Vulnerability to Trafficking in Protracted and Post-Crisis Situations: Considerations for Scenario Planning in the MENA Region
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Acronyms:

AVRR—Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CT-Counter-Trafficking
Da’esh-The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
GBV-Gender-based violence
IDP-Internally Displaced Person
ILO-International Labour Organization
IOM-International Organization for Migration
MCOF-Migrant Crisis Operational Framework
MICIC-Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative
MENA-Middle East and North Africa
TiP-Trafficking in Persons
UNHCR-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM-United Nations Development Fund for Women
VoTs-Victims of Trafficking

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The IOM MENA Region includes member states Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen.

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I. Introduction

1. State of the subject, gaps to address

Human trafficking, or trafficking in persons (TiP), is a grave international crime that continues to be a serious concern worldwide. The last few years have seen increasing recognition within the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and in the international community more broadly, that TiP is not just an isolated phenomenon to be addressed during peacetime independent of the political and social situation of a region, but rather one that is intrinsically linked to institutional and social stability. TiP is a phenomenon that not only occurs during times of crisis—it occurs as a direct consequence of a crisis. Just as IOM has recognized for years that human trafficking is closely tied to migration patterns and therefore falls within IOM’s mandate, it is becoming clear within the organization that counter-trafficking (CT) must be built into institutional planning and in responses to migrant dimensions of crises, whether natural or man-made.

Although it is still a new and under-researched field, there is a small emerging body of work on TiP in crisis, including a number of initiatives and reports by IOM. The MC/2355 document for the 2012 IOM Resolution 1243 for the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) identifies counter-trafficking and protection of vulnerable migrants as a necessary sector of assistance for response in migrant crises, making trafficking in crisis a priority within the context of IOM interventions. The state-led Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, for which IOM serves as the secretariat, calls for the identification of and planning for needs of migrant victims of trafficking during crisis and recommends compiling data and research on trafficking networks. A 2016 MICIC Issues Brief published by IOM provides background and guidelines for addressing trafficking in crisis. By far the most comprehensive study of TiP in crisis is the 2015 report published by IOM “Addressing Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Times of Crisis”.

Although these initiatives have significantly advanced recommendations for incorporating CT planning into humanitarian emergency preparations and response at the onset of a crisis, an analysis of vulnerability to trafficking and appropriate responses in the longer term are

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3 MICIC Initiative Guidelines, 42.
notably lacking, particularly with regards to the post-crisis stage. MCOF identifies “before, during, and after” stages of a crisis requiring direct responses. However, little evidence is available on the trafficking risks for stages occurring “after” a crisis, or even for the later stages “during” a crisis, and IOM’s TiP in crisis planning primarily addresses issues related to the onset of crises. This lack of information and planning is a gap IOM needs to address. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in particular, is faced with a number of protracted crises, as the conflict in Syria approaches its sixth year and civil war continues in Libya and Yemen. Given the nature of these crises, the line between protracted crisis and post-crisis is more of a continuum than a hard edge. Even within the same country, certain areas may be in continued conflict while other areas might be moving into more of a recovery phase. Within Iraq, for instance, there are areas in active conflict between security forces and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), recently liberated areas, and areas that have not been in active conflict but host high numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) from conflict zones.

As IOM begins to plan for post-crisis responses in the region, including in Iraq and Syria, it is essential that vulnerability to trafficking is taken into account in IOM response. Migration and trafficking considerations are heavily linked. IDPs and other neglected populations, groups with acute protection needs including victims of sexual violence and exploitation (e.g. sexually trafficked Yezidi women), vulnerable migrants entering conflict or post-conflict areas, and refugees and migrants from conflict-affected areas residing in host countries—all may face vulnerabilities to trafficking that need to be considered. IOM must incorporate CT into their broader response for addressing the needs of these mobile populations.

2. Note on methodology

Coming to firm conclusions about vulnerabilities to trafficking in protracted and post-crisis situations is difficult, as very little data has been collected on the subject. However, various anecdotal reports of trafficking in protracted and post-crisis areas point to the possibility of broader trends. Moreover, as the IOM global trafficking in crisis report notes,6 in the case of a grave human rights concern like human trafficking, waiting until a full evidence base can be established is not an acceptable option, and prevention of possible cases should be undertaken even when evidence is not fully developed.

This paper looks to anecdotal evidence as warnings, considers work on vulnerability to trafficking more broadly, and uses the evidence that does exist from previous crises with a heavy TiP dimension such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Looking to these as potential indicators of broader trends, this report examines a set of groups that may face high risks of trafficking during protracted and post-crisis

scenarios, and develops recommendations for IOM’s response in the MENA region to try to mitigate these vulnerabilities.

3. Defining Trafficking in Persons

Trafficking in Persons is a relatively new concept—until relatively recently the distinction between “trafficking” and “smuggling” was not well defined, and the two terms were often used relatively interchangeably. By the 1990s, though, a distinction began to be developed between human smuggling, or the illegal movement of people across borders, and trafficking, the illegal coercion of humans for exploitation.

In 2000, a formal international legal definition of Trafficking in Persons was distilled in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also known as the Trafficking Protocol or Palermo Protocol. Passed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly as a supplement to the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, the protocol was the first international legal agreement that defined TiP. The definition of TiP laid out by the protocol reads as follows:

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article; (d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

The Trafficking Protocol defines TiP as a process using a set of means for a purpose: exploitation. The Protocol also identifies a number of practices that are considered TiP, such as forced

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8 Salt, 33.
prostitution, but does not present a closed list. And critically, the protocol is intentionally vague on the concept of exploitation, which it does not define at all. Rather, it merely presents a list of examples that fall into that category. The protocol also provides for lower criteria for trafficking of minors, only requiring the purpose of exploitation without requiring the use of the means it sets out for adult cases.

Although the vagueness inherent in the definition laid out in the 2000 Trafficking Protocol allows for significant debate and disagreement over what exactly falls within the bounds of Trafficking in Persons, the Protocol has come to serve as the widely-accepted framework for understanding TiP as an international crime.

II. Conditions that heighten vulnerability to trafficking

The nature of protracted and post-crisis situations features a combination of conditions that make vulnerability to trafficking particularly high in comparison to non-crisis settings. Vulnerability is a term that refers to an individual’s likelihood of being a victim of trafficking; in order to understand why individuals in protracted or post-crisis situations have increased vulnerability, it is important to understand what life conditions can create or increase individuals’ vulnerability to trafficking more generally. This paper identifies three broad groups of conditions: those relating to the institutions surrounding the individual, those relating to the individual’s economic status, and those relating to the individual’s place in society.

Some of these vulnerable conditions may be preexisting in communities prior to crisis, while others are brought on by crisis. Weak rule of law and institutional breakdown, unchecked criminal activities and networks, economic disruption, as well as social discrimination for certain crisis-affected groups help create conditions where traffickers can thrive preying on crisis-affected populations. These social, legal, and institutional factors can increase crisis-affected populations’ desperation and social isolation, increasing people’s vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Many of these conditions may have been present in earlier stages of crisis, although the prolonged time period of their effect may change the way they are felt by affected populations.

1. Insufficient rule of law, institutional breakdown, and corruption

State institutions in protracted and post-crisis settings are often severely weakened from the experience of crisis. This can heighten vulnerability to trafficking of those in affected areas, because of the following factors:
• Crisis-affected states may have insufficient policing, law enforcement training, and institutional capacity to recognize and respond to instances of TiP.

• TiP is often a low priority for protracted and post-crisis governments.

• Countries may experience breakdown of government protections that safeguard vulnerable groups.

• Increased corruption and impunity may lead officials to be indifferent or even complicit in trafficking networks.

This problem is compounded in areas that already had active crime syndicates pre-crisis—although networks may be disrupted during the crisis, crime networks may restructure and strengthen their activities during crisis periods, flourishing in the diminished rule of law and institutional capacity that comes with protracted and post-crisis situations.

2. Economic drivers

There are two major economic conditions resulting from protracted and post-crisis situations that increase vulnerability to trafficking. On the one hand, the economic conditions in long-term crisis situations affect potential victims from crisis-affected areas, pushing people into risky situations they would not otherwise consider. On the other hand, there are the potential traffickers, who in protracted and post-crisis situations have economic incentives to traffic and exploit workers rather than to use non-exploitative labor practices. In both cases, the vulnerability is worsened by institutional inability to effectively address these issues.

a) Unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities

The widespread unemployment that comes from economic disruption, displacement, and migration during crisis situations puts those from crisis-affected areas into economic hardship and desperation, often encouraging people to pursue risky options in their search for a livelihood that can lead to trafficking. These include:

• Risky migration to other countries or areas via smugglers

• Entering informal and potentially exploitative employment situations (particularly a concern in secondary host countries where refugees are not allowed to work)

• Negative coping mechanisms by families such as
  o Child labor
  o Early or temporary marriages
Survival sex

b) Rebuilding and sectoral demand

On the other side of the coin, the rebuilding process in post-crisis situations may create a demand for cheap labor in certain sectors. The increasing demand in sectors such as construction and security may encourage unscrupulous employers and contractors to engage in exploitative practices including labor trafficking, capitalizing on a government’s inability to detect and respond to these practices. Sectors where this may be particularly prevalent in protracted or post-crisis settings include:

- Construction
- Security work
- Sex work

3. Social status

Many crisis-affected areas feature a number of conditions that heighten vulnerability to trafficking for certain groups and individuals in society even before the onset of crisis. These generally relate to the formal legal status and informal social status that come from belonging to certain social groups. Members of certain groups may have less access to rights and protections than others, or may face discrimination and stigmatization because of cultural norms. Groups that may be in a more vulnerable situation because of legal and/or social status include:

- Non-national migrants
- Members of minority racial, ethnic, and religious groups
- Victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation
- Pregnant unmarried women or unmarried women with children
- Former child soldiers

Although stigma and discrimination against these groups may exist regardless of whether there is a crisis context, the added factor of crisis may exacerbate these attitudes, as in the case of increased hostility towards migrants in host countries that have faced an influx of refugees, or ethnic or religious discrimination in areas that have experienced conflict of a sectarian nature. A crisis may also increase membership in these groups, as many more people will be in a vulnerable situation during a protracted or post-crisis situation. For instance, rape, forced marriage, and death of spouses during conflict may increase the number of victims of sexual exploitation and GBV and pregnant unmarried women and
single mothers in protracted and post-crisis situations. Additionally, groups that might normally receive protections through governmental programs, such as migrants or victims of GBV, may not have access to these formal protection mechanisms in protracted and post-crisis settings because of continued institutional disarray or lack of access to services caused by crisis.

III. The post-crisis factor

In crisis-affected areas during the post-crisis period or in a situation of protracted crisis, uneven rule of law and low institutional capacity creates an environment that exacerbates the conditions discussed in the previous section so that TiP can thrive. Beginning to recover from the destruction and destabilization of the immediate crisis period, governments are often overwhelmed with the difficult tasks of reconsolidating and reestablishing order and rule of law, which may be very uneven across crisis-affected regions. In the face of this daunting task, addressing TiP is often a low priority for post-crisis governments and even more so for protracted crisis governments. Insufficient policing and institutional capacity to recognize and respond to instances of trafficking create a low-risk environment with few consequences for potential traffickers and criminal networks.

Post-crisis areas contain high numbers of people in the vulnerable situations discussed in the previous section, who are at heightened risk of exploitation and trafficking. This includes many nationals affected by the crisis including IDPs and victims of sexual violence. Although the inflow of foreign migrant workers may have slowed during the onset and immediate period of crisis, protracted and post-crisis countries may experience a renewed inflow of workers, for whom there is very little protection or oversight. Additionally, the processes of rebuilding and reestablishing order may themselves create a demand in certain sectors for labor and sex work, making exploitation of workers in these sectors particularly profitable and providing further encouragement to potential traffickers.

This section will examine trafficking risks for three different groups related to the crisis-affected country: displaced nationals within the crisis-affected country, non-national migrants from abroad in the crisis-affected country, and refugees and migrants from the crisis-affected country who flee the crisis to secondary hosting countries.

1. Displaced nationals

People from crisis-affected areas are often more vulnerable to trafficking, particularly when there has been a mass movement of people. Long-term displacement and lack of livelihood opportunities put people in isolated and desperate situations, making them more vulnerable to falling victim to TiP schemes. In protracted or post-crisis situations, IDPs are often physically cut off from their community networks and means of livelihood, while victims of
trafficking and sexual violence during the conflict—whether displaced or returned to their home communities—may be socially isolated and cut off from support networks.

a) Negative coping mechanisms

In the face of desperation coming from long periods of displacement and lack of livelihood opportunities, some families in protracted conflict areas may turn to negative coping mechanisms in order to get by. This includes directly selling children into exploitative child labor, or selling girls into early, forced, or temporary marriages. The 2016 US Trafficking in Persons Report (JTIP) documents a number of negative coping mechanisms practiced by some vulnerable and/or displaced Iraqi and Syrian families. In Iraq, the report notes that some families sell children to other families in the hope the child will have a better life, putting those children at higher risk of trafficking. The report also notes resurgence in child marriages and the practice of fasliya, or forced marriage in exchange for resolving disputes.10

b) Schemes

In other cases, traffickers may entice desperate crisis-affected individuals or families with attractive schemes such as offers of scholarships or well-paid work, but once separated from their families the victims (often children) are trafficked into sexual exploitation or extreme forms of child labor. For example, in Iraq, refugee and IDP women are sometimes trafficked into sexual exploitation after traffickers promise individuals transportation and resettlement in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) zone.11 Similarly, in the joint IOM/ILO report “Impact of Livelihood Recovery Initiatives on Reducing Vulnerability to Human Trafficking and Illegal Recruitment: Lessons from Typhoon Haiyan,” the authors find an increase in working children during the post-crisis period after the 2013 typhoon. In particular, they detected a greater increase of children performing harsh and dangerous labor in the area hardest hit by the typhoon and IDP areas, as compared with non-IDP regions.12

The report also notes that promises of schooling opportunities in areas where schools were damaged by Haiyan was a major hook for parents whose children were trafficked to Manila. Traffickers also target communities that are overlooked by authorities—for example, IOM Philippines assisted an isolated indigenous community affected by Haiyan, whose children had been taken and trafficked by an unscrupulous group who said they were taking the children for a schooling opportunity.13

Not only do insufficient rule of law and corruption in protracted and post-crisis situations allow these sorts of schemes to expand and thrive, those in power are sometimes complicit

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11 JTIP 2016, Iraq country profile, 207.
13 Interview with Romina Sta. Clara.
or actively involved in the schemes themselves. In Iraq, the 2016 JTIP profile reports that vast networks trafficking IDPs exist in the KRG zone, “operating with assistance from local officials, including judges, individuals from the Kurdistan Regional Government’s (KRG) Asayish internal security forces, and border agents.”

**c) Reintegration and retrafficking risks in post-crisis**

Victims of exploitation and gender-based violence during crises are particularly vulnerable to further exploitation in protracted and post-crisis situations. Child soldiers and victims of sexual exploitation and violence, some of whom may have been trafficked during the time of crisis, are particularly vulnerable in post-crisis settings because of their experience during the crisis and because of the challenge of reintegrating into their communities post-crisis. A difficult reintegration process can put these victims not only at risk of social isolation, poverty, and psychosocial problems, but also may increase their vulnerability to further exploitation in post-crisis settings, potentially including TiP.

The existence of protracted and post-crisis areas itself increases returning victims’ vulnerability to retrafficking, due to the economic instability and social upheaval that results from a crisis. A 2010 IOM study on retrafficking based on evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database (which primarily considered international trafficking victims) found that trafficking victims are more likely to experience retrafficking if they are returning to a country of origin “where there are economic and social difficulties,” a likely scenario for victims returning domestically to home communities in protracted and post-crisis situations. The study further notes, based on a survey of IOM workers, the study found that victims of trafficking (VoT’s) are more vulnerable to retrafficking “where VoT’s originate from countries where conflicts are ongoing or recent, or where trafficked persons are also refugees or displaced persons.”

This is compounded by the stigmatization and alienation victims of trafficking and other forms of exploitation they may face returning to home communities, particularly if their exploitation was of a sexual nature. Traditional understandings of gender roles, sexuality, and purity often cause home communities to stigmatize victims of sexual violence and exploitation, increasing their isolation and lack of economic opportunities, and thereby increasing risks of retrafficking, as well. In “Gender-Based Violence and Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Areas,” Manjoo and McRaith note that women who are raped during conflict often face steep challenges to successfully reintegrate into their home communities because of stigma coming from traditional expectations for gender and sexuality. They point out that unmarried rape victims often find it difficult to find a husband post-conflict, while

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14 JTIP 2016, Iraq country profile, 207.
16 The causes and consequences of retrafficking, 12.
married rape victims are sometimes divorced by their husbands upon return, and notes that victims who become pregnant as a result of rape are further stigmatized. A 2007 UNIFEM independent expert paper on women and peacebuilding discusses the risks of women victims of violence who have been rejected by their families having to resort to “survival, transactional or commercial sex or other exploitative situations,” and such situations put women at a high risk of trafficking. The IOM retrafficking report found that, based on their interviews, discrimination and stigmatization increased likelihood of retrafficking, with higher risks for those returning to countries where they are an ethnic minority facing discrimination or countries where gender inequality is high.

Although there is not a large amount of data available specifically on retrafficking of victims of trafficking and sexual violence in protracted and post-crisis situations, anecdotal evidence from current conflicts in the MENA region indicates that retrafficking risks for victims in protracted and post-conflict situations is high. Both the 2015 and 2016 US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report (JTIP) Iraq country profile highlights the case of sex trafficking of Yezidi women by Da’esh, and the 2016 report notes that

In 2015, thousands of women and girls escaped Da’esh captivity—many of whom were pregnant as a result of rape—and became internally displaced persons (IDPs) because Da’esh still controlled their homelands; these victims remain highly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including re-trafficking.

With the protracted conflict in Iraq and Syria featuring high levels of sexual violence and exploitation in conflict areas, retrafficking is a serious concern that must be taken into account in post-conflict planning.

2. Vulnerable migrants

Although migrants may leave crisis areas during the onset of crisis and initial crisis phase, new flows of migration to crisis-affected regions often begin in protracted and post-crisis periods. Some migrants come of their own volition to protracted and post-crisis areas; some are unaware of continuing violence in their destination. Other migrants are tricked by recruiters into thinking they are going to another country in the region but are brought against their will to the crisis-affected country instead; many agree to come to the crisis-

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19 The causes and consequences of retrafficking, 12.
21 JTIP 2016, Iraq profile, 207.
22 JTIP 2016, Iraq profile, 207.
affected area but had been deceived about the nature of the work they will be doing and the working conditions. A few victims are even kidnapped and forcibly brought into protracted or post-crisis country against their will.\textsuperscript{23} This phenomenon has been reported in Syria—the 2016 JTIP report notes credible reports from 2016 of hundreds of Nepalese women who were “fraudulently recruited” to Syria and trafficked for sexual exploitation, having been promised employment opportunities.\textsuperscript{24}

These new flows of migrants meet labor needs in certain sectors with a high demand for workers due to the nature of protracted and post-conflict situations, such as sex work, construction, and security work, among others. This demand and the insufficiency of oversight or response capacity on the part of protracted and post-crisis governments often encourages unscrupulous employers and contractors to engage in exploitative labor practices including trafficking, bolstered by a sense of impunity that comes from low prioritization and prosecution of trafficking by crisis-affected governments.

Migrants are in a particularly vulnerable position due to their non-national status. Socially, they are often quite isolated, since most do not have ties in the country where they are working and may not even speak the local language. Crisis-affected countries often do not have well-developed systems of permitting and tracking migrant workers, making it difficult to have proper oversight of employers and contractors using foreign laborers.\textsuperscript{25} Officially, migrants may not have access to the same rights and protections as nationals of the country they are in, and if their migration to the crisis-affected country was irregular, they may be detained for immigration offenses or sex work.\textsuperscript{26} Governments in protracted or post-crisis countries—particularly in the MENA region—often have official policies permitting the withholding of documents by employers and other practices that put workers at a high risk of exploitation, particularly in the case of domestic workers in the kafala system, a migration regime common in the region, which requires migrants to have a sponsor such as an employer who controls their visa status.\textsuperscript{27} Additionally, migrant workers who are being exploited may be disincentivized to seek help to return home, as migrants who voluntarily left their country of origin after being enticed by recruiters may have accrued heavy amounts of debt in their home country to cover the costs of migration. Some migrants may even face legal charges in their home country for migrating to the protracted or post-crisis country.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{a) Sex trafficking}

\textsuperscript{23} Interview with Anna-Eva Radiccetti.
\textsuperscript{24} JTIP 2016, Syria country profile, 358.
\textsuperscript{25} Interview with Michael Newson.
\textsuperscript{26} Interview with Madeleine Tough; JTIP Iraq 2016, 208.
\textsuperscript{28} Interview with Madeleine Tough.
In protracted and post-crisis settings, the trafficking of migrants for sex work often seems to increase. In particular, peacekeeping forces or the presence of other large groups of international personnel tend to create a large demand for sex workers, which is met in large part through the trafficking of women. There is a substantive body of research that has developed on this topic over the last two decades, mostly studying the effect of peacekeeping on sex trafficking in the Balkans Crisis.

The increase in trafficking due to the presence of peacekeeping forces and other international personnel is believed to be correlated with the market demand for sex work, with trafficking tending to start when demand for sex workers outstrips supply in the local sex industry.29 This increase in demand is both a direct and indirect effect of the international community’s presence, and the extent of sex trafficking seems to be correlated to the size of peacekeeping force deployed.30

Directly, the international peacekeeping troops and other civilian personnel themselves provide a huge influx in demand for prostitution as clients of establishments providing sex workers, including trafficked women. The level of involvement of peacekeepers in the trafficking process can very broadly, from serving as patrons to actively facilitating and even profiting from the trafficking process, as documented in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s and early 2000s.31 The money that comes with international forces makes trafficking women a very profitable option for traffickers: Simic reports that in Kosovo at the height of troop NATO peacekeeping deployment in 1999 and 2000, international personnel accounted for 80% of clients of trafficked women; even when this number dropped to 30% of clients by 2002, international personnel still accounted for 80% of sex industry profits.32

There is also a possible indirect effect that may contribute to the increase of trafficking in post-crisis areas with peacekeeping presence. The influx of money being spent over a very short period of time by members of the international community in occupied areas suddenly floods local economies with cash. Much of this influx of cash comes through legitimate, legal business operations; however, this extra money also may allow local community members to be able to afford the “services” of sex trafficking victims being used by the internationals. Thus not only does the extra money allow traffickers to invest in building networks, venues,


30 Smith 2010, 134.

31 Simic 2010, 83; Allred 302 and 306.

32 Simic 84.
etc., it may also result in the formation of brothels in order to develop a local clientele which will last beyond the peacekeeping period.

In both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, most trafficking victims came from Romania, Ukraine, and Moldova, as trafficking networks developed sophisticated systems of recruitment and transportation of foreign women from nearby countries into the conflict-affected areas. Although some victims were forcefully abducted and brought to areas with a peacekeeping presence, or told they were going to work in other fields such as waitressing, most victims travelled to the conflict-affected areas knowing they would be working in the sex industry in some capacity—as exotic dancers, for instance; maybe even prostituting on their own terms when they desired. However, when women arrived the terms of their work were far more exploitative than they expected—many trafficking victims were forced to have sex against their will, had their documents confiscated, were stripped of their mobility and sometimes violently abused by brothel owners and associates.

Although IOM in Kosovo worked with other international organizations and local actors on prevention on both the international demand side and potential victim supply side, prevention on the supply side was quite difficult because of the skewed set of information reaching “sending communities” from those working in Kosovo. Reports from the few women who did have positive experiences got back much faster and at higher rates than from the many women who were abused, in part because of the lack of communication opportunities for trafficked women, and in large part because of the shame trafficked women felt in telling their home communities what they experienced. Even when awareness campaigns warning of trafficking dangers were implemented in sending communities, favorable stories of individuals from the community ultimately proved to be much more powerful considerations than any warnings international organizations put out.

Currently, in the MENA region, there is anecdotal evidence that this pattern of protracted conflict sex trafficking may be repeating itself in the current crisis in Iraq and Syria. In Iraqi Kurdistan, there has been a sudden increase in the number of “bathhouses” and “massage parlors” over the last few years, in which Filipina women, recruited as masseuses, are instead being trafficked and forced to perform sex acts for clients. IOM has assisted in the rescue and voluntary return of several of these women. The 2016 JTIP reports that Syrian refugee women and girls in Iraq are being trafficked into brothels and forced marriages in the KRG

33 Interviews with Anna Eva Radicetti; Theodora Suter.
34 Interview with Anna Eva Radicetti, Simic, 82.
35 Interview with Anna Eva Radicetti.
36 Interview with Anna Eva Radicetti.
region and other areas, reportedly with participation by some members of the Asayish security forces.\textsuperscript{38}

Moreover, in Iraq and Syria, militants from Da’esh openly traffick women and girls of minority groups for the purpose of sexual exploitation and use by their fighters. The most well-known example of this is the case of the Yazidis, a religious minority in Iraq. Da’esh has explicitly kidnapped and trafficked Yazidi women and girls for sexual exploitation by their fighters, whether through rape, slavery, or forced marriage.\textsuperscript{39} This is certainly a different phenomenon from the presence of peacekeeping troops, where the use of prostitutes and other sexual services that may lead to trafficking is officially forbidden; however, the case of sex trafficking by Da’esh fighters is a very extreme example of how, if unchecked or even encouraged, the presence of militants in protracted conflict situation has the potential to contribute significantly to trafficking of vulnerable individuals and contribute to the development of longer-term, durable trafficking networks that may continue into post-crisis.

\textbf{b) Labor trafficking}

Although much less well-documented and studied than sex trafficking during post-conflict, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that labor trafficking in certain sectors may increase in protracted and post-crisis situations, possibly because of a similar market demand phenomenon as seen in sex trafficking during peacekeeping operations. During the rebuilding process in protracted and post-crisis areas, demand for laborers in certain sectors such as construction and security may increase dramatically compared with non-crisis periods, encouraging unscrupulous employers and potential traffickers to take advantage of the governments’ institutional weaknesses and bring foreign laborers to crisis-affected areas, exploiting workers with little to no repercussions.

IOM has learned of (and has sometimes been involved in responding to) a disturbing number of cases involving migrant worker exploitation and trafficking in Iraq since 2010, which points to a broader trend. Several known cases are listed below:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 2011(2012?), Iraq—A Turkish contractor trafficked 35 Ukrainian and Bulgarian construction workers who had been abducted, had their passports taken, and were eventually abandoned without access to water or food. Rescued in Baghdad International Zone, IOM helped facilitate their return and reintegration.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{38} JTIP 2016, Iraq profile, 207.
\textsuperscript{39} JTIP 2016, Iraq profile, 207; JTIP 2016, Syria profile, 357.
• 2011, Iraq—IOM became aware of 60-70 Bengali and Indian construction workers in Najaf. The two victims interviewed by IOM staff showed various trafficking indicators—they had not been paid for 15 months, did not have freedom of movement, access to documents, or money to return home.\textsuperscript{41}

• 2011, Iraq—IOM was contacted by the Bosnian embassy about exploited workers from Bosnia and Herzegovina trapped in Iraq.\textsuperscript{42}

• 2016, Iraq—Currently, IOM is working with 40 Bengali men imprisoned in KRG, trafficked as cleaners in restaurants (a few in construction as well). The men had their passports taken and replaced with fake passports, were sold, forced into labor, and experienced physical abuse. When they escaped, they were arrested in Kurdistan on immigration charges.\textsuperscript{43}

• 2016—the JTIP 2016 report comments on numerous Asian and East African migrants in Iraq forced into construction, security, and domestic work. The report also notes that according to the Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, there are around 140,000 foreign workers in the country without formal work permits, and that “The Kurdistan Independent Human Rights Commission reported 69 percent of 480 foreign workers surveyed in the IKR in January 2016 were not paid their agreed-upon salaries and 18 percent reported violent acts their employers committed against them.”\textsuperscript{44}

3. Refugees and migrants from crisis-affected countries

The extent of vulnerability to trafficking from protracted crisis situations does not just end at the borders of crisis-affected areas. Migrants and refugees displaced from crisis affected areas sheltering in second countries may be more vulnerable to trafficking due to isolation and, often, due to their economic situation in the hosting country, as many hosting countries legally prohibiting refugees and asylum seekers from participating in the host country’s workforce.

After the onset of a major crisis, many people living in crisis-affected areas may be displaced, which may cause large numbers of refugees and migrants to flee to neighboring countries. In the immediate crisis context, these arriving refugees and migrants often need urgent humanitarian assistance. However, if a crisis situation becomes protracted and refugees are displaced in a second country and are unable to return home for a longer period of time, the needs and vulnerabilities facing these populations changes.

\textsuperscript{41} “The cost of Iraq’s reconstruction: Trafficked labour migrants,” 3, interview with Madeleine Tough.

\textsuperscript{42} “The cost of Iraq’s reconstruction: Trafficked labour migrants,” 3.

\textsuperscript{43} Interview with Madeleine Tough.

\textsuperscript{44} JTIP 2016, 207.
A UNHCR/World Bank white paper “The Syrian Refugee Crisis in the Medium-Term” provides good insight into the vulnerabilities refugees face economically while sheltering in second countries during protracted crises, based on a joint welfare assessment of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. Firstly, the paper notes, Syrian refugees in second countries tend to be from more economically disadvantaged backgrounds than would be represented in a cross section of the Syrian population as a whole. Many of the refugees had already been displaced due to drought prior to the conflict, and most refugees tended to already be poor on arrival in the second country. That being said, the authors note that the refugee experience itself increases vulnerability to poverty. Refugees’ vulnerability to poverty in second countries cannot entirely be explained only by prior poverty, as refugees who haven’t experienced poverty arriving in the second country are likely to experience poverty in the future.45

The white paper identifies a humanitarian crisis response gap in a period they refer to as the “medium-term”—the time between the humanitarian response for refugees in the immediate “crisis onset”, and “long-term” post-conflict repatriation and reconstruction.46 The paper argues that, while effectively reducing poverty in the short term, traditional humanitarian refugee policy such as distribution of food vouchers and cash assistance are not effective or sustainable policies for longer-term development and resilience in protracted refugee situations.47 The report found that economic inclusion for refugees is the most effective approach for the medium term, though noting that this cannot come at the expense of host communities.48

Politicians in hosting countries will often endorse policies preventing refugees from acquiring work permits and entering the general labor force as show of protecting the labor market for their citizens.49 For a short-term refugee situation, prohibiting refugees from working in a host country is not necessarily a problematic policy, as humanitarian aid such as food vouchers and cash assistance can be effective and appropriate lifesaving relief if refugees only need to shelter in a secondary country temporarily before returning home.50 However, in a protracted crisis where the situation in refugees’ home countries is not such that they are able to return for extended periods of time, solely relying on humanitarian aid is not a suitable longer-term remedy to the economic and social challenges that refugees face,51 especially when refugees have no other means of earning a livelihood in a hosting country.

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46 The Syrian Refugee Crisis in the Medium Term, 3, 5.
47 The Syrian Refugee Crisis in the Medium Term, 3.
48 The Syrian Refugee Crisis in the Medium Term, 4.
49 Interview with Michael Newson.
50 Interview with Michael Newson.
51 Syrian Refugee Crisis in the Medium-Term, 5.
that does not allow refugees to work. Not only is it psychologically isolating for refugees to be in a protracted situation of subsisting on relief and being cut off from the legal workforce, it is not a sustainable economic situation for many refugees and families, making refugees vulnerable to exploitation, and encouraging people to turn to negative coping mechanisms.

Although politically popular among host country populations, legal prohibitions on refugee labor are not only harmful to refugees, but also ineffective, as such prohibitions do not prevent refugee labor, but just push it underground.\(^{52}\) In protracted refugee situations, refugees in host communities with refugee work prohibitions will be forced to seek out whatever livelihood opportunities are available to them through informal, under-the-table arrangements rather than formal labor contracts. The informal nature of these arrangements puts refugees at greater risk of exploitation, and does not allow them to access formal labor rights and protections. Unscrupulous employers may take advantage of refugees’ lack of livelihood options to use refugees in exploitative working situations. Child labor may also increase as families increasingly resort to this negative coping mechanism to get by financially. A report by the Freedom Fund gave an estimate that 60-70% of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon were engaged in child labor.\(^{53}\) Although child labor may not be exploitative, child laborers are vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking because of their age, the informal nature of the work, and the vulnerabilities the children experience as displaced refugees.

The 2016 JTIP profile of Syria notes numerous reports of Syrian refugee labor trafficking and exploitation in hosting countries, among them:

- Begging—possibly forced—by Syrian children in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan

- Syrian gangs in Lebanon often traffic Syrian refugees as agricultural laborers in the Beqaa Valley, where “victims are forced to work under harsh conditions with little to no pay and some are subject to physical abuse.”

- Syrians in Qatar and Kuwait trapped in forced labor situations\(^{54}\)

In addition to labor exploitation, refugees and migrants—especially females—may be at greater risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Female refugees may be forced to engage in “survival sex” to earn a living, which may put them at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking.\(^{55}\) Families may put girls into early marriages in order to try to secure a better future for their daughters and to reduce the financial strains on their family. These young

\(^{52}\) Interview with Michael Newson.


\(^{54}\) JTIP 2016, Syria profile, 358.

\(^{55}\) Struggling to Survive: Slavery and Exploitation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, 12.
girls may not give full consent to the arrangement or have a say in the terms and nature of the marriage, and may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation as well as forced labor.56

The 2016 JTIP report also offers numerous examples of reports of Syrian refugees trafficked for sexual exploitation in hosting countries, including:

- In Turkey and Lebanon, alleged trafficking rings prostituting Syrian refugee women and girls
- A 2014 Lebanese police report of Lebanese men selling Syrian refugee women
- Reports of LGBT Syrians refugees in Lebanon trafficked by Lebanese pimps57

The vulnerability to trafficking created and exacerbated by protracted or post-crisis contexts extends beyond the borders of the crisis-affected country. In looking to address these vulnerabilities, it is crucial IOM takes hosting countries into consideration as part of a larger phenomenon.

IV. Recommendations

Because of the interconnected nature of migration and the international repercussions of crises, IOM must not only look to countries in crisis themselves in addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in protracted and post-crisis situations, but also to all the locations where crisis-affected populations are found. Specifically, this report provides recommendations for ways IOM can support three types of member countries affected by a protracted crisis: 1) countries in protracted or post-crisis situations themselves, 2) secondary countries hosting refugees and migrants from crisis-affected countries, and 3) the countries of origin of vulnerable migrants who are living in countries in crisis situations. For all of these countries, we provide recommendations to prevent trafficking as well as to protect, and provide justice to victims of trafficking. A chart of these recommendations sorted by country and type can be found in the appendix.

Prevention

IOM can support member states in preventing and detecting TiP from the outset by supporting states in raising awareness, building institutional capacity, and reducing potential demand for trafficking.

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56 JTIP 2016 Jordan profile, 220; Struggling to Survive: Slavery and Exploitation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, 10.
57 JTIP 2016 Syria profile, 358.
• **Awareness**—In crisis-affected countries and in refugee-hosting countries, IOM can support governments and community groups in training community members to recognize and report instances of trafficking. This may involve creating training sessions, advertising on TV or radio, or creating a hotline or other accessible and anonymous means of reporting possible instances of TiP. In countries of origin, IOM should support programs to raise awareness about known trafficking schemes so that potential victims are on the lookout.

• **Institutional capacity building**—post-crisis governments may be severely weakened and overstretched; similarly, the institutional resources of hosting countries facing a sudden influx of migrants may be overstretched. By preparing to help states with rapid capacity building, IOM can help governments address these weaknesses before they become chronic.

  o IOM should encourage governments of hosting countries to legalize refugee labor. IOM could develop a package program to help governments quickly build capacity to manage labor markets. Crucially, this would involve quickly implementing a system of granting work permits for migrants.

  o IOM should support states in implementing or improving a national registry of births and marriage, so that the state can ascertain whether youths are the legal working age employers claim them to be, and to crack down on temporary or child marriages that often put women and girls in exploitative situations.

  o In hosting countries IOM should support development programs that create legal labor opportunities for refugees and migrants as well as for citizens. This would remove the necessity of seeking out risky, under-the-table employment opportunities that may be exploitative.

• **Demand**—in crisis-affected countries, IOM should encourage strict codes of conduct for national security forces, law enforcement, international forces, and other members of the international community to prevent witting or unwitting patronage of sex trafficking networks. In Kosovo, IOM worked with local officials to designate restricted areas for international forces where trafficking rings were known to be active, and helped local authorities develop systems for reporting and punishing perpetrators, a model that could be implemented elsewhere.

**Protection**

IOM can support member states in protecting victims of trafficking by helping develop institutional capacity for identifying and referring victims, and through providing material, psychosocial, and return and reintegration support for victims.
• **Capacity building**—In crisis-affected countries and in refugee-hosting countries, IOM can support member country’s governments in developing institutional capacity to identify and process potential trafficking victims. This includes developing a system of trafficking indicators to train law enforcement agents and other relevant personnel to be able to identify trafficking victims if they come into contact with them. IOM can also assist countries in setting up centralized referral systems to direct potential trafficking cases to the relevant authorities. An important part of this would be making sure systems are in place to facilitate efficient information sharing between the government, local law enforcement, and IOM, so that trafficking cases can be compiled and followed from the same database nationally, rather than divided between agencies and departments.

• **Assistance**—In all types of countries, IOM can help provide appropriate, secure shelters for victims of trafficking while their cases are being addressed. If organized crime networks that had been involved in the trafficking are present in home countries that victims return to, it is important that the shelters have heightened protection for victims facing threats from these groups. IOM should also provide psychosocial support to victims. For migrant victims of trafficking in countries in crisis, IOM can help provide Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) to victims, helping them return to their home country and reestablish their lives back home. This may require material and psychosocial support, as well as livelihood training programs for victims.

**Justice**

In order to ensure justice for victims, IOM should encourage member states to adopt policies that support rather than criminalize trafficking victims in all types of country. Many states consider trafficking victims, particularly those who have been victims of sex trafficking, to be criminals under prostitution or immigration laws, and may detain and imprison victims rather than providing them the assistance they need as victims of a grave international crime.

Additionally, in countries where the trafficking takes place, whether this is the crisis affected country or a secondary hosting country, IOM should call for member states to guarantee remuneration to victims, helping victims obtain lost wages and compensation for the trafficking abuse—holding the employer accountable where possible, and compensating victims with state funds where this is not possible. Finally, in countries where trafficking crimes occur, IOM should call for governments to take all measures to prosecute the perpetrators involved in trafficking in persons.
V. Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention:</th>
<th>In countries in post/protracted crisis</th>
<th>in hosting countries</th>
<th>(in country of origin—of migrants in countries in crisis)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>community training to recognize, report instances of trafficking</td>
<td>community training to recognize, report instances of trafficking</td>
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<td>awareness of risk of trafficking, schemes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Capacity Building</td>
<td>Work permitting for migrants</td>
<td>legalizing refugee labor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implementing birth, marriage registry</td>
<td>Creating legal labor opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>Strict codes of conduct for members of the international community; restricted areas, reporting and punishing perpetrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Response: | |
| Protection capacity building | identification of VoTs | identification of VoTs | Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) coordination for VoTs |
|             | information sharing between government, law enforcement, IOM | information sharing between government, law enforcement, IOM | AVRR reintegration, livelihood support for returnees to reduce trafficking risks |
|             | centralized referral systems | centralized referral systems | psychosocial support for returnees |
| Assistance | shelters | | |
|             | psychosocial support | Psychosocial support | protection from syndicates, loan sharks |
|             | AVRR | | |
| Justice     | Decriminalizing VoT | Decriminalizing VoT | Decriminalizing VoT |
|             | remuneration for victims | remuneration for victims | Prosecution of perpetrators |
|             | prosecution of perpetrators | prosecution of perpetrators | |
|             | migrant detention reform | | |
VI. References

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https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/

http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/

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**Interviews with IOM Staffers:**

Jason Aplon (Post-Conflict Advisor, Department of Emergencies, Transition and Recovery Division, IOM Headquarters, Geneva), interviewed by Carmen Baskauf via phone, 12 July 2016.

Michael Newson (Labor Migration/Migration and Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office, Cairo), interviewed by Carmen Baskauf at IOM MENA Regional Office, Cairo, Egypt, 13 July 2016.

Anna Eva Radicetti (Head of Policy and Program Support Unit, IOM Regional Office, Brussels; formerly Project Officer on Human Trafficking, IOM Kosovo (2000-2002)), interviewed by Carmen Baskauf via phone, 14 July 2016.


Theodora Suter (Head of Gender Unit, IOM Headquarters, Geneva), interviewed by Carmen Baskauf via phone, 11 July 2016.

Madeleine Tough (Project Officer, IOM Iraq), interviewed by Carmen Baskauf via phone, 25 July 2016.