



30 July 2017 – Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims. It is one of the most serious human rights violations of our time that yields high profits to traffickers through the acquisition and exploitation of human beings through improper means such as force, fraud or deception. In order to shed light on this grave human rights abuse, the United Nations, since 2013, designated this day as the [International Day against Human Trafficking](#)

Human trafficking is a crime that exploits women, children and men, and can take many different forms, such as domestic work, fisheries, prostitution, child labour, forced begging, child soldiers, debt bondage, and organ removal. While the exact figures of people trafficked are unknown, estimates show that there are millions of victims of human trafficking in the world today. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ( [UNODC](#) ), children make up almost [one-third of all human trafficking](#) and seventy-nine % of all victims are women and girls.

However, this has started to change in recent years. A growing proportion of men are now

found among the victims of human trafficking, and with this, the share of victims who are trafficked for forced labour has also increased. About 4 in 10 victims detected between 2012 and 2014 were trafficked for forced labour, and out of these victims, 63% were men.

“Human trafficking is both big business and a serious crime”, says Dr. James Cockayne, Head of the United Nations University ( [UNU](#) ), and author of a report seeking to break the financial chains of human trafficking. In Europe, human trafficking is one of the most lucrative illicit businesses, with criminal groups preying on the world's most marginalized persons and profiting an estimated [\\$3 billion per year](#) . In an effort to disrupt the financial flows that make the crime so lucrative, the UNU, a UN think tank, released a report entitled [25 Keys to Unlock the Financial Chains of Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery](#) , which puts forth 25 concrete measures in which the financial sector can break ties with this shameful crime.

Dr. Cockayne added that, while “an estimated 45.8 million people enslaved today, the impacts cannot be measured in dollars and cents alone. These numbers hide the stories of real people, most of them women and girls, facing abuse at the hands of criminal and terrorist groups, and in exploitative businesses. By handling the proceeds of these crimes, banks and other financial institutions risk violating anti-money-laundering and counter terrorist-financing laws. Disrupting the financial flows associated with these crimes will make a powerful contribution to improving these lives and preventing future crimes.”

In light of the most one of the most pressing issues of our time -- the large mixed migration movements of refugees and migrants -- UNODC has chosen ‘ [Act to Protect and Assist Trafficked Persons](#) ’ as the focus of this year’s World Day. The theme highlights significant impact of conflict and natural disasters, as well as the resultant, multiple risks of human trafficking that many people face. It addresses the key issue concerning trafficking responses: that most people are never identified as trafficking victims and therefore cannot access most of the assistance or protection provided.

To find out more about more about World Day against Trafficking in Persons [click here](#) .

## Human trafficking is both big business and a serious crime

Saturday, 29 July 2017 00:00

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For more information on human trafficking please visit: [UNODC](#) , [IOM](#) , and [ILO](#)

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