QUICK FACTS

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international policies against human trafficking that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people.

What Is Human Trafficking?

In the past decade human trafficking has emerged as one of the fastest-growing criminal activities in the world. This modern-day form of slavery claims an estimated 20.9 million victims internationally and is a serious violation of human rights.[1] Traffickers use violence, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to manipulate victims into engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against their will.[2] Though awareness of and concern about this industry have increased in recent years, human trafficking is consistently underreported due to its covert nature, low community awareness, lack of law enforcement, limited resources for victim recovery, and social blaming of victims.[3]

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a growing global industry and occurs in a wide variety of venues within the sex industry, including residential brothels, online escort services, fraudulent massage businesses, strip clubs, and on the streets.[4] Under federal law, any minor under the age of 18 who has engaged in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking — regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion.[5] The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime reports that 54 percent of human trafficking victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation.[6]

Labor Trafficking

Similar to sex trafficking, labor-trafficked victims are coerced; however, instead of being sexually exploited, victims are abused in a variety of labor settings including domestic work, small businesses, large farms, and factories.[7] Trafficked victims in every industry work long hours for little to no pay, but the physical and psychological control employers have over victims often forces them to assume they have no other option but to stay. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 21 million people trapped in forced labor all over the world.[8]

Human Trafficking Worldwide

Human trafficking victims from roughly 160 countries have been detected in about 140 different countries around the world.[9] Although some trafficking is global, human trafficking is largely a regional and local issue, with 43 percent of trafficking happening domestically.[10] The key destinations for transregional trafficking include western and southern Europe, as well as wealthy countries in the Middle East and North America, with large numbers of victims coming from sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia. Victims of human trafficking in Europe and the Americas are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation, and trafficking for forced labor is more frequently detected in Africa and central Asia.[11]

Human Trafficking in the United States

Contrary to popular belief human trafficking also occurs in the United States, and it is a growing problem for every state. Since 2007, there have been 25,696 cases of human trafficking reported in the United States. In 2015 alone 5,973 cases were reported in every state and Washington, D.C.[12] The National Human Trafficking Resource Center found that of cases reported in the United States from 2007 to 2012, 41 percent of sex trafficking cases and 20 percent of labor trafficking cases identified U.S. citizens as victims.[13]

Human Trafficking Affects Women

Though this epidemic affects people from all cultures, social classes, and backgrounds, human trafficking disproportionately affects women and girls. Resulting from a global tendency to devalue women, women who lack the rights to own land, property, and inheritance become more vulnerable to trafficking. Seventy-one percent of victims of trafficking are women and girls; 72 percent of female victims are trafficked for sexual

exploitation.[14] The National Human Trafficking Resource Center reported that women were the victims in 85 percent of sex trafficking cases reported in the United States from 2007 to 2012.[15]

Current Efforts to End Human Trafficking

The main federal legislation in the United States used to combat trafficking is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). TVPA was recently reauthorized as part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act in 2013. The law includes invaluable specialist services for survivors of human trafficking, grants prosecutors new tools to go after traffickers for exploiting others, and enhances partnerships with priority countries to protect children and prevent child trafficking. Additionally, early in the 114th Congress, the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act, a bill aimed to end the demand for illegal trade and support survivors, was signed into law.[16] The federal government has also worked to end human trafficking through the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign, which strives to bring those who exploit human lives to justice.[17]

Even with these federal efforts much work is still left to be done at the state level. All states should have statutes in place that address protection of victims, prosecution, and prevention.[18] Protection must include

provisions that cover safe harbor, victim assistance, civil remedies, the ability to vacate convictions for survivors, and strict hotline posting requirements.

Additional Resources
National Human Trafficking Resource Center
www.traffickingresourcecenter.org

"2014 State Ratings on Human Trafficking Laws"
Polaris Project
www.polarisproject.org/2014stateratings

"State Policy Sex Trafficking Tool Kit"
AAUW and the National Council of Jewish Women
www.aauw.org/resource/state-policy-sex-trafficking-tool-kit

Human Trafficking Legislative Updates
Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking
www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org/legislative_updates

Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
www.unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking

You provide the voice; we'll provide the megaphone. Sign up to take action for women and girls today:
bit.ly/AAUWActionNetwork.

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[1] International Labour Organization (2012). "New ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: 20.9 Million Victims." www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_182109/lang--en/index.htm

[2] National Human Trafficking Resource Center. "What Is Human Trafficking?" www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/type-trafficking/human-trafficking

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Polaris Project. (2014). "Sex Trafficking in the U.S." www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/sex-trafficking-in-the-us

[6] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2016). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.* www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf

[7] National Human Trafficking Resource Center. "What Is Human Trafficking?" www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/type-trafficking/human-trafficking

[8] International Labour Organization (2016). "Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Slavery." www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm

[9] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2016). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.* www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Polaris Project. (2016). "2015 Human Trafficking Hotline Data Released." polarisproject.org/news/press-releases/2015-human-trafficking-hotlines-data-released

[13] Polaris Project. (2013). "Human Trafficking Trends." www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview/human-trafficking-trends

[14] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2016). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.* www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf

[15] Polaris Project. (2013). "Human Trafficking Trends." www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview/human-trafficking-trends

[16] AAUW Action Fund. (2016). *Congressional Voting Record.* www.aauwaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/CVR-nsa.pdf

[17] Department of Homeland Security. (2016). "About the Blue Campaign." www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/about-blue-campaign

[18] Polaris Project. (2015). *A Look Back: Building a Human Trafficking Legal Framework.* polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2014-Look-Back.pdf