This issue highlights the vulnerability of those forced to migrate and how nation states influence the outcomes of their journey.

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• Society of the Sacred Heart
• U.S. Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union

Violence from Crime or War
Poverty & Lack of Opportunity
Greed
Exploitation
Lawlessness

Climate-related Natural Disasters

Human Trafficking

Trafficking in human beings (THB) and smuggling of migrants (SoM), two distinct but often interrelated phenomena, occur on a global scale. Searching for a way out of economic inequalities, environmental crises, armed conflict, political instability and persecution, and in view of tightening border controls and restricted options for legal migration, migrants are driven to seek the services of smugglers. At the same time, a globalized economy fosters demand for diverse types of exploitation, which also makes migrants vulnerable to traffickers. Both THB and SoM are billion-dollar businesses that exact high human costs. This is illustrated by the many migrants dying while being smuggled along increasingly dangerous migration routes, and by the millions of trafficking victims trapped in exploitative situations worldwide.
Complexities in the Fight Against Trafficking and Smuggling

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) are increasingly addressing trafficking in human beings (THB) and smuggling of migrants (SoM). However, they face challenges in developing the necessary holistic, long-term interventions that combine law enforcement with a rights-based, victim-centered approach and with prevention efforts that are linked to development and offer realistic, practical alternatives to irregular migration. The ACP-EU Migration Action publication analyzed these challenges and provided recommendations to address the difficulties that ACP countries face in relation to trafficking and smuggling phenomena.

ACP States face seven key issues in combating THB and SoM: 1). Legal and policy framework; 2). Implementation of law and policy; 3). Effective border management and tracking illicit financial flows; 4). National and cross-border cooperation and coordination; 5). Victim protection and assistance; 6). Prevention and awareness-raising; and 7). Data collection, management and sharing. It also examined four cross-cutting categories that must be considered throughout the entire effort to bring about justice: 1). Gender, age, social, and cultural norms; 2). Stakeholder capacity-building; 3). Resource constraints; and 4) Human rights protection for victims of trafficking, vulnerable and smuggled migrants.

Immigrant Women Exploited in Europe

In 2017 Anna Zobnina, of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW), published in Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence an article entitled, “Women, Migration, and Prostitution in Europe: Not a Sex Work Story.”

“Since the onset of the most recent humanitarian crisis, nearly one million refugees have been granted asylum in Europe. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2016, over 360,000 refugees arrived on the European shores looking for shelter (UNHCR, 2017). Of this number, at least 115,000 are women and girls, including unaccompanied minor females. What some describe as a “refugee crisis” is, in many ways, a feminist phenomenon: women and their families choosing life, liberty, and well-being, as opposed to death, oppression, and destitution.

“However, Europe has never been a safe place for women, particularly for those who are alone, poor, and without documents. The refugee camps, dominated by men, managed by military personnel, and unequipped with sex-segregated spaces or basic hygiene units for women, quickly became highly masculinized environments where sexual violence and intimidation of women proliferate. Frequently women disappear from the refugee centers. As the members of our network - the refugee women themselves who provide services in the camps - report, female asylum seekers are legitimately afraid to take showers in the mixed-sex facilities. They fear being sexually harassed, and when the strangers posing as humanitarian workers offer to help them use bathrooms at a secure location outside the camp, the women never come back.

“Unless a missing woman has been officially identified, it is impossible to know whether she was transported elsewhere, has managed to escape, or is dead. What we—the European Network of Migrant Women—know is that the women from our communities regularly end up in situations of exploitation, with forced marriage, domestic servitude, and prostitution being the most severe forms. This exploitation comes on top of sexual trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), prolonged material deprivation, and social isolation which predicate migrant women’s vulnerability in the first place.

“To understand this, one needs to walk the streets of Madrid, Berlin, or Brussels. Brussels, the capital of Europe, where the ENOMW’s head office is located, is one of the many European cities where prostitution is legalized. If you walk from its “European quarter”—the luxurious area hosting the international clientele of the “high-class escorts”—towards Molenbeek—the infamous “terrorist quarter,” where impoverished and ethnically segregated migrants live—you will pass the Alhambra district. There you will notice the men, hurrying down the streets, their faces down. They avoid eye contact so as not to betray the reason they frequent Alhambra—to access women in prostitution.
Europe cont. from pg. 2

“Many of these women are from the Europe’s ex-colonies—what is often called the “Third World” — or they come from the poorest regions of Europe itself. While the Latin American, African, and South East Asian women are easy to spot on the streets, the Eastern European women are difficult to reach, as their “managers” enforce strict surveillance and keep the women away from public spaces.

“We are supposed to call these women Europe’s sex workers, but most of them will be surprised with this Western and neo-liberal description of what they do. Most migrant women survive prostitution the way one survives famine, natural disaster, or war. They do not work in it. Many of these women hold education qualifications and skills that they want to use in what the European Union (EU) calls skilled economies, but the EU’s restrictive labor laws and the ethnic and sex discrimination against the women do not allow them to get these jobs.

“The sex trade, therefore, is not an uncommon place to find the migrant women in Europe. While some of them are identified as victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation, most are not. On and off streets—in strip-clubs, saunas, massage parlors, hotels, and private flats—there are female migrants who do not satisfy the officially accepted trafficking criteria and are not entitled to any support.

“In 2015, the European Commission (EC) reported that out of 30,000 registered trafficking victims in the EU in only three years between 2010 and 2012, nearly 70% were victims of sexual exploitation, with women and underage girls making up 95% of this number. Over 60% of the victims were trafficked internally from countries like Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland. Victims from outside the EU commonly came from Nigeria, Brazil, China, Vietnam, and Russia. These are the official numbers obtained through official institutions. The trafficking definitions are notoriously difficult to apply, and front-line service providers know that the trafficking indicators can hardly account for the range of cases they come across so entrenched are the practices of exploitation, prostitution, and trafficking.”

To read the entire article in which Zobolina challenges the position of Amnesty International, which in May 2016 released its international policy supporting the decriminalization of prostitution, go to: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/dignity/vol2/iss1/1/)

(Criminal Networks Earn $Billions Due to Inadequate Refugee Policies

There were 68.5 million forcefully displaced people as of 2017, with that number steadily growing. According to a June 2018 study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), about 2.5 million migrants were smuggled across borders — an operation worth about $5.5 billion to $7 billion in 2016 alone.

As could be expected, the countries most affected are in proximity to the conflict zones creating waves of global refugees. “Neighboring countries shoulder the entire burden of the situation,” said a spokesman at the UN Refugee Agency. Many of the countries absorbing large flows of refugees do not have comprehensive policies or simply lack resources to deal with the influx. That means those migrants often become isolated and desperate for the means to survive. Promises of a better future offered by transnational organized criminal groups and traffickers become attractive as time passes.

“Refugees are especially vulnerable as they typically move under desperate situations,” said Benjamin Smith, Southeast Asian program coordinator for the UNODC. “This creates a situation where transnational crime organizations can come in and take advantage of them through exploitation or trafficking.”

About 1 million migrants entered the European Union in 2015 alone, with nine out of 10 of them paying smugglers to help them cross borders, according to a joint report by the Interpol and Europol. Many unaccompanied minors are also sold into slavery or forced prostitution. Smuggling is at the heart of the criminal enterprises surrounding global refugee crises.

“In the absence of legal channels, boat smugglers remain the only alternative. These smugglers practically have a monopoly on transporting people across the Mediterranean,” said a senior advisor at the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The increasingly tense subject of international migration has led to many countries adopting closed policies for dealing with the crisis. With tighter immigration policies, legal channels for migrants become more cumbersome. That pushes more people toward smugglers who offer a much quicker and lower cost way of entering a country.

Field research conducted in Bangladesh after Cyclone Sidr in 2007 demonstrated an increased rate of trafficking in affected areas. Criminal networks operating in the disaster-affected region, preyed on widows, on men desperate to cross the border to India to find employment and income, and sometimes on entire families. Victims of trafficking were forced into prostitution and hard labor, some working in sweatshops along the Indian border. 

Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in 2013. It affected a part of the country that was already suffering from poverty and high rates of trafficking. The typhoon amplified these trends. Nepal faced a similar situation during the Gorkha earthquake in 2015.

Smuggling of drought-affected migrants from Cambodia to Thailand has also been observed. A study by the International Office of Migration (IOM) in Cambodia revealed that villages engaged in natural resource-based occupations, such as fishing and agriculture, were frequently affected by droughts and floods. A related study conducted in the country demonstrated that these drought-affected families from agricultural villages were more likely to migrate. These migrants tended to take illegal and often unsafe pathways as they were deemed easier and cheaper than migrating through regular channels.

Droughts have particularly devastating effects on households engaged in agriculture as they reduce yields necessary for subsistence and sometimes entrench farmers in debt traps. In India, successive droughts across the country have forced people to migrate – usually to nearby cities – in search of work. Community-based organizations report traffickers who tend to recruit during tough times: before the harvest or during periods of drought. Men are trafficked to work in brick kilns while women are coerced into prostitution. Incidents of children being sold by destitute families to work in the construction sector were also reported.

Sudden-onset disasters can cause unexpected loss of land and lives, and destruction of means of livelihoods, instantly plunging those without safety nets into poverty. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, displacement is likely to occur, giving space for traffickers to operate and exploit affected people, their desire for safety, and their search for means of income to help restore their lives. This may lead to either a sharp rise in human trafficking if the region already witnessed trafficking or the creation of a new ‘hotspot’ for human trafficking.

Slow-onset events are also associated with an increase in trafficking. Populations engaged in natural resource-based livelihoods that are affected by events, such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise and glacial retreat, may take proactive measures to diversify their income. Migration is one such strategy to diversify livelihoods, implying that slow-onset events can drive out-migration. Traffickers are likely to recruit in such source areas of climate migrants, but also at their destinations, such as in urban slums. Increased desperation may push affected populations into the hands of criminal actors, and even into colluding with them, as seen in instances of men selling their wives or other female relatives or parents selling their children in order to cope with the losses associated with a changing climate.

Women are especially vulnerable. Incidents of women from climate-vulnerable areas being duped by ‘agents’ is frequent. The agents promise employment but instead sell vulnerable women to brothels where they are sexually exploited. (https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mecc_infosheet_climate_change_nexus.pdf)
Plight of Immigrant Women in the U.S.

In an October 2017 survey done by the Tahirih Justice Center at the request of the Ford Foundation, a variety of challenges confronting immigrant women and girls in the U.S. were cited. Tahirih asked immigration advocates, immigrant women, and legal and social service providers to identify and rank challenges facing immigrant women in order of urgency and impact, and to provide suggestions for policy solutions. Over 150 individuals, representing 108 entities in 23 states, provided input in English and Spanish through an online survey and telephone interviews.

While the survey sought to document the experience of immigrant women and girls generally, participants overwhelmingly discussed the experiences of immigrant women, who have often endured violence and trauma in their home countries, causing them to flee. Sometimes such violence happened during migration. Between 60 and 80% of female migrants traveling through Mexico are raped on their way to the U.S. Many immigrant women and girls also survive domestic abuse, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence while in the U.S. As one advocate stated, “Everyone we work with has post-traumatic stress disorder.”

According to survey participants, the most urgent challenges facing immigrant women and girls are:

- Lack of legal remedies to prevent deportation;
- Immigration detention and accompanying challenges, such as abuse, lack of legal access, impact of confinement itself, and separation from children;
- Inability to obtain competent, affordable counsel;
- Lack of safe and affordable housing;
- Language barriers;
- Lack of trauma-informed services;
- Fear and mistrust of the police.

The greatest challenges faced by immigrant women in the U.S. are:

- The complexity of the U.S. legal and social service systems;
- Economic hardship and lack of eligibility for government assistance;
- Backlogs in all immigration adjudications (proceedings, benefits, appeals).

Policy solutions to address the challenges experienced by immigrant women and girls include:

- Comprehensive immigration reform;
- Gerrymandering reform to address political polarization;
- Universal representation for all in immigration proceedings;
- Abolition of immigration detention.

Strategies to achieve policy changes, listed by respondents in order of importance:

- Legislative change: Participants overwhelmingly agreed that change must happen at the federal level, as opposed to among local and lower-level government agencies. Likewise, they viewed legislative changes by the U.S. Congress as the most likely to make a real and lasting impact on the lives of immigration women, instead of relying on changes inside agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, which can be unreliable and shift with each new administration.
- Increased access to services: Participants considered increased access to services, e.g., availability of Legal Services Corporation or other funds for a national pro bono infrastructure or direct legal and social services, as the second most effective strategy.
- Litigation;
- Community Organizing;
- Client-led advocacy;
- Election reform/campaign finance reform/change of elected officials;
- Administrative advocacy;
- Communications/media campaigns;
- Youth educational programs;
- Other educational outreach;
- Fact-based research and reports.

Advocates and service providers agreed that without affordable housing, language services, and immigration counsel, it is nearly impossible for immigrant women to obtain lawful immigration status, escape poverty, vulnerability, and abuse. These obstacles prevent immigrant women from rebuilding their lives and achieving safety and stability for themselves and their children. To remedy such risks, Tahirih concluded that Congress must reform the country’s broken immigration system that leaves vulnerable immigrant women and girls at risk.
“Modern Slavery & Climate Change: The Commitment of Cities”

More than 70 mayors of major cities around the globe gathered at the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences (PASS) in the Vatican in July 2015 to address two interconnected dramatic emergencies: human-induced climate change, and social exclusion in the extreme forms of radical poverty, modern slavery and human trafficking. It was the first time that the two phenomena were addressed in a causal manner.

On the basis of the encyclical Laudato si’, they considered the overwhelming scientific evidence regarding human-induced climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and the vulnerability of the poor to economic, social and environmental disasters. They affirmed humanity’s shared yearning for peace, happiness, prosperity, justice and environmental sustainability and jointly committed to the following:

• Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its effective control is a moral imperative for humanity.
• In this core moral space, cities play a very vital role. All of our cultural traditions uphold the inherent dignity and social responsibility of every individual and the related common good of all humanity. They affirm the beauty, wonder and inherent goodness of the natural world, and appreciate that it is a precious gift entrusted to our common care, making it our moral duty to steward rather than ravage the garden that is our ‘common home.’
• In spite of having a minimal role in the disruption of the climate, the poor and excluded face dire threats from human-induced climate change, including the increased frequency of droughts, extreme storms, heat waves, and rising sea levels.
• Today humanity has the technological instruments, the financial resources and the know-how to reverse climate change while also ending extreme poverty, through the application of sustainable development solutions, including the adoption of low-carbon energy systems supported by information and communications technologies.
• The financing of sustainable development, including the effective control of human-induced climate change, should be bolstered through new incentives for the transition towards low-carbon and renewable energy, and through the relentless pursuit of peace, which also will enable a shift of public financing from military spending to urgent investments for sustainable development.
• The world should take note that the climate summit in Paris later in 2015 (COP21) may be the last effective opportunity to negotiate arrangements that keep human-induced warming below 2°C, and aim to stay well below 1.5°C to stay well below 2°C for safety, yet the current trajectory may well reach a devastating 4°C or higher.
• Political leaders of all UN member States have a special responsibility to agree at COP21 to a bold climate agreement that fosters global warming to a limit safe for humanity, while protecting the poor and the vulnerable from ongoing climate change that graverly endangers their lives. The high-income countries should help to finance the costs of climate-change mitigation in low-income countries as the high-income countries have promised to do.

Climate-change mitigation will require a rapid transformation to a world powered by renewable and other low-carbon energy and the sustainable management of ecosystems. These transformations should be carried out in the context of globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, consistent with ending extreme poverty; ensuring universal access to healthcare, quality education, safe water, and sustainable energy; and cooperating to end human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery.

• As mayors we commit ourselves to building, in our cities and urban settlements, the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reducing their exposure to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, which foster human trafficking and dangerous forced migration.
• At the same time, we commit ourselves to ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of modern slavery, which are crimes against humanity, including forced labor and prostitution, organ trafficking, and domestic servitude; and to developing national resettlement and reintegration programs that avoid the involuntary repatriation of trafficked persons (cf. PASS’s revision of UN Sustainable Development Goals, n. 16.2).
• We want our cities and urban settlements to become ever more socially inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (cf. UN Sustainable Development Goals, n. 11).
• All sectors and stakeholders must do their part, a pledge that we fully commit ourselves to in our capacities as mayors and individuals.

(http://www.pass.va/content/dam/scienze sociali/booklet/declaration21july2015.pdf)

The 2018 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Nadia Murad, a 25-year old woman forced into sexual slavery by the Islamic State, and Denis Mukwege, a 63-year old Congolese gynecological surgeon, for their campaigns to end the use of mass rape as a weapon of war. They worked despite grave risks to their own lives to help survivors and bring their stories to the world.

Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said, “We want to send out a message of awareness that women, who constitute half of the population in most communities, actually are used as a weapon of war, and that they need protection and that the perpetrators have to be prosecuted and held responsible for their actions.” The award pointed at the failure of the global community to prosecute perpetrators of wartime sexual violence. (https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/05/world/nobel-peace-prize.html) (https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/summary/)

‘Tender Age’ Shelters

As of October 2018 there remained 13,000 migrant children in detention in the U.S. These children are being moved into tents, constructed by the same companies that run ‘for-profit’ prisons. Detention centers have become another billion dollar big business at the expense of innocent refugee children, for whom there are few safeguards to ensure their health and well-being.


Finding Victims with Forensic Science

Trafficking in children is one of the worst forms of human rights violation and is categorized as a serious crime. Children at high risk of becoming victims of trafficking are runaways, children with a history of abuse, and migrant children. Internationally, cases of child trafficking are increasing the most in Europe, which is likely the result of the current migration crisis. In crises, preventing and combating human trafficking needs to be prioritized, considering that the aims of humanitarian action include saving lives, easing suffering and preserving human dignity.

The involvement of forensic practitioners in investigations of cases of child trafficking mainly concerning the identification of victims may save lives and certainly alleviate suffering of the child victims and their families in search of them. Moreover, by aiding the prosecution process through thorough documentation and expert reporting forensic practitioners may contribute to the protection, rehabilitation and possibly compensation of the child victims, and thus to the restoration of their rights and dignity. To date, forensic practitioners were rarely specifically mentioned as actors in the counter-trafficking efforts in the multitude of policies, regulations, guidelines and recommendations concerning different aspects of child trafficking. This seems surprising considering that the expertise and experience of practitioners from forensic sciences including cyber forensics, document analysis, forensic biology, anthropology, and medicine can be utilized for gathering intelligence in cases of suspected human trafficking, for identifying the victims as well as perpetrators, and for securing evidence for legal proceedings.

The document discusses the role of forensic pathologists and anthropologists, with a specific focus on the identification of child victims of trafficking in the context of the European migration crisis. However, the contribution of forensic sciences to the counter-trafficking effort can be adapted to other geographical and sociopolitical contexts. (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2017.10.036)

Speak Up for Vulnerable Refugees

In September 2018 President Trump set a limit of 30,000 refugees to resettle in the U.S. This is the lowest number authorized since Congress created the resettlement program in 1980 during the Reagan administration, which approved the highest admission of 217,000 refugees.

Today, there are 65.6 million people forcibly displaced worldwide and 22.5 million are classified as refugees awaiting resettlement. In 2018, although 45,000 were authorized to resettle in the U.S, only 22,000 were ultimately allowed to resettle.

Consider taking action on their behalf. See pg. 8.
Contact Your Legislators on Behalf of Refugees

To locate your representatives, go to: https://whoismyrepresentative.com

Sample Script: “I’m your constituent from [CITY/TOWN], and I urge you to protect the refugee resettlement program. I am outraged that President Trump has set a new historic low for FY 2019’s refugee admissions goal at 30,000. Protecting vulnerable populations is not a zero-sum game; we can and should protect refugees and others fleeing violence or persecution. Refugee resettlement facilitates U.S. diplomatic, national security, and foreign policy interests. The White House is also required to consult with Congress prior to setting the refugee admissions number, but they have not done so.

Congress must act. I urge you to do everything in your power to see the administration resettle at least 75,000 refugees in 2019 and to stop the administration from further dismantling the resettlement program. My community welcomes refugees, and I urge you to reflect the best of our nation by supporting refugee resettlement.”

Also tweet Senators and Representatives and the Administration.
Sample Twitter and Facebook messages.
Use the hashtag #saverefugeeresettlement

• CONCERNED: @SecPompeo announced the LOWEST refugee admissions goal in history - 30k - putting the lives of vulnerable families in danger. We will not stand for this. @[MemberOfCongress]
• CONCERNED: @SecPompeo’s announcement of the lowest refugee admissions goal in history - 30k - is an affront to the countless American communities who have welcomed refugees and understand that they are valuable members of their cities and towns. @[MemberOfCongress]

‘Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the U.S.’

Having spent nearly a decade following the lives of formerly trafficked men and women, Denise Brennan recounts in close detail their flight from their abusers and their courageous efforts to rebuild their lives. At once scholarly and accessible, her book links these firsthand accounts to global economic inequities and under-regulated and unprotected workplaces that routinely exploit migrant laborers in the U.S.

Brennan contends that President Trump’s punitive immigration policies undermine efforts to fight trafficking. While many believe trafficking happens only in the sex trade, Brennan shows that across low-wage labor sectors—in fields, in factories, and on construction sites—widespread exploitation can lead to and conceal forced labor.

‘Life Interrupted’ is a riveting account of life in and after trafficking and a forceful call for meaningful immigration and labor reform. All royalties from this book are being donated to the nonprofit Survivor Leadership Training Fund administered through the Freedom Network.

IOM Publication Resource

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has a resource booklet entitled, ‘Migration Focus on Trafficking.’ It provides an overview of IOM publications on trafficking in persons and other related issues. The publications cover different forms of exploitation in times of crisis involving labor migrants and other groups of vulnerable migrants, the challenges in doing research on human traffickers and trafficking operations, the health consequences of human trafficking, responses of stakeholders to combat trafficking in persons, and assisting and reintegrating victims of trafficking. In this series, there are also studies on areas where little research is done, such as the causes and consequences of re-trafficking.

INSPIRE Handbook

The ‘INSPIRE Handbook: Action For Implementing The Seven Strategies For Ending Violence Against Children’ explains in detail how to choose and implement interventions that will fit your needs and context. The seven strategy-specific chapters address the Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; and Education and life skills. The handbook concludes with a summary of INSPIRE’s implementation and impact indicators, drawn from the companion INSPIRE indicator guidance and results framework.

Download at:

‘Forced from Home’ Raises Awareness

Watch seven video clips: https://www.forcedfromhome.com/about/

While delivering emergency medical care across many countries, Doctors Without Borders know firsthand the horrific conditions and suffering that drive people to risk their lives for the chance of a better and safer future. ‘Forced From Home’ provides an opportunity for Doctors Without Borders to speak out on behalf of their many patients around the world who may not have a way to speak for themselves.

Download at:
http://www.unodc.org/pdf/HT_indicators_E_LOWRES.pdf