



COVID-19 pandemic and its impact for victims and survivors of trafficking in persons

With a view to continuing to assess the impact and challenges that COVID-19 poses on anti-trafficking responses worldwide, share your story on how the pandemic is affecting victims of trafficking in persons by tagging ICAT on Twitter [@ICAT News](#)

The current COVID-19 outbreak has drastically affected the lives of millions around the globe. While health responses are a priority, concerns have emerged on the short and long-term impact that the pandemic and the measures taken to control it have and will likely have on the crime of trafficking in persons and its victims, including with respect to:

- Hindered access to healthcare for victims who may be more or less exposed to the virus;
- Exacerbating risks for already vulnerable groups of individuals, including women and girls, people on the move affected by travel restrictions, children at greater risk of family separation, as well as persons directly impacted by disruption of economic activities and reduced livelihoods options;
- Decline in remittances, as well as disruptions to family and social safety networks;
- Increasing prevalence of sexual exploitation online and use of technology to facilitate criminal conduct;
- Hindered access to services and support for victims and survivors, due to temporarily closed shelters and disrupted services by NGOs and service providers;
- Diverted law enforcement resources in investigating and responding to trafficking in persons, as well as reduced inspections leading to decrease in identification of cases, including of trafficking for labour exploitation;
- Delayed identification of victims;
- Delayed access to justice, including postponement of trials, causing significant disturbances in the conduct of proceedings before criminal, civil and administrative courts to the detriment of victims' rights;
- Risks that the return of victims of trafficking to their countries of origin may be delayed or, on the contrary, precipitated, even if the persons concerned face serious health and protection risks in the countries of return.

The **Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT)** recognizes the importance of global efforts to respond to such an unprecedented crisis. At the same time,

those responsible for developing and implementing these responses must consider the implications of such measures for victims and survivors of trafficking and safeguard fundamental rights in this time of pandemic.

As the UN's lead inter-agency platform on trafficking in persons, comprised of 26 United Nations entities and other international and regional organizations, [ICAT's mission](#) is to facilitate policy coherence by setting clear priorities and sharing expertise, as well as supporting States, practitioners and civil society to translate such priorities into actions.

A number of initiatives have been actioned across the ICAT membership to increase advocacy and policy guidance in identifying key areas of concern and developing responses to address the impact of COVID-19. You will find a selection of readily available resources below, which comprise both material related to trafficking in persons and other relevant information on COVID-19 responses.

Statements and press releases

OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Statement: on need to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts in a time of crisis.

UN Women

Statement by UNSG and UN Women Executive Director: COVID-19: Women front and centre.

UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons and Special Rapporteur on Migrants

Statement: UN experts call on Governments to adopt urgent measures to protect migrants and trafficked persons in their response to COVID-19.

Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) – Council of Europe

Statement: In time of emergency the rights and safety of trafficking victims must be respected and protected.

Alliance 8.7

Video message from Chair (France)

UNHCR

Statement: The COVID-19 Crisis: Key Protection Messages

UNICEF

Press release by UNICEF Executive Director: COVID-19 pandemic could devastate refugee, migrant and internally displaced populations without urgent international action.

ICMPD

News Items, Expert Voice Series

Technical and guidance notes

Council of Europe

COVID19 and human rights

DPO

The Operational Toolbox: COVID-19 Preparedness & Response in Places of Detention

ILO

Country policy responses

ILO Monitor

Restructuring for recovery and resilience in response to the COVID 19 crisis

Sectoral impact, responses and recommendations

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and COVID-19 Impacts (forthcoming)

IOM

COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot: Human Trafficking

COVID-19: Guidance for employers and business to enhance migrant worker protection during the current health crisis

COVID-19: Guidance for labour recruiters to enhance migrant worker protection during the current health crisis

OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings offers recommendations on short-term responses to COVID-19

OHCHR

COVID 19 and Human Rights

UNDP

COVID-19 Gender Offer

Briefing Note on the Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Gender Inequality

Gender and Recovery Toolkit

UNFPA

Technical note: Gender Equality and Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Prevention, Protection and Response.

Technical brief: COVID-19: A Gender Lens.

UNHCR

Global Protection Cluster Anti-Trafficking Task Team (Co-led by UNHCR, IOM and Heartland Alliance) guidance note: COVID-19 Pandemic Trafficking in Persons considerations in internal displacement contexts.

Guidance: Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) – COVID-19.

Briefing note: Gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation and response during COVID-19.

Brief: Key Legal Considerations on access to territory for persons in need of international protection in the context of the COVID-19 response.

UNICEF

Technical Note: COVID-19 and its implications for protecting children online.

How to keep your child safe online while stuck at home during COVID-19.

Quick Tips on COVID-19 and Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Children: what to look out for in the COVID response to ensure the protection of children on the move.

Agenda for Action: Protecting the Most Vulnerable Children from the Impact of Coronavirus.

UNODC

Brief: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons, Preliminary findings and messaging based on rapid stock taking

[COVID19 updates](#)

UN Women

Brief: COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls.

Brief: COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: How to incorporate women and gender equality in the management of the crisis response.

Brief: Gender-Responsive Prevention and Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Brief: Violence Against Women and Girls Data Collection during COVID-19.

Brief: COVID-19 and essential services provision for survivors of violence against women and girls