



RESEARCH
GUIDE
**SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA**

PREPARED BY

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ANGOLA • BENIN • BOTSWANA
BURKINA FASO • BURUNDI • CABO VERDE • CAMEROON
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC • CHAD • COMOROS
REP. OF CONGO • DEM. REP. OF CONGO • COTE D'IVOIRE
EQUATORIAL GUINEA • ERITREA • ESWATINI • ETHIOPIA
GABON • GAMBIA • GHANA • GUINEA • GUINEA-BISSAU
KENYA • LESOTHO • LIBERIA • MADAGASCAR • MALAWI
MALI • MAURITANIA • MAURITIUS • MOZAMBIQUE • NAMIBIA
NIGER • NIGERIA • RWANDA • SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
SENEGAL • SEYCHELLES • SIERRA LEONE • SOMALIA
SOUTH AFRICA • SOUTH SUDAN • SUDAN • TANZANIA
TOGO • UGANDA • ZAMBIA • ZIMBABWE

This research guide follows the regional division defined by the [United Nations Statistics Division](#)

Of the list above, the [British Indian Ocean Territory](#), the [French Southern Territories](#), [Mayotte](#), [Réunion](#), and [Saint Helena](#) ([Saint Helena](#), [Ascension](#) and [Tristan da Cunha](#)) are dependencies or overseas territories of European countries; [Western Sahara](#) is a disputed territory.

MAJOR TRAFFICKING ROUTES:

- Sub-Saharan Africa → Western Europe
- Sub-Saharan Africa → Southern Europe
- Southern Africa → Middle East
- Southern Africa → Northern Africa
- Eastern Africa → Southern Africa

SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY:

Migrant Smuggling: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines [smuggling](#) as the “facilitation, for financial or other material gain, of irregular entry into a country where the migrant is not a national or resident.” Smuggling is distinct from trafficking as the participant has given their consent to be transported. However, migrants

who originally agreed to be smuggled can be exploited and trafficked against their will during their journey. Migrants' increased vulnerability to trafficking during transport makes the line between human trafficking and migrant smuggling harder to define. Smuggled migrants are often held in debt bondage or sold on to traffickers on arrival in the destination country. Sub-Saharan African countries, particularly Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, The Republic of Congo, Côte D'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eswaniti, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, Surinam, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Somalia serve as both an origin, transitory site, and destination for migrant smuggling.

Baby Factories: any location where women are encouraged or forced to become pregnant and give up their newborns for sale. Traffickers operate “[baby factories](#)”, often disguised



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as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centers, where traffickers hold women against their will, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver a child. The traffickers sell the children, sometimes with the intent to exploit them in forced labor and sex trafficking. This is particularly an issue in Nigeria.

Forced/Exploitative Begging: This recently identified form of trafficking occurs across the globe. Regionally it is connected mainly to Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, DRC, Côte D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Victims are forced to beg through threat of severe violence or torture. With many migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers passing through or resettling across Sub-Saharan Africa, there remains a large number of victims to exploit as forced beggars, including children.

Baby harvesting: Child harvesting or baby harvesting refers to the systematic sale of human children, typically for adoption by families in the developed world, but sometimes for other purposes, including trafficking. The term covers a wide variety of situations and degrees of economic, social, and physical coercion. Child harvesting programs or the locations at which they take place are sometimes referred to as baby factories or baby farms. (see above definition of "baby factories")

Boko Haram: (*refers to itself as "Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad" (JASD); Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad*) and "Nigerian Taliban"—other translations and variants are used) a Nigeria-based group that seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a regime based on Islamic law. It is popularly known in Nigerian and Western media as "Boko Haram," which means "Western education is forbidden" (the word boko is a holdover from the colonial English word for book). The current situation mostly affects women and girls who are trafficked within the Boko Haram conflict as demonstrated by the well publicized abductions of the Chibok and the Dapchi girls.

Child soldiers: Any child under 18 who is used for any military purpose. A UN report verified that 8,521 children were used as soldiers in 2020, while another 2,674 children were killed and 5,748 injured in various conflicts. 40% of child soldiers are in Africa according to some estimates. Eastern DRC has amongst the highest numbers of child soldiers in Africa and the world. There is no precise data, but it is certain that thousands of boys and girls have been actively recruited or conscripted, accounting for up to 60% of militia forces. Known locally as "kadagos", a Swahili term meaning "little ones", child soldiers have been used by all sides throughout the decades of conflict in the region.

Domestic servitude: In this type of forced labor, domestic workers (maids, servants, housekeepers...) who are most often girls aged 8 to 15 years old, are engaged to do domestic work. These children often come from poor, rural areas and are employed,



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often through force, coercion, or deception, for domestic service in the homes of wealthier families in the urban centers. The practice is condemned by many human rights organizations, as children are often unable to attend school, employed with little to no compensation, and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Some of these children migrate from Sub-Saharan Africa in an effort to support their families.

Juju and voodoo: Spiritual belief systems that have been used as a coercive tool to traffic women. The terms refer to the spiritual belief system practiced mainly in West African countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana, although its assumptions are shared by most African people. The belief system may be used for constructive purposes as well as for more malevolent purposes. Traffickers have used juju and voodoo rituals as an effective control mechanism and catalyst to instill profound fear amongst victims of human trafficking.

Organ trafficking: the illegal and non-consensual acquisition and distribution of human organs. Trafficking in persons for the purpose of removal of organs is a form of human trafficking in which an individual is exploited for bodily organs. This term includes the "recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, of a position of vulnerability, of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs, tissues or cells for transplantation." Such practices have increased exponentially in recent decades with the growing demand for live-donor organ transplants. For more in-depth information on organ trafficking see the HTS [Organ Trafficking: How Structural Inequality Leads to Individual Exploitation](#).

Sex tourism: the practice of traveling to foreign countries, often on a different continent, with the intention of engaging in sexual activity or relationships in exchange for money or lifestyle support. This practice predominantly operates in countries where sex work is legal but there are countries where laws prohibit sex work. The World Tourism Organization of the United Nations has acknowledged this industry is organized both within and outside the structured laws and networks created by them. In Africa this is a particular concern in the Gambia, Senegal and Kenya where sex tourism has a long connection with sex trafficking, mainly of women and young girls.

Supply chain: In commerce, a supply chain is a network of facilities that procure raw materials, transform them into intermediate goods and then final products to customers through a distribution system. It refers to the network of organizations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in delivering a product or service to a consumer. Certain supply chains across Africa (notably in the cocoa industry and mining sector) have been known to incorporate labor trafficking in the early stages of production.



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Talibé: A boy studying the Quran at a daara (Quranic school), usually in West Africa. These boys are often made to engage by their 'spiritual leaders,' or marabout, in forced labor in the form of forced begging. They must beg for rice or coins in the streets, are beaten into submission if they refuse and punished if they try to run away. Often the Talibé are orphans who have no parents or guardians.

Transplant tourism: Overseas organ transplantation in which a patient obtains an organ through the organ trade or other means the organ trade may take other forms as well. The scarcity of organs available, mostly to patients in the global North, has led to the practice of organ trafficking, mostly from those in the global South. For a definition of organ trafficking please see above. For more in-depth information on organ trafficking see the HTS [Organ Trafficking: How Structural Inequality Leads to Individual Exploitation](#).

Ukuthwala: A form of abduction in South Africa that involves kidnapping a girl or a young woman by a man and his friends or peers with the intention of compelling the girl or young woman's family to endorse marriage negotiations. In ancient Africa, particularly among the Nguni, Ukuthwala was a condoned albeit abnormal path to marriage targeted at certain girls or women of marriageable age. But it did not involve raping or having consensual sex with the girl until marriage requirements had been concluded.

Irregular Migration: Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination. This type of migration can render migrants vulnerable to abuse, trafficking and exploitation as a result of the migrants' irregular status. The irregular routes that are used are often precarious and can be deadly. Additionally, irregular migrants may have arrived in a state through regular pathways but become an irregular migrant for reasons such as denied asylum claims, becoming a victim of trafficking, etc. Please also refer to the note below on the Irregular Migration.

Note on Irregular Migration from the International Organization on Migration (IOM): Although a universally accepted definition of irregular migration does not exist, the term is generally used to identify persons moving outside regular migration channels.

The fact that they migrate irregularly does not relieve States from the obligation to protect their rights. Moreover, categories of migrants who may not have any other choice but to use irregular migration channels can also include refugees, victims of trafficking, or unaccompanied migrant children. The fact that they use irregular migration pathways does not imply that States are not, in some circumstances, obliged to provide them with some forms of protection under international law, including access to international protection for asylum seekers fleeing persecution, conflicts or generalized violence.

In addition, refugees are protected under international law against being penalized for unauthorized entry or stay if they have traveled from a place where they were at risk.

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(Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) 189 UNTS 137, Art. 31(1)).

Useful French search terms (if searching for information on Burundi, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Comoros, Cameroon, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Mauritius, Seychelles)

- La traite des personnes/ le trafic d'êtres humains: human trafficking
- Traite à des fins d'exploitation sexuelle: sex trafficking
- Traite à des fins d'exploitation de main-d'œuvres: labor trafficking

TIP REPORT:

The U.S. State Department releases an annual [Trafficking in Persons Report \(TIP\)](#), which ranks countries on a four-tier system based on their efforts to combat human trafficking. TIP Reports can be found on the [State Department's website](#) and the [HTS database](#). Tip Report rankings for 2022 are listed below, for a more detailed breakdown by country, please refer to the 2022 Tip report where information is listed alphabetically.

The US State Department places each country in the Report onto one of four tiers, as mandated by the [TVPA](#). This placement is based not on the size of a country's problem but on the extent of government efforts to meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking (see page 58-61 of the 2022 TIP Report), which are generally consistent with the [Palermo Protocol](#). While Tier 1 is the highest ranking, it does not mean that a

country has no human trafficking problem or that it is doing enough to address the crime. Rather, a Tier 1 ranking indicates that a government has made efforts to address the problem that meet the TVPA's minimum standards. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, governments need to demonstrate appreciable progress each year in combating trafficking. Tier 1 represents a responsibility rather than a reprieve.

MAJOR TYPES OF TRAFFICKING:

- **Forced marriage**
- **Sex trafficking**
- **Child labor**
- **Domestic servitude**
- **Organ trafficking**
- **Child soldiers**
- **Baby harvesting (trafficking for adoption)**
- **Forced begging**



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2022 TIP REPORT RANKINGS FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- **Tier 1:** Namibia is the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa on Tier 1
- **Tier 2:** Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria Sudan, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda
- **Tier 2 Watchlist:** Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Como, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritania, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- **Tier 3:** Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, South Sudan
- **Special Case:** Somalia- Somalia remains a Special Case for the 20th consecutive year. The country continued to face protracted conflict, insecurity, and ongoing humanitarian crises, while the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the crises and further hampered government, international community, and NGO operations.
- There is no mention of São Tomé and Príncipe in the 2022 TIP Report

ANTI-TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have defined anti-trafficking legislation dedicated to outlawing most forms of slavery and providing appropriate punishment. Every country other than Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania has 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.

The International Labor Organization's law database possesses anti-trafficking legislation under "forced labor" for Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Rep. of Congo, Comoros, Côte D'Ivoire, DRC, Eswatini, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In 2021 Sub-Saharan Africa as a group had 1,686 prosecutions, 659 convictions and 11,450 victim identifications.



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KEY ORGANIZATIONS

There are several helpful organizations that aid victims of human trafficking within Sub-Saharan Africa, especially irregular migrants and children who face commercial sexual exploitation. [The International Organization for Migration](#) has worked in or with every country in Sub-Saharan Africa except Equatorial Guinea. All countries except Equatorial Guinea and Tanzania are member states of the [IOM](#).

Notable local organizations include:

- [End Child Prostitution and Trafficking \(ECPAT\)](#)
- [Heartland Alliance](#) In Sub-Saharan Africa, Heartland Alliance International (HAI) addresses the HIV/AIDS epidemic, human trafficking, trauma-informed mental health care for survivors of violent conflict, and empowering women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.
- [Global Welfare Association](#) (Cameroon) GLOWA combats human trafficking and the damage it creates in communities throughout the Northwest Region of Cameroon through raising awareness, rehabilitation, and advocacy.
- [HAART](#) (Awareness Against Human Trafficking)- non-governmental organization based in Nairobi dedicated to fighting human trafficking in Eastern Africa. HAART works through a multi-disciplinary approach applying the UN Four P's Strategy to combat trafficking in persons: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnership
- [Devatop Center for Africa Development](#) (Nigeria) a leading youth-led anti-human trafficking and human rights organization in Nigeria, with focus on combating human trafficking, gender-based violence, irregular migration, and supporting survivors and at-risk youth.

The Global Modern Slavery Directory and End Slavery Now's [Antislavery Directory](#) include other anti-trafficking organizations working in Sub-Saharan Africa.



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MAIN RESOURCES:

There are several standard worldwide publications that discuss human trafficking and modern-day slavery in Sub-Saharan Africa including the [Global Slavery Index's 2018 report on Africa](#), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's 2020 "[Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#)," and the US Department of State's [2022 Trafficking in Persons Report](#). Other regional reports and resources include:

- The ILO's 2022 [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#)
- The ILO, Walk Free and IOM's [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage](#)
- [Verité](#) is an independent, non-profit, civil society organization (CSO), whose website provides insight into the trafficking risks associated with the operation of specific global supply chains in the region, including Sub-Saharan Africa.
- [Illicit Trafficking in North Africa and Sahel](#), by NATO Strategic Direction -South Hub 2018
- ECPAT's [Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism: Sub-Saharan Africa Report 2017](#)

For more resources on all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery, please visit [HumanTraffickingSearch.org](#) and select or enter specific search terms in the [Global Database](#).