

HUMAN TRAFFICKING Global Risk Background Paper

“Human trafficking is one of the most tragic human rights issues of our time. It splinters families, distorts global markets, undermines the rule of law, and spurs other transnational criminal activity.”

– Rex Tillerson, U.S. Secretary of State

Introduction

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. For purposes of forced labor, exploitation, debt bondage¹, domestic servitude, or the recruitment of child soldiers, traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to entrap nearly 2.5 million victims a year. This is a gross violation of human rights with its root causes grounded in global poverty, armed conflict, corruption, and a demand for cheap labor.

Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims. From domestic work and agriculture to construction and manufacturing, predators exploit unwilling victims who are often working at the margins of the formal economy. It is an illegal industry that makes traffickers extremely wealthy, and supports some of the most-profitable illicit activities of organized crime, after arms and drug smuggling. As traffickers rely on the globalized economy to carry out their inhumane trade, often using online recruitment websites, hotel and hospitality venues, and financial institutions, governments and the private sector play a critical role in ending human trafficking.

Defining Human Trafficking

According to the U.S. Department of State, “trafficking in persons,” “human trafficking,” and “modern slavery” are used as umbrella terms to refer to both sex trafficking and forced labor. Regardless of the term used, the United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force, for the purpose of exploitation.

Human trafficking is also fundamentally different from people smuggling. People smuggling involves migrants being facilitated with entry across an international border through illegal means where the migrants have consented to the smuggling. Human trafficking can include, but does not require, a large amount of movement, or the requirement that a person must have crossed a border for trafficking to take place – it can and does take place within national borders. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were exploited in their home town, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers’ aim to exploit and enslave their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so.

¹ Debt bondage, or bonded labor, is one form of coercion used by traffickers where victims are forced to work to pay off debts assumed, wittingly or unwittingly.

Review of the Online Briefing Material on Modern Slavery

Now, please review the **Council on Foreign Relations' Info Guide on Modern Slavery** (a link is available on the 2018 GEF web page entitled "Briefing & Presentation Materials"). This interactive, online guide containing text, video, and case studies will provide an exploration of human trafficking's (referred to as modern slavery) root causes, economic consequences, and human toll. Once you have reviewed this material, we encourage you to complete the "Questions to Consider" to help you prepare for your role in the Global Economic Forum.



Questions to Consider

1) What are the root causes of human trafficking?

2) Why is human trafficking a pressing global risk? What challenges and/or opportunities exist for your economic bloc in addressing such a risk?

3) Is human trafficking a high concern for your economic bloc? If so, what specific risks does human trafficking pose? If not, how might your economic bloc be affected by the impact of human trafficking in other blocs?

4) How would reducing the risks posed by human trafficking directly impact long-term economic stability and prosperity in your economic bloc?

5) What strategies or actions has your economic bloc taken to address the root causes of human trafficking?

6) What strategies or actions has your economic bloc taken to assist the victims of human trafficking?

7) What strategies or actions has your economic bloc taken to target criminals involved in the trafficking of human beings?

8) What type of action might be necessary to end human trafficking in your economic bloc? Beyond your economic bloc?
