



INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Human trafficking and smuggling of migrants

Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are two distinct crimes yet they can overlap as they both profit from vulnerable people. In the case of human trafficking, victims are recruited through deception, threats or force, for the sole purpose of exploitation. With migrant smuggling, individuals generally pay a smuggler/facilitator to gain illegal entry into a country of which they are neither a citizen nor a permanent resident. Once payment is completed, the relationship between the irregular migrant and the smuggler usually ends.

► LUCRATIVE CRIMES TARGETING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Organized criminal groups take advantage of the most vulnerable people for profit, with a complete disregard for human safety and dignity. Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are low-risk, high profit criminal businesses that employ increasingly sophisticated methods and technological means to expand their reach.

While both crimes have clear distinctions, it is important to recognize that they can also be linked. Human trafficking occurs for specific purposes, such as sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced criminality, and organ removal among other forms of exploitation.

Migrant smugglers take advantage of people who want to leave their home countries to escape poverty, conflict, and crises or simply want to seek a better life. Even if irregular migrants generally enter into the journey voluntarily, they are often exposed to significant risks, including that of being trafficked, kidnapped or dying in transit to their destinations.

Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are also connected to other crimes including illicit money flows, corruption, document fraud, trafficking in illicit goods, cybercrime and terrorism.

► INTERPOL'S SERVICES

We help law enforcement agencies around the world combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling through a variety of activities designed to increase their capacity to detect and investigate these crimes while protecting victims and vulnerable people.

► POLICE COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- Facilitating information sharing through the use of our secure global communications system, i24/7
- Promoting the use of INTERPOL's notices and diffusions system to locate missing persons, track criminals and suspects or collect information;
- Providing access to our databases, especially those used to detect stolen, lost or fraudulent travel documents, and our forensic databases.

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► CRIMINAL ANALYSIS

We assess current threats and trends and produce operational and strategic analysis reports to support law enforcement decision making in INTERPOL member countries. The Odyssey Crime Analysis File is the basis for this work. This analysis file is a criminal intelligence database created for the collection of data from INTERPOL Member Countries and other sources to find links between different instances of crime.

► TRANSNATIONAL OPERATIONS

We help member countries dismantle the criminal networks behind human trafficking and migrant smuggling through investigative support and global operations.

Operations are preceded by training workshops to ensure that officers have the necessary skills to detect cases of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Operations often have a regional focus such as Turquesa across the Americas, WEKA in Africa, Storm Makers in Asia or cover multiple continents such as Liberterra. Between them, these operations identify hundreds of criminals and detect thousands of victims every year.

► DEVELOPMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY

We work to increase the knowledge and skillsets of law enforcement officers to detect, prevent and investigate crimes as well as safeguard victims and migrants in vulnerable situations. This is done through national and regional needs assessments and the design and delivery of training courses.

► COORDINATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SPECIALIZED NETWORKS

Two specialized networks, comprised of experts from a variety of law enforcement agencies, provide advice and support to INTERPOL's activities, facilitating the exchange of best practices and intelligence:

- INTERPOL's Human Trafficking Expert Group (HTEG)
- INTERPOL's Specialized Operational Network (ISON) against Migrant Smuggling

► INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Effective law enforcement cannot happen in isolation, which is why we are constantly building new partnerships with a diverse range of regional policing bodies, international organizations, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to share, analyze and disseminate relevant information.



INTERPOL

► CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contact us via our web site. For matters relating to specific crime cases, please contact your local police or the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in your country.

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