



IOM International Organization for Migration

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SOMALIA

SOMALIA

“HUMAN TRAFFICKING INVOLVES THE RECRUITMENT, TRANSPORT AND RECEIPT OF ADULTS OR CHILDREN FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THEIR EXPLOITATION.”

Human trafficking, also referred to as modern day slavery, is a global problem involving millions of victims and traffickers every year.

In the past three years IOM was able to collect information providing initial evidence that human trafficking occurs in many parts of Somalia.

In 2009, IOM initiated the first counter trafficking programme in the three regions of Somaliland, Puntland and South

Central Somalia, which generated much interest and support from regional authorities and civil society.

Through its counter trafficking projects, IOM was able to further establish evidence that victims are being trafficked within and out of Somalia. In fact, findings from rapid assessments commissioned by IOM in Puntland and Somaliland confirmed that the phenomenon is indeed widespread.

However, as in most other countries, the exact scale of trafficking in Somalia is difficult to determine and document, due to the very nature of this particular crime.

While IDPs, asylum seekers and economic migrants (both Somali and Ethiopian) are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, it has been clearly established that others, mainly Somali women and children, and often from very poor families are also at high risk of trafficking.

IOM IN ACTION

- **Awareness Raising / Community Sensitization:** IOM places emphasis on outreach and advocacy activities to raise awareness of the danger and risks involved with human trafficking
- **Capacity Building Initiatives:** IOM, in collaboration with regional authorities in Somaliland and Puntland, initiated the establishment of Counter Trafficking Task Forces (CTTFs), an Inter-Ministerial working group to develop an interim National/Regional Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking
- **Victim Referral and Assistance.**

Further Action Planned:

- Drafting of National/Regional Plans of Action to combat human trafficking
- Training to judiciary, law enforcement, legal clinics and service providers
- Community sensitization and awareness raising campaigns
- Training for the media
- Targeted awareness raising among health care providers
- Expand and enhance victim assistance mechanisms and referral systems
- Further in-depth training for service providers

TRAFFICKING SITUATION IN SOMALIA

Somaliland

Somaliland is a region of destination, transit and origin for victims of international human trafficking as well as domestic/local human trafficking (whereby no international borders are crossed). The victims are mainly women and young children and are trafficked for domestic work, forced prostitution and possibly organ removal.

While cases of trafficking to Hargeisa and Burao in Somaliland have been identified so far, the main destinations for international trafficking seem to be Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen and potentially the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia among others. Personal interviews with victims and others in Somaliland reveal a trafficking pattern where Somali women (in Somaliland) act as recruiters and intermediaries to take the victims to Djibouti, and Ethiopia for the purpose of domestic servitude and organ removal.

Despite the existence of the problem most people are not familiar with the notion of human trafficking in Somaliland. Prior to IOM's intervention in 2009, Somaliland lacked basic formal response mechanisms for emergency victim assistance and referral. This lack of awareness and subsequent lack of effective response mechanisms increased the vulnerability of people to fall prey to traffickers and posed a capacity building challenge.

South Central Somalia

South Central Somalia has been embroiled in a brutal civil war for the last 20 years, resulting in a desperate population that is vulnerable to various forms of exploitation including human trafficking. This vulnerability is further compounded by extreme poverty. Many people continue to be displaced by the conflict. The displaced populations in South Central Somalia, as well as refugees, who have fled out of Somalia to other countries such as Kenya, are highly vulnerable to human trafficking. Traffickers, taking advantage of weak governance, use South Central Somalia as a transit route for international trafficking

Puntland

Puntland has been identified as a source, transit and destination region for trafficked persons. Victims are trafficked from and to Puntland as well as internationally across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and beyond or to Ethiopia and Tanzania. Most victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Children are more prone to international trafficking for various forms of exploitation, including organ removal.

While many community members are not aware of their vulnerability to trafficking, the risk is high. Interviews with victims and community members indicate that there is a heightened risk of child trafficking, especially female children. Findings from an IOM assessment revealed that the potential trafficking patterns are widely perceived within the local communities in the form of women and unaccompanied minors being transported to Yemen (and then to Europe and Gulf States) through Bosasso port.

A STORY OF HOPE FROM SOMALILAND

Amina is a 13 years old girl from Mogadishu. Her father makes little earnings selling vegetables and other small items on the street. Following her mother's death, she joined her elder sister in Garowe, (Puntland) with other siblings in search of a safer environment and better education opportunities. One day as she walked to the shops, a Somali woman approached her, and enticed her into going with her. Amina does not recall what happened next. When she woke up, she found herself contained in a room full of other children.

The other children informed her that the woman had drugged her and transported her to Ethiopia for the purpose of organ removal. The following day, Amina was made to undergo several medical check-ups where she was diagnosed with hepatitis A. She was given medical treatment, which did not work. Amina was told by the Somali woman that she was 'useless'. As a result she was transferred from Ethiopia to Burao via Hargeisa in Somaliland, where she was found by one of IOM's Counter Trafficking Network members who referred her case to IOM. She was given immediate assistance and protection, and was finally reunited with her family in Garowe.

"IOM has carried out various capacity building and awareness raising activities with considerable achievements, including the creation of interest and support from regional authorities. The organization is also providing direct assistance to trafficking victims and working closely with regional authorities, civil societies and local communities to ensure a partnership in addressing Human Trafficking in Somalia."

WE ASSIST:

- Irregular migrants
- Trafficked persons



MANAGING MIGRATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

International Organization for Migration
Coordinating Office for the Horn of Africa
Church Road – off Rhapta Road, Westlands
PO Box 55040 – 00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 444 4174
Email: piunairobi@iom.int

<http://nairobi.iom.int>

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WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS:

