

THE INCREASED RISK OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN TIMES OF WAR

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Abstract. The phenomenon of human trafficking during the war is analyzed. The main situations in which human traffickers are active and the schemes they use to recruit people are given. A list of recommendations has been developed that will help minimize the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking.

Keywords: human trafficking, war, human exploitation, women and children, migration.

Анотація. Проаналізовано явище торгівлі людьми під час війни. Наведено основні ситуації, в яких активізуються торговці людьми та схеми, які вони використовують для вербування людей. Розроблено перелік рекомендацій, які допоможуть мінімізувати ризик стати жертвою торгівлі людьми.

Ключові слова: торгівля людьми, війна, експлуатація людей, жінки та діти, міграція.

Introduction. The war unleashed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has in no time been a real catalyst for the development of already existing and newly-formed dangers. One of these is human trafficking. Women and children are travelling abroad, creating large queues at border crossing points, which has led to a significant increase in such cases. At the same time, men have also become more frequent victims of traffickers [1]. This problem is indeed growing sharply and poses a threat to every Ukrainian.

Analysis of the state of the issue. Trafficking in human beings is an illegal transaction, the object of which is a human being, as well as the recruitment, transportation, transfer or receipt of a person, committed for the purpose of exploitation, including sexual, with the use of deception, fraud, blackmail, vulnerable person or with the use or threat of violence, using the official position or material or other dependence on another person, in accordance with the Criminal Code of Ukraine is recognized as a crime [2]. Trafficking in human beings has long been a lucrative business for criminal networks and is carried out in various ways. Alleged victims of human trafficking among refugees from Ukraine have already been detected in several states and there are reports of investigations. This problem requires the constant attention of law enforcement authorities, especially now that people have become even more vulnerable to such crimes due to military operations. In addition, everyone should be made aware of the advice on how not to become a victim of human traffickers.

The aim of the article: to identify the main areas that give rise to significant risks of human trafficking crimes and the patterns of these crimes, to determine at-risk groups, and to develop recommendations to help avoid the threat of becoming a human trafficking victim.

Methods, materials and research results. As noted earlier, in the context of war, the danger of human trafficking is only heightened and people of all genders, ages, social backgrounds and incomes are at risk. This is because panic and fear dull attention and make people easy targets for abduction. There are several areas that give rise to

significant risks of such crimes and other associated offences, as well as several typical patterns of human trafficking in war situations [3; 4].

First and foremost is the sharp increase in the number of migrants travelling abroad from the territory of Ukraine. Since it is very difficult to identify cases of such crimes during mass movements, traffickers successfully take advantage of this. The most vulnerable category of people in this situation are children, as they are often separated from their parents for various reasons and have to cross the border on their own. Due to their age, they are particularly prone to accept dubious offers from recruiters and become easy prey for fraudsters and traffickers. A vulnerable category is also people (mostly women) who have domestic difficulties, lack of financial resources, and uncertainty about their future prospects.

So, in most cases, women and children are victims in this way, which is why traffickers usually use a scheme that consists of the following points [3]:

- 1) taking advantage of the vulnerable psychological state of the person who is experiencing separation from family, loss of housing, confusion and cannot think critically;

- 2) offering safe housing for free or at a very low price, without giving any specifics about the living conditions;

- 3) using flattering beliefs and making the person dependent on their help;

- 4) introducing themselves as volunteers, other proxies;

- 5) confiscation of documents without further return.

Another important direction is the forcible transfer of Ukrainian citizens to the territory of the aggressor country. Many Ukrainians have been taken to the most remote regions of the aggressor country, apparently to make it more difficult for them to return to Ukrainian territory. As of now, over 1.6 million Ukrainians are known to have been forcibly deported [6]. The removed children are put up for adoption, which does not exclude the possibility of further crimes being committed against them, such as involvement in begging, forced organ transplants and sexual exploitation. Many POWs have also been removed from Ukrainian territory. In April, there were proposals in the Russian State Duma on forced blood donation of Ukrainian POWs for wounded occupants.

The peculiarities of the kidnapping scheme in this case are:

- 1) tangible physical or psychological pressure;

- 2) using people as a «resource» for 21st century slavery;

- 3) abduction mainly in the temporarily occupied territories;

- 4) appropriation of all the property of the victim (looting);

- 5) deprivation of any communication with the outside world (confiscation of telephone and other means of communication);

- 6) deprivation of free movement, prohibition to leave a certain territory.

With each day of the war the danger of human trafficking increases, so this situation requires an adequate and resolute response from Ukrainian law enforcement authorities. Nevertheless, the five danger markers – documents, transport, offer of assistance, interaction and communication – should be kept in mind [7]. Having analyzed all of the above, a list of recommendations can be identified to help avoid the risk of becoming a human trafficking victim:

- 1) you should never give your documents to anyone and you should only give them to officials;
- 2) take care of copies of your documents in advance, scan them or take photos;
- 3) if you use transport, you should know exactly where you are going and inform your relatives and friends;
- 4) offers of help should only be accepted from official organizations that you can trust;
- 5) you must not give your phone or other means of communication to anyone;
- 6) you should always stay in touch with your family and friends and inform them of any changes in your route or place of residence;
- 7) it is advisable to arrange a code word with your loved ones to signify that you are in danger;
- 8) you should not trust all links to dubious volunteer organizations on social media; if you decide to seek help, you should choose contacts of officially trusted organizations;
- 9) if you have a problem with suspicious people, you should contact the IOM-supported National Human Trafficking and Migrant Counselling Hotline at 527 or contact the hotline counsellors at 527.hotline@gmail.com if you are abroad [1].

Conclusion. So, unfortunately, the problem of human trafficking is extremely acute nowadays. Law enforcement agencies in Ukraine and around the world have already intensified monitoring of the situation, conducting constant checks of volunteer centers, and optimizing communication and cooperation with border services. Nevertheless, the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking is still very high, which once again underlines the relevance of the recommendations provided in the paper.

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