



**GLOBAL REPORT
ON TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS 2022**

Special points of interest



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



- Finding 1** *Number of detected victims falls for the first time in 20 years as pandemic limits opportunities and potentially pushes trafficking further underground, while constraining law enforcement capacities to target the crime*
- Finding 2** *Trafficking for sexual exploitation less detected during the pandemic*
- Finding 3** *Victims rely on “self-rescue” as anti-trafficking responses fall short*
- Finding 4** *Global slowdown in convictions accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic*
- Finding 5** *Increased impunity in home countries resulting in more victims trafficked to more destinations*
- Finding 6** *War and conflict offer hunting grounds for traffickers*
- Finding 7** *Climate change is multiplying trafficking risks*
- Finding 8** *Boys and men account for a greater share of detected victims as new forms of exploitation emerge*
- Finding 9** *Woman and children suffer greater violence at the hands of traffickers*
- Finding 10** *More highly organized traffickers exploit more victims, more violently and for longer periods of time*
- Finding 11** *Women: more likely than men to be traffickers or more likely than men to be convicted?*

Finding 1 *Number of detected victims falls for the first time in 20 years as pandemic limits opportunities and potentially pushes trafficking further underground, while constraining law enforcement capacities to target the crime*

11% reduction in the number of victims detected compared to 2019, largely driven by low- and medium-income countries.

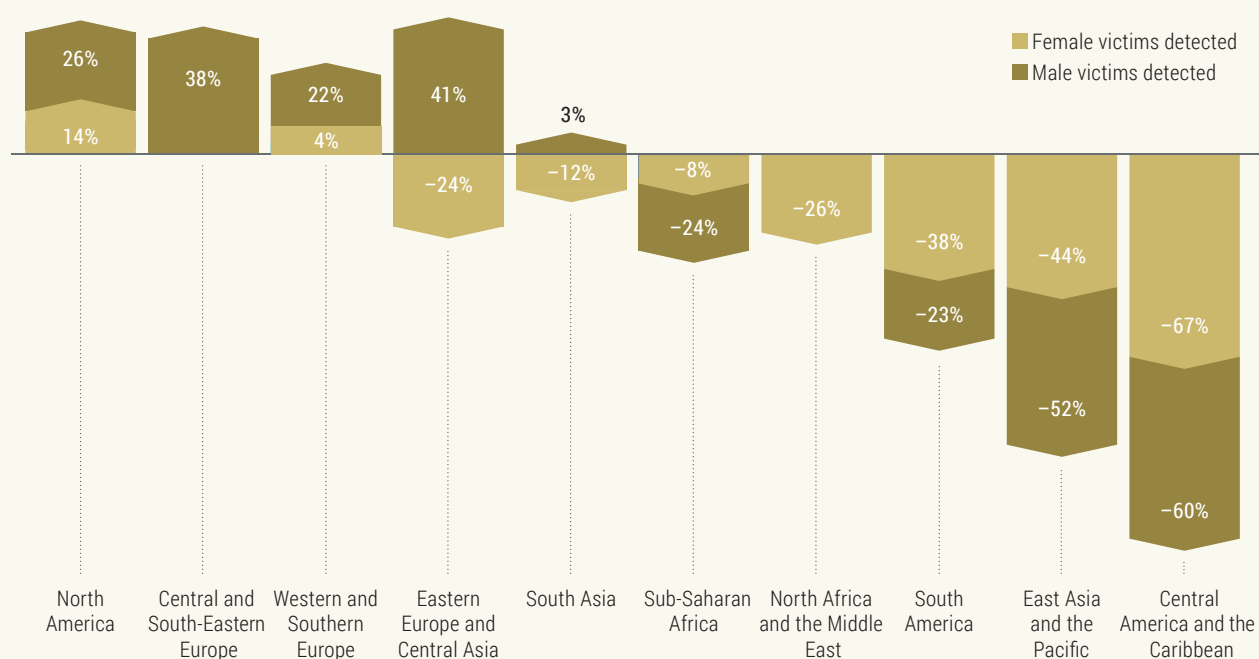
59% reduction in East Asia and the Pacific
 40% reduction in North Africa and the Middle East
 36% reduction in Central America and the Caribbean
 32% reduction in South America
 12% reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa

In 2020, for the first time, the number of victims detected globally decreased. This change in trends could be the result of three different factors affecting especially low- and medium- income countries during the pandemic: **lower institutional capacity to detect victims, fewer opportunities for traffickers to operate due to Covid-19 preventive restrictions, and some trafficking forms moving to more hidden and less likely to be detected locations.**

Possible responses

- › Member States to develop and strengthen national frameworks for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking (national referral mechanisms - NRMs), especially during states of emergency.
- › Donor community and international organizations to enhance support for national authorities in identifying and protecting victims of trafficking, especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- › Member States to increase efforts to assess and identify more hidden forms of trafficking in persons.

Trends in the number of detected victims per 100,000 population, comparison from 2019 to 2020 by sex

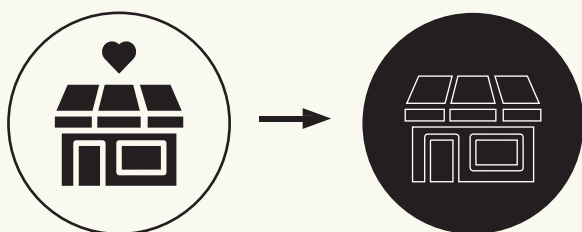


Finding 2 *Trafficking for sexual exploitation less detected during the pandemic*

24% reduction compared to 2019 in the detection of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.



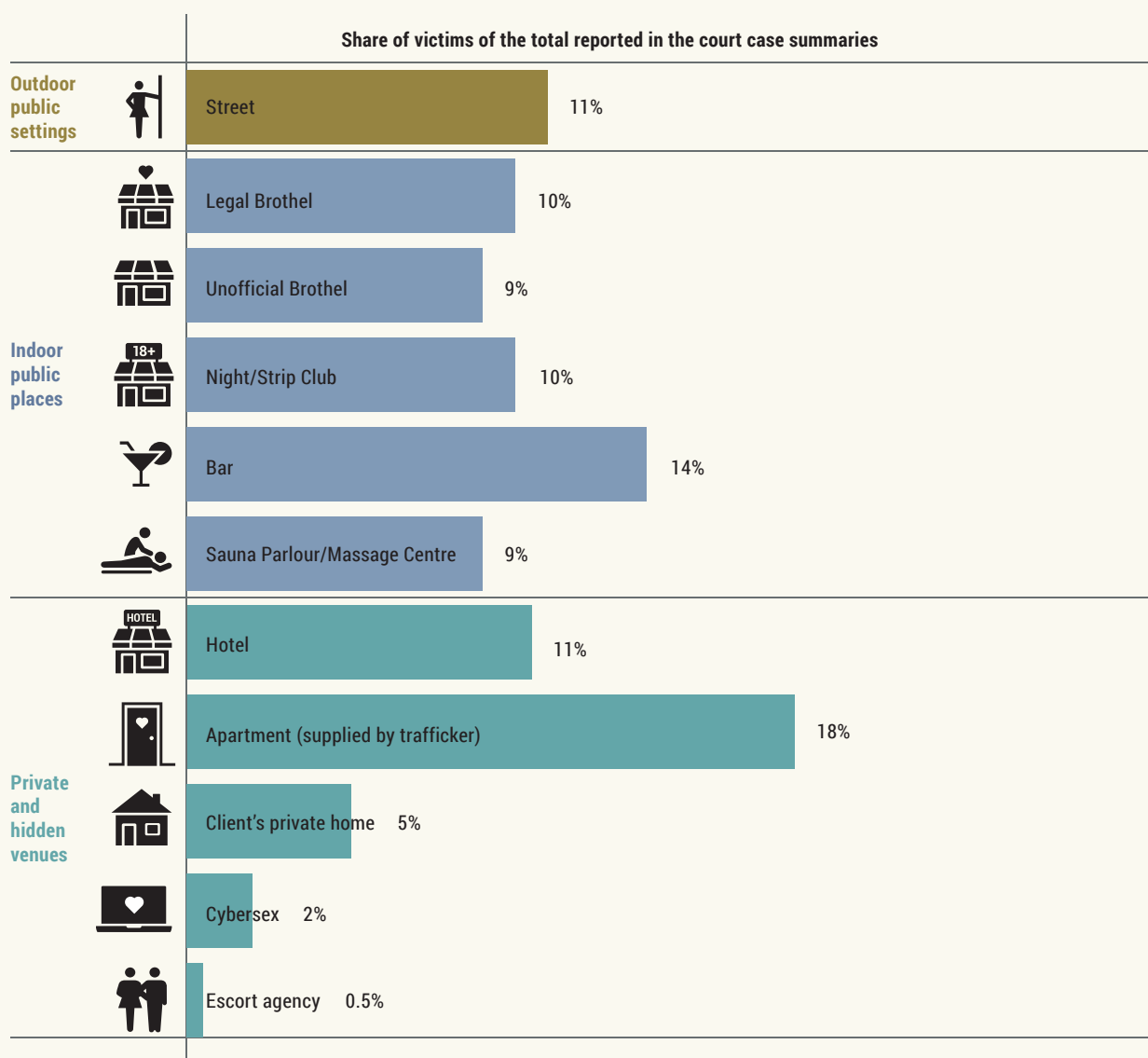
Many identified victims of sexual exploitation are exploited in public venues, such as bars and clubs or outdoors. During the protective measures applied in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, sexual exploitation may have reduced due to the closure of public spaces and it may have also been pushed **into less visible and less safe locations**, making this form of trafficking more concealed and harder to be detected.



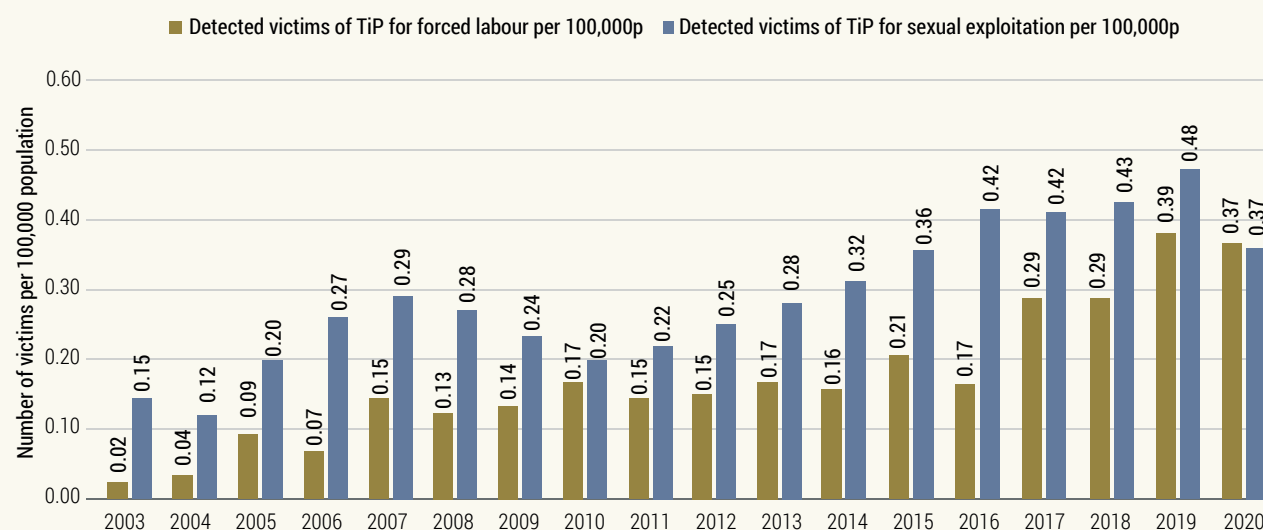
Possible responses

- › Member States to promote joint interventions bringing together law enforcement, social protection services, civil society organizations and the private sector to identify and protect victims exploited in private apartments, hotels and other concealed locations.
- › Member States and private sector to promote government regulation of online platforms, including robust obligations for online service providers to maintain the core responsibility to prevent and stop trafficking in persons. Further collaboration between governments, the technology industry and anti-trafficking stakeholders is critical for the deployment of technology tools and the design of state policies and legislation.
- › Countries should also require online platforms to:
 - ›› Implement prevention measures such as age and consent verification and high visibility content removal request mechanisms;
 - ›› Conduct regular due diligence of operations and systems based on concrete standards to identify risks of misuse of their platforms and resources by traffickers and to mitigate any risks that are found; and
 - ›› Conduct proactive monitoring for exploitative materials and misuse of platforms while establishing mechanisms that allow direct reporting by the public to companies.
- › Member States to invest in capacity building in the areas of Internet monitoring and undercover online investigations.
- › Member States to promote international cooperation of law enforcement to proactively infiltrate online markets and networks and collect human rights-compliant digital forensic evidence.
- › International organizations to develop specific training programmes for workers in economic sectors at high risk of trafficking to report on potential victims of trafficking in persons.
- › Academia and international organizations to study patterns of sexual exploitation in order to inform more effective responses.

Victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation by intermediaries or by venues where exploitation took place (2012-2022), as reported in UNODC court case summaries.



Total victims detected per 100,000 population by form of exploitation, victims trafficked for forced labour vs. victims of sexual exploitation, 2003–2020

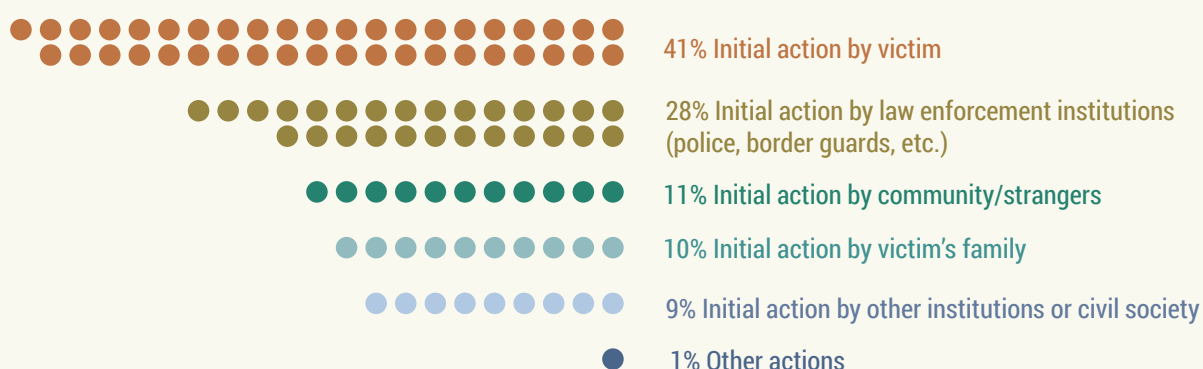


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data and UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019.

Finding 3 Victims rely on “self-rescue” as anti-trafficking responses fall short

Most victims are self-rescued – they manage to escape and reach out to the authorities on their own initiative. Fewer cases are initiated by law enforcement, members of the community and civil society. This constitutes an alarming result considering many victims of trafficking may not identify themselves as victims.

Discovery patterns for trafficking in persons cases (2012-2022)

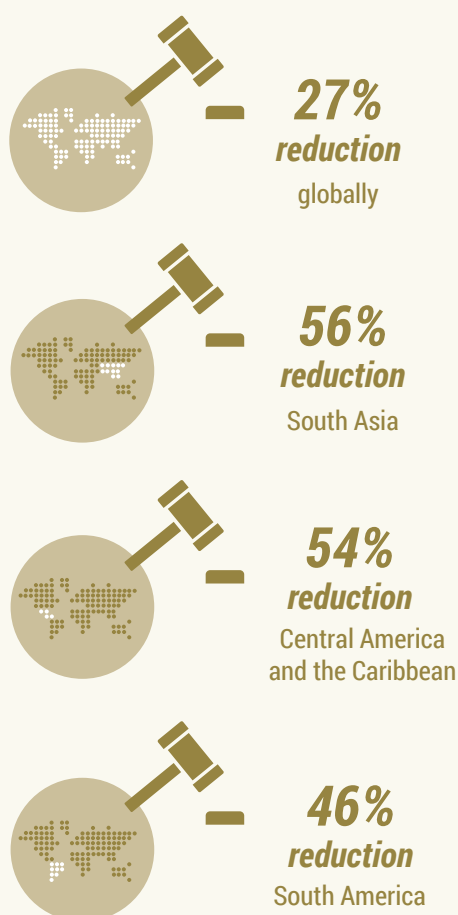


Possible responses

- › Member States to invest in proactive identification of victims, through investigations that are human rights-based and mindful of victims' trauma, providing protection as soon as basic trafficking indicators are met.
- › Member States and international organizations to promote community and public health approaches to advance victims' identification outside of the criminal justice system.
- › Member States to promote the role of communities to combat trafficking in persons, i.e., *if you see something, say something* approach.
- › Member States to enhance online confidential reporting mechanisms, allowing anonymous reporting of trafficking in persons cases.
- › Private companies to increase social advertising to prevent victimisation and improve the detection of technology-facilitated trafficking in persons.
- › Member States to promote social service providers and civil society as safe spaces for victim self-identification.

Finding 4 *Global slowdown in convictions accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic*

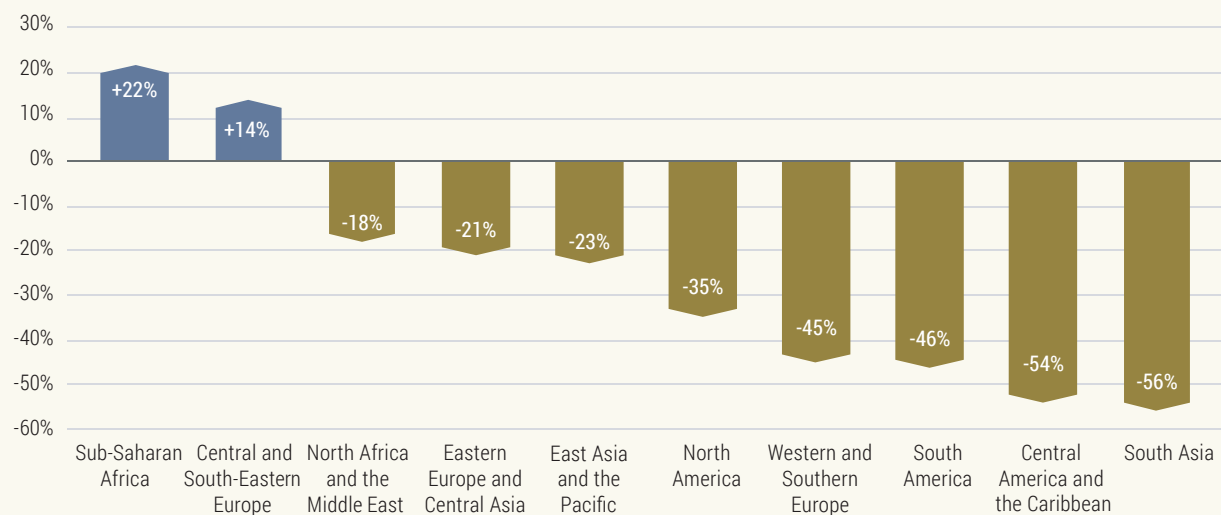
In the year 2020, a **27%** reduction in the number of convictions was recorded globally compared to 2019; the number of convictions has been decreasing since 2017.



Possible responses

- › Member States to invest in capacity building on digital investigative capabilities, including in collecting and handling electronic evidence.
- › International organizations to facilitate joint training activities for countries affected by the same trafficking flows. Further, international organizations should promote the sharing of best practices, technologies and dissemination of practical information about national dedicated units on trafficking in persons.
- › Member States to ensure that access to victim assistance is not conditional on a victim's participation in criminal proceedings.
- › Member States and international organizations to promote judicial education on trafficking in persons, including on technology-facilitated trafficking.
- › Member States to include trafficking in persons among their top three crime priorities when funding is allocated.
- › Donor community and international organizations to support efforts to improve human rights-based counter-trafficking actions in low- and medium-income countries.

Conviction trends by region, 2019-2020



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Finding 5 Increased impunity in home countries resulting in more victims trafficked to more destinations

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia are convicting fewer traffickers and detecting fewer victims when compared to the rest of the world. At the same time, victims from these regions are increasingly identified in a wider range of destination countries compared to victims from other regions.

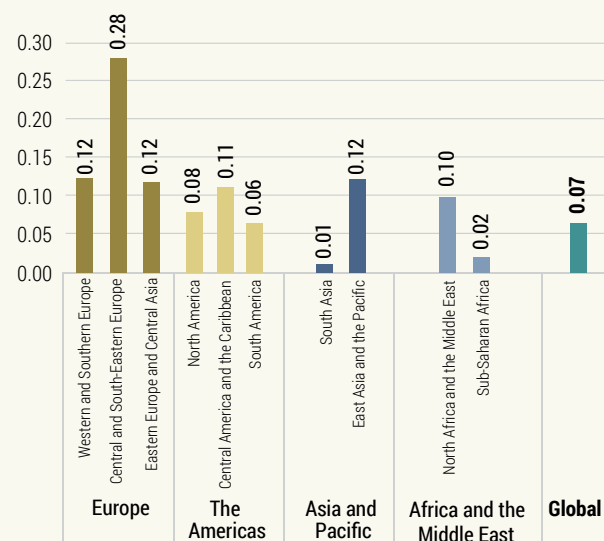
Number of destination countries detecting victims originating within and outside of the region, 2017-2020



Possible responses

- › Member States to promote human rights-based and trauma-informed proactive investigations on cases of trafficking in persons.
- › Member States to scale up proactive identification of victims and provide protection as soon as basic trafficking indicators are met (reasonable grounds).
- › Member States to enhance measures for safe and orderly migration from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- › Member States to strengthen intelligence sharing mechanisms between law enforcement and immigration officials to counter cross-border trafficking in persons.
- › Member States target specific efforts to dismantle high-level transnational organized crime groups active in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- › Member States to consider adopting a coordinated and regional approach and response mechanisms to deter cross-border trafficking.
- › International organizations and academia to identify good practices and weaknesses of the criminal justice system in counter-trafficking activities.

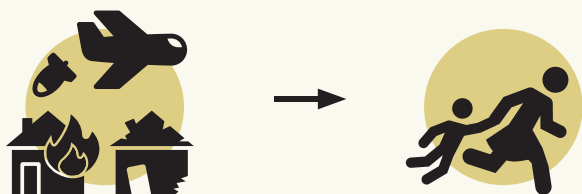
Conviction rates per 100,000 population, by region (2020 or most recent)



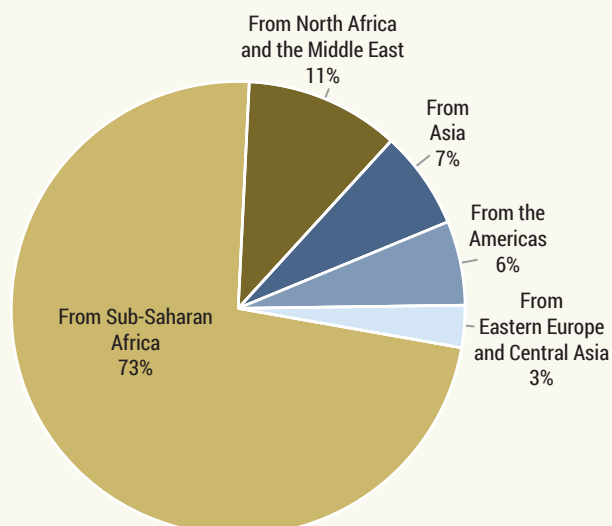
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data and UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019.

Finding 6 War and conflict offer hunting grounds for traffickers

Conflicts increase the number of victims of trafficking exploited within and outside crisis areas. The refugee emergency in Ukraine is elevating risks of trafficking for the Ukrainian displaced population. The 2014 conflict in Ukraine quadrupled the number of Ukrainian victims detected in Western Europe in 2016.



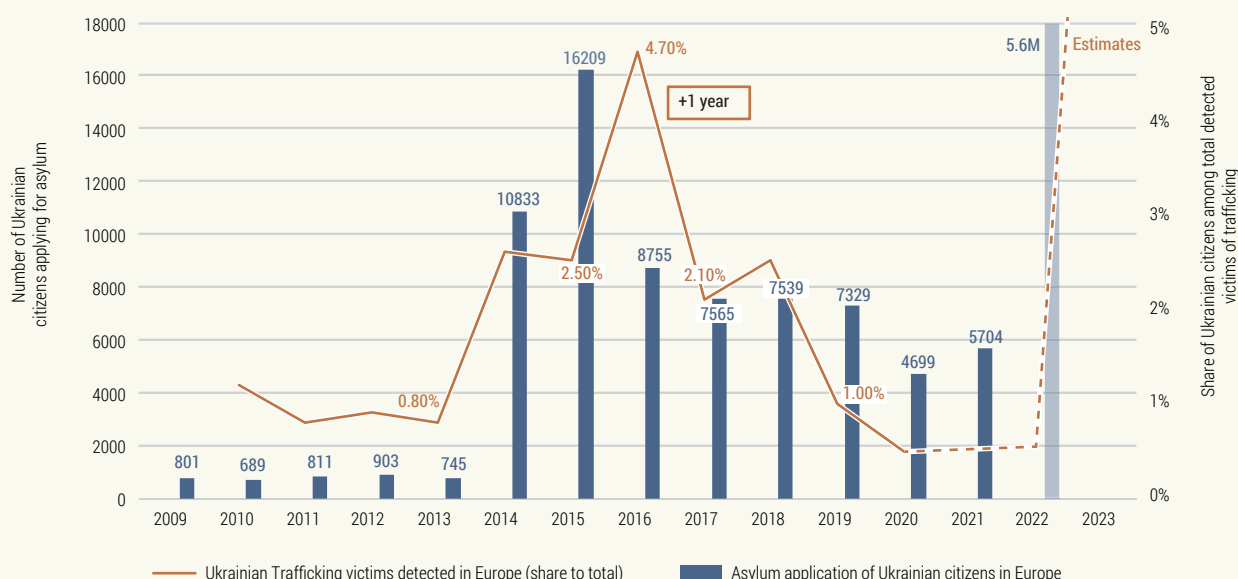
Detected victims of trafficking originating from a country in conflict, by region of citizenship, 2020



Possible responses

- Member States and international organizations to reduce vulnerability to trafficking within conflict areas by ensuring safe access to essential services and humanitarian support for affected populations.
- Member States and international organizations to systematically integrate counter-trafficking measures in emergency humanitarian assistance for displaced populations.
- Member States to extend humanitarian support and durable protection measures to all populations fleeing from countries in conflict.
- International organizations and donor community to enhance action for the demobilization and reintegration of children recruited by armed forces.
- Member States and international organizations to enhance counter-trafficking training for military personnel, UN and peacekeeping personnel.
- International organizations to monitor evolving patterns and flows of trafficking in persons in crisis situations.

Relationship between Ukrainian asylum applications and detection of Ukrainian trafficking victims, in Western and Central Europe, 2009-2022

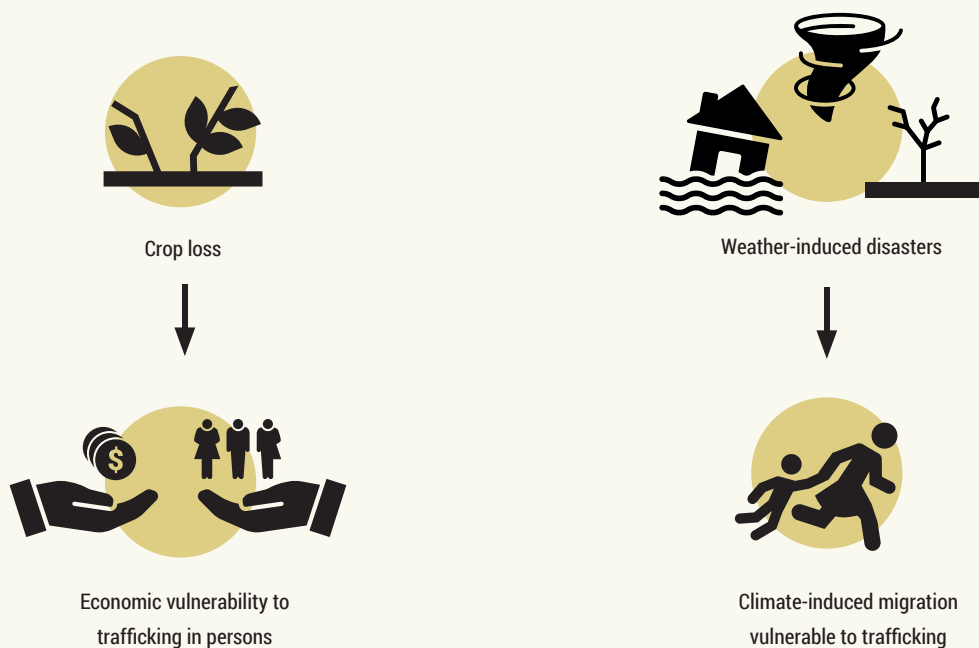


Source: UNODC elaboration of national data and UNHCR data.

Finding 7 Climate change is multiplying trafficking risks

Climate change is increasing vulnerability to trafficking in persons by acting as a stress multiplier.

In 2021, 23.7 million people were internally displaced by weather-induced natural disasters while many others crossed borders to escape climate-induced poverty.



Possible responses

- › Member States to ensure that those affected by climate change, particularly those in vulnerable situations, have access to effective remedies and means of adaptation to enjoy lives of human dignity.
- › Member States to systematically integrate counter-trafficking measures in emergency humanitarian assistance for climate-induced migrants.
- › Donor community to invest in increasing the resilience of livelihoods and opportunities for communities vulnerable to climate change.
- › International organizations and academia to monitor the impact of climate change as a potential driver of trafficking in persons through targeted data collection and research.

Finding 8 Boys and men account for a greater share of detected victims, as new forms of exploitation emerge

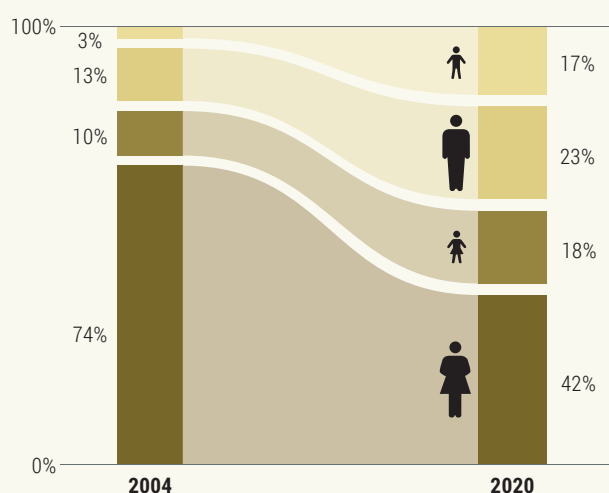
More male victims – both boys and men – have been detected in greater numbers over the past decade.

Increasing proportions of identified victims have been trafficked for the purpose of **forced criminality and mixed forms** of exploitation.

Notwithstanding the global reduction in detection, male victims make up the single profile to be increasingly detected, about a three per cent rise from 2019.

At the same time, the share of detected victims in criminal activities and in mixed forms of trafficking has increased rapidly over the last five years.

Trends in the profile of victims detected, 2004–2020



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Possible responses

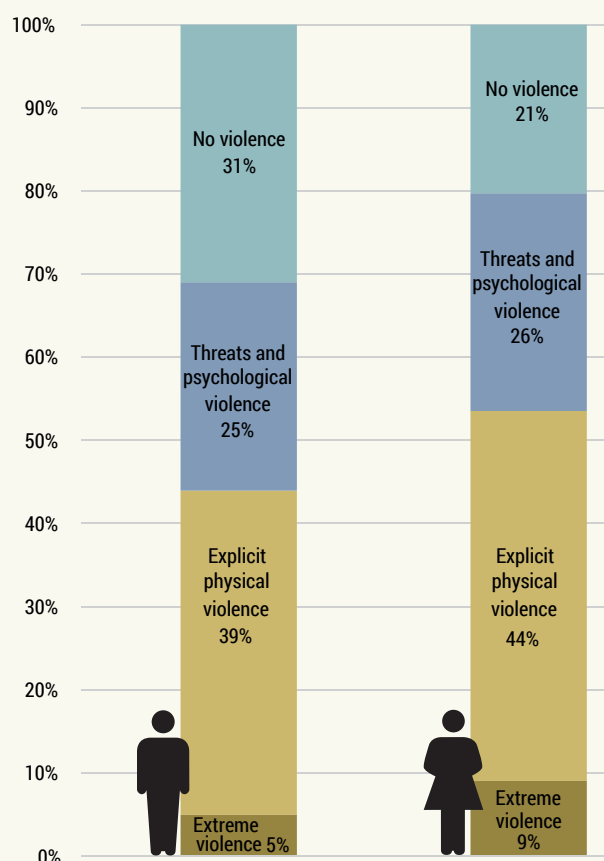
- › Member States to enhance and tailor protections and services for all victims and for all forms of exploitation, including male victims.
- › Member States to give effect to the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking, including for criminal, civil, administrative and immigration offences and ensure that trafficked persons are not subject to prosecution or punished for illegal conduct that they committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked.
- › Member States to systematically address gender biases in victim identification by ensuring that protection efforts also target men as potential victims.
- › Donor community, international organizations and academia to invest in research into patterns of diverse forms of trafficking, including mixed forms, criminal activity, forced marriage and others.
- › Donor community, international organizations and academia to invest in prevalence studies to unveil potential misperceptions and bias in the detection of victims and target the response towards the most in need.

Finding 9 Woman and children suffer greater violence at the hands of traffickers

Analysis of court cases shows that **female victims are subjected to physical or extreme violence at the hands of traffickers at a rate three times higher than males**, while children are subjected to physical or extreme violence at a rate almost two times higher than adults.



Level of violence suffered by trafficking victims, by sex, 2012-2021, as reported in UNODC court case summaries*



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries and Sherlock Case Law Database.
 * Based on 1,790 female victims and 327 male victims reported in 622 cases of trafficking that concluded with a conviction between 2012 and 2020.

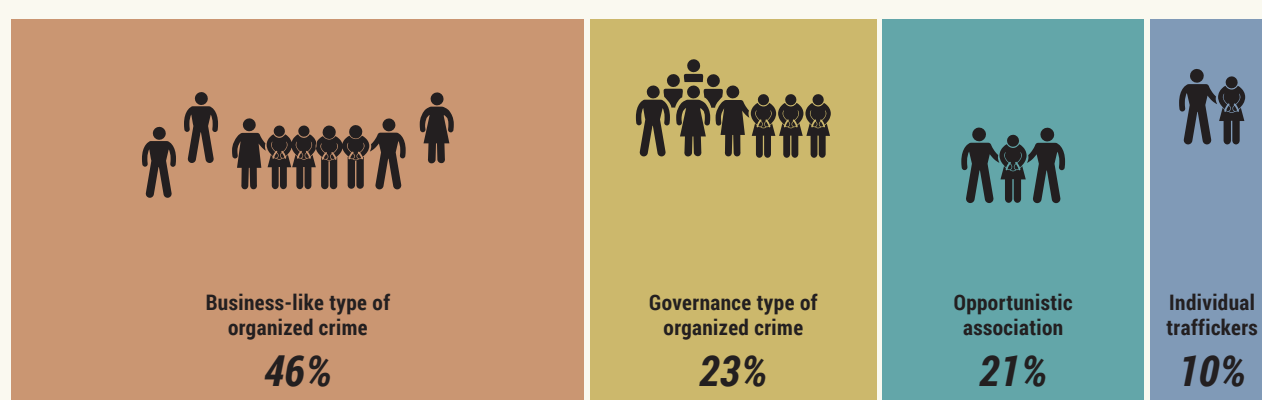
Possible responses

- › Member States to increase access to specialized care and services for victims who have suffered extreme violence.
- › Member States to integrate gender-based violence interventions into anti-trafficking strategies.
- › Member States to consider including the use of explicit and extreme violence as an aggravating circumstance for the offence of trafficking in persons in national legislation.
- › Donor community, international organizations and academia to invest in research into patterns and root causes of all forms of gender-based violence and reporting bias by gender at investigation and prosecution stages.
- › Member States to enhance cooperation between law enforcement and social services for the identification and protection of child victims of trafficking.

Finding 10 *More organized traffickers exploit more victims, with more violence and for longer periods of time*

Traffickers' structure and level of organization differ profoundly. Court case summaries reveal that organized criminal groups account for most detected victims and convicted offenders. Individual traffickers operating on their own may traffic a few victims each, but globally they

may account for a significant number of victims. When larger, more structured criminal organizations get involved, they manage to traffic more people in a more violent manner and for longer periods of time.



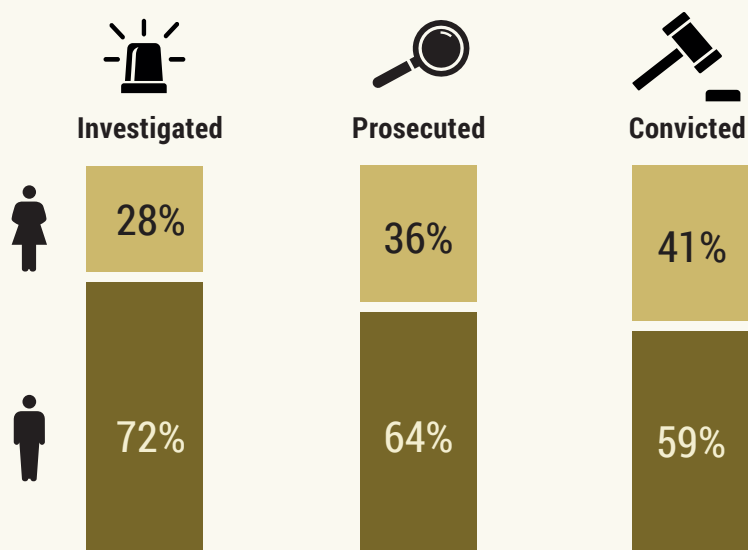
Possible responses

- › Member States to fully implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the provisions on international cooperation regarding measures to identify, trace and freeze or seize proceeds of crime, on measures to combat money-laundering and measure to combat corruption.
- › Member States to harmonize legislation with international standards to adequately punish offences of trafficking in persons aggravated by the organized crime element.
- › International organizations to monitor and support Member States in implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- › Member States to adapt investigative tools according to the traffickers' structure.
- › Financial institutions to establish financial information sharing systems to monitor illicit transactions, particularly among remittance transfer services and banks.

Finding 11 *Women: More likely than men to be traffickers or more likely than men to be convicted?*

Women investigated for trafficking in persons are significantly more likely to be convicted than men.

Persons investigated, prosecuted, convicted (1st instance) for trafficking in persons, by sex, 2020 (or most recent)



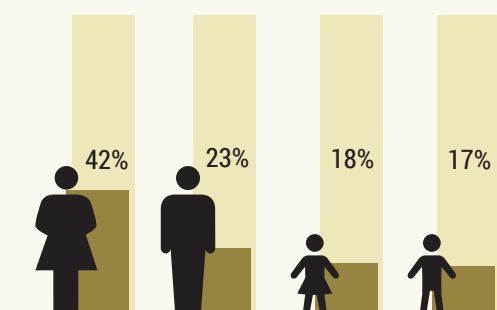
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Possible responses

- › Member States to ensure access to justice to women and girls investigated for trafficking in persons and related offences.
- › Member States to integrate training of the judiciary to examine trafficking in persons as a form of gender-based violence within the context of international women's rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW).
- › International organizations and academia to better analyse the gender dimension of the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons.

Key Indicators

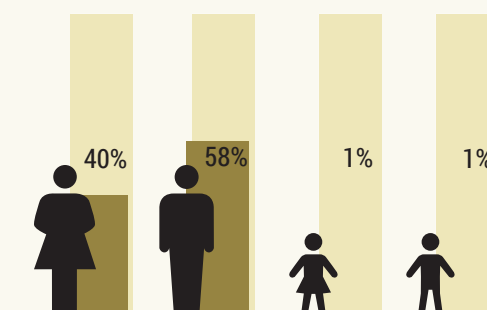
Detected victims of trafficking, by age group and sex, 2020 (or most recent)*



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

*Based on a total of 51,675 victims detected in 166 countries in 2020 (or most recent).

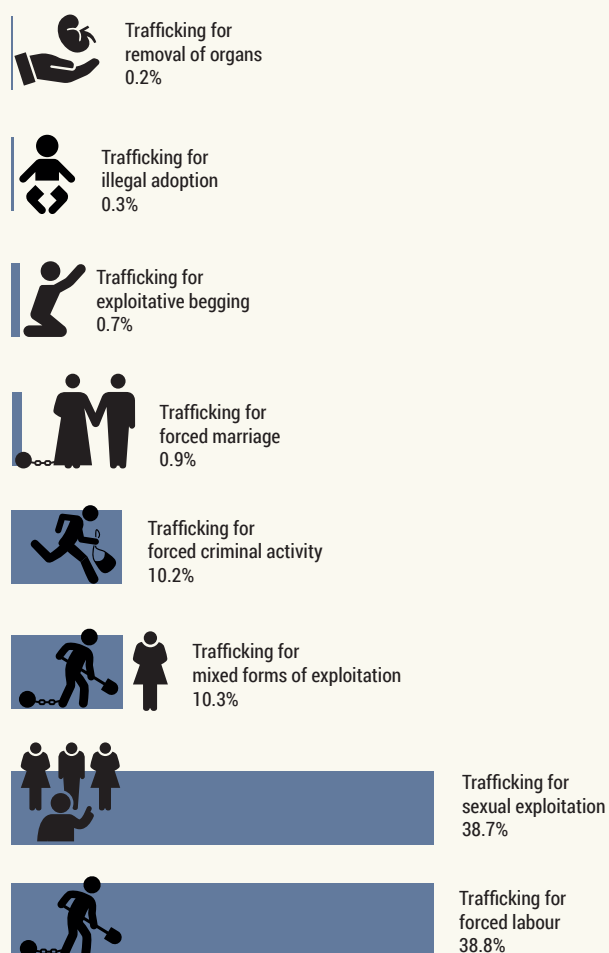
Persons convicted of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, 2020 (or most recent)*



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

*Based on 1,234 people convicted of trafficking in persons in 2020 (or most recent) whose age and sex were reported in 128 countries.

Detected victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation, 2020 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

REGION-BY-REGION KEY DEVELOPMENTS

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- › 60% decrease in male victims detected; 67% decrease in female victims detected.
- › A large number of girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- › More than 10% of detected victims of sexual exploitation are males.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

- › Continued increase in the detection of victims of trafficking in persons.
- › The region recorded an increase in convictions in 2020.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- › 59% decrease in the number of victims of trafficking detected in 2020.
- › 81% decrease in the number of victims of cross-border trafficking detected in 2020.
- › Men and boys trafficked for sexual exploitation are more frequently reported than in other subregions.
- › East Asian trafficking outflows remain of a global dimension as most regions detect victims from this part of the world.

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

- › 41% increase in male victims detected; 24% decrease in female victims detected.
- › Limited impact of the pandemic on the detection of trafficking victims.
- › Severe slowdown of the criminal justice response to trafficking recorded in 2020.

NORTH AMERICA

- › 26% increase in male victims detected; 14% increase in female victims detected.
- › 35% drop in the number of convictions during 2020.

SOUTH AMERICA

- › 23% decrease in male victims detected; 38% decrease in female victims detected.
- › The number of people convicted in the region was 46% lower than that seen in 2019.

SOUTH ASIA

- › 31% decrease in detected victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- › In 2020, more men were detected as victims of trafficking compared to previous years.
- › 23% decline in the number of domestic victims detected in 2020.
- › Fewer victims per 100,000 population are detected than other parts of the world.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- › The number of foreign victims detected in Sub-Saharan Africa countries fell, especially in comparison to 2018 levels.
- › Children continue to account for the majority of detected trafficking victims. Between 2019 and 2020, the rate of child victims per 100,000 population increased by 43%.
- › Fewer victims per 100,000 population are detected than other parts of the world.
- › Compared to other regions of origins of cross-border trafficking, victims from Sub-Saharan Africa are detected in a growing number of countries, both within and outside the region of origin.

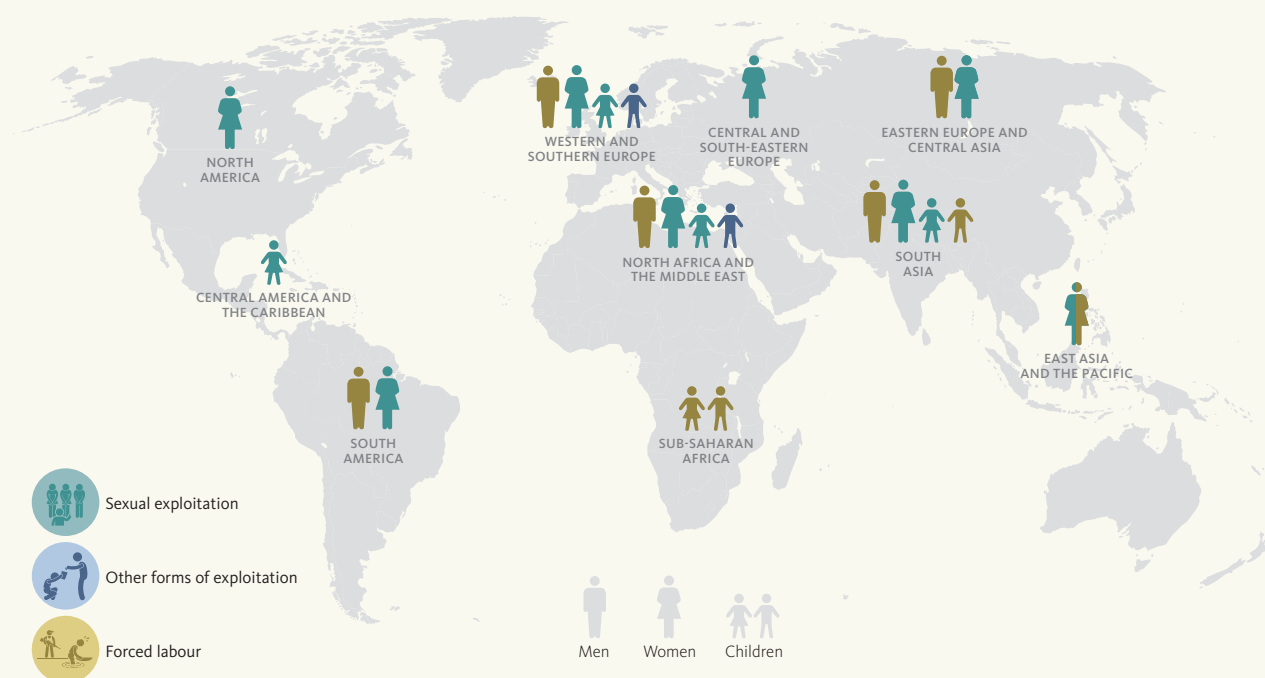
REGION-BY-REGION KEY DEVELOPMENTS**THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

- › 70% decrease in the number of victims of cross-border trafficking detected in 2020 compared to 2019.
- › 68% decrease in the detected child victims of trafficking in 2020 compared to 2019.
- › Children were reported to have been trafficked for exploitative begging.

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

- › In 2020, 22% increase in male victims detected compared to 2019.
- › A proportion of detected victims are trafficked to be exploited in criminal activity or mixed forms of trafficking.
- › Increased detection of domestic trafficking.
- › Decrease in prosecutions and convictions.

Main forms of exploitation and profile of detected victims, by regions, 2020 (or more recent)



Sources: UNODC elaboration of national data.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



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The 2022 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons is the seventh of its kind mandated by the General Assembly through the 2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. It covers 141 countries and provides an overview of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at global, regional and national levels, based on trafficking cases detected between 2017 and 2021.

The accompanying statistical annexes and court case summaries are published on the UNODC website:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>