

What You Need to Know

Who is most vulnerable to being trafficked?

- Unaccompanied minors (children)
- Women without family protection/support; single mothers
- People who are disabled

What increases the risk?

- Denial of asylum
- Criminal activity in camp/center/community
- Unsafe living situation
- Isolation
- Minority status/ethnicity within migrant group

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

- There are 60 MILLION forcibly displaced people in the world today. (UNHCR)
- Over one million refugees and migrants fled to Europe by sea in 2015; half of this group came from Syria. (UNHCR)
- Germany has the most applications – over half a million – but Hungary has the greatest number in proportion to its population: 1,800 to 100,000 locals. Sweden is close behind with 1,667. The UK has 60 applications for every 100,000 residents. (Eurostat)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- According to Unicef, Europe's refugee crisis has created a "huge business opportunity" for human traffickers. Europol agrees. "Criminals who would normally deal with drugs... are making criminal profits out of the migrant crisis."
- More than 90% of refugees in 2015 used services provided by criminal networks and their associates. (Europol)
- If a family runs out of money before they reach their destination, smugglers will happily accept a kidney, a cornea, or a child in payment.
- Even without coercion, families are forced to rely on risky survival strategies such as early child marriage, child labour, and prostitution, increasing exposure to trafficking. (IREX)

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

- Women and children make up the majority of the world's refugees. As of 2016, they comprise 60% of Europe's migrants, and children now account for more than one-third of all refugees and migrants. (Unicef)
- Europol reported in February 2016 that at least 10,000 unaccompanied child refugees have disappeared since their arrival on the continent. The European Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) says that children who go missing often disappear within 48 hours.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- As border controls get tighter, people will take even more risky routes to enter.
- On arrival in Europe, refugees might feel relatively safe, but if their legitimate need for work is not met, they may soon be “hooked in” by traffickers. (Kevin Hyland, UK’s independent anti-slavery commissioner)

MIXED MIGRATION

- The composition of current migration flows include: economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied migrant children. (IOM)
- Although the massive numbers make identification challenging, trafficking and irregular migration must be separated. Trafficking victims are people whose human rights have been violated, and they are entitled to protection.

Case study: Falling through the cracks of our frameworks

From ICMPD - International Centre for Migration Policy Developments

<http://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/desperation-leaves-syrian-refugees-open-to-exploitation/>

A 13-year-old Syrian Kurdish girl flees her home in Raqqa in Northern Syria with her family, due to the violent threat of ISIS militants. Like many Syrian Kurds, the family are all stateless. They are first accommodated in a camp for Internally Displaced Persons in Dera’a in Southern Syria, and provided services by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Due to shortfalls in funding by international donors at the end of 2014, the UN Office can no longer provide for the basic needs of her family and so they decide to try to cross the border into Lebanon. As they do not have Syrian IDs, they have to cross the border irregularly.

In the Bekaa Valley in Eastern Lebanon, her parents and older brothers hear of informal working opportunities further north. It is very unsafe there, so they leave her with her aunt and cousins in the Bekaa. Word then comes from the North that her father has been killed during fighting at the Lebanese-Syrian border, and that her mother and brothers have disappeared. She is now a separated child, but cannot seek asylum because Lebanon is not a party to the Geneva Convention and Protocol, so her aunt arranges for her to travel with family friends from Lebanon to Turkey, where they have heard it will be safer. Her aunt contributes to the cost of smuggling, as she cannot enter Turkey without ID.

They travel by boat to the Turkish port of Mersin, and she makes it to a temporary protection camp run by the government in Gaziantep in Southern Turkey. A Syrian Kurdish man comes to see the family she has travelled with, and offers them 100 dollars if he can arrange a marriage for her to “a kind Lebanese man he knows”, also living in Turkey. The family, in extremely difficult economic circumstances, agrees. The girl is subjected to a forced marriage to the Lebanese man and ends up in a situation of domestic servitude. She is now a trafficked child.

This hypothetical story might sound far-fetched, but tragically it is not unlikely. Not only are many people affected by this conflict forced to move many times both within the same country and across international borders, but they also move in and out of various different types of status, according to national and international laws. A child trafficking victim may also be a separated child seeking asylum, or an internally displaced person.
