



MIDDLE EAST RESEARCH GUIDE

Major Forms of Trafficking

- Migrant Domestic Work/ Migrant Workers/ Labor Exploitation
- Sex Trafficking/ Forced Marriage/ Child Marriage
- Child Labor Trafficking/ Child Soldiers
- Organ Trafficking

Trafficking Routes

- Syria → Lebanon/Jordan
- Southeast Asia → the Gulf/ Lebanon/ Jordan
- Horn of Africa → the Gulf/ Lebanon/ Jordan
- Horn of Africa → Israel/ Palestine

Intergovernmental Organizations

- Arab Trade Union Confederation Global Welfare Association
- League of Arab States
- Gulf Cooperation Council

Middle Eastern Countries

Jordan	UAE
Lebanon	Saud Arabia
Syria	Kuwait
Iraq	Bahrain
Iran	Oman
Qatar	Egypt
Yemen	Israel
	Palestine

Resources

Due to the diversity of human trafficking related activity in this region, it is difficult to always assess the full scope of the issue in the Middle East. However, several resources do this well. Standard worldwide publications include the Global Slavery Index's section on the Middle East and North Africa and the US Department of State's 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report. Other regional reports include the International Labor Organization's Report, "Tricked and Trapped: Human Trafficking in the Middle East"¹ and ECPAT's Regional Report on commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Middle East and North Africa.² More specific country or region reports include but are certainly not limited to:

- ECPAT'S country reports on Jordan,³ Lebanon,⁴ and Egypt.⁵
- The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative reports on Syria, Iraq,⁶ and Egypt.⁷
- The International Centre for Migration Policy Development report on Syrian Refugees.⁸
- Freedom Fund's "Struggling to Survive: Slavery and Exploitation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon."⁹
- "Combatting Trafficking in Persons in Accordance with the Principles of Islamic Law."¹⁰
- "Enabling Access to Justice": A CSO Perspective on the Challenges of Realizing the Rights of South Asian Migrants in the Middle East.¹¹
- Sinai Trafficking resources, which include "I Wanted to Lay Down and Die,"¹² "Egypt/Sudan: Refugees Face Kidnapping for Ransom, Brutal Treatment and Human Trafficking,"¹³ and "Human Trafficking in the Sinai: Refugees Between Life and Death."¹⁴

Terms

Kafala/ Sponsorship System: "Under this system, a local citizen or local company (the kafeel) must sponsor foreign workers in order for their work visas and residency to be valid. This means that an individual's right to work and legal presence is dependent on his or her employer. With tight restrictions on changing employers, this dependency renders workers vulnerable to exploitation."¹⁵

Sinai Trafficking: This type of trafficking occurs when refugees from the Horn of Africa, most often Eritreans, are kidnapped and trafficked into the Sinai Desert, where they are tortured and killed for ransom from their families.

Summer Marriage: A temporary marriage practice where men from the Gulf come to Egypt to marry women for short periods of time, often over the summer months. These marriages are not legally binding. Critics of the practice say that this type of marriage contract sexually exploits women, who are often young and do not have a choice in the marriage brokerage process.

FIFA World Cup 2022: The 2022 FIFA World Cup is taking place in Qatar, which has been drawing concerns over migrant labor exploitation and working conditions during the construction process.

Anti-Trafficking Legislation

Most countries in the Middle East have defined anti-trafficking legislation specifically dedicated to clearly outlawing most forms of slavery and providing appropriate punishment. Yemen and Iran are the only countries in the Middle East that have not signed or ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹⁶ To see all of the anti-trafficking legislation put forth by countries in the Middle East, go to the Protection Project's International Anti-Trafficking Law Library to obtain PDF versions of anti-trafficking laws (warning: not all of them have English translations!)¹⁷

Anti-Trafficking Organizations

There are several very important and helpful organizations that aid victims of human trafficking within the Middle East region, especially migrant workers experiencing exploitation or forced labor. The International Organization for Migration works in every country in the Middle East save for Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁸ MigrantRights.Org is another great resource for migrant workers seeking help, and offers an interactive map that gives insight into what resources migrant workers have in countries all over the Middle East.¹⁹ Other notable organizations include ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking), ASSAF (Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel),²⁰ Tamkeen (Jordanian NGO focusing on migrant workers and trafficking victims),²¹ the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, the Qatar Foundation for Combatting Human Trafficking, and KAFA (enough) Exploitation and Trafficking (a Lebanese NGO focused on fighting sex trafficking).²² Bahrain has also recently instituted a National Referral System for Victims of Trafficking in Persons. The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights is another great organization that focuses on helping women attain legal justice.²³

2017 TIP Report²⁴

The Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report for 2017 reported that Israel was the only country in the Middle East that reached Tier 1 status this year. Most countries were either ranked Tier 2 or placed on the Tier 2 Watch List. Tier 2 countries include Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait were placed on the Watch List. Iran and Syria both ranked as Tier 3 countries, and Yemen was reported as a special case due to the current conflict there.

Endnotes

1. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_211214.pdf
2. <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2.-Region-MENA.pdf>
3. <http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/GlobalMonitoringCountry-for-JORDAN.pdf>
4. http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/A4A2011_MENA_LEBANON.pdf
5. http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Global_Monitoring_Report-EGYPT.pdf
6. <https://www.childsoldiers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Syria-Iraq-January-2017-Report-1.pdf>
7. <https://www.child-soldiers.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c38950de-a77f-41cc-a153-88f4bdc74e1b>
8. http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Targeting_Vulnerabilities_EN_SOFT_1.pdf
9. <http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Lebanon-Report-FINAL-8April16-1.pdf>
10. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Islamic_Law_TIP_E_ebook_18_March_2010_V0985841.pdf
11. http://www.gaatw.org/publications/GAATW_Enabling%20Access%20to%20Justice_2017.pdf
12. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0214_ForUpload_1_0.pdf
13. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr04/001/2013/en/>
14. http://www.ehrea.org/report_Human_Trafficking_in_the_Sinai_20120927.pdf
15. <https://www.migrant-rights.org/campaign/end-the-kafala-system/>
16. https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&clang=en
17. <http://www.protectionproject.org/resources/law-library/international-anti-trafficking/>
18. http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Targeting_Vulnerabilities_EN_SOFT_1.pdf
19. <http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Lebanon-Report-FINAL-8April16-1.pdf>
20. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Islamic_Law_TIP_E_ebook_18_March_2010_V0985841.pdf
21. http://www.gaatw.org/publications/GAATW_Enabling%20Access%20to%20Justice_2017.pdf
22. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0214_ForUpload_1_0.pdf
23. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr04/001/2013/en/>
24. http://www.ehrea.org/report_Human_Trafficking_in_the_Sinai_20120927.pdf