

IMS Office of the Gender Advisor: Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and the Gender Perspective

What is it?

Human trafficking can be defined as the action, such as recruitment or transportation, by means of threat or other forms of coercion directed at people in a position of vulnerability, for the purpose of exploitation. The gender perspective of human trafficking becomes apparent when analysing the different types of trafficking. For instance, human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation sees 78% female victims, while the total number of humans trafficked for forced labour is 57% male. NATO is not the primary organisation to combat trafficking in human beings, however military operations risk ineffectiveness due to the topic's implications.

NATO Policy and Guidelines

The NATO policy on combatting trafficking in human beings commits NATO member countries and other troop-contributing countries participating in NATO-led operations to reinforcing efforts to prevent and combat such activity. The policy includes a zero-tolerance approach and calls for military and civilian personnel and contractors taking part in NATO-led operations to receive appropriate training. In theatre, NATO-led forces operating within the limits of their mandate support the responsible host country authorities, as well as relevant international organisations, in their efforts to combat trafficking in human beings.

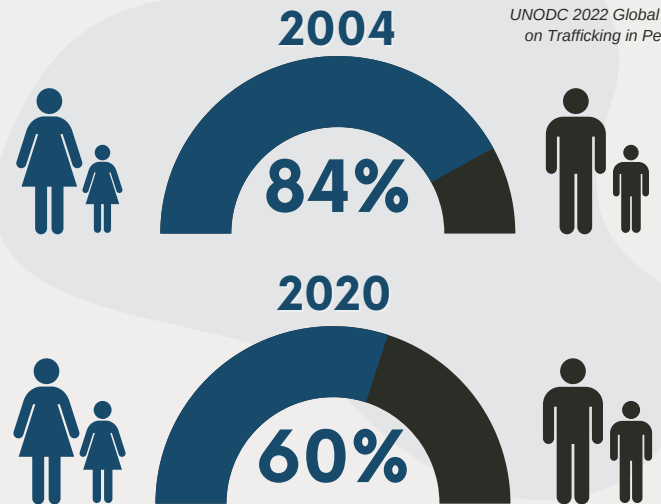
“MILITARY ACTORS ARE SOMETIMES THE ONLY ACTORS PRESENT, AND ABLE, TO OBSERVE AND REPORT ON THE CRIME”

Relevance for the Military

There is the risk that trafficking in human beings can impact the credibility and legitimacy of NATO led operations, efforts to increase stability and long term peace, as well as the integrity and safety of soldiers on the ground. Human trafficking exacerbates conflict itself, undermines peacekeeping efforts and inhibits the transition from conflict to long term stabilisation. Human trafficking can serve as an indicator of upheaval which needs to be countered and monitored. Furthermore, possible exploitation of supply chains and procurement need to be identified at an early stage.

Armed forces must reinforce NATO led efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking, as well as support the commitments by international organisations.

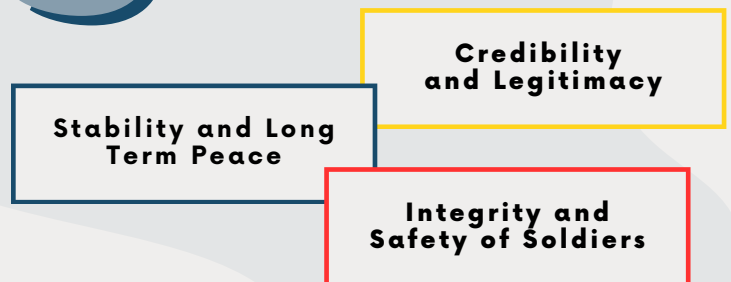
UNODC 2022 Global Report
 on Trafficking in Persons



Impact on Men, Women, Boys and Girls

When analysing human trafficking with a gender lens, the trend of victims is predominantly women and girls. However, more trafficked men and boys have been detected over the past decade with 16% being identified in 2004, increasing to 40% in 2020. Women are traditionally trafficked into sexual exploitation and forced marriage, whereas men are rather trafficked into forced labour. The analysis of court cases shows that female victims are subjected to physical or extreme violence at the hands of traffickers at a rate three times higher than males, and children are subjected at a rate two times higher than adults.

3 RISKS OF CTHB TO NATO LED OPERATIONS



CIMIC COE, THB INFO SHEET

Trafficking in human beings is a grave human rights violation that impacts men, women, boys and girls differently. It can lead to systematic undermining of government and NATO endeavors, including threats to the success of a military operation and activity.