



ABOUT The *Data Bulletin: Informing the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration* series aims to summarize in an accurate and accessible fashion existing evidence on migration to support the discussion and any follow-up activities.

As part of the project “Support to IOM for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,” funded by the European Union, *Data Bulletin* outlines the strengths and limitations of relevant migration data and highlights innovative data practices that are pertinent to the Global Compact for Migration. This publication reflects the collaborative nature of the Global Compact for Migration process by including relevant contributions from different parts of IOM, as well as other agencies and migration experts.

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Human trafficking

The crime of human trafficking is complex and dynamic, taking place in a wide variety of contexts and frequently difficult to detect. One of the greatest challenges in developing targeted counter-trafficking responses and measuring their impact is the lack of reliable, high-quality data. Historically, available data on human trafficking have been extremely limited and the data that do exist are too often isolated in silos, leading to fragmented knowledge.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration emphasizes the need for detailed, disaggregated data to contribute to evidence-based policy responses to today's migration challenges. It also calls for measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons in the context of international migration, and specifically outlines the need for information-sharing as a necessary step towards this goal. This Data Bulletin examines some of the main global sources of human trafficking data, their strengths and limitations, and the work IOM and other organizations are carrying out to build the evidence base on human trafficking in the context of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, specifically Objectives 1 and 10.

The three areas explored are (a) data on identified and reported cases of human trafficking, (b) estimating trafficking prevalence, and (c) collecting data on trafficking in humanitarian settings. Each data source is crucial in building the global picture of human trafficking, but each source has its own limitations that need to be considered when using the data.

Data on identified and reported cases of human trafficking

The main sources of data on human trafficking globally come from identified victims. These are usually collected by a range of different actors, including law enforcement, the judiciary and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing protection and assistance services to victims. Such operational data tend to be held in the various databases of different organizations and are not readily available – particularly in disaggregate form – due to data protection and civil liberties concerns. Such data may be compiled and reported in aggregate form by a central body, as part of a national reporting process. This responsibility commonly falls on the agency that manages the national referral mechanism, as those data tend to provide the most comprehensive data set in terms of coverage. National aggregate statistics are reported by some governments to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

As described above, data on identified victims of trafficking are generated by counter-trafficking organizations. This means that data are only available where such organizations are operational and able to share such data. In practice, data are therefore not available for all countries/locations and, where data do exist, they are not always comprehensive in terms of coverage of a given country/location. Large quantities of data on



identified victims of trafficking do not necessarily indicate higher prevalence of human trafficking. Indeed, they may equally indicate an effective counter-trafficking response. Identified cases are better understood as a sample of the unidentified population of victims, yielding insight into trafficking trends and patterns. This sample may be biased if some types of trafficking cases are more likely to be identified (or referred) than others. The extent of the bias is not always known or able to be corrected for, since the unidentified population is, by definition, unknown. Nevertheless, where available, these data are indispensable, as they provide detailed insight into the profiles and experiences of the victims, the forms of human trafficking, and information on perpetrators.

Operational case data

In the course of protecting and providing services to victims, counter-trafficking actors frequently collect individual-level, operational case data. IOM has been providing direct assistance to victims of human trafficking since the mid-1990s and assists approximately 8,000 victims each year. Through its case management activities, the Organization has developed the largest database of victims of trafficking case data in the world, with information on more than 55,000 individual cases.

Operational data from counter-trafficking organizations are often highly sensitive and pertain to individuals, which raises a range of privacy and civil liberty concerns, where the risk of identifying data subjects can be high and the consequences severe. While many organizations and governments around the world collect data on cases of human trafficking, disaggregated data have not been

easily accessible to external stakeholders or have not been frequently shared between relevant actors in the past, due to the sensitivity of its content, and data protection and confidentiality considerations.

To overcome these challenges, in 2017, IOM made its own data publicly available online through IOM's Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC),¹ along with combined data from other leading counter-trafficking organizations with significant case-level datasets. CTDC has made great progress in overcoming these obstacles, but more work is needed throughout the counter-trafficking community to agree on common standards and methods of data-sharing and applicability. Disaggregated case-level data are the most detailed source of information on human trafficking and should thus play a vital part of any meaningful analysis on the phenomenon, with due attention to privacy and security concerns.

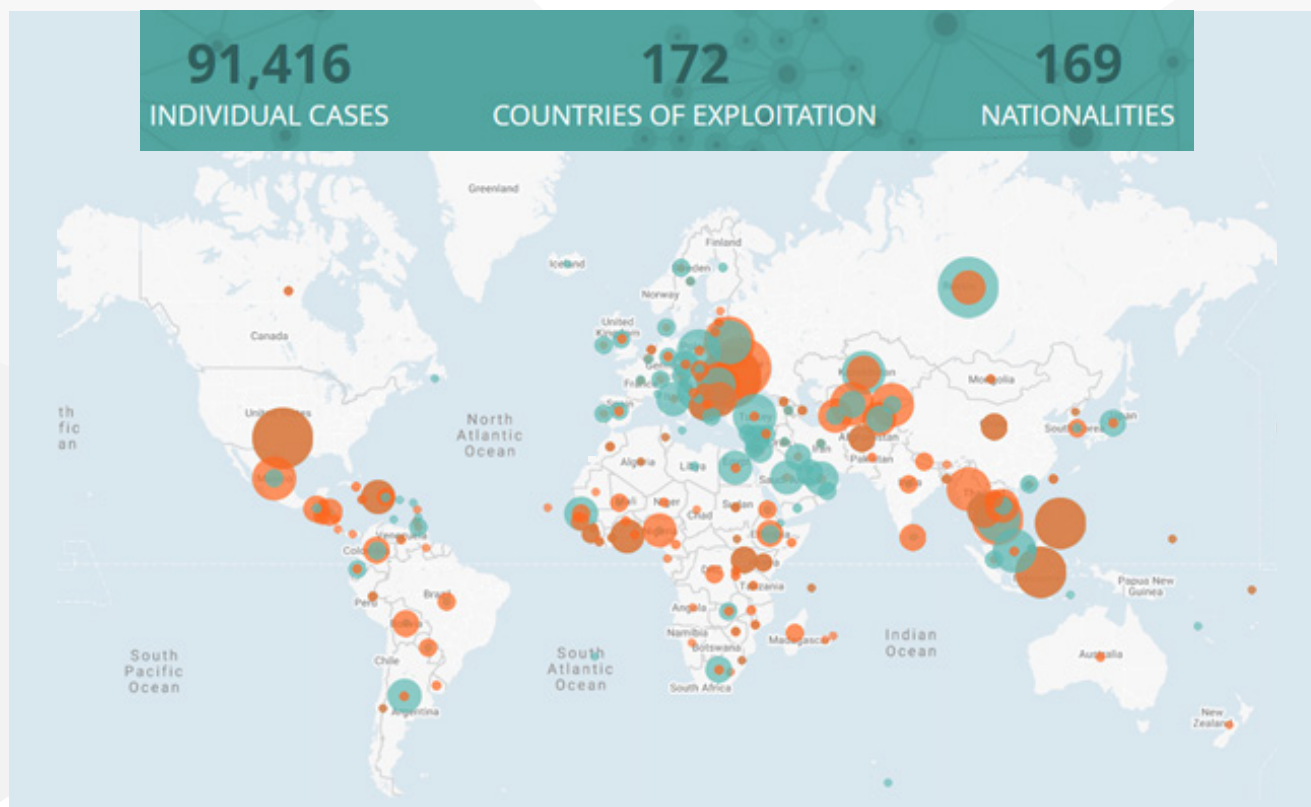
National reporting mechanisms

Official reports on administrative data compiled by governments (or other central reporting bodies) on human trafficking cases within their national jurisdictions are another key source of trafficking information. UNODC surveys governments on trafficking victims identified in their respective countries for the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016*,² using a common questionnaire with a standard set of indicators, and then

¹ Available from www.ctdatacollaborative.org (accessed 20 November 2018).

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6) (New York, 2016). Available from www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf (accessed 20 November 2018).

Figure 1: CTDC Global Dataset: Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative, 2018



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

aggregates the results. The most recent Global Report was produced in 2016, and featured data on approximately 63,251 identified victims of trafficking from 106 national governments over a two-year period.³ Data are largely published in the form of total numbers, disaggregated by variables such as sex, age and type of exploitation, wherever possible. In addition to government surveys, UNODC collects official information, such as police reports, that are available in the public domain, and some information from intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. While these data are not detailed, limiting their use, they have the widest geographical coverage and therefore provide useful baseline information on human trafficking at the global level. Furthermore, in the absence of publicly available disaggregated data, official reports may be the only source of data on identified victims available in a given country or region.

The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative

CTDC is the first global data hub on human trafficking, with data contributed by organizations from around the world. The resulting data set is the largest of its kind globally, with information on more than 90,000 individual cases of human trafficking visualized throughout the site, including through an interactive global map. An anonymized version of this data set is publicly available to download. By putting such data in the public domain, the goal of CTDC is to break down information-sharing barriers and equip the counter-trafficking community with up-to-date, reliable data on human trafficking. As new data from contributing partners are added, CTDC will continue to expand in scope, featuring new data sets from diverse counter-trafficking actors and disseminating standards on sharing trafficking-case data.

Estimating prevalence of human trafficking

There are currently no global or regional estimates of the prevalence of human trafficking. National estimates have been produced in several countries, but they are also based on modelling of existing administrative data from identified cases and should therefore only be considered as basic baseline estimates. Historically, producing estimates of the prevalence of trafficking based on the collection of new primary data – for example, through surveys – has been difficult. This is due to trafficking’s complicated legal definition and the ethical challenges of addressing sensitive questions to household survey respondents. Relatively few examples of estimates related to human trafficking exist:

(a) **2017 Global Estimate of Modern Slavery:** This is a global estimate of the prevalence of the human trafficking-related crimes of forced labour and forced marriage, produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation, in collaboration with IOM. The 2017 report estimates that 40 million people were victims of modern slavery on any given day in 2016.⁴ Of these, approximately 25

million were in forced labour and another 15 million were in forced marriages. Data from IOM’s human trafficking database on sexual exploitation and child exploitation were used for the estimates.

(b) **Estimating human trafficking in displacement contexts:** IOM is developing a series of comparable prevalence estimates in displacement contexts, in partnership with ILO and the Walk Free Foundation. These new, nationally representative prevalence estimates are being developed in three pilot countries, leveraging existing IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix operations.

(c) **Multiple Systems Estimation:** This is the methodology used to estimate the total (unidentified and identified) victims of trafficking at the country level. This is based on the analysis of multiple lists of human trafficking cases provided by different actors in the counter-trafficking field, such as NGOs, law enforcement, other authorities and international organizations. The Multiple Systems Estimation depends upon the existence of various databases on identified victims of human trafficking in the country of implementation. Currently, it cannot be applied globally – researchers developing the method estimate that it could potentially be used in approximately 50 countries around the world.

Trafficking in humanitarian settings

There are thousands of trafficked persons in most countries at any given moment. Humanitarian crises such as those associated with conflicts or natural disasters may exacerbate pre-existing trafficking trends and give rise to new ones. While some forms of trafficking could be a direct result of crises, such as exploitative sexual services

Figure 2: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage



³ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴ International Labour Organization, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage* (Geneva, 2017).

demanded by armed groups of the forced recruitment of child soldiers, others are less evident, with traffickers thriving on the widespread human, material, social and economic losses caused by crises and the inability of families and communities to protect themselves and their children.

IOM advocates for activities that prevent trafficking and protect trafficked persons in humanitarian settings. To address the acute need for data in such settings, IOM has been using the Displacement Tracking Matrix to collect reliable data on human trafficking and migrant exploitation, abuse and vulnerability in situations of crisis, displacement and large-scale migration. Locations of recent data collection include Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, North-East Nigeria, Ukraine, South American countries and countries on the main migration routes to Europe.

In 2017, IOM produced a report with the United Nations Children's Fund on the specific experiences of children and youth migrating via the Mediterranean migration routes to Europe.⁵ In a separate report, IOM identified predictors of vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation for migrants taking these routes.⁶ There are limited reliable data on human trafficking and exploitation in displacement contexts. Humanitarian settings are often highly pressurized and fast-changing environments, where conducting rigorous and ethical data collection can be challenging. For example, access to affected populations for data collectors can rapidly change, and services relevant for assistance of victims of human trafficking might not initially exist in crisis-affected

locations. Therefore, the methods of data collection need to avoid causing harm, and they need to be time-sensitive and adaptable.

Data recently collected by IOM illustrate the prevalence of forced labour, forced marriage and abductions in certain displacement contexts, and show risks of and vulnerabilities to human trafficking. These types of data can inform counter-trafficking activities during the humanitarian response.

Figure 3: Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation



⁵ International Organization for Migration and United Nations Children's Fund, *Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation* (New York, 2017).

⁶ Galos, E., L. Bartolini, H. Cook and N. Grant, *Migrant Vulnerability to Human Trafficking and Exploitation: Evidence from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean Migration Routes* (Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2017).

IOM's GMDAC

In response to growing calls for better data on migration, and for better use and presentation of migration data, IOM has created the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).

Located in Berlin, Germany, the Centre aims to provide authoritative and timely analyses of data on global migration issues as a global hub for data and statistics on migration.

For more information, please contact:
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