

The System for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking in International Conventions

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Abstract

This study aims to clarify the measures contained in international conventions for the protection and care of victims of human trafficking. It does so by presenting the rules and procedures established by these conventions to ensure such protection. This protection takes two main forms: direct protection and indirect protection. Through these mechanisms, the international community has paid attention to the condition of victims of human trafficking and the circumstances surrounding them.

The study also addresses the concept of the crime of human trafficking, along with its main characteristics and patterns. It adopts a descriptive methodology to examine these issues. The study concludes that the role of international conventions in protecting victims of human trafficking cannot be denied. However, given the continuous growth and persistence of this phenomenon, the international community must demonstrate stronger commitment to ensuring comprehensive and effective protection for victims. This is particularly important in light of the difficulty, and sometimes

impossibility, of fully repairing the harm they have suffered.

Keywords: Human trafficking, victims, protection, international conventions, protection system

Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the oldest crimes known to humanity. In recent times, however, it has spread widely, becoming a serious threat to both social and international security. The number of victims has continued to increase, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women and children. Criminal organizations rely on various methods, including deception, intimidation, and torture. As a result, victims are forced into behaviors imposed on them by criminal networks. This situation constitutes the exploitation of victims of human trafficking.

This inhumane exploitation leaves deep psychological and social effects that victims often find difficult to overcome. It becomes extremely challenging for them to return to their previous condition and to resume a normal life after experiencing trafficking.

The international community has recognized the gravity of this crime and its devastating consequences for

humanity. In addition to efforts aimed at prevention, attention has been directed toward protecting victims and providing them with assistance. This issue forms the core focus of the present study. Accordingly, the study examines the measures adopted in international conventions to protect victims of human trafficking.

The objective of this research is not limited to highlighting the role of international conventions in victim protection. It also seeks to define the crime of human trafficking, clarify its seriousness, and assess whether international legal texts provide effective and sufficient protection for victims. Where shortcomings exist, the study aims to identify appropriate solutions.

The importance of this topic lies in the fact that every victim of crime has the right to protection and assistance. This includes victims of human trafficking, which represents one of the most violent and degrading forms of violation of human dignity and internationally recognized human rights. Victims of human trafficking are ordinary individuals who must not be discriminated against because of the conditions imposed on them as a result of abuse and exploitation.

In light of the above, the main research question is formulated as follows: What are the protection systems established in international conventions for victims of human trafficking?

To address this question, the study is divided into two main sections. The first section is entitled “The Nature of Human Trafficking.” The second section is entitled “The Protection of

Victims of Human Trafficking in International Conventions.”

The study adopts a descriptive approach to present issues related to the crime of human trafficking, including its concept, characteristics, and forms. It also relies on an analytical approach to examine the system for protecting victims of human trafficking under international conventions, through an analysis of these systems and an assessment of their outcomes.

Section One: The Concept of Human Trafficking

The crime of human trafficking is among the most widespread crimes in the contemporary era. It is classified as a form of organized crime. It poses a serious threat to individuals, particularly in certain societies that suffer from political or economic instability, weak security, or other conditions that facilitate the activities of criminal organizations. These circumstances enable such groups to commit this crime in its various forms. Organized crime has also come to exploit scientific and technological developments when carrying out acts of human trafficking. For this reason, the phenomenon has attracted wide attention at both the national and international levels.

In this section, the study examines the nature of human trafficking as a criminal phenomenon. This is done through an analysis of its concept (first subsection) and the factors and causes that have contributed to its growing spread (second subsection).

First: The Concept of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is considered one of the most dangerous forms of organized

crime, despite being as old as humanity itself. The trade in slaves was once well known and commonly practiced. With the emergence of divine religions, this practice was prohibited, and such prohibition later extended to positive law. In the modern era, however, this phenomenon has intensified and taken on new forms and patterns that were previously unknown. These forms rely on methods that facilitate the recruitment of victims. This development has created a strong need for deeper legal and doctrinal analysis of the crime.

Through examining the literature on this subject, it becomes clear that definitions of human trafficking vary among legal scholars and legislators. International conventions, however, have adopted an almost unified definition. This variation does not contradict the objective and specific nature of the crime. All definitions agree that the subject of trafficking is the human person. They also converge on its core elements, namely the criminal act, the means used, and the intended purpose.

Some legal scholars define human trafficking as the process of manipulating and transferring persons through the use of violence or the threat of violence, abuse of power, exploitation of the victim's circumstances, deception, or other forms of coercion. This is done for the purpose of sexual or economic exploitation. Such exploitation includes forced labor, enslavement, servitude, or organ removal. These acts are carried out for the benefit of certain groups, such as pimps, smugglers, intermediaries, brothel owners, criminal

organizations, or any individual with the financial capacity to purchase persons or their organs (Ben Massahel Alaa Al-Rahman & Nasreen Salem, 2020, p. 95). Others define human trafficking as all practices and behaviors that turn the human being into a commodity or a victim who is controlled through professional intermediaries across national borders. The aim is to exploit the person in low-paid labor, sexual activities, or similar practices. This applies whether the victim consents or is coerced, or whether the situation involves any other form of slavery (Saleh, 2019, p. 93).

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000, human trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons. This is carried out through the use of force or the threat of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or abuse of a position of vulnerability. It may also occur through giving or receiving payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person who has control over another. The purpose is exploitation, including the exploitation of the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs (see Article 3 of the Protocol, adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/25 on 2 November 2000).

The definition provided by the Protocol shows that human trafficking consists of three main elements:

1. The act (what is done): the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons.
2. The means (how it is done): the use or threat of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or abuse of a position of vulnerability, or the giving of money or benefits to a person who has control over the victim.
3. The purpose (why it is done): exploitation, which includes the exploitation of the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices, or the removal of organs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Document No. V.07-89373 (A), p. 9).

Second: Characteristics of the Crime of Human Trafficking

Based on the definitions of human trafficking discussed above, several defining characteristics can be identified. This crime has specific features that distinguish it from other criminal offenses. It constitutes a serious violation of human rights and an assault on human dignity. It is also one of the most dangerous forms of organized crime, as it leaves profound negative effects on societies. In this subsection, these characteristics are presented in sequence and briefly explained.

1. Human Trafficking as a Crime against Human Rights

Human trafficking crimes violate the individual's right to freedom and the right to be free from slavery and servitude. They also infringe upon the right to bodily integrity, personal security, and freedom of movement. These crimes are considered crimes against humanity, as they undermine human dignity and humanity itself. They are organized crimes committed by criminal gangs that specialize in human trafficking, which constitutes the core of their activities and a major source of their growing profits (Al-Makhlafi, 2017, pp. 89–90).

In addition to being fundamentally a humanitarian issue, human trafficking represents a legal, human rights, and ethical dilemma. This is particularly evident in its social, economic, and cultural impacts, as well as its repercussions on social and international peace. It poses a serious threat to human security. Human trafficking constitutes a blatant violation of the entire system of human rights and of moral and religious values. It also results in the erosion of personal security (Ben Massahel Alaa Al-Rahman & Nasreen Salem, 2020, p. 101).

2. Human Trafficking as a Crime that Degrades Human Dignity

Human trafficking is one of the most serious crimes that directly affect human dignity and physical integrity. It represents a clear violation and infringement of fundamental rights. It also poses a challenge to sustainable development. Addressing this crime requires a comprehensive approach.

Such an approach includes building partnerships and adopting measures to prevent and prosecute offenders. It also involves identifying victims, ensuring their protection and support, strengthening international cooperation, and promoting criminal justice in proportion to the gravity of the offense (see the Preamble to United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 75/158, adopted on 16 December 2020, Document A/RES/75/158, p. 1).

3. Human Trafficking as a Transnational Organized Crime

Human trafficking is a global crime. United Nations statistics confirm that no place in the world is immune from this phenomenon or its consequences. It is present in 127 countries and is considered the third largest criminal activity after the illicit trade in weapons and drugs (see the Preamble to United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 75/158, adopted on 16 December 2020, Document A/RES/75/158, p. 1). Human trafficking is a form of transnational organized crime carried out by professional criminal networks. These networks make trafficking the core of their activities and a primary source of income. They engage in illegal practices with the aim of generating profit (Leila Ali Hussein Sadiq, 2011, p. 51). Human trafficking finances these illicit activities. It fuels various forms of organized crime and supports criminal groups. It also contributes to corruption, including the bribery of officials in authority and of migration and nationality services. There is also a close link between human trafficking, organized crime, and the illicit

trafficking of drugs (Mamdouh Abdel Hamid Abdel Muttalib, 2006, p. 92).

4. The Severe Impact of Human Trafficking on Society

Human trafficking leads to social breakdown and contributes to rising crime rates. One of its consequences is the disintegration of the family structure due to the absence of key family members. This weakens family relationships, including parental authority. It also hinders proper upbringing and healthy moral development of children. In addition, it disrupts the transmission of knowledge within families, which undermines the social role of the family. Studies have shown that some victims of human trafficking, after returning to their communities, often become involved in criminal behavior (Mamdouh Abdel Hamid Abdel Muttalib, 2006, p. 91).

Third: Factors and Forms of Exploitation in Human Trafficking

Every criminal phenomenon is driven by underlying causes that contribute to its emergence. Offenders consistently exploit any circumstance that facilitates the commission of crime. This is also the case with human trafficking. Although human trafficking is an old crime, the deterioration of security, political, and economic conditions in certain countries has turned them into fertile environments for recruiting victims. This situation is further aggravated by rapid scientific and technological developments worldwide. As a result, the forms of victim exploitation used by criminal organizations have multiplied and diversified. This has led to the continuous expansion of the crime and a

daily increase in the number of victims. This section seeks to identify the main causes and factors that have contributed to the spread of human trafficking. It also highlights the most common patterns and forms of exploitation suffered by victims of this crime.

1. Causes of the Spread of Human Trafficking

A person may be born with criminal tendencies, or may be driven to crime by specific circumstances when such conditions are present. Human trafficking, like other crimes, has benefited from the development experienced by humanity, which offenders have exploited to carry out their illegal activities. In addition, several other factors have contributed to the spread of this crime, transforming it into a transnational phenomenon.

This subsection examines the role of scientific and technological development in the spread of human trafficking. It also highlights other factors that have contributed to the global expansion of this criminal phenomenon.

A. Causes Related to Scientific and Technological Development

Criminal activity in general has expanded alongside scientific and technological progress witnessed since the last century. Criminal gangs use modern technological tools to broaden their illegal activities, including drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption, terrorism, and human trafficking. United Nations statistics on crime and justice in 2000 indicate that approximately one million migrants worldwide are subjected to exploitation, slavery, and servitude by Italian,

Japanese, and Chinese mafia groups. Half of these victims are women exploited in prostitution (Al-Sayyid Awad, Technological Development and Crime, Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference on Population and Development Issues, 19–22 December 2004).

One of the most significant factors contributing to the steady growth of human trafficking is the use of digital technology. Human trafficking has entered cyberspace. The Internet in general, and digital platforms in particular, have provided traffickers with multiple tools. These tools are used to recruit victims, exploit them, and exercise control over them. They also facilitate the organization of transportation and accommodation. Traffickers use these platforms to advertise victims, communicate with potential clients, and coordinate among offenders. They also enable the concealment of criminal proceeds. All of this is carried out with speed, low cost, and a high degree of anonymity (see the United Nations website).

B. Other Contributing Factors

Among the most important causes of the spread of human trafficking are poor economic conditions and political instability in certain countries. These conditions turn such states into source countries for trafficking victims. Human traffickers deliberately target countries experiencing these circumstances. Poverty remains a central factor in this phenomenon. Criminals often deceive poor families by promising improved income, better living conditions, and employment opportunities abroad. Victims are then manipulated and

eventually trapped within trafficking networks and criminal gangs (Abata Dhaban Zahir & Hassan Salameh Al-Aouran, 2009, p. 166).

Another factor contributing to the spread of human trafficking is low levels of education and vocational training. This is particularly evident among women and children. These groups are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation by criminal organizations (Al-Tarawneh, 2006, p. 174).

2. Forms of Exploitation in the Crime of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is among the most brutal and inhumane crimes. This is due to the practices and behaviors it involves, which constitute serious violations of human rights. Victims are exploited in various ways. These include sexual exploitation, organ trafficking, forced labor, and other forms of abuse. Such activities generate enormous profits for criminal gangs. This section highlights the most significant forms of exploitation suffered by victims of human trafficking.

A. Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation represents one of the largest proportions of overall human trafficking worldwide. It is also one of the most prevalent forms of modern-day slavery. Victims are forced into the sex trade through violence, deception, coercion, or abuse of authority. This is especially the case when the victim is under the age of eighteen (Shaer, 2012, p. 9).

B. Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Organ Removal

Studies have shown that organ transplantation is one of the major scientific achievements resulting from progress in medical sciences. However, a troubling development has accompanied this progress. Human organs have become commodified. They are now treated as goods that are bought and sold through organized practices that violate Islamic jurisprudence and national laws. Research indicates that such operations are carried out in secrecy and under various labels. In some cases, they are conducted through procedures that appear lawful and are therefore difficult to criminalize.

The concept of organ trafficking refers to the acts of buying and selling human organs, such as tissues, skin, blood, and kidneys. Organ trafficking often takes on a form of so-called transplant tourism. In this context, the recipient travels to another country to obtain the required organ, usually from a poor state where measures to prevent such crimes are weak or poorly enforced (Leila Ali Hassan Sadiq, *The Crime of Human Trafficking, Especially Women, as a Transnational Crime: A Comparative Study of the Arab Gulf Region*, Master's Thesis, Middle East University for Graduate Studies, 2001, p. 59).

.Forced Labor or Compulsory Work

The Forced Labour Convention of 1930 defines forced or compulsory labor as any work or service that is imposed on a person under the threat of any penalty, and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.

This definition excludes compulsory military service imposed under national laws. It also excludes any other service

that forms part of the normal civic obligations of individuals in a fully independent country. In addition, it excludes work imposed as a consequence of a judicial decision, provided that the person concerned is placed under the supervision of the judicial authorities alone (see Article 2 of Convention No. 29 concerning Forced Labour, adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization at its Fourteenth Session on 28 June 1930, and entered into force in May 1930).

Section Two: Systems for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking under International Conventions

In addition to preventing and combating human trafficking, relevant international conventions aim to protect victims of this crime and safeguard their rights. One such instrument is the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005. This convention seeks to establish a comprehensive framework and approach to assisting victims (see Article 1, paragraph (a) of the Convention).

Other international conventions have also clearly emphasized the need to provide various forms of protection for victims of human trafficking. Through this research, two main types of protection can be identified. The first is the system of direct protection for victims of human trafficking. The second is the system of indirect protection for victims of human trafficking.

First: The System of Direct Protection for Victims of Human

Trafficking in International Conventions

The system of direct protection established by international conventions for victims of human trafficking consists of both legal and substantive protection. This protection focuses on the direct safeguarding of the victim's person. It includes protection from retaliation and the protection of personal data. In broader terms, it covers everything related to the victim, including family members and identity. This subsection provides a detailed discussion of direct protection as recognized in international conventions. It begins with legal protection and then addresses substantive protection.

1. Legal Protection

Legal protection for victims of human trafficking includes the identification of victims and the protection of their personal integrity. It also includes protection from retaliation and threats. This part of the study examines these aspects in detail. Before doing so, it is necessary to define who is considered a victim of human trafficking. It is also important to clarify how victims are identified and how they are protected from potential retaliation.

Who Is the Victim in the Crime of Human Trafficking?

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking of 2012 defines a victim of human trafficking as any natural person who has suffered material or moral harm. This harm may result from any of the crimes covered by the law. This definition applies regardless of whether the perpetrator is known, arrested, or convicted (see Article 1, paragraph 5 of the law, as

amended by Resolution No. 920-D28 of the Council of Arab Ministers, dated 26 November 2012).

A victim of human trafficking may be a minor or an adult, male or female, an individual or a group of persons. This applies regardless of nationality, color, age, gender, legal capacity, health condition, mental state, or family or professional status. It makes no difference whether the victim is a national or a foreigner. The same applies whether the victim is rich or poor, healthy or ill, known or unknown in lineage, or holds any social position within society (Al-Makhlafi, 2017, p. 88).

Victims of human trafficking rarely seek assistance. This reluctance is due to several reasons, including fear of traffickers, fear of law enforcement authorities, and language barriers. In some cases, the trauma experienced by victims is so severe that they are unable to recognize themselves as victims. As a result, they do not seek help or attempt to escape exploitation (International Civil Aviation Organization, Circular 352, Guidance on the Training of Cabin Crew to Identify and Respond to Trafficking in Persons, 2018, p. 3).

Forms of Legal Protection for Victims of Human Trafficking under International Conventions

Legal protection for victims of human trafficking under international conventions includes several measures, most notably the following:

Identification of Victims

When one or more victims of human trafficking are discovered, the competent authorities are required to first identify their identities. This

obligation is affirmed in various international instruments. Among them is the Arab Model Law for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking of 2012. This law requires states, upon the detection of trafficking crimes, to identify the victims, determine their nationality, and establish their age. This process enables authorities to protect victims from offenders (see Article 30 of the law).

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings also obliges its parties to adopt the necessary measures to assist competent authorities in identifying victims and providing assistance to them. This obligation includes children and requires coordination among relevant authorities and organizations. Such cooperation facilitates victim identification while taking into account the specific circumstances of women and children (see Article 10, paragraph 1 of the Convention).

Protection of Victims from Retaliation or Threats and the Safeguarding of Their Personal Integrity

Victims of human trafficking are often exposed to threats by criminal organizations when they seek justice, attempt to escape, or provide testimony proving involvement in prohibited trafficking activities. Such threats may target the victims themselves or members of their families. Victims may also face discrimination and racism from society. This situation necessitates their protection and the preservation of their dignity.

International conventions have recognized this need for protection.

Under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, States are required, within their means, to provide appropriate protection to victims of human trafficking, particularly when they are exposed to threats or retaliation (see Article 25, paragraph 1 of the Convention of 2000, adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/25 on 15 November 2000).

This approach is also affirmed by the Palermo Protocol of 2000, which obliges States Parties to ensure that legal proceedings related to trafficking crimes are conducted in a confidential manner (see Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Protocol).

Similarly, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings provides for the personal protection of victims. It requires that personal data relating to victims not be made public and that their identities not be disclosed through the media or any other means. Disclosure is permitted only in exceptional cases, such as those required for investigation or tracing family members. States are also encouraged to adopt regulatory or joint measures with media outlets to protect the rights of victims (see Article 11 of the Convention).

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking likewise provides for the protection of victims by prohibiting the disclosure of their identities. It also requires the adoption of measures to ensure the confidentiality of criminal proceedings, in accordance with applicable national legal systems (see Article 31 of the Law).

Protection of Victim–Witnesses from Retaliation

A victim of human trafficking may also serve as a witness to the crime. In such cases, the victim is exposed to a high risk of retaliation, whether directed at the victim personally or at relatives and family members. To address this risk, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000 urges States Parties to adopt appropriate measures to protect victim–witnesses and those closely connected to them.

These measures include procedural rules that ensure physical protection, such as relocation when necessary, and restrictions on the disclosure of information related to identity and whereabouts. Where required, special procedures may be adopted to allow testimony in a manner that ensures the safety of witnesses, including the use of video testimony through technological means (see Article 24 of the Convention).

2. Substantive Protection

Substantive protection includes the following measures:

Exemption from Civil and Criminal Liability for Victims of Human Trafficking

A victim of human trafficking shall not incur criminal or civil liability for acts related to trafficking crimes when such acts result directly from being a victim (Al-Makhlafi, 2017, p. 92). This principle is affirmed in various international instruments.

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking of 2012 provides that victims shall not be prosecuted for trafficking-related offenses when they are victims of such crimes (see Article

27 of the Law). Victims are also exempt from penalties for violations of immigration, nationality, or residence laws when such violations are connected to their status as victims (see Article 28 of the same Law).

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings similarly obliges States Parties not to impose penalties on victims for unlawful activities that they were compelled to commit (see Article 26 of the Convention).

Prohibition of the Expulsion of Victims of Human Trafficking

Taking humanitarian considerations into account, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 2000 calls upon States Parties to adopt legislative or other measures that allow victims of human trafficking to remain in their territory, either temporarily or permanently, where circumstances so require (see Article 7 of the Protocol).

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005 expressly prohibits the expulsion of victims who are nationals of another State, once it is established that they were victims of trafficking, at least during the recovery period. An exception is allowed only where expulsion is required for reasons of public order. States may grant renewable residence permits to victims, particularly when their cooperation with competent authorities is necessary in criminal proceedings, or when the victim is a child whose best interests must be taken into account (see Article

13, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Convention).

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking of 2012 also provides for granting victims temporary residence until criminal procedures are completed and their rights are fully realized (see Article 30, paragraph 8 of the Law).

Second: The System of Indirect Protection for Victims of Human Trafficking under International Conventions

In addition to direct protection, international conventions also provide indirect protection for victims of human trafficking. This protection is reflected in assistance aimed at enabling victims to claim their rights before judicial authorities, as well as other rights related to their status as victims and parties to criminal proceedings.

States are required to provide support to ensure the effective exercise of these rights. This includes assisting victims in recovering from severe harm, facilitating their social reintegration, and enabling their return to their countries of origin. The system of indirect protection under international conventions therefore includes assistance, integration, and repatriation measures.

1. Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking under International Conventions

International conventions have recognized the need of trafficking victims for assistance. This includes legal assistance that allows them to understand the stages of criminal proceedings, become aware of their rights, and identify available

mechanisms to claim those rights. Victims also require medical and psychological assistance to support recovery and rehabilitation. The following outlines the main forms of such assistance.

Provision of Legal Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking

Under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, States Parties are required, subject to their domestic law, to establish procedural rules that allow victims to obtain compensation and reparation for harm suffered. Victims must also be enabled to present their views and concerns before judicial authorities, without prejudice to the rights of the defense (see Article 25, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Convention).

The Protocol supplementing the Convention on Trafficking in Persons, as set out in Article 6, obliges States Parties to ensure that their legal systems provide victims with all relevant information regarding judicial and administrative proceedings related to their cases. It also allows victims to express their concerns before competent authorities (see Article 6, paragraph 2). States must further establish legal mechanisms to provide compensation for the damage suffered by victims (see Article 6, paragraph 6).

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking likewise emphasizes the provision of legal assistance to victims. This includes assistance in selecting legal counsel to defend their interests and claim their rights, particularly where the victim is unable to secure such representation

independently (see Article 30, paragraph 5 of the Law).

Assisting Victims in Recovery

The Palermo Protocol of 2000 is considered the first international instrument to address the protection of victims of human trafficking. It emphasized the obligation of States to provide assistance and support mechanisms to victims in order to ensure their physical, psychological, and social recovery. States may involve governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as civil society institutions, in delivering such assistance. Victims may receive medical and financial support and be provided with appropriate housing. To further facilitate assistance, victims should be informed of their rights in a language they understand (see Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Protocol).

Similarly, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005 called upon States Parties to adopt legislative or other measures to assist victims in their physical, psychological, and social recovery. This assistance includes ensuring adequate living conditions through safe and suitable accommodation, as well as providing psychological, material, and appropriate medical care (see Article 12, paragraph 1, subparagraphs (a) and (b) of the Convention). Victims may also be provided with written or oral translation services when necessary, particularly with regard to available services. They should further be assisted in presenting and claiming their rights before judicial authorities (see subparagraphs (c), (d), and (e) of the same paragraph).

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking of 2012 likewise provides for the protection of victims. It requires the creation of appropriate conditions for their physical and psychological recovery and their social reintegration. It also calls for cooperation between competent national authorities and governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as civil society institutions (see Article 29 of the Law).

2. Reintegration of Victims of Human Trafficking and Their Return to Their Countries of Origin

Victims of human trafficking are frequently subjected to severe physical and psychological violence, which often leaves lasting effects that hinder their return to normal life. For this reason, international conventions have included provisions aimed at assisting victims in achieving physical and psychological recovery and facilitating their reintegration into society.

Reintegration of Victims of Human Trafficking

For the purpose of reintegration, the Palermo Protocol of 2000 obliges States Parties to ensure that victims are provided with opportunities for employment, education, and vocational training (see Article 6, paragraph 3, subparagraph (d) of the Protocol).

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings further requires States Parties to adopt legislative or other measures to promote the reintegration of victims. This includes reintegration into education and the labor market through vocational training and skills development. Child victims must be

provided with appropriate education and suitable care, whether by their families or by competent institutions authorized to do so (see Article 16, paragraph 5 of the Convention).

The Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking, as previously mentioned, also emphasizes the necessity of reintegrating victims. It obliges States to establish care, education, training, and rehabilitation programs for victims, in coordination with governmental and non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions (see Article 35 of the Law).

Return of Victims of Human Trafficking to Their Countries of Origin

Under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005, the State of which the victim is a national, or in which the victim held permanent residence at the time of entry into the receiving State, is required to facilitate and accept the victim's return without undue or unreasonable delay. The return process must respect the victim's safety, rights, and dignity (see Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Convention).

Where a victim lacks identification documents, the Convention obliges the State of nationality or permanent residence to issue the necessary documents to facilitate return, upon request by the receiving State (see Article 16, paragraph 4 of the Convention). States may also act individually or in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations to establish voluntary

return programs (see Article 16, paragraph 5 of the Convention).

The same principles and procedures are set out in Article 8 of the Palermo Protocol. In the same context, the Arab Model Law on Combating Human Trafficking encourages States to cooperate with one another to facilitate the return of victims to their countries of origin, while taking all necessary measures to ensure their safety and security during the return process

CONCLUSION

The crime of human trafficking consists of the exploitation of individuals, whether by coercion or consent, in activities and services criminalized by law. It is among the most serious crimes affecting societies and their social stability, particularly due to its transnational nature. This crime directly targets the core component of society, namely the individual, who becomes a direct victim of its various forms. It leaves psychological, moral, and physical consequences that make it difficult for victims to regain their former condition prior to being subjected to this grave form of criminal exploitation. Accordingly, victims require special protection, care, and assistance. This need has been addressed by relevant international conventions, which have established specific rules and procedures aimed at providing protection and support to victims.

Through this study, a set of findings and recommendations was reached concerning the crime of human trafficking and the protection

mechanisms provided under international conventions.

First: Findings

1. Human trafficking constitutes a serious violation of human rights and is among the most harmful crimes affecting its victims.

2. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to the most severe forms of exploitation, which leave deep psychological, moral, and physical effects that are often difficult to overcome. This includes crimes such as organ trafficking and sexual exploitation, among others.

3. International conventions play a significant role in protecting victims of human trafficking and assisting them in rehabilitation, social reintegration, and access to compensation for the harm they suffer.

4. Despite the important role played by international conventions through systems of direct and indirect protection, their effectiveness remains limited by the scope of their provisions and by the willingness of States to implement them. This limits the practical enforcement of rules intended to ensure effective protection for victims.

5. In many cases, victims or groups of victims of human trafficking are identified by competent authorities. However, apprehending perpetrators remains difficult, particularly due to the concealment capabilities of criminal organizations supported by modern technological developments. This contributes to the continued commission of trafficking crimes and the ongoing victimization of individuals.

Second: Recommendations

1. States Parties to international conventions on combating human trafficking should fully comply with all their provisions, particularly those related to the protection and assistance of victims.
2. International conventions should include clearer and more detailed provisions regarding procedures for assisting and protecting victims of human trafficking, rather than relying on general principles or non-binding guidelines. This is especially important given that some States overlook such crimes due to the financial benefits they generate.
3. States should adopt a flexible and humane approach in dealing with victims of human trafficking, particularly when victims lack official documents proving their identity.
4. Combating human trafficking requires the involvement of all actors. Individuals must act with responsibility and awareness, while governments must mobilize all available resources to prevent and combat this crime. This should be done in coordination with civil society institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and through their active participation in addressing trafficking crimes and the means of combating them.

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