts have been as successful. In 2018, the US government-initiated awareness programs and law enforcement training to help identify trafficking instances and increase responses (Blue Campaign). Even with these efforts, the training and resources available were often insufficient and inconsistent. Many law enforcement agencies lacked necessary revenue and skills to properly identify and respond to human trafficking cases, resulting in poor detection rates and lost chances to protect victims. Despite limited effectiveness due to uneven financing and training, these actions are ongoing because the governments adapt and expand to meet shifting trafficking patterns and strengthen law enforcement capabilities.

Department of Justice's \$51 million grant allocation (ongoing)

In 2020, the Department of Justice invested \$51 million in grants to improve victim assistance and law enforcement activities (Hewitt). While the funding was an effective first step, its implementation encountered difficulties by a lack of coordination and variables of commitment at the state to local levels. As a consequence, several areas did not get the intended effect of the subsidies, leaving many victims without enough help or safety. The unequal distribution of resources demonstrated the need for improved alignment and more effective utilization of finances across the nation. Notwithstanding issues in coordination and implementation, the attempts are still in place, providing continued revenue to improve victim care and increase law enforcement activities across regions.

Possible Solutions

1. Improving victim identification and support systems

Improving the capacity of law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and social workers to detect trafficked victims is important (U.S. Department of State). It could be achieved through improving training, improving victim support networks, and offering clearer

access to shelters, legal assistance, and counseling, which supports victims in recovery and preventing re-victimization (Human Trafficking).

2. Strengthening border enforcement and surveillance

Improving border security is will be helpful for combating trafficking across state and national boundaries. This involves strengthening patrols, using modern technology such as drones and face recognition, and enhancing inspection at checkpoints. Furthermore, international collaboration using shared information and combined actions is required to destabilize trafficking networks and protect victims (U.S. Department of State).

3. Increasing penalties for those who profit from trafficking

Prevention of trafficking may be achieved through enhancing the penalties for traffickers and facilitators, such as landlords, employers, and transporting businesses. By applying greater charges, lengthier sentences, and asset ownership, authorities may limit financial motivations for trafficking and weaken the networks that enable it to grow (Long-Term Solutions).

Appendix

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>

It talks about international legal framework aimed at combating human trafficking by establishing comprehensive measures for prevention, protection, and prosecution. As a document authored by the United Nations, it is highly reliable and valuable resource when drafting resolutions on the issue.

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