



HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN UKRAINE – SITUATION ANALYSIS, JUNE 2016

In January-June 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Ukraine identified and assisted **491 victims of trafficking (VoTs)** who suffered from forced labour and sexual exploitation in 13 different countries, including Ukraine. This is 59% more identified victims year-to-year from 2015.

The Russian Federation remained the top **destination country** for trafficking from Ukraine with 68% of cases in the first six months of 2016 (64% in 2015 and 77% in 2014 and 2013). The EU continued to occupy second place, with 17% of victims returning from its member countries (20% in 2015 and 15% in 2014), over 80% of whom were trafficked to only one country, Poland. Other countries of destination in 2016 have included Turkey, UAE, Israel, Moldova (incl. the self-proclaimed Republic of Transnistria), and Belarus. The number of domestic trafficking cases increased, amounting to 7% in the first six months of 2016 (compared to under 3% in 2015, 2% in 2014, 15% in 2012, and 9% in 2013) and includes a considerable number of cases of trafficking to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Following a stable trend of the past several years, an overwhelming majority of victims identified in the first half of 2016 had been trafficked for forced labour (93%, compared to 91% in 2015 and 2014 and 89% in 2013). The most prevalent sectors for this type of exploitation have been manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. A new form of exploitation that has come to IOM Ukraine’s attention in 2016 is trafficking in persons for illicit drug smuggling. Two cases involving in total dozens of Ukrainian nationals recruited as couriers and used, without their knowledge, for transporting narcotics within and across international borders were referred to IOM in the first half of 2016.

Men have so far prevailed in the 2016 caseload (59%). Most of the victims (63%) identified in 2016 are **under the age of 35**, including six children. Eighty (80%) per cent have university or vocational school education and 72% come from cities and towns, which is a reflection of the deepening economic hardship in Ukraine. **Recruitment** is chiefly carried out locally, through informal contacts (64%), the Internet (23%), and local newspapers or street advertisement (18%). The average **period of exploitation** was between three and six months, after which the victims were either released by their exploiters or escaped.

Ukraine continues to cope with mass displacement from the Donbas region and Crimea. Internally displaced persons are targeted by unscrupulous intermediaries who offer brokerage services for emigration and receiving refugee status abroad. Nineteen (19) cases of trafficking (or attempted trafficking) of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been recorded by IOM in 2015-16, some of them involving several victims. The situation in the non-government-controlled territory (NGCA)¹ and along the contact line remains of high concern. IOM conducts regular monitoring through its press review, interviewing local NGOs and newly-arrived IDPs, as well as analyzing the statistics of the 527 Hotline (see below).

Government response to human trafficking

The Government of Ukraine (GoU) continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment to addressing human trafficking and achieved some notable benchmarks between January and June 2016. The new National Action Plan for 2016-2020 was adopted in February 2016 and contains activities to address the U.S. TIP Report, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), and EU-Ukraine Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) recommendations. The total funding needed for the NAP’s implementation is estimated at UAH 38,250,100 (~1.5 mln USD), of which UAH 1,844,000 (approx. USD 74,000) was allocated from the State Budget and 1,096,100 UAH (~USD 44,000) from local budgets. Thus, most of the CT needs are still expected to be covered from external sources (UAH 35,310,000, or ~USD 1,412,000).

The National Coordinator - Ministry of Social Policy (MSP) - sustained its efforts to streamline cooperation and dialogue with relevant state actors, particularly law enforcement, as well as civil society, donors, and international organizations. In January 2016, the Ministry issued a joint decree with the Ministry of Interior aimed to facilitate data exchange between social protection departments and police at the local level. The first since meeting of the high-level Interagency Coordination Council for Gender Policies, Demographics and Countering Human Trafficking since 2010 was held in March 2016 and focused specifically on counter-trafficking issues. Additionally, between January and June 2016, regular informal coordination working group meetings were initiated and chaired by the MSP.

¹ The following repeated trends have been identified through anecdotal evidence: kidnapping of women and girls who are then subjected to sexual exploitation and/or forced labour; forced recruitment/kidnapping of men and boys for exploitation in the armed conflict and for forced labor; labour exploitation of detainees by the anti-government forces; and increased scope of child begging.

The National CT Coordinator has been particularly successful in its efforts to enhance victim identification, which resulted in a significant increase in the number of certified VoTs. Since the adoption of relevant regulations in the fall of 2012, 315 VoT status applications (67 in 2016) were submitted by the local state administrations to the MSP, 227 of which were approved (63 in 2016) and 86 rejected (four in 2016). The MSP has consistently and pro-actively pushed for increased referral through the National Referral Mechanism and decreased status application rejection rates (from 47% in 2014, to 10% in 2015 and 6% in 2016). This progress can also be attributed to the good results of the capacity building efforts undertaken by the MSP in cooperation with IOM, OSCE PCU, and NGOs.

The CT Department of the National Police of Ukraine (NPU) detected and documented 60 trafficking in persons cases in the first half of 2016, a 35% decrease compared to the same period of 2015, and identified 44 victims of trafficking (89 in the same period of 2015), including 32 women and 12 men (one is a child). The number of cases submitted to courts with accusatory acts has also decreased, from 71 in January – June 2015 to 26 in the same period of 2016. The negative tendency can be attributed to the ongoing reform of the NPU and the lack of clarity regarding the future of the CT department's leadership and staff.

Main challenges

- **Insufficient resources dedicated to countering human trafficking at the national and local level, while new serious threats emerge in this sphere.**
- Growing risk groups and lack of socio-economic alternatives to unsafe migration for them.
- Need to harmonize the counter-trafficking legislation with other laws.
- Adjustments to the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking necessary, including those in line with the ongoing administrative reform.
- Need to formalize the status of NGOs within the NRM and establish mechanisms that would ensure their access to state funding.
- Urgent need to streamline prosecution of human trafficking and termination of emerging trafficking channels.

IOM Ukraine's Counter-Trafficking Programme

- The IOM Mission in Ukraine has cooperated on human trafficking prevention and reintegration with the Government of Ukraine, a network of over 30 local NGOs, and other international organizations since 1998.
- IOM supports the **National Counter-Trafficking and Migrant Advice Hotline 527**, which assists over 20,000 persons annually.
- IOM cooperates with law enforcement in, *inter alia*, **capacity building on the investigation and prosecution** of trafficking-related crimes, networking with countries of transit and destination, development of witness protection systems, and other areas.
- Since 2000, the IOM Mission in Ukraine has provided **reintegration assistance to 12,186 victims of trafficking**, which included legal aid, medical care, psychological counseling, family support, vocational training, and other types of assistance based on individual needs. IOM operates a Medical Rehabilitation Centre which has provided free-of-charge comprehensive medical care to 2,976 victims of trafficking. More than 400 former victims and internally-displaced persons have benefited from IOM's Micro-Enterprise Development Programme, setting up over 300 micro-enterprises and creating hundreds new jobs.
- IOM implements a variety of the **human trafficking prevention** activities targeting vulnerable and at-risk population, including youth, IDPs, unemployed, potential labor migrants and also state and non-government professionals who might be in contact with potential victims. **Awareness raising** and outreach to general population is, among others, done through designated counter-trafficking website www.stoptrafficking.org
- Since July 2014, the IOM Mission in Ukraine has disseminated **close to 200,000 copies** of safe migration and trafficking prevention information materials to IDPs throughout Ukraine.

For more information please contact the IOM Ukraine Communications Officer Ms. Varvara ZHLUKTENKO:
Tel.: +38 044 568 5015; email: vzhluktenko@iom.int; iomkievcomm@iom.int