



UNITED NATIONS  
*Office on Drugs and Crime*

# ACT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ພວກເຮົາຕໍ່ສູ້ກັບ  
We combat

ການຄ້າມະນຸດ  
Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. Virtually every country in the world is affected by trafficking for sexual exploitation or forced labour. The international response is, at best, uneven.

UNODC offers practical help to all countries, not only to draft laws and create comprehensive national strategies but also assisting with resources to implement them.

The adoption in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children, marked a significant milestone in international efforts to stop the trade in people.

#### The Protocol:

- provides the first internationally agreed definition of trafficking in persons;
- requires countries to criminalize trafficking in persons;
- creates a framework for assisting and protecting victims; and
- requires cooperation within and between countries.

In January 2008, 117 States had signed the Protocol and 116 countries had ratified it. But translating the Protocol into reality remains problematic. Very few criminals are convicted and most victims are probably never identified or assisted. As the custodian of the Protocol, UNODC seeks to address these issues through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The following is an overview of UNODC's work to fight human trafficking, with real-life stories to illustrate the complexity of the issues.



A leader of a community vigilance group and her daughter on India's border with Nepal

## Prevention

**Boi Ngoc** is a young woman living in a remote farming village in South East Asia. She has a child, but lives in a hostile family environment, with little means of securing any income.

Desperate to support her child independently, she contacts a woman, recommended by a relative, who says she can arrange a job as a waitress in a neighbouring country.

**Burim** is a young Eastern European boy staying in an asylum seekers' camp in a foreign country. He and his brother have been separated from their family for several years. As asylum seekers, their status and future are likely to remain uncertain for many years. A man approaches Burim and offers him and his brother the chance to start a new life.

In seeking better lives, people like Boi Ngoc and Burim are vulnerable to manipulation by traffickers. To raise the awareness of vulnerable persons to such risks, UNODC makes video and radio products, broadcast in numerous languages globally, and undertakes targeted campaigns with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to reach actual and potential victims.

### Vulnerable communities

Community-led activities are an important prevention tool. In 2006, UNODC supported NGO initiatives such as the Community Vigilance project, on the border between India and Nepal, led by local leaders and women's groups and mobilizing thousands of villagers to detect and prevent trafficking. UNODC also provided funding for NGOs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to run trafficking prevention campaigns among asylum-seekers to assist people like Burim.

### Conflict zones

Sometimes the threat of trafficking can emerge very suddenly. During the armed conflict in Lebanon in 2006, UNODC became aware that traffickers were targeting some of the 300,000 domestic workers from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Philippines left behind when their foreign employers were evacuated. Having abruptly lost their livelihoods and official resident status, the workers quickly became vulnerable. UNODC put an emergency information campaign in place within days, producing and distributing 12,000 pages of information in numerous languages.

### Research

UNODC's prevention work includes raising awareness among policy-makers, law enforcement bodies and civil society. In 2006, UNODC published the report *Trafficking In Persons: Global Patterns* identifying 127 countries of origin, 98 transit countries and 137 destination countries. The sensitive nature of the issue and lack of systematic action, worldwide, make information collection a challenge. The absence of reliable global data, in turn, makes it more difficult for Governments and international organisations to fight trafficking effectively. In 2008, UNODC will publish new global research on national responses to human trafficking.

## Protection

**Alexandru**, a 24-year old Eastern European, went to a Western European country for seasonal work but he was paid almost nothing and lived in a shack with no electricity or running water. After Alexandru complained, his boss beat him and left him in a critical condition. When he was found, police placed him in custody as an illegal immigrant and he was deported.

**Juana**, a South American woman, was trafficked to North America and sexually exploited. With a poor family to support, she initially consented. Arrested and deported as an illegal alien, she received no assistance from her government, NGOs or local community. Her family's situation did not improve. Juana agreed to be re-trafficked in the hope of earning much-needed money.

Police and criminal justice staff need standard working procedures to guarantee the physical safety of victims, protect their privacy and make it safe to testify against their abusers. These issues are core features of UNODC's human trafficking training for police, prosecutors and judges globally.

### Identification & Referral

In many countries, it is not understood that someone like Alexandru could be a victim and not an offender. Without identification and recognition as a victim of crime, a person can unjustly suffer persecution because of his or her irregular status.

In 2006, UNODC launched a *Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons* to provide practical help to Governments, policy-makers, police, NGOs and others through "best practices" available for immediate use and adaptation worldwide. One topic addressed, amongst many, is identification, with the Toolkit providing victim checklists and techniques. An updated and improved edition will be published in 2008.

A "rescuer" must know how to refer victims to experts for appropriate support. In 2003, UNODC helped to set up one of the first victim referral mechanisms in the Czech Republic. UNODC has also helped to introduce such systems in Poland, the Philippines, Moldova, and the Slovak Republic to assist not only trafficking victims but those who might help them. In 2007, UNODC issued an assessment of how victims are currently identified, assisted and protected in Moldova to improve and coordinate the help that Juana and others should receive.

### Reintegration

Victims need assistance that extends beyond the end of their exploitation and any criminal prosecution. Through 2007, companies in the Philippines helped fight against re-victimization by participating in the Corporate Apprenticeship programme, a joint initiative between UNODC and the Department for Social Welfare and Development.

## Prosecution

In late 2005, a police officer in a major European city, noticing a young boy begging, tried unsuccessfully to communicate with him. Later, with the help of a translator, a trained police interviewer established that the boy, named Krasimir, was living in the city with a "friend." Based on this information, specialist investigators were tipped off. Three more boys were found and the "friend" was arrested. Interviews took place before an investigative judge and a defence lawyer so that the boys did not have to go to court.

Much of UNODC's work centres on strengthening national criminal justice systems to achieve more convictions globally. This means not only that human trafficking must be a criminal offence in the country where an act of trafficking is detected, but also that the law must be enforced.

Successful convictions depend upon the police and others making the right decisions. This can only happen if they have the knowledge and capacity to respond to human trafficking.

In 2007, UNODC provided Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritius, Slovakia and Uganda assistance in drafting and reviewing anti-human trafficking legislation.

Criminal justice officials, including police, border guards, prosecutors, judges, legislative drafters and NGO staff, from many countries received specialized training, including India, Laos, Lebanon, Moldova, and Vietnam.

UNODC assisted NATO in training its senior officials and Partnership for Peace countries to combat trafficking in persons. In 2008, UNODC will publish its most advanced series of global training modules yet, in all of the official UN languages.

The impact of these and related activities can be immediate. In Nigeria, ongoing collaboration between UNODC and the national authorities resulted in the filing of 22 new prosecutions nationwide in 2007. In India, increased police resources and training had the following 2007 results - 104 rescue operations, freeing 985 victims; and the registering of 631 cases and arrest of 1359 traffickers.





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## Donor Support

Since the entry into force of the Protocol, donor support to the UNODC Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings has increased rapidly.

Twenty-four donors<sup>1</sup> have contributed a total of approximately \$30 million towards 32 UNODC anti-human trafficking projects since 2002. These projects cover the range of activities described above.

<sup>1</sup> Asian Crime Prevention Foundation, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic the European Commission, Finland, France, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mozambique, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates (UAE), United Kingdom (UK), USA, UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), UNHCR and UNICEF.

To learn more about UNODC's programmes, or to make a contribution, please contact:

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