



## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Human Trafficking in the refugee and migrants' context**

*"Human trafficking takes many forms and knows no borders. Too often, traffickers act with impunity, and their crimes do not receive sufficient attention. This cannot go on like this"*

António Guterres, General secretary of ON

The General Assembly of the United Nations created the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on December 14, 1950, entrusting it with the responsibility of providing international protection to refugees and the search for permanent solutions to the refugees' problems. The mandate also includes asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons and, in special circumstances, internally displaced persons.

The UN gives the status of "refugees" to people who are outside their country of origin for fear of persecution, conflict, widespread violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disrupted public order and therefore require international protection. The character of "migrant" is given to the person who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year, regardless of the causes of their transfer, voluntary or involuntary, or the legal means used or otherwise.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (also known as Palermo Convention) defines trafficking in persons as the act of capturing, transporting, transferring, harboring or receiving people through threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a situation of vulnerability, or the granting of payments or benefits in exchange for the control of the life of the victim, for exploitation purposes, which includes prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, withdrawal of organs and similar practices.

There are currently 68.5 million people forcibly displaced around the world, 25.4 million people are refugees and of these refugees 57% come from only 3 countries: South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria.



These people do not always have a decent life and human trafficking has doubled in recent years, the percentage is about 60% until 2014, with more than 137 nations having to deal with this problem.

In recent years, surveys of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reveal that 70% of migrant refugees arriving in Europe from Africa are victims of human trafficking, exploitation and trafficking of organs and blood.

According to indicators from UNICEF and the Interagency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Group (ICAT), children represent approximately 28% of the victims of trafficking identified worldwide. In addition, in sub-Sahara Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, children represent an even greater proportion, with 64% and 62%, respectively.

Also, the international organization “Save the Children” revealed, through research in conflict zones, that at least 354 million children throughout the world are part of armed conflicts. The data reflected indicates that 49,640 children were recruited, 17,515 suffered any type of sexual violence, 14,327 were kidnapped and 73,023 were killed and/or mutilated, figures that are simple numbers orientated to the real situation of the minors, because the data of 2017 and 2018 are not yet included, not counting the innumerable unregistered cases that have risen as a consequence of the alarming failure of monitoring and the lack of action by the international community.

For example, in countries like Lebanon, children are forced to sell their organs in exchange for a few dollars to survive because they do not have the legal power to work. In Turkey they use refugees as work machines and have to work for up to 12 hours straight, practically without salary to survive.

In Libya, the problem is faced with almost 200,000 displaced people living in deplorable conditions. Each year, tens of thousands of people are concentrated in the country, and this phenomenon led to the emergence of hugely rich criminal organizations, which functions as



smuggling networks, kidnapping and trafficking with people as slaves. Meanwhile, these people suffer abuse, torture, exploitation and even death.

Currently, the cases of migrants and refugees who are victims of human trafficking could be considered as a form of modern slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the Global Index of Slavery disseminated by the UN, North Korea has the highest prevalence of slaves, followed by Eritrea, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Mauritania, South Sudan, Pakistan, Cambodia, Iran, among others; being the United States, Brazil and Mexico the countries with the largest number of enslaved people in America. Similarly, it was pointed out that a large number of these people who live in conditions of slavery are equally migrants.

Another issue that calls the attention of the United Nations and that has to be resolved is the slave trade. Recently, CNN undercover reporters witnessed an auction of a dozen men outside Tripoli, the capital of Libya. Many of them were migrants who had run out of money when they arrived in Libya after visiting several countries in Africa.

The illicit market is estimated at 32 billion dollars. 49% is generated in industrialized countries, and most of the applicants are from Syria, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq, and the countries that receive the most requests are Germany, Serbia and Hungary.

For all of the above, the task that falls to the participating States of the General Assembly is to reach a solution to protect migrants and refugees who have been violated in their human rights.

### Guided Questions

1. What is the United Nations agency in charge of helping refugees? What are its main attributions and faculties?
2. What are the human rights that are violated to refugees and migrants in these types of situations?



3. Which countries are the ones that commit the main human rights violations of refugees and migrants?
4. What are the measures (legal and preventive) that the UN should take to prevent human trafficking?
5. What kind of sanctions should there be for States that incur in refugee violations?
6. What is the difference between trafficking in persons and the illegal trafficking of migrants?
7. Who should be responsible for protecting the Human Rights of refugees and immigrants? The country of origin or the recipient?
8. What economic influence does the illegal slave trade have?
9. How much is the money capital that is transferred through ghost companies that cover illicit acts?
10. Should they be the same measure taken by the UN regarding human trafficking as modern slavery or should they have different scopes?

### **Required Consultation sources**

<http://www.acnur.org/es-mx/>

<http://www.un.org/es/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<https://news.un.org/es/story/2018/07/1438712>

<https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/es/definitions>

<https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/highlights/>

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS36\\_sp.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS36_sp.pdf)

<https://www.unodc.org/lpo-brazil/es/trafico-de-pessoas/index.html>

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/lpo-](https://www.unodc.org/documents/lpo-brazil/sobreunodc/Fact_Sheet_Dados_Trafico_de_Pessoas_geral_ESP.pdf)

[brazil/sobreunodc/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Dados\\_Trafico\\_de\\_Pessoas\\_geral\\_ESP.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/lpo-brazil/sobreunodc/Fact_Sheet_Dados_Trafico_de_Pessoas_geral_ESP.pdf)



### **Complementary Consultation sources**

1. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrantauctions/index.html>
2. <http://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/mundo/hay-mas-de-40-millones-de-personas-sometidas-a-esclavitud-moderna>
3. <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2018/06/11/estados-unidos-sanciona-alibios-trafficantes-de-personas-tras-una-investigacion-de-cnn/>
4. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vandgdata/20150907/54435145658/paises-asilo-refugiados.html>
5. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-39719364>
6. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-37757061>