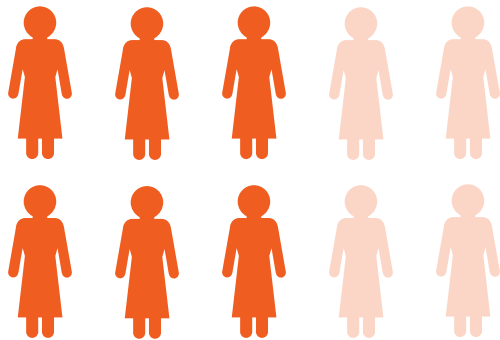




UNGA 79: TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS: STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VICTIM-SURVIVORS: REPORT OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL (2024)

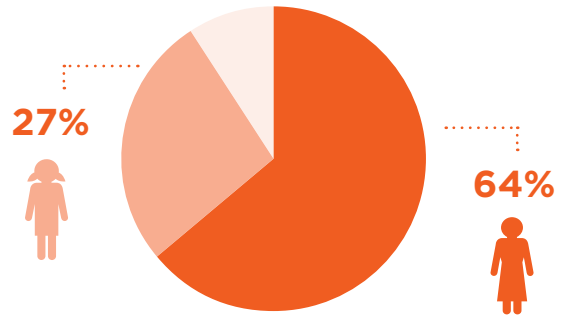


GLOBAL TRENDS IN THE TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS



60 per cent

In 2022, women and girls made up **60 per cent of total detected trafficked victims**. Sexual exploitation continues to be the most common form of trafficked experienced by women and girls.¹



64 per cent

In 2022, nearly **64 per cent of detected victims of sexual exploitation were women** and **27 per cent were girls**.²

TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IS ROOTED IN GENDER INEQUALITY AND IS PART OF A CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



The connection between VAWG and trafficking is increasingly evident. The global data on trafficking shows that **women victims are subjected to physical or extreme violence at a rate three times higher than men**.³



Moreover, the **children of women** who are trafficked for sexual exploitation, especially girls, are **highly susceptible** to becoming trafficked themselves.⁴



25 per cent

The connection between other forms of VAWG and trafficking is increasingly recognised, with a study of cases showing **25 per cent of survivors had experienced other forms of gender-based violence prior to being trafficked**.⁵

DEEPLY ENTRENCHED BARRIERS TO JUSTICE REMAIN FOR TRAFFICKING VICTIM-SURVIVORS



61 per cent

Women's access to justice is limited by the quality and availability of legal and justice services with data showing that only **61 per cent of Member States provide legal advice and court services in all legal proceedings to female survivors of violence.**⁶

Culture of impunity

The culture of impunity for traffickers is upheld when the **justice system is not trauma-informed, and victim-survivors are revictimised.** These practices can lead to trafficking survivors withdrawing from the justice process resulting in low conviction rates with traffickers continuing to enjoy impunity.⁷



62 per cent

Inadequate application of the non-punishment principle has led to trafficking survivors being misidentified as offenders. A study of trafficking survivors in the United States found that **62 per cent of survivors reported being cited, detained, or arrested by law enforcement for being forced to commit criminal acts whilst being trafficked.** This resulted in criminal records that prevented survivors from rebuilding their lives once they were able to escape trafficking.⁸



72%

64%

59%



28%

36%

41%

Investigated

Prosecuted

Convicted

41 per cent of convictions for trafficking were women

Despite the fact that **women make up only 28 per cent of those investigated for trafficking, data shows that 41 per cent of convictions for trafficking were women,** highlighting a disproportionately high conviction rate for women.

This trend reflects entrenched gender biases in justice systems, that fails to recognise the gendered power structures within trafficking organisations, mostly led by men who are protected, allowing those in lower rungs such as women and girls to be more easily prosecuted.⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS



Access to justice

To improve access to justice for victim-survivors of trafficking, Member States should ensure that laws and policies:

- Include access to free legal aid for all victim-survivors and apply the non-punishment principle fully.
- Do not condition access to assistance, support, justice, and remedies to initiating criminal proceedings or cooperating with law enforcement and judicial authorities.
- Member States should also take concerted action to ensure gender and age-sensitive and trauma-informed justice system practices.



Connections between trafficking and gender-based violence

The connections between gender-based violence and trafficking should be explicitly addressed in National Action Plans to address trafficking and gender-based violence, with specific preventative actions to address the common drivers and risk factors for trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence.



Prevention

To eliminate trafficking of women and girls in the long-term, a renewed focus on prevention with a focus on addressing gender inequality as the root cause of trafficking, including transforming norms and stereotypes that foster demand and exploitation. Actions should integrate an intersectional approach to reach the marginalised groups of women and girls who are at greatest risk of trafficking.



Response

To ensure the full recovery and well-being of trafficking survivors, Member States should ensure that survivors of trafficking are given long-term, comprehensive reintegration support, and fund survivor groups and women's rights organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Role of technology

Given the continued role of technology in facilitating trafficking of women and girls, Member States should strengthen efforts to detect and monitor activities associated with trafficking online, especially greater research to understand how online spaces are being used to facilitate and fuel trafficking and how technology can instead be used to combat trafficking.



Crisis Contexts

Humanitarian responses should prioritise social protection and economic support for all women and girls, including those vulnerable to trafficking, to reduce the risk of exploitation.



Data & Evidence

Member States should invest in data collection to report on disaggregated data on trafficking. Data should be disaggregated by age and gender, and include children, but also provide information on other factors such as disabilities, race, sexual orientation in line with do-no-harm principles.

Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2024 (forthcoming)
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Op.Cit (UNODC) (2022)
- 4 A/HRC/56/48
- 5 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation as Defendants: A Case Law Analysis (2020)
- 6 UNDP and UNOCD (2016), Global Study on Legal Aid: Global Report
- 7 Polaris, Criminal Record Relief for Trafficking Survivors (2023)
<https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Criminal-Record-Relief-for-Trafficking-Survivors-by-Polaris.pdf>
- 8 Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (08/2020).Issue Brief: Non-Punishment of Victims of Trafficking
- 9 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Female victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation as Defendants: A Case Law Analysis (2020)