



The links between human trafficking and forced migration

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"To protect [our] siblings [migrants] is a moral imperative that needs to be translated into adopting clear and relevant legal, international and national instruments [...], implementing timely and humanising programmes in the fight against trafficking in human beings, which profit from the



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misfortunes of others." - Speech given by Pope Francis at the International Forum "Migration and Peace", which was attended by Caritas Europa on 21 February 2017

Humanitarian crises, natural disasters, unstable contexts, conflict situations linked to gross violations of human rights often trigger forced displacements and large migratory movements. Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation in these contexts, as these displacements create family instability and destroy community structures. Impoverished, vulnerable families are targeted by traffickers who promise to provide education and training and exploit them: forced labor, sexual exploitation, begging, crimes, trafficking in organs. Other minors are



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forced by their own families to work under conditions of exploitation or subjected to forced or servile marriage.

Unaccompanied or isolated minors are at an increased risk of trafficking throughout their journey, but also in overcrowded camps and when arriving in Europe. Many disappear, some are exploited to survive or retained in captivity to be exchanged for a ransom.

At the European level, trafficking is becoming more international. It is common to meet children who, despite their young age, have already lived in several countries. Some describe how they experienced situations of exploitation in these different countries. Others sometimes describe life in very different ways from one country to another. However, it is likely that adults who exploit these children will move from one country to another, either because of criminal opportunism or a willingness to take a break with their criminal activity because it has become too dangerous for them in a certain country. This obviously reinforces the vulnerability of children since the positive links they can build up in a country, in particular through associations, quickly break down when they move. It has also been observed that the most organised networks sometimes have "teams" in place, present in different countries.

On the occasion of the presentation of the report of the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, in June 2017, Secours Catholique - Caritas France, Caritas Albania and Caritas Kosovo, Caritas Europa and Caritas Internationalis presented to the UN Human Rights Council seven proposals to combat child trafficking in these contexts.

We call on all parties to assume their legal and moral responsibility to ensure that all children are released in the short term from all trafficking and exploitation and live in a supportive environment.

1 - Make visible this hidden phenomenon to fight it: Children at risk and victims of trafficking are too often invisible. Trafficking awareness needs to be enhanced in the general public, in business, in schools, and with professionals in the field of childhood. Identification processes need to be clarified.

2 - Help children at risk and those who are trafficked to rebuild themselves: When they are identified, they face discrimination, stigmatisation, lack of assistance and support for reintegration while they require assistance from all points of view: social, health, housing, education, administrative, and legal. The specific physical and psychological needs of trafficked children often remain unsatisfied, jeopardizing their long-term development.

3 - Establish a status of victim without criminalizing the children: Encourage authorities to consider children exploited to commit offenses as victims and not as offenders.

4 - Give a legal representative for each child, guarantor of the application of the

rights of the child under the common law - no sub-rights: We are particularly concerned about unaccompanied minors who often have no legal representative when they should have access to a guardianship. Ad hoc tutors or administrators - when they exist - should be informed at all stages of the procedure

5 - Provide access to interpreters when necessary: States should pay more attention to these issues and ensure that the services that represent minors have access to interpreters.

6 - Develop training for professionals and volunteers on child trafficking: The training of all relevant professionals and volunteers (education, police, justice, social workers, etc.) should be reviewed and systematised to strengthen the capacities of all. It is imperative that civil society and institutions collaborate more closely in this area.

7 - Open migration policies: Restrictive and exclusive migration policies lead to inadequate protection for migrant in general and minors in particular. Europe has many tools to humanise its migration policies and contribute to address trafficking in human beings, such as humanitarian visas, resettlement, community sponsorship, humanitarian corridors and family reunification.

The Caritas Europa network, with its members, is committed to continuing its action at the local, national, continental and international levels.

This text is also available in French.

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