

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking of human beings is a violation of human rights, a modern form of slavery and an extremely profitable business for organized crime. It is the acquisition of people through the use of force, coercion or other means with the aim of exploiting them. Human trafficking has three elements:

- » The act—recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring, and receipt of persons
- » The means—threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, and giving payments or benefits
- » The purpose—exploitation, including: prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs, and other types of exploitation

A person younger than 18 cannot consent to being trafficked. People are trafficked into various types of labor, including restaurant and hotel work, domestic work, construction, agriculture and entertainment, as well as prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Recognizing that a person may be a victim of human trafficking is not an easy task. Trafficking in persons is usually an underground crime and it is difficult to readily identify a trafficking victim or scenario. Some people may also find it difficult to accept that trafficking could be taking place in our communities.

Being familiar with some of the general indicators of trafficking is helpful. People who have been trafficked may:

- » Show signs that their movements are being controlled
- » Show fear or anxiety
- » Be subjected to violence or threats against themselves or against their family members and loved ones
- » Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault
- » Be distrustful of the authorities
- » Be threatened with being handed over to the authorities
- » Be afraid of revealing their immigration status
- » Not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, as those documents are being held by someone else
- » Not know their home or work address
- » Act as if they were instructed by someone else
- » Be unable to negotiate working conditions
- » Have no access to their earnings

- » Work excessively long hours over long periods
- » Live in poor or substandard accommodation
- » Have limited contact with their families or with people outside of their immediate environment
- » Be unable to communicate freely with others
- » Be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- » Have had the fees for their transport to the country of destination paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back by working or providing services in the destination countries
- » Have acted on the basis of false promises

No one willingly signs up to become a slave. Traffickers frequently recruit victims through fraudulent advertisements that promise legitimate jobs such as hostessing, domestic work or working in the agricultural industry. Trafficking victims can be recruited by family members, and can come from rural and urban settings.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Millions of children (up to the age of 18 years) fly unaccompanied each year as air travel becomes ever more accessible. There is no industry-wide policy covering unaccompanied minors; not all airlines will accept them. Unaccompanied minors appear at airports for a variety of reasons and it is impossible for immigration officials to know if they are all traveling legitimately and for the reasons they claim. This is a very complex area, and children traveling alone or with a person other than their parent or guardian can be at high risk of falling victim to traffickers. Knowledge and recognition of the signs of trafficking could prevent these children from falling prey to traffickers. Please visit www.blueblindfold.gov.ie for more information on human trafficking.

WHAT IS BEING DONE IN IRELAND?

The Irish Government has undertaken a number of legislative, administrative and operational initiatives to deal with human trafficking. Some of these measures are:

- » Enactment of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act, 2008, which criminalizes trafficking in adults or children for the purposes of labor exploitation, sexual exploitation or the removal of organs. It is an offence to sell or offer for sale, or to purchase or offer to purchase any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine apply in respect of these offences.
- » The introduction of an administrative framework on



7 June 2008 for periods of recovery and reflection—currently 60 days—and six months' temporary residency in the state—renewable—where the person wishes to assist An Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force) or other relevant authorities in any investigation or prosecution of the alleged trafficker. Forthcoming immigration legislation will include provisions to give these administrative arrangements a statutory footing.

- » Establishing dedicated anti-trafficking units in the Department of Justice and Equality, Health Service Executive, Legal Aid Board and An Garda Síochána.
- » Training on the issue and roll-out of Train the Trainer courses to Government personnel, plus specialized training in An Garda Síochána.

Further information on this issue can be obtained from:

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