



UNODC

ATIDMUN 2021

*Addressing Human Trafficking Across International
Borders: Prevention, Prosecution, and Protection*

Chair Letters

Honorable delegates,

My name is Isobel, and I'll be one of your chairs for UNODC at AtidMUN 2021.

I'm currently living in Canada, so the time difference is going to be interesting, to say the least, but that's one of the great things about this new online format! I'm excited to see the global attendance of this conference and get to know you all.

I've been doing Model UN as a delegate, a mentor, and a chair for over 20 conferences in Israel and abroad, for over 4 years now. Now I'm starting again here at the University of Toronto, where I'm studying Political Science and International Relations.

If you're a beginner, don't worry! The online format can be weird at first, but I'm sure we'll have a great time once we get a hold of the differences. It really is a great opportunity to grow, learn and engage with new ideas, and in order to get the most out of it, you need to have the confidence to start talking. At my first conference, I sat there doing nothing and shook during my Policy Statement. But there is really no reason to be nervous, so I hope you can be comfortable enough to participate fully. Please let me know if there's anything at all I can help with before the conference at bird.icj@gmail.com.



Dear delegates,

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

A few words about myself:

My name is Ofek, I've been doing MUN for over 3 years, and I especially like the Security Council and European Council committees, having under my belt a few TIMEMUN and AtidMUN and many other national conferences, have been both mentoring and participating in many MUN conferences.

I'd like to thank all of you for participating, even during COVID-19. It is remarkable that the MUN community is still having conferences and people still attend them, and you - the delegates, are the perfect example of just how amazing our community is.

If you have questions about the committee or the conference, feel free to contact me at

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Sincerely,

Ofek Magrafta



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Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was established in 1997. Its goal is to ultimately coordinate a cohesive international response to drugs, human trafficking, crime, and international terrorism by advancing research, providing guidance, aiding member states, and adopting treaties, protocols, and conventions.

The UNODC is mandated to help member states deal with human trafficking, drugs, crime, terrorism, and corruption on the global stage.

More information and resources from UNODC can be found at unodc.org.

Background

UNODC classifies human trafficking as “the acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them”. This entails the 1) recruitment, 2) movement and 3) exploitation of a person by force or deception.

One of the implications of human trafficking is the subsequent forced labor of the victims. In 2012, the International Labour Organization estimated that 21 million people were in forced labor as a result of human trafficking. These people tend to be employed in the private underground (“black”) economy.

This committee will aim to address this issue by discussing innovative ways to prevent human trafficking from happening in the first place, pursue justice in prosecuting those responsible and those benefitting from this trade, and protecting the victims from physical and psychological harm throughout the process.

Important Terms

Trafficking

The act of buying, selling, or transporting illegal goods, usually over an international border.

Human trafficking

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act.

Smuggling

Smuggling is defined as the illegal transportation of objects, substances, information or people in violation of laws or other regulations. As opposed to human trafficking, smuggled people are free upon their arrival at their destination. The difference comes down to the consent of the person being trafficked or smuggled.

It is indispensable to remember people are trafficked under the pretense of smuggling, but then not set free once in the country of destination.

Like human trafficking, people engage in illegally smuggling of things or people over international borders (in this context) for profit.

Emigration

The relocation or process of people permanently leaving one country to reside in another.

Immigration

The international movement of people into a country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship to settle as permanent residents or naturalized citizens. This is the legal method of settling in another country in search of better work or living conditions.

Forced Labour

Forced labor is the modern equivalent of slavery. People are unwillingly coerced into working for an employer who holds power over the victims. This includes work in the construction, agriculture, domestic work, manufacturing, and sex industries.

The definition of forced labor overlaps with the definition of human trafficking, with the exception of people who are trafficked with the intent of illegal organ harvesting.

History

The abolition of slavery is seen as one of the great achievements of the 1800s, and a sign of human progress. Prior to the abolitionist movement in the late 1700s, the Atlantic slave trade involved the capture, trafficking, and forced labor of approximately 12 million people. This forced movement of people happened mainly from the African continent to North America, as part of a triangular trade system that also included Europe. The victims of this trade helped build industries and undertook the hard labor that helped develop the countries in which they arrived.

The abolitionist movement was groundbreaking, it established that all men are equal. It further established the criminality and fundamental immorality of forced labor. Concerningly, slavery was declared illegal only under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and until 1981, slavery was still legal in Mauritania.

After the abolition of slavery in law, most places still faced slavery-era racial and inequality issues including indentured labor and segregation, and, of course, the human trafficking that we see today that continues to affect tens of millions of people.

UN Actions

Palermo Protocols

The Palermo Protocols are a series of three protocols supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. This convention was implemented in September of 2003 and aimed to commit member states to a unified approach to transnational organized crime of varying natures. It has been ratified by 178 member states, with Iran as a notable exception.

The three Palermo Protocols are as follows:

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

This protocol is the most relevant to our committee. It is also referred to as the Trafficking Protocol.

This Protocol commits member states to combat human trafficking, protecting victims of human

trafficking, and cooperating between the states to do so. Among other things, the trafficking protocol considers the legal protection of victims (especially children), humanitarian asylum, and proportional criminal charges for those found guilty of trafficking. (For reference, the full text can be found in “Further Reading” below).

Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air.

This protocol aimed to overcome transnational smuggling in various ways. As stated above, smuggling is different from trafficking and is not necessarily what we will be addressing.

Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, and Ammunition.

This protocol is less relevant to our committee, but it is included here for sake of completeness.

Current Situation

The people that fall victim to human trafficking:

Poverty

Poverty is something that affects people’s choices. It causes them to make decisions most people can’t imagine. These decisions are what can lead to human trafficking. For example, a family that needs money for food, but can’t afford it. This situation doesn’t leave a lot of choices - you either find a way to get money, or you and your family's life is destroyed. The problem is that earning money quickly is almost impossible, and loans are hard to come by when you are unable to pay them back. In many cases like this, people that are in desperate need of money reach out to criminal organizations that can assist them. Once these people get involved with criminal organizations and can’t pay back, the road towards human trafficking isn’t very long. Another example is people enslaving themselves in exchange for money or basic living conditions.

Broken families

Individuals who are cast out of their homes, abandoned, or placed into the child welfare system are highly vulnerable to human trafficking. Runaways, youth experiencing homelessness, and those who live in isolation are often targeted. When someone feels alone, unloved or has been abused in the past, they may be willing to take great risks. They may feel as though they have little to lose or may even

find comfort living with their trafficker. Some traffickers offer love and acceptance to lure individuals to work for them.

Of course the examples given here are not the only way people get involved in human trafficking

Effects of human trafficking on victims

Mental trauma

Because traffickers dehumanize and objectify their victims, victims' innate sense of power, visibility, and dignity often become obscured.

Victims of human trafficking can experience devastating psychological effects during and after their trafficking experience. Many survivors may end up experiencing post-traumatic stress, difficulty in relationships, depression, memory loss, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, and other severe forms of mental trauma.

Physical trauma

Many victims also experience physical injuries. Those who have been sexually exploited are often abused by their traffickers and customers. They may be raped, beaten, and subjected to abuse over a long period of time. There is also a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, infections, diabetes, cancer, and other illnesses. A lack of proper medical care allows these conditions to spread and worsen—often affecting an individual's health permanently.

Victims of forced labor may work in dangerous conditions for long hours doing repetitive tasks. They may also be exposed to dangerous contaminants or work with heavy equipment. As a result, many are subjected to serious infections, respiratory problems, injuries, impairments, and exhaustion.

The economics of human trafficking

Human trafficking is very profitable - it generates 150 billion dollars a year and is second only to the drug trade. Its risk is low and consequences minimal when comparing them to the enormous pay. The worldwide issue of not recognizing the signs of human trafficking also helps make human trafficking more attractive to organized crime. But more importantly, because human trafficking is basically selling “a product” (people), the supply and demand ratio is crucial. Sadly, there is a lot of demand for illegal labor and prostitution worldwide.

The impact of human trafficking on the economy

Most of the money produced from human trafficking goes untaxed, which means it is not benefiting the community. Fair competition can also be affected by traffickers investing in legitimate businesses to launder money and disguise their crime.

Governments are left spending resources and millions of dollars on preventing, treating, and supporting victims of human trafficking. That includes, for example, costs for developing strategies, and empowering local leaders to contribute to anti-trafficking efforts and increase awareness. There is also the costs to the police who investigate and collect evidence of suspected human trafficking, as well as apprehending and prosecuting the offenders. Then, there are criminal court, prison, probation, and other government services' costs. Successfully prosecuting traffickers and confiscating their income and assets may offset some of the costs, but rarely is it enough.

Child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children can also result in adults unable to work. Due to suffering severe trauma and potential illness from years of abuse, previously tormented adults may have to depend on the government welfare systems for their survival. In cases when trafficking victims are able to work and take part in the economy, they often have a difficult time obtaining a job since they are typically seen as criminals by the law.

The anti-trafficking policy index

The 3P Anti-trafficking Policy Index evaluates governmental anti-trafficking efforts in the three main policy dimensions (3Ps), based on the requirements prescribed by the United Nations.

The 3Ps are:

- Prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking
- Prevention of human trafficking
- Protection of the victims of human trafficking

Case Study: Mexico

Current Information

Mexico is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking victims. Statistics are notoriously unreliable, but some estimates suggest that 250,000 people are trafficked each year in Latin America (UNODC, 2008:6), and 16,000 children in Mexico alone.

The effects of poverty on human trafficking

Mexico is characterized by persistent and extreme income inequality and high rates of poverty. These inequalities, and poverty, in particular, increase trafficking in several ways. Poverty often drives families to make decisions out of desperation and lack of education. For example, in the case of Mexico, parents are especially likely to leave their families to work in the United States and may become victims of traffickers. Furthermore, many victims of trafficking, especially in the case of sex trafficking, are not fluent in the language of their destination country and are limited in their ability to escape their situation. In addition, victims often accept their positions because they feel that this is the only way they might send some remittances to their family, and their enslaved situations may in some cases still be better than their original impoverished and desperate state. In this manner, poverty can both drive to trafficking and prevent its victims from escaping it once they have been trafficked.

Regulation and enforcement

Mexico's legal anti-trafficking framework has improved substantially since 2007 when the first national law on human trafficking was passed. Since then, all Mexican states have adopted some form of legislation to address this crime in their territory. As a result, the Trafficking in Persons Report, published annually by the United States Department of State, raised Mexico's ranking to a so-called "tier two" country, assigned to countries that are not in full compliance with the minimum standards set by the report, yet are making significant efforts to do so.

Two recent developments are of importance for anti-trafficking efforts in Mexico. One is the publication of the first nation-wide overview of human trafficking in the country. This report, commissioned by the Mexican government and conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was commissioned to provide the most comprehensive compilation of data on human trafficking in Mexico to date. The second development is the ambitious reform agenda of

President Enrique Peña Nieto and his Party of Institutionalized Revolution (PRI). Since taking power in January 2013, Peña Nieto has pushed for long-awaited reforms in education, energy, financial regulation, and fiscal affairs. He also has profiled himself as tough on organized crime.

Possible Solutions

Prevention

In order to mitigate the number of people who resort to trying to smuggle their way into a country, and who then find themselves in situations of human trafficking, Facilitating legal migration

- Improving work and living conditions in origin countries

Prosecution

- Extending international jurisdictions
- Increasing communication and collaboration in apprehending suspects

Protection

- Giving legal protection to victims of trafficking in the receiving country
- Lifelines and escape routes for victims

Questions to Consider

- Is your country an origin country, a receiving country, or both?
- What are work and living conditions like in your country?
- What is the human trafficking history in your country?
- What are the laws against human trafficking in your country?
- What sort of protections do illegal/unwilling migrants into your country have?
- What measures does your country take to pursue human traffickers?
- How regulated is the underground economy in your country?

Further Reading

- Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons
- Human Trafficking: An Introduction

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