

**Vefamun'23**

**International  
Criminal  
Police Organization**



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## LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Most distinguished participants of VefaMUN'23,

After such a prolonged break, as the Secretary-General, I am more than pleased to extend a warm welcome to you at the 4th Vefa Lisesi Model United Nations Conference. After diligent preparation, it is my utmost pleasure to announce that we are ready to host you for one of the premier Model UN conferences. Both our VefaMUN'23 Academic and Organization team has worked tirelessly to cultivate an energetic and engaging atmosphere that will provide the perfect backdrop for tackling some of the world's most pressing issues. I know that your participation in this conference will be just the beginning of a long and meaningful commitment to justice and progress, and we find it to be a privilege to be a part of this journey.

Respectfully,

Ali Kağan Aydınğör, Secretary-General

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## LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear participants of VEFAMUN'23 Conference,

I am Seren Anaçođlu. I am studying Law at Bahesehir University. I am also European Union Climate Ambassador. I am writing to you in my capacity as the INTERPOL Under Secretary General to address the two pressing issues that we will be addressing at the conference: the reports of war crimes and violation of humanitarian law in the Tigray war, and the investigation of the worldwide human trafficking crisis. Thanks to my Academic Assistant Irmak Gl, we prepared a very detailed study guide.

The reports of atrocities committed in the Tigray war are deeply disturbing and demand a thorough investigation. It is imperative that those responsible for any war crimes or violations of humanitarian law are held accountable for their actions. INTERPOL is committed to supporting the efforts of law enforcement agencies in this regard, and we will be working closely with all relevant parties to ensure that justice is served.

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The global human trafficking crisis is another issue of grave concern. This heinous crime preys on the most vulnerable members of society and destroys the lives of its victims. INTERPOL is dedicated to combating human trafficking in all its forms and we will be working closely with our member countries and partners to identify and disrupt trafficking networks and bring those responsible to justice.

I welcome all of you to the VEFAMUN'23 Conference and I look forward to working together to address these important issues.

Sincerely,

Seren Anaçođlu

INTERPOL Under Secretary General

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

INTERPOL is the International Criminal Police Organization, a global network of police agencies that work together to prevent and combat international crime. The organization is headquartered in Lyon, France, and has member organizations in 194 countries around the world. The governing body of INTERPOL is the General Assembly, which is made up of delegates from each member organization. The General Assembly meets annually to discuss and make decisions on INTERPOL's policies and activities. There is also an Executive Committee, which is responsible for managing the organization's day-to-day activities and implementing the decisions made by the General Assembly.

- The organization was founded in 1923 and has its roots in the International Criminal Police Commission, which was established in 1914.
  - INTERPOL's mission is to facilitate international police cooperation and to support and assist member organizations in their efforts to prevent and combat transnational crime.
  - INTERPOL has a number of different functions and services that it provides to its member organizations. These include:
    - The sharing of criminal databases and information, including the INTERPOL Notice System, which allows member organizations to request or provide information about criminal suspects or missing persons.
    - The provision of forensic and technical assistance to member organizations.
    - The organization of international conferences and training programs for police officers.
    - The coordination of international investigations and the extradition of criminal suspects.
    - The issuance of travel documents, such as INTERPOL Red Notices and Diffusions, to assist member organizations in locating and arresting criminal suspects.
    - The organization has a number of specialized units and programs that focus on specific areas of crime, such as terrorism, cybercrime, and trafficking in human beings.
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## TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Human trafficking is a heinous crime that violates the fundamental rights of the individuals involved. It is a grave violation of human rights, and those who are trafficked may suffer physical and emotional abuse, as well as other serious harm.

Human trafficking often goes unreported, so it is difficult to know the full extent of this crime. However, it is believed to affect millions of people around the world, with women and children being the most vulnerable.

There are many different types of human trafficking, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and forced marriage. Those who are trafficked may be forced to work in a variety of industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and domestic work. They may also be forced to work in the sex industry, where they may be subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Human trafficking is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach to address. This includes law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers, as well as efforts to provide support and assistance to victims of trafficking. Governments, international organizations, and NGOs all have a role to play in combating this crime and protecting the rights of those who are vulnerable to trafficking.

*“Women and girls represent 72 percent of all trafficking victims globally, and 77 percent of detected female victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.”*

*Åsa Regnér, UN Women Deputy Executive Director*

It is important to recognize that all forms of trafficking, including those that affect boys and young men, are serious crimes that have significant negative impacts on the lives of the victims. Boys and young men may be trafficked for a variety of purposes, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse.

It is also important to recognize that gender norms and stereotypes can contribute to the vulnerability of boys and young men to trafficking. For example, societal expectations that boys and men should be strong and capable may make it more

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difficult for them to seek help if they are being trafficked or exploited. In addition, discrimination and stigma based on sexual orientation and gender identity can also make certain individuals, including boys and young men, more vulnerable to trafficking.

Combating human trafficking requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of this crime and provides support and assistance to victims. This includes efforts to address economic inequality and social exclusion, as well as working to challenge and change harmful gender norms and stereotypes. It also requires strong law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers, as well as the provision of services to help victims recover from their experiences and rebuild their lives.

### **Both supply and demand factors foster the growing trafficking industry:**

#### **Demand Side**

- Demand by employers and enterprises for cheap labour, women's labour is usually in low status work in the domestic and entertainment spheres putting them at risk.
- An expanding commercial sex industry in the subregion and increased demand for the services of sex workers. Male client preferences are for younger women and girls because of the fear of HIV infection.
- Development policies promoting tourism, and patterns of development that depend on temporary migrant workers, particularly males.
- Male attitudes and perceptions of women in society, and women's unequal socio-economic status.

#### **Supply Side**

- Poverty, women are the minority of the poor and their poverty is increasing.
  - Inadequate educational and employment opportunities.
  - Economic disparities within countries and between countries and regions, fuels the demand for trafficking from low income to high-income areas. Globalization
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and economic liberalization have relaxed controls, opened borders between countries, facilitating population mobility.

-International migration of women into the labour market provides increased opportunities and channels for trafficking.

-Civil and military conflicts push people to flee their countries, encouraging cross-border trafficking.

-Erosion of traditional family values and the pursuit of consumerism encourage the sale of women and children.

- A lucrative business with high monetary returns attractive to crime syndicates.

-The growth of transnational crime, and the expansion of drug trafficking networks act as mechanism for other forms of exploitation.

-Weak law enforcement mechanisms and measures to penalize offenders, exploitation by corrupt law enforcers and officials.

## Forced Labor

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines labor trafficking as: “The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.” The TVPA also recognizes sex trafficking, which is discussed in a separate fact sheet. A modern-day form of slavery, labor trafficking is a fundamental violation of human rights.

Victims of this widespread form of trafficking come primarily from developing countries. They are recruited and trafficked using deception and coercion and find themselves held in conditions of slavery in a variety of jobs.

Victims can be engaged in agricultural, mining, fisheries or construction work, along with domestic servitude and other labour-intensive jobs.

Labor trafficking includes situations of debt bondage, forced labor, and involuntary child labor. Labor traffickers use violence, threats, lies, and other forms of coercion to force people to work against their will in many industries.

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Common types of labor trafficking include people forced to work in homes as domestic servants, farmworkers coerced through violence as they harvest crops, or factory workers held in inhumane conditions with little to no pay.

## Forms of Labor Trafficking

There are several forms of exploitative practices linked to labor trafficking, including bonded labor, forced labor and child labor.

- Bonded labor, or debt bondage, is probably the least known form of labor trafficking today, and yet it is the most widely used method of enslaving people. Victims become bonded laborers when their labor is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan or service in which its terms and conditions have not been defined or in which the value of the victims' services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt. The value of their work is greater than the original sum of money "borrowed."
- Forced labor is a situation in which victims are forced to work against their own will, under the threat of violence or some other form of punishment, their freedom is restricted and a degree of ownership is exerted. Forms of forced labor can include domestic servitude; agricultural labor; sweatshop factory labor; janitorial, food service and other service industry labor; and begging.
- Child labor is a form of work that is likely to be hazardous to the health and/or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development of children and can interfere with their education. The International Labor Organization estimates worldwide that there are 246 million exploited children aged between 5 and 17 involved in debt bondage, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, the illegal drug trade, the illegal arms trade and other illicit activities around the world.

Globally, the International Labor Organization and Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with IOM, estimate that there are 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour with 16 million victims of labor trafficking in private industry, 4.8 million victims of sex trafficking, and 4.1 million victims of state-imposed forced labor.

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The U.S. Department of Labor has identified 148 goods from 46 countries made by forced and child labor.

Human trafficking occurs when a trafficker takes any one of the enumerated actions, and then employs the means of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of compelling the victim to provide commercial sex acts or labor or services. At a minimum, one element from each column must be present to establish a potential situation of human trafficking. The presence of force, fraud or coercion indicates that the victim has not consented of his or her own free will.

Human trafficking victims make an alarmingly high number of consumer goods and food products, imported to the United States and produced domestically. More often than we realize, elements of forced labor may be present within the supply chain of products we buy or the services we pay for. As economies around the world integrate, it is faster and easier for goods produced with forced labor to enter the global market. In the U.S., labor traffickers exploit and enslave both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens.

In cases of labor trafficking, consumers provide the demand and profit incentive for traffickers. These consumers can include companies that subcontract certain types of services, end-consumers who buy cheap goods produced by trafficking victims, or individuals who use the services of trafficking victims. By supporting fair pay for workers and basing our purchasing choices on the fair treatment of those who make our products, consumers have the power to reduce the demand for labor trafficking.

### Sex trafficking

Sex trafficking is human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It has been called a form of modern slavery because of the way victims are forced into sexual acts non-consensually, in a form of sexual slavery. Perpetrators of the crime are called sex traffickers or pimps—people who manipulate victims to engage in various forms of commercial sex with paying customers. Sex traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion as they recruit, transport, and provide their victims as prostitutes. Sometimes victims are brought into a situation of dependency on their trafficker(s), financially or emotionally. Every aspect of sex trafficking is

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considered a crime, from acquisition to transportation and exploitation of victims. This includes any sexual exploitation of adults or minors, including child sex tourism (CST) and domestic minor sex trafficking.

Sex traffickers frequently target victims and then use violence, threats, lies, false promises, debt bondage, or other forms of control and manipulation to keep victims involved in the sex industry for their own profit.

Sex trafficking exists within diverse and unique sets of venues and businesses including fake massage businesses, escort services, residential brothels, in public on city streets and in truck stops, strip clubs, hostess clubs, hotels and motels, and elsewhere.

In 2012, the International Labor Organization (ILO) reported 20.9 million people were subjected to forced labor, and 22% (4.5 million) were victims of forced sexual exploitation. The ILO reported in 2016 that of the estimated 25 million persons in forced labor, 5 million were victims of sexual exploitation. However, due to the covertness of sex trafficking, obtaining accurate, reliable statistics poses a challenge for researchers. The global commercial profits for sexual slavery are estimated to be \$99 billion, according to ILO. In 2005, the figure was given as \$9 billion for the total human trafficking.

Sex trafficking typically occurs in situations from which escape is both difficult and dangerous. Networks of traffickers exist in every country. Therefore, victims are often trafficked across state and country lines which causes jurisdictional concerns and make cases difficult to prosecute.

This type of violence exploits women, men, and children across the United States and around the world. Trafficking victimization and perpetration share risks and consequences associated with child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and youth violence.

Perpetrators of human trafficking often target people who are poor, vulnerable, living in an unsafe situation, or searching for a better life. Victims can come from all backgrounds and become trapped in different locations and situations.

- Many victims are women and girls, though men and boys are also impacted

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- Victims include all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, citizens, non-citizens, and income levels
  - Victims are trapped and controlled through assault, threats, false promises, perceived sense of protection, isolation, shaming, and debt
  - Victims do not have to be physically transported between locations to be victimized

The consequences of sex trafficking are similar to the consequences of sexual violence. Consequences can be immediate and long-term including physical and relationship problems, psychological concerns, and negative chronic health outcomes.

Sex trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand. Therefore, people who purchase commercial sex increase the demand for commercial sex and likewise provide a profit incentive for traffickers, who seek to maximize profits by exploiting trafficking victims. Therefore, buyers of commercial sex need to recognize their involvement in driving demand. By not buying sex and not participating in the commercial sex industry, community members can reduce the demand for sex trafficking.

### Commercial sex exploitation of children

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a grave violation of children's rights and a serious crime. It includes a range of activities such as sex trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism, pornography, early marriage, and the online transmission of children engaged in sexual activities. CSEC is a global problem, affecting both developed and developing countries, and it is often linked to other forms of exploitation and abuse, such as labor trafficking and forced marriage.

It is difficult to accurately quantify the extent of CSEC in the United States, due to underreporting and the challenges of identifying and measuring victims and perpetrators. However, it is clear that CSEC is a significant problem, with estimates ranging from a few thousand to millions of victims. CSEC disproportionately affects marginalized and vulnerable communities, including children from low-income families, children in the child welfare system, and children who are homeless or runaways.

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Combating CSEC requires a multifaceted approach that includes law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute perpetrators, as well as the provision of support and services to help victims recover from their experiences and rebuild their lives. It also requires efforts to address the underlying social and economic conditions that make children vulnerable to exploitation, as well as addressing harmful gender norms and stereotypes that contribute to the problem.

## **Existing Legal Frameworks**

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 is the primary legal document prohibiting the trade of humans.<sup>21</sup> All member nations are subject to the international law, regardless of their voting. However, persecuting those found guilty of trafficking under international law is logistically problematic and costly. International law is therefore most effective when incorporated into domestic legislation. Domestic legal instruments have played a key role in the prevention of human trafficking, notably the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (2000) in the United States, and the Convention on Action against Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (2008) in the European Union. National legislation empowers regional policing forces to actively seek and persecute those suspected of human trafficking.

## **Regional legal instruments on trafficking in persons**

In addition to UNTOC, the Protocol against Trafficking in Persons and national legislation, a few regional initiatives were designed to address trafficking. For example, in 2005 the Council of Europe adopted the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Article 39 addresses the relationship between this Convention and the Protocol. It states that the Convention does not affect the rights and obligations of States under the Protocol, but is intended to enhance the protection afforded by it and further develop the standards contained within it. The 2015 ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the 2002 SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution provide a regional legal framework in Asia.

In regions where no specific regional legal instrument addresses trafficking in persons, other documents may be referred to. In the Arab region, the Arab Model

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Law on Combating Human Trafficking and the Arab Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking were both adopted in 2012. In Africa, several time-bound plans of action were adopted in the last years, such as the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2006) which aimed to prevent and combat trafficking between the European Union and the African Union, or the the ECOWAS Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2002) or the SADC Strategic Plan of Action on Combatting Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2009).

### International principles and guidelines on trafficking in persons

A number of internationally recognized, albeit non-binding principles and guidelines, aid interpretation of the Protocol and guide the implementation of measures to combat trafficking and protect trafficked persons. For example, in 2003 the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking, which call upon States to "adopt appropriate legislative and other measures necessary to establish, as criminal offenses, trafficking, its component acts and related conduct" in accordance with the rules stipulated in the Protocol. The Recommended Principles and Guidelines provide that "the lack of specific and/or adequate legislation on trafficking at the national level has been identified as one of the major obstacles in the fight against trafficking. There is an urgent need to harmonize legal definitions, procedures and cooperation at the national and regional levels in accordance with international standards". There are also a host of policies, guidelines and manuals published by various international entities, including UNODC, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, OSCE, regional initiatives, such as the Bali Process, as well as numerous non-government organizations.

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## GLOBAL IMPACT

### Africa

Sex trafficking of women and children is the second most common type of trafficking for export in Africa. In Ghana, "connection men" or traffickers are witnessed regularly at border crossings and transport individuals via fake visas.

Law enforcement reported that sex traffickers force drug use to persuade these unwilling women.

### Americas

Human trafficking, including sex trafficking, is a serious and complex issue that affects people of all ages, races, and nationalities. The estimates you mentioned are a small snapshot of the extent of this problem, which is often hidden and difficult to quantify. It is important to note that these estimates are only estimates, and the true scale of the problem is likely much larger.

It is also important to recognize that human trafficking is a multifaceted problem that cannot be addressed through a single solution. Factors such as poverty, lack of education, and abuse can contribute to an individual's vulnerability to trafficking, but these issues must be addressed in conjunction with other efforts to prevent trafficking, such as legislation and law enforcement efforts to target traffickers and protect victims.

It is crucial that we work together as a society to raise awareness about this issue and take action to prevent and combat human trafficking. This can include supporting organizations that work to help victims and prevent trafficking, advocating for stronger laws and policies to address the problem, and educating ourselves and others about the signs of trafficking and how to report it.

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## **Asia**

In Thailand, 800,000 children under the age of 16 were involved in prostitution in 2004. Also, according to UNICEF and the International Labour Organization there are 40,000 child prostitutes in Sri Lanka. Thailand and India are in the top five countries with the highest rates of child prostitution.[94] The 2014 Global Slavery Index (GSI) says that there are about 36 million victims of trafficking in the world, and nearly two-thirds of the people are from Asia.

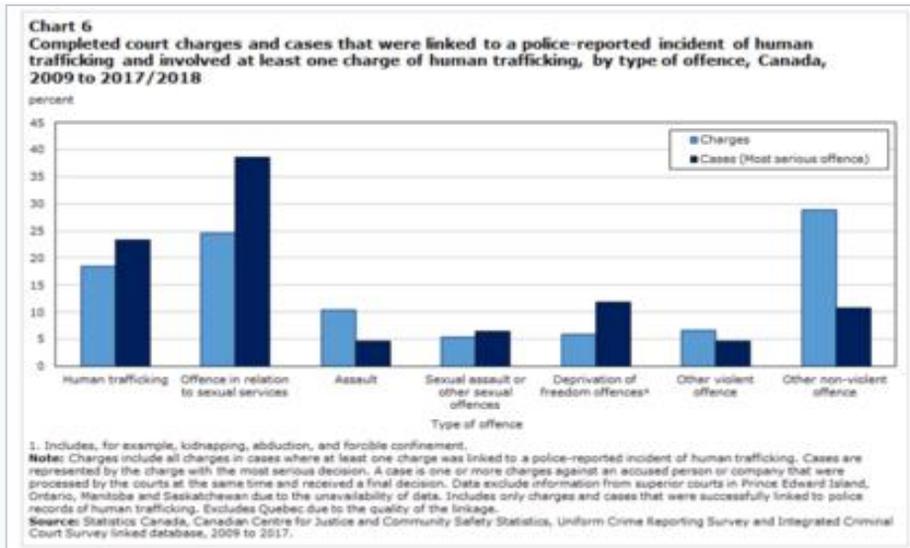
India is at the top of the list with 14 million victims, China comes in second with 3.2 million victims, and Pakistan comes in at third with 2.1 million victims.[95] Cambodia is also a transit, source, and a destination country for trafficking. 36% of trafficked victims in Asia are children, while 64% are adults.

## **Canada**

Human trafficking is a serious issue in Canada, as you noted. The statistics you provided highlight the fact that sex trafficking is a significant part of this problem in Canada, and that it disproportionately affects women and girls. It is also important to recognize that other forms of human trafficking, such as labor trafficking, also occur in Canada.

It is important that we work to address this issue in Canada and around the world. This can involve supporting organizations that help victims and prevent trafficking, advocating for stronger laws and policies to address the problem, and educating ourselves and others about the signs of trafficking and how to report it. It is also important to recognize that human trafficking is often connected to other issues, such as poverty, lack of education, and abuse, and that addressing these issues can also help to prevent trafficking.

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### Offences related to sex trafficking in Canada

In recent years, the Canadian government has focused more on addressing domestic sex trafficking, including prioritizing victims' and witnesses' voices and increasing attention to cases involving minors. The government has also invested \$19 million to combat human and sex trafficking in Canada through a federally collaborative approach that aims to empower survivors, deter trafficking, protect vulnerable populations, and prosecute perpetrators. The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (CCEHT) is the only nationally coordinated organization in Canada specifically focused on ending human trafficking, and works with other organizations, businesses, and stakeholders to establish best practices and provide services for survivors of sex trafficking. There are also other initiatives at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels in Canada working to reduce sex trafficking, including the Traffick Stop campaign led by Covenant House

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Toronto, which aims to educate Canadians about the indicators of sex trafficking.

## **Europe**

In general, countries in the European Union are destinations for individuals who are sex trafficked, while the Balkans and Eastern Europe are source and transit countries for trafficking. In the period from 2010 to 2013, 30,146 individuals were identified as human trafficking victims in the European Union, with 69% of them being sexually exploited and more than 1,000 being children. The majority of these victims were EU citizens, but the most common ethnicities of women who were trafficked to the United Kingdom were Chinese, Brazilian, and Thai. Moldova is a known source country for sex trafficking in Europe, with many victims being tricked into becoming sex slaves and forced into prostitution. The International Organization for Migration found that 61% of victims in the region came from Moldova, 19% came from Romania, and the rest came from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, and Ukraine. Most of these victims had a secondary school education or higher and were around 21 years old on average.

## **Iran**

Iran is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Iranian girls between the ages of 13 and 17 are targeted by traffickers for sale abroad; younger girls may be forced into domestic service until their traffickers consider them old enough to be subjected to child sex trafficking. An increase in the transport of girls from and through Iran en route to other Gulf States for sexual exploitation has been reported from 2009 to 2015; during the reporting period, Iranian trafficking networks subjected Iranian girls to sex trafficking in brothels in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Organized criminal groups kidnap or purchase and force Iranian and immigrant children to work as beggars and street vendors in cities, including Tehran. These children, who may be as young as 3, are coerced through physical and sexual abuse and drug addiction; reportedly many are purchased for as little as \$150. Dozens of girls from Iran are brought to Pakistan to be sold as sex slaves every day. Most of these women have already been raped within the first 24 hours of their departure. It was also said in the Tehran newspapers that senior figures from the government have been involved in buying, selling, and abusing young women and children.

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Runaway girls in Iran are sought out for by the traffickers because it is incredibly easy to put them in the sex trafficking market since they have no home. There are about 84,000 women and girls in prostitution in Tehran. Most of them are on the streets, while others are in the 250 brothels.

## **Israel**

The trafficking of women into prostitution in Israel increased in the early 1990s.<sup>[118]</sup> An estimate of three thousand women were being trafficked in the 1990s and early 2000s. Many of the women came from "post-Soviet states particularly Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and many more." The women ended up in brothels where they worked seven days a week and served up to 30 clients a day. The traffickers used physical violence and threats to dissuade the women from leaving, they also confined women behind locked doors and barred windows. Throughout the 1990s the Israeli authorities failed to view sex trafficking as a problem, they simply viewed it as prostitution. They failed to interfere with brothel operations. If a case was filed the trafficker would have had a plea bargain with light punishment. The women who were being trafficked on the other hand were classified as illegal alien or criminals since they entered Israel illegally, so authorities concentrated on catching the women rather than the traffickers. Usually the victims of trafficking are vulnerable because they live in poverty, or they are not educated. Trafficking affects the mental health of the victim as well as physical health. Israel has become a country of destination for women who had been trafficked from surrounding countries.

In 2000, the Knesset amended the Penal Law to prohibit sex trafficking. In 2006, an Anti-Trafficking Law was enacted. In 2001, Israel was placed in U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report Tier 3. Between 2002 and 2011 Israel was placed in Tier 2. Since 2012 through the recent 2019 report Israel has been ranked Tier 1 (full compliance with the TVPA's minimum standards)

## Interpol's Role of Human Trafficking

Exploitation in different forms

Interpol works to ensure police are trained and equipped to identify and investigate cases of human trafficking in all its forms

## Protecting Children

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Minors are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, as they are more easily manipulated and often don't realize they are the victims of crime. Some may feel they are being protected by their so-called employers, particularly if they are given meals and accommodations.

INTERPOL recognizes the crucial role played by child protection units, social services and NGOs in our member countries. Interpol, regularly engage and involve them in our activities to ensure children are given the proper attention and care throughout investigations and operations.

### INTERPOL's response to human trafficking

INTERPOL, strives to empower police in our member countries to investigate and handle cases of human trafficking. This is done via:

- Training: building long-term capacity by sharing the latest investigation and victim interview techniques with officers;
  - INTERPOL's policing capabilities and expertise: tools and systems for sharing intelligence globally;
  - Global operations: concrete action in the field to disrupt and dismantle human trafficking networks;
  - Partnerships: working across sectors to improve the ways in which trafficking can be identified, reported and investigated;
  - Events and conferences: gathering experts from across the world;
  - Specialist groups which focus on frontline police work and the exchange of operational information;
  - Resources: covering general information, international legislation, and law enforcement guides and manuals.
- **Agenda Item 2- Investigating the reports of war crimes and violation of humanitarian law at Tigray war**

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## KEY TERMS:

1. **War crimes:** Serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) that are committed during an armed conflict. Examples of war crimes include murder, torture, rape, and the use of prohibited weapons.
2. **Humanitarian law:** The body of international law that regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to protect civilians and other non-combatants. This includes the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, as well as other international agreements and customary law.
3. **International Criminal Court (ICC):** An independent, international tribunal that has the authority to investigate and prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.
4. **Fact-finding mission:** A team of experts or investigators who are tasked with gathering and evaluating information about alleged violations of IHL or human rights.
5. **Eyewitness testimony:** Firsthand accounts of events or incidents provided by individuals who were present at the time they occurred.
6. **Forensic evidence:** Physical evidence that is collected and analyzed using scientific methods and techniques in order to establish facts or to support or refute a hypothesis.
7. **International humanitarian organizations:** non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide assistance to individuals affected by armed conflict or other disasters and seek to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable populations.

## COUNTRY BACKGROUND:

Ethiopia has a long and complex history. It is located in the Horn of Africa and is one of the oldest countries in the world. It has a rich cultural heritage and has been home to various empires and civilizations over the centuries.

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Ethiopia was one of the first places in Africa to adopt Christianity as a state religion, and it has a strong tradition of monasticism. It was also the first independent African country to modernize, and it has a long history of resistance to colonialism.

In more recent times, Ethiopia has faced challenges such as civil wars, famines, and political instability. However, it has also made significant progress in areas such as economic development and improving education and health care.

## **HISTORY OF ETHIOPIAN WARS:**

1. The First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896): This war was fought between the Kingdom of Italy and the Ethiopian Empire and ended with Ethiopia's defeat.
2. The Second Italo-Ethiopian War (1935-1936): This war was fought between Italy and Ethiopia and resulted in the occupation of Ethiopia by Italian forces.
3. The Ethiopian Civil War (1974-1991): This civil war was fought between various factions within Ethiopia and resulted in the overthrow of the communist Derg regime and the rise of the current government.
4. The Eritrean-Ethiopian War (1998-2000): This border war was fought between Ethiopia and Eritrea and resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of lives.
5. The Tigray War (2020-present): This ongoing conflict is being fought between the Ethiopian federal government and the regional government of Tigray and has resulted in significant casualties and a humanitarian crisis.

## **ORIGIN OF THE TIGRAY WAR:**

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The Tigray War is an ongoing conflict in Ethiopia that began in November 2020. It is being fought between the Ethiopian federal government and the regional government of Tigray, which is located in the north of the country.

The conflict began when the regional government of Tigray held elections in September 2020, which were not recognized by the federal government. In response, the federal government launched a military operation against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the ruling party in Tigray.

The conflict has resulted in significant casualties and a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of people being displaced and reports of human rights abuses on both sides. It has also had regional and international repercussions, with several countries calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.



## **HUMANATARIAN CRISIS ON TIGRAY WAR**

The Tigray War has caused a significant humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia, with thousands of people being displaced and in need of assistance. The United Nations estimates that more than 2.3 million people in Tigray are in need of humanitarian assistance, including food, water, and medical care.

There have also been reports of human rights abuses, including sexual violence and the targeting of civilians by both sides. The conflict has disrupted essential services such as healthcare and education, and there are concerns about the potential for further deterioration of the situation.

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The humanitarian situation in Tigray has been made more difficult by the fact that access to the region has been restricted, which has made it challenging for aid organizations to deliver assistance. There have also been reports of looting and destruction of infrastructure, which has further exacerbated the crisis.



© WFP/Claire Nevill

WFP distribution of emergency food rations to conflict affected communities, Ethiopia.

## **Tigrayan women and girls not spared**

According to the Commission chairperson, **rape and crimes of sexual violence had happened “on a staggering scale”** since the earliest days of the conflict, “with Ethiopian and Eritrean forces and regional militias targeting Tigrayan women and girls with particular violence and brutality”.

**Tigrayan forces had also committed rape and sexual violence against Amhara women and girls and Eritrean refugees**, Ms. Murungi said, highlighting the devastating long-term impacts for the survivors that included trauma, unwanted pregnancy, and HIV infection.

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## **FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION**

The Tigray War has disrupted food production and supply chains in the region, leading to widespread food insecurity. According to the United Nations, more than 2.3 million people in Tigray are in need of food assistance.

To address this need, the UN and other international organizations have been working to deliver food aid to the region. However, access to Tigray has been restricted, which has made it challenging to reach those in need. There have also been reports of looting and destruction of infrastructure, which has further disrupted aid efforts.

Despite these challenges, aid organizations have been able to deliver some assistance, including through the distribution of food, water, and other basic necessities. However, the scale of the crisis means that much more is needed to address the needs of those affected by the conflict.

The Tigray War in Ethiopia is causing a severe humanitarian crisis, including a risk of famine. The conflict has disrupted access to essential services and there have been reports of human rights abuses and looting. The Ethiopian government, in collaboration with Eritrea, is using starvation as a weapon of war in Tigray, which amounts to genocide. The international community must take urgent action to end the war and provide humanitarian aid, including food assistance, to those in need. In the long term, efforts should be made to rebuild Ethiopia's food systems to make them more resilient to future crises.

## **INTERNAL AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT**

The Tigray War has resulted in significant internal and forced displacement, with over one million people estimated to have been internally displaced and over 50,000 seeking refuge in Sudan. There have been concerns over possible COVID-

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19 outbreaks in crowded refugee camps, and the humanitarian situation has continued to worsen in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions due to both the conflict itself and bureaucratic obstruction. The western zone of Tigray has been under the control of Amhara regional authorities, and there have been reports of ethnically motivated violence and forced displacement, with around 45,000 civilians believed to have been forced to leave the area. In addition, the war has resulted in the displacement of nearly 100,000 Eritrean refugees who were living in four camps in Tigray, with around 20,000 still unaccounted for as of February 2021.

## REACTIONS TO TIGRAY WAR

There have been a range of reactions to the Tigray War in **Ethiopia** from various actors. The United Nations and other international organizations have called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and have expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis in the region. Some countries have imposed sanctions on Ethiopia in response to the conflict, while others have provided humanitarian aid.

**Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed** has defended the government's military operation in Tigray, saying it was necessary to restore law and order. **The Tigray People's Liberation Front** (TPLF), the ruling party in Tigray, has accused the federal government of carrying out a campaign of ethnic cleansing and has called for international intervention to protect civilians.

There have also been protests and demonstrations in support of the **TPLF** and against the federal government's actions in Tigray. Some have called for the international community to do more to address the crisis and protect civilians.

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## DOMESTIC REACTIONS

In November 2020, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) expressed concern about the outbreak of the Tigray War in Ethiopia and called for consensus and dialogue as a way to reach a mutually beneficial solution. The TPLF denied allegations that its forces had surrendered, stating that they were still holding and could not be defeated. Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn argued that calls for peace and dialogue by international observers were misguided and accused TPLF officials of attempting to manipulate the international community and present themselves as victims in order to retain power and absolve themselves of past crimes. The Ethiopian Attorney General stated that the government's actions were necessary to prevent the possibility of descending into civil war.

In September 2021, a group of 24 Ethiopian civil society organizations called for peace in the country, highlighting the negative impact of the conflict on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly.

## OTHER COUNTRIES REACTIONS TO THE WAR

**The United States** has called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities involved in human rights abuses in Tigray. The US has also provided humanitarian aid to the region.

**The European Union** has also called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis in Tigray. The EU has provided humanitarian aid to the region and has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities involved in human rights abuses.

**China**, a major economic partner of Ethiopia, has called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has provided humanitarian aid to Tigray.

Other countries, such as **Sudan**, have also called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and have provided humanitarian aid to the region.

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## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REACTIONS**

In November 2020, the United Nations (UN) warned that a full-scale conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region could lead to a major humanitarian crisis. In March 2021, plans for the UN Security Council to issue a statement calling for an end to the violence in Tigray were canceled due to opposition from China and Russia.

In November 2021, the UN reported that all sides in the conflict had committed violations of international human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law, some of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The UN Security Council unanimously issued a statement calling for a cessation of hostilities in November 2021, with a follow-up meeting scheduled for the following week.

In October 2022, as the war escalated following the collapse of a months-long ceasefire, UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed alarm that the situation in Ethiopia was "spiraling out of control" and urged that peace talks be arranged as soon as possible. The European Commission mobilized €4 million in emergency aid to assist Ethiopian refugees who had fled to Sudan. The European Union (EU) also planned to cut aid to and impose sanctions on other regions of Ethiopia due to the conflict.

In December 2021, EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell criticized the EU's inability to properly respond to large-scale human rights violations in Ethiopia and described the situation as one of his "biggest frustrations" of the year. The African Union (AU) appealed for a cessation of hostilities and protection of civilians in Ethiopia and stated that the UN and EU should not intervene until an African Union envoy was sent to the country. The Chairperson of the AU Commission defended the Ethiopian government's efforts to preserve the unity, stability, and constitutional order of the country, but also called for attention to be paid to the needs of refugees and displaced people in the region.

## **POSSIBLE ACTIONS TAKEN BY INTERPOL**

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INTERPOL is an international organization that facilitates cooperation between law enforcement agencies around the world. It does not have a direct role in conflicts or wars. However, INTERPOL can support law enforcement efforts related to conflicts or wars in various ways.

For example, INTERPOL can assist in the investigation of crimes committed during a conflict or war, including crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes such as looting and smuggling. It can also help to locate and arrest individuals wanted for such crimes.

In the case of the Tigray War in Ethiopia, INTERPOL may be able to assist law enforcement agencies in investigations related to crimes committed during the conflict, if requested to do so by member countries. However, it is ultimately up to individual member countries to request INTERPOL's assistance and for the organization to decide how best to support their efforts.

## **UN/EU DECISIONS AND COMMISSION PAPERS**

### **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission**

#### **Rapid Investigation into Grave Human Rights Violation in Maikadra Preliminary Findings**

**24 November 2020**

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC/The Commission) deployed a team of human rights experts to Maikadra, in Tigray Region's Western Zone, for a rapid investigation into purported mass killings of civilians and related human rights violations.

Between November 14th, 2020, and November 19th, 2020, the EHRC team travelled between Maikadra, Abrahajira, Sanja, Gondar, Dansha and Humera and

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gathered testimonies and other evidence from victims, eyewitnesses, families of victims, first responders, military personnel and various other sources including government authorities who were present at the time of EHRC's visit. The team also visited hospitals and health facilities and talked to survivors and other relevant authorities.

This report presents the mission's key preliminary findings along with highlights of ongoing human rights concerns and recommendations. The full report will follow with additional detailed and verified evidence.

**Link:**

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220604094356/https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vS-0N8xCDZDRAM5lzBAELTVjqfKLrzJha8xpKdqh1OE/mobilebasic>

UNSC Reports and Meetings

**Link:** <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/ethiopia/>

European Parliament resolution of 6 October 2022 on the recent humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, notably that of children (2022/2858(RSP)) [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0351\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0351_EN.html)

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