

# Barbary Slave Trade, Modern Smuggling-Migrant Crisis, Europe

Between 1500 and 1800, over one million white European Christians were enslaved by Muslims along the Barbary Coast of North Africa and within the Ottoman Empire, a practice often referred to as the “forgotten slave trade.” These individuals were frequently captured in raids and were primarily used for manual labor or domestic service.

Currently, there is a migrant crisis in which smuggled individuals are traveling on foot to primarily white European Christian countries. The majority are described as being of North African and Muslim descent. Local police are working to address the situation.

## Key Facts on White Slavery in the Muslim World

- **Scale and Scope:** Estimates suggest that between 1 and 1.25 million white Europeans were enslaved by North African Muslims between 1500 and 1800, particularly affecting regions such as Italy, France, Spain, and Britain.
- **Sources of Slaves:** Captives were taken from Mediterranean coastal towns, ships, and through raids in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, including those conducted by the Crimean Khanate.
- **Barbary Slave Trade:** This involved the trafficking of white, primarily Christian, slaves who were sold in North African markets such as Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.
- **Ottoman Empire:** Slavic populations (often referred to as *Saqaliba*) and other Europeans were commonly traded. In some cases, Christian children from Balkan regions were taken as part of a “blood tax” system known as *devshirme*.
- **Treatment and Roles:** Enslaved individuals were often used for galley rowing, construction labor, or domestic service. While Islamic law permitted the enslavement of non-Muslims, conversion to Islam did not necessarily guarantee freedom.

## Common Terms

- **Saqaliba:** A term used in medieval Arabic sources to refer to Slavs and other Central or Eastern Europeans who were traded.
- **Barbary Coast:** The coastal region of North Africa where the enslavement of Europeans was heavily concentrated.



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