

Foreword

Over 20 million people are estimated to be victims of forced labour globally, which includes victims of trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation. While considerable steps have been taken by governments across the world to combat this multi-billion-dollar business that is destroying lives and violating fundamental human rights, the impact on the ground remains limited. At the same time, the proceeds of traffickers continue to rise. In light of the current refugee crisis, combatting trafficking in persons and ensuring that more people do not become victims is more relevant than ever. Adults and unaccompanied minors alike who have been forced to flee their home countries in search of safety, political stability and humane living conditions are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. They arrive in a new and unfamiliar country without possessions, and in need of physical and economic security.

Trafficking in persons (TIP) relies on systemic corruption. Corruption ensures that traffickers can operate undisturbed and under the radar, without risk of being arrested or convicted even when a trafficking crime has been uncovered. It also allows for the re-trafficking of victims that were able to escape their situation of exploitation. Corrupt behaviour ranges from active involvement, such as violating duties, accepting or transferring bribes, and facilitating transactions, to passive involvement, such as ignoring or failing to follow up on information that a crime may be taking place, and is present throughout the trafficking chain.

Yet, what has largely been missing in the current efforts to address trafficking in persons is a comprehensive analysis of how corruption facilitates trafficking and how interventions could be leveraged, re-focused, or introduced to more effectively reach the desired results within both areas.

Recognising the need to strengthen the anti-corruption component in the efforts to address this acute humanitarian challenge, the OECD has developed “Guiding Principles on Combatting Corruption related to Trafficking in Persons”. These Guiding Principles have gone through multiple rounds of consultation and were field-tested in the Philippines and Thailand to ensure that they focus on “what works” and capture the knowledge and lessons learned that have been accumulated by the experts from national governments, civil society and academia.

These Guiding Principles are part of the OECD’s efforts to analyse the role that corruption plays in facilitating globalised illegal activities, such as human trafficking, terrorism, illicit trade, and organised crime. Only by having a comprehensive and cohesive approach to strengthen institutions and target the corrupt links in these activities can policy makers break the chain and advance into combatting global threats.

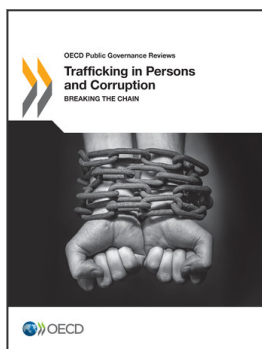
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