

ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS

In the fight against human trafficking Turkey has carried out legislative arrangements in accordance with Palermo Protocol of 2000, which we are party to, and European Council's Convention on Action against Human Trafficking of 2005 in particular, as well as several other international legislations and this crime has been inserted into our domestic law by including the crime of human trafficking into Turkish Criminal Code of 2002 for the first time.

Fundamental amendments on combating human trafficking and victim protection are included in the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection as well as in the Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims in order to ensure uniformity in practice and to determine the procedure in the actions and procedures.

Considering that the victims of human trafficking and the people with strong suspicion that they may be victims can be exposed to extremely challenging and traumatic conditions and behaviors during the period of their victimization, it is stipulated in the same Law that a recovery and reflection period shall be given to them so that they can overcome the trauma they experienced in this situation and plan the next process. In this context, the victims are granted a 30 day residence permit by the governorships so that they can get over and cooperate with the authorities. It is also essential that the victims are accommodated at shelters during this period.

While 82 victims were given residence permits in 2018, this number was 178 in 2019.

In the Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims, provisions regarding victim determination and identification procedures, victim support services and the **Human Trafficking Coordination Commission** have been regulated.

Determination and identification procedures are carried out by the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management as a result of interviews conducted by the Provincial Migration experts (together with vocational staff such as psychologists and social workers) as part of the interview techniques with the suspect.

All countries in the world are affected by the crime of human trafficking due to being a source, transit or destination country. When considered in terms of women's exploitation Turkey emerges especially as a destination country.

In **2018**, human trafficking interviews were conducted with 1,636 victim suspects, of which 134 were identified as victims. **111 of them** are women. In **2019**, 2,725 victim suspects

were interviewed, of which 215 were identified as victims. Of those 215 victims, **195 are women.**

The most common picture of this crime in Turkey, as all around the world, is sexual exploitation. While 95 of 134 victims identified in **2018** were sexual exploitation and 39 were labor exploitation cases; 215 victims identified in **2019**, **134 are sexual exploitation, 23 are labor exploitation, 16 are in captivity, 12 are forced marriage, 9 are child bride cases.**

The nationality distribution of women victims identified in 2018 (top 5 countries): 29 are the citizens of Uzbekistan, 18 Morocco, 14 Kyrgyzstan, 12 Syria, 7 Kazakhstan. When the age distribution of the victims are examined, it is found out that 10 are under the age of 18 and 33 are between the ages of 18-25, 51 are between the ages of 26-35, and 17 are 36 and over.

The nationality distribution of women victims identified in 2019 (top 5 countries): 44 are the citizens of Uzbekistan, 31 Syria, 28 Morocco, 26 Kyrgyzstan, 11 Indonesia. When the age distribution of the victims are examined, it is found out that 23 are 18 years old and under, 66 are between the ages of 18-25, 70 are between the ages of 26-35, 36 are 36 and over.

In accordance with the provisions of the Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims, physical, psychological and social support services are provided to victims in cooperation with relevant public institutions and organizations, taking into account their security and protection needs.

Article 28 of the same Regulation assures the support services to be provided to victims. Accordingly, victim support program shall be provided for the victim on the basis of informed consent during the reflection period, at the stages of investigation and prosecution and thereafter, considering the safety, health and special status of the victim. The following services are provided under the scope of that program:

- ✓ Accommodation in shelters or safe locations,
- ✓ Ensuring access to healthcare services,
- ✓ Ensuring psychosocial support,
- ✓ Access to social services and assistance,
- ✓ Access to legal assistance and providing counseling and information about the legal rights of the victims,
- ✓ Guidance on access to education and training services,
- ✓ Providing vocational education and supporting the access to labor market,

- ✓ Providing necessary guidance about financial support in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Encouragement of Social Solidarity and Assistance
- ✓ Access to counseling services to be provided by relevant non-governmental organizations, international organizations and intergovernmental organizations,
- ✓ Providing interpretation services,
- ✓ Providing information for the (affiliated) embassy or consulate of the country which the victim is a citizen of, upon consent of the victim,
- ✓ Providing assistance for identification and granting of necessary travel documents.

While the number of victims who benefited from victim support program was **122 in 2018**, this number was **188 in 2019**.

There are three shelters that currently serve the victims of human trafficking in Ankara (30 people capacity), Kırıkkale (12 people capacity) and Aydın (40 people capacity).

While 22 women victims were hosted at shelters in 2018, 30 women victims were hosted in 2019 and the following services were provided to them:

- ✓ Victims staying at the shelters are given 500 TL per month and their children, if any, are given 200 TL per child.
- ✓ The accompanying children were enrolled in schools according to their age and education level.
- ✓ As part of the Accelerated Vaccination Program, the children staying at our shelters have been vaccinated.
- ✓ Child-friendly areas have been built at shelters.
- ✓ Victims, who are under heavy trauma, have been hospitalized in psychiatry clinics.
- ✓ Victims with infectious diseases have been treated.
- ✓ Regular trainings on basic health, first aid and sexual health have been provided in cooperation with relevant institutions.
- ✓ Access to legal aid and participation in training programs in the field of basic foreigners law has been ensured.
- ✓ Victims participated in various vocational courses.
- ✓ Social activities such as cinema, theater, picnic and birthdays are regularly held and support services are provided for their social cohesion.

Turkey provides services both in terms of legislation and implementation in order to ensure that victims of human trafficking return to their countries in a safe and dignified manner.

Among the provisions of the aforementioned Regulation, there are also provisions that regulate the voluntary and safe return program. Accordingly, the victim returns to his country or to a third country under the voluntary and safe return program, under the coordination of the General Directorate of Migration Management.

The voluntary and safe return program can be implemented if the victim does not want to benefit from the support program or if the victim requests to leave the support program during or at the end of the support program.

In 2019, 35 of 188 victims who benefited from victim support services demanded to benefit from the victim support program, while **153 of them** requested to return to their country or to a third country by benefiting from **voluntary and safe return program**.

Along with the provisions for protecting and providing support services to the victim, the same Regulation also stipulates that a Commission shall be established in order to carry out tasks to draft policies and strategies regarding the prevention of and combating the crime of human trafficking, to prepare action plans and to ensure coordination among public institutions and organizations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Based on that provision, the Commission Meeting was held in 2017, 2018 and 2019 under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of the Interior, with the participation of all relevant public institutions and organizations, relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and several decisions were taken.

In line with the decision taken in the Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking of 2018, “2018 / 1.2- Designate one primary one back-up human trafficking liaison officer in 15 provinces (Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Artvin, Bursa, Çanakkale, Gaziantep, Hatay, Iğdır, İstanbul, İzmir, Kilis, Muğla, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon) by the relevant institutions, provide training to designated officials and present the annual activity report to be prepared by the officers to the meeting of Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking of 2019” the provincial human trafficking liaison officers were appointed and training for the fight against human trafficking and training for trainers were provided. **In addition, 674 people were trained to fight against human trafficking in 2018.**

In line with the decision taken in the Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking of 2019, “2019/1.1- Organizing trainings, awareness raising activities and workshops in cooperation with civil society organizations and international organizations every year in order to increase the knowledge and experiments of the personnel of relevant institutions and organizations in the field of human trafficking” 1.118 employees of relevant public institutions and non-governmental organizations were trained **on fight against human trafficking** and workshops were organized. In addition to this, many awareness raising activities, especially posters, brochures, booklets and public service ad have been prepared.

You may reach the public service ad in the following link:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cwEc9a0E6LO>

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=7bWodAyu7Ek>

Also in 2019, in line with the decision “2019/1.3 - creating private lawyers groups to follow the cases of the victims in the Bar Associations” it was aimed to secure the legal rights of victims with the support of lawyers, who are the defense authority.

15 provinces determined in 2018 Coordination Committee decision were increased to 36 in 2019, “*In line with the decision of the 2019 / 1.4- Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking, the liaison officers of 15 provinces (Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Artvin, Bursa, Çanakkale, Gaziantep, Hatay, Iğdır, İstanbul, İzmir, Kilis, Muğla, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon) increased to 36 by adding the provinces (Afyon, Ağrı, Aydın, Balıkesir, Çankırı, Denizli, Edirne, Erzurum, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kırıkkale, Kırklareli, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Mersin, Osmaniye, Tekirdağ, Yalova, Yozgat, Van) and notifying the General Directorate within 15 days in case the designated liaison officers change*” it was aimed to carry out our fight against human trafficking more effectively.