[Survivor Engagement in the Anti-Trafficking Field: History, Lessons Learned, and Looking Forward](https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/%22%20%5Cl%20%22section-4)

*Please note that this introduction contains substantial input from the Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network (the Network). The purpose of the Network is to engage experts, particularly those with lived experience of human trafficking, to provide expertise and input on Department of State anti-trafficking policies, strategies, and product.*

Survivors of human trafficking play a vital role in combating this crime. Their perspective and experience should be taken into consideration to better address this crime and to craft a better response to it. They run organizations, advocate before legislatures, train law enforcement officers, conduct public outreach, and collaborate with government officials on local and national levels. They serve the anti-trafficking community and society at large as doctors, lawyers, mental health professionals, and more. Engaging survivors as partners is critical to establishing effective victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent anti-trafficking polices and strategies that address prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts. Meaningful engagement means collaborating with survivors in all aspects of anti-trafficking efforts such as developing practices, policies, and strategies, as well as prioritizing survivor leadership of those efforts whenever possible.

The goal of this introduction is to highlight and emphasize the importance of meaningful survivor engagement – specifically with experts with lived experience of human trafficking for whom sufficient time has passed since their victimization – and to share context, lessons learned, and guidance to governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector entities, and other stakeholders who wish to further their survivor engagement efforts. While many anti-trafficking stakeholders have long consulted survivors in their work, it is imperative that this engagement be done in a responsible and meaningful way and that stakeholders develop and improve upon their approaches to doing so. This effort will bolster inclusivity, help prevent sensationalism, and reduce potential re-traumatization of survivors. It will also promote more effective criminal justice responses that provide remedies for victims and survivors and help prevent trafficking crimes. This year’s introduction seeks to establish a solid foundation for how to responsibly engage survivors through trauma-informed approaches that promote transparency, trust, equity, inclusivity, and commitment to collaboration.

The background, learnings, and promising practices offered in the sections to follow are informed primarily by survivor leaders, as well as anti-trafficking practitioners and allies in the field, creating a collective basis of understanding upon which the anti-trafficking community can build.

Integrating survivors and their perspective and expertise into the development and execution of anti-trafficking policy, programming, and public awareness efforts is essential. This recognition has prompted governments and stakeholders to consider the best mechanisms to incorporate survivor input and to establish adequate support, including compensation, for survivor leaders. Solutions to combat human trafficking and serve victims are most effective when designed and informed by those who have survived it.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED**

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

* sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
* the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.

**TERMINOLOGY**

As noted in the 2021 report of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (the Council), there are myriad terms survivors use to identify themselves. While some individuals who have experienced trafficking choose to embrace the title “survivor,” others do not. Terminology regarding human trafficking varies based on a country’s respective laws and language(s). The word “survivor” is not generally defined by law, nor is it universally used or accepted in the con-text of human trafficking. In some countries, “survivor” may refer to those who have experienced historical, collective, or cultural trauma.

Within the United States, there are some widely used terms for individuals who have experienced human trafficking and subsequently decided to engage in anti-trafficking related work on a professional level. Individuals may prefer to be referred to as “survivor leaders,” “survivor advocates,” or “subject matter experts with lived experience of human trafficking.” Some may have other titles or prefer not to identify based on this experience at all. In recognizing individuals’ full life experiences, skill sets, and professional goals, it is important to always ask someone how they want to be identified. Policymakers and stakeholders should not assume that someone who identifies as a “survivor leader,” “survivor advocate,” or “expert with lived experience of human trafficking” should be referred to as such in a professional setting or that identification as a survivor leader makes it acceptable to inquire about someone’s personal experience with human trafficking. For simplicity and consistency, the terms “survivor” and “survivor leader” are used throughout this introduction.

Other important terms used in this introduction and in country narratives within this report include:

* Victim: In the United States, the term “victim” means a person who has suffered direct physical, emotional, or pecuniary harm as a result of the commission of a crime. As in the United States, in some other countries “victims” are expressly afforded certain rights and services to assist during and in the aftermath of the commission of that crime. For these reasons, country narratives within this report still make extensive use of this term. Adopting survivor and trauma-informed approaches should not conflict or compete with the provision of assistance entitled to victims.
* Victim-centered approach: Stakeholders place the crime victim’s priorities, needs, and interests at the center of their work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance, with an emphasis on self-determination, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring restoration of victims’ feelings of safety and security are a priority; and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize victims. A victim-centered approach should also incorporate a trauma-informed, survivor-informed, and culturally competent approach.
* Survivor-informed approach: A program, policy, intervention, or product that is designed, implemented, and evaluated with intentional leadership, expertise, and input from a diverse community of survivors to ensure that the program, policy, intervention, or product accurately represents their needs, interests, and perceptions.
* Trauma-informed approach: A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in individuals and the professionals who help them and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings and by seeking to actively resist re-traumatization. This approach includes an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach places priority on restoring the survivor’s feelings of safety, choice, and control. Programs, services, agencies, and communities can be trauma-informed.
* Culturally competent approach: Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. ‘Culture’ refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. ‘Competence’ implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND REFLECTIONS**

Over the past two decades, there have been notable developments in the anti-trafficking movement, including the ongoing elevation of survivor leaders as influential decision-makers. Survivors have been instrumental in advocating for and guiding the incorporation of victim-centered, survivor-informed, trauma-informed, and culturally competent approaches in anti-trafficking efforts on a local and global scale.

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge and address survivors’ long-term suffering and struggle to overcome exceptional challenges to establish and solidify their role as leaders in the anti-trafficking movement. When the anti-trafficking movement launched in the United States in the 1990s, trafficking survivors had few options for tailored support. Prior to the adoption of the TVPA and the UN TIP Protocol, individuals who had survived human trafficking experiences were served primarily by organizations lacking an understanding of human trafficking. The lack of dedicated and diverse services for victims of trafficking further marginalized and endangered survivors. Additionally, victims and survivors also faced stigmatization by some of the media’s misleading, yet influential, portrayal of survivors as either criminals or individuals who “are damaged for life and will never recover.” Furthermore, there were few opportunities for survivors who were willing to participate in the development of solutions related to service delivery, nor were there training or employment opportunities for survivor leaders. As the anti-trafficking field grew, survivors were mostly called on to share stories of their trafficking experience and faced barriers and competition to participate as legitimate partners or experts in anti-trafficking policy and programming efforts.

The long-standing trend of engaging survivors solely to share their trafficking experience is not always an appropriate or meaningful way to engage survivors. Storytelling can be a powerful tool to shed light on the reality of human trafficking; however, it can easily cause survivors to relive the trauma they experienced. It can also be harmful if survivors’ stories are used without their consent or a survivor feels compelled to accept a paid speaking request to share their story because of their economic situation. Survivors should not be engaged solely for storytelling purposes; yet survivors should not be dissuaded from sharing their story if they choose to do so. The recommendations in the later part of this introduction have been offered by survivors as promising practices in ethical storytelling. It is essential that in moving forward, governments, anti-trafficking organizations, the media, and private sector entities reflect on past policies, practices, and actions, as well as acknowledge unintentional harm to survivors, and commit to change for the better.

*“For those who began to identify as survivors, the feeling of being oppressed was, in essence, replicated by the very organizations that they relied on for aid, even more so for those with diverse identities.  Survivors who were committed advocates were overlooked as experts and were competed against or replaced by agency endorsed non-survivor advocates causing them to lose training and employment opportunities.  As Dr. Countryman-Roswurm noted, they were ‘rarely genuinely lifted up, respected, treated as equal partners, or supported and followed as competent leaders.’”*

*Dawn Schiller,  Training Director, L.A. County Project, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Human Trafficking (CAST), Human Trafficking Lived Experience Expert and Consultant*

While there is still significant room for improvement, it is important to recognize the progress made thus far. Many survivors have overcome real and serious challenges and made remarkable strides forward, such as pursuing advanced degrees and founding NGOs that advance anti-trafficking priorities. In response to survivors’ advocacy efforts, the global anti-trafficking community has taken tangible steps toward more meaningful survivor engagement. Governments, anti-trafficking organizations, and private sector entities are now developing strategies and creating opportunities to build more meaningful working relationships with survivors. Though significant work towards meaningful improvement remains, efforts taken to date demonstrate survivors’ role as qualified experts, leaders, and equal partners in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking efforts. Throughout the past decade in the United States, survivor leaders have developed, drafted, and shaped significant landmark legislation in support of more effective anti-trafficking efforts. One of the major accomplishments resulting from these efforts was the establishment of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, noted below. Other recently enacted U.S. legislation has explicitly recognized the necessity of survivor engagement, for example to inform development of human trafficking training requirements for health care and social service providers; to improve detection of human trafficking related financial transactions when surveilling money laundering and counter-terrorist financing activities; and to enhance efforts to combat crime, including human trafficking, affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The anti-trafficking field has significantly progressed in its understanding and practice of survivor engagement. Yet, there are still important lessons to learn for any government, anti-trafficking organization, or private sector entity seeking to further their survivor engagement efforts. Some recommendations based on lessons learned thus far are highlighted below under “Considerations for Engagement.”

**MODELS FOR ENGAGEMENT**

Now more than ever, anti-trafficking stakeholders are incorporating survivor expertise and input at all stages of developing and implementing policies, procedures, and programs. Within the government space, as well as the NGO community, various models to include survivor expertise have emerged, such as advisory councils and boards and consultant mechanisms, as well as training and technical assistance centers. Government agencies at all levels should explore formal platforms to meaningfully engage survivors as subject matter experts and equal partners to become more survivor-informed in their policies and program implementation. Regardless of the model, governments and organizations must ensure the application of a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent approach; provide competitive compensation for survivors’ expertise and contributions; and be willing to dedicate resources and explore ways to implement the changes recommended by survivor leaders. While further evaluation is needed to discover other promising initiatives globally, the following mechanisms showcase notable developments that may serve as a model to others.

**Advisory Councils and Boards**

* **United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (Council)**: In 2015, the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act, which was passed as part of the*Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act*, established the Council. The establishment of the Council, an idea originated by survivors and the world’s first survivor engagement mechanism of its kind, created a formal platform for human trafficking survivors to provide input on federal policies and marked a significant breakthrough in the anti-trafficking movement. The Council advises and makes recommendations on federal anti-trafficking policies to the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, a cabinet-level entity created by the TVPA, which consists of 20 agencies across the federal government responsible for coordinating U.S. government-wide efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Each member of the Council is a survivor of human trafficking, and together they represent a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Members of the Council are appointed by the President for two-year terms. Since it was established, the Council has produced five reports containing recommendations for the U.S. government related to rule of law, public awareness, victim services, labor laws, grantmaking, survivor-informed leadership, and underserved populations. After years of advocacy from the Council and other survivor leaders, the U.S. Congress included provisions in the William M. (Mac.) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (P.L. 116-283) to compensate the Council for its work and contributions to federal government anti-trafficking efforts.
* **International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC)**: Established in 2021, the ISTAC currently consists of 21 survivor leaders from across OSCE’s 57 member states, representing a diverse range of expertise and backgrounds.. The ISTAC provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and through ODIHR to the OSCE participating states, on matters pertaining to combating human trafficking, including but not limited to: draft legislation, policies, and state practices; implementation of relevant OSCE participating states’ commitments; research, drafting, and reviewing of material related to the international normative framework for combating human trafficking; and educational and capacity-building efforts undertaken by ODIHR to combat human trafficking in the OSCE region. For example, the ISTAC contributed to ODIHR’s updated version of its National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Handbook to provide guidance to OSCE participating states on establishing and strengthening NRMs. The ISTAC also provides guidance to survivor leaders on the tools necessary to foster the growth of national and international survivor networks and promotes the standardization of survivor-related terminology within anti-trafficking frameworks. Members are compensated for certain ISTAC-related work, including participation in trainings and speaking engagements.
* **Albania’s Advisory Board for Victims of Trafficking**: The Coalition of Shelters for Victims of Trafficking in Albania has an Advisory Board for Victims of Trafficking composed of survivors of trafficking, with its own Regulation and Code of Conduct. The Board advises shelters on addressing the specific needs of victims in relation to identification, protection, and support and on consistently improving the shelters’ policies and practices.

Additionally, the Government of Canada, as part of its National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking 2019-2024, committed to establishing a Survivor Advisory Committee comprising survivors of human trafficking to provide a platform in which individuals with lived experiences can inform and provide their unique and invaluable recommendations to the Government of Canada on current and future federal anti-human trafficking policies and initiatives. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, composed of UN and regional organizations, released its first Plan of Action in late 2020, which includes strengthening its engagement and partnerships with survivor councils and associations, as well as among other stakeholders, to ensure a human rights-based approach.

**Consultant and Training and Technical Assistance Mechanisms**

Within the United States, federal agencies have developed training and technical assistance centers and consultant mechanisms comprising survivor leaders and other relevant subject matter experts to bolster stakeholder and government efforts to combat trafficking. These mechanisms exist within the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, State, and Homeland Security. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created the Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA), which seeks to develop and expand survivor-informed services, offering leadership development opportunities to survivor leaders and allied professionals. The first class of HTLA fellows informed the “Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations.”

Internationally, governments have also consulted with survivor leaders to improve their anti-trafficking efforts. For example, the Governments of the Philippines and the United Kingdom sought survivor input to inform the provision of protection services. The Government of the United Kingdom engaged directly with survivors to better understand their recovery needs and experiences with the NRM. It also solicited survivor input for the creation of an inspection regime for government-commissioned victim support services. In the Philippines, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking conducted virtual focus group discussions with trafficking survivors to seek feedback on protection services, case management, and challenges in the provision of services.

The Governments of Guyana, Rwanda, and the Netherlands have consulted survivors on updates to their respective national action plans—critical to informing future whole of government approaches to address human trafficking. Additionally, the Organization of American States acknowledged the importance of survivor engagement in develop-ing national policies and programs in its 2015-2018 Work Plan against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere. Survivor leaders have also established their own organizations and continue work as independent contractors to advise NGOs, government agencies, and international and regional organizations on implementing survivor-informed and trauma-informed approaches in policymaking and service delivery.

**Considerations for Engagement**

In the face of new and evolving challenges, survivor leaders are the most equipped to advise on adapting efforts and ensuring appropriate, effective, and uninterrupted services for victims and survivors. Learning from survivor leaders and integrating their expertise into program and policy development not only improves anti-trafficking efforts but also can help address emerging challenges and longstanding systemic issues that drive vulnerabilities and perpetuate trauma. Survivor leaders specifically can play an integral role in applying an equity lens to anti-trafficking practices to prevent and address discrimination in all its forms. Additionally, the challenges and widespread trauma associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and implications of climate-associated crises resulting from extreme weather conditions or environmental degradation have made a survivor-informed and trauma-informed approach more important than ever. Governments, private sector entities, and organizations should consider engaging survivor leaders to develop effective risk mitigation and management plans that ensure the incorporation of survivor-informed, trauma-informed, victim-centered, and culturally competent approaches; meet the needs of survivors; and minimize the chances of re-traumatization during crises.

There are several important considerations when engaging survivor leaders. Stakeholders should clearly articulate the scope and purpose of the engagement, as well as desired skills and outcomes. This will help inform how to identify potential partners. Survivors and other experienced leaders in the field recommend a trauma-informed strategy for identifying participants, whether as potential council or board members or consultants and reaching out to them to inform them of the opportunity. There must be complete transparency with the individual on how their information was obtained and why they are being contacted. Since no single individual can speak on behalf of all survivors, efforts must be made to mitigate tokenization by including individuals with a range of subject matter expertise and lived experiences (i.e., survivors of different forms of trafficking and experiences of trafficking at different ages, as well as expertise on a range of subjects). Council or board members, employees, and consultants should also represent a range of personal and professional experiences and backgrounds (i.e., sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, sex characteristics, ethnicity, race, religion, socioeconomic background, age, etc.).

When working with survivor leaders, it is key for governments and international, regional, and anti-trafficking organizations to consider financial hardships survivor leaders may face because of their trafficking experience and seek to alleviate those hardships. For example, survivors may have limited access to and complicated relationships with traditional banking institutions. If possible and appropriate, governments and stakeholders should find a way to cover upfront, reimbursable costs and determine strategies for limiting costs; they should also create a system for survivor leaders to invoice for labor fees and reimbursable expenses quickly and easily (if it is not possible to eliminate those costs). It is also necessary to build organizational capacity to be trauma-informed, ensuring all staff are familiar with trauma-informed principles and approaches, and to avoid re-traumatization of survivors during meetings, at public events, or through process-related tasks. This will also promote effective engagements and solution-oriented collaboration. Additional support can include providing access to mental health services such as counseling support or contracting an independent/third party to facilitate trauma-informed engagements and manage logistics.

**Private Sector Partnerships and Employment Pathways**

Private sector entities also benefit from incorporating survivor engagement and expertise into the development and implementation of their company policies, codes of conduct, and strategic planning; whether they seek to prevent forced labor in their global supply chains, prevent commercial sexual exploitation from occurring anywhere in their business operations, or both. Additionally, the financial sector can create an environment in which financial stability and accessibility are supported through banking systems that are accessible and navigable for survivors.

In the United States, partnerships have emerged between private sector companies and anti-trafficking service providers to create employment pathways and programs for survivors to pursue a job in a specific field or industries of interest. These innovative partnerships not only increase the availability of jobs in more industries but also create important opportunities for continuing education, professional development, financial freedom, and self-sufficiency, as well as help safeguard against revictimization.

“Many survivors wish to leave their trafficking experiences in the past. If organizations and service providers are only equipping survivors to work within the anti-trafficking sec-tor, it limits the potential of survivors and may cause further harm by keeping survivors feeling trapped in a field that is tied to their trafficking experience.”                     U.S. Advisory Council, 2021 report

Critical components of these partnerships include comprehensive skills training, appropriate employment placement, trauma-informed support, and a competitive wage. For these partnerships to develop, companies must implement confidentiality policies that ensure a safe space for survivors and allow them to be treated as equals among staff, while precluding identification of survivors without their consent.

Additionally, private sector partnerships with survivor leaders can provide promising opportunities to elevate survivor expertise. Survivor leaders have long advocated for organizations to hire survivors to deliver trainings on human trafficking awareness and identification, as well as on strategies to combat the crime. Survivors can provide unique perspectives that can help companies identify how trafficking situations may present within certain kinds of systems and industries or implement organizational change to hire and better support employees with varying levels of trauma, including trauma resulting from human trafficking.

Within the private sector, survivors can also play a pivotal role with financial institutions; this is critical as such institutions are required to report on money laundering transactions and are uniquely positioned to detect and combat human trafficking. It is estimated that human trafficking, both sex trafficking and forced labor, generate more than $150 billion in illicit profit for the traffickers and those who help facilitate the crime. Those profits often pass through traditional financial institutions or are used by traffickers to purchase real property or other personal assets. Survivor leaders can advise financial institutions and train staff on how trafficking may present on bank records and credit card transactions of individuals experiencing trafficking. Financial institutions should collaborate with survivors and other institutions to share information and standardize best practices to combat human trafficking, as well as to improve survivors’ access to banking and financial services.

**ESTABLISHING ADVISORY COUNCILS OR BOARDS**

When establishing an advisory council or board, it is especially important to ensure it operates as an independent body, autonomous from the organization, government, or entity it is to advise. This independence enables the council or board to provide objective advice and recommendations and safeguards members from being influenced or pressured from larger organizations to make certain decisions, change priorities, or weaken recommendations. The council or board should have the authority to establish its own governing bylaws, protocols, and procedures, as well as deliver its advice and recommendations with a unified voice, having each member contribute equally and collaboratively as a voting member of the body.

A council or board should also have administrative and trauma-informed support through an independent third-party structure. This support should include staff to facilitate coordination with the entity to which it is meant to advise and support understanding of that entity’s authorities, capacities, and limitations respective to its mandates and mission. In addition to providing support for members, a third party could also facilitate a grievance mechanism for both the members of the council or board and the entities for which they advise. This mechanism is especially important as it would create a channel for feedback if members of the council or board feel harmed or re-traumatized in any way, as well as for them to advocate for any needed support during their engagements.

It is also important for organizations or governments to continually evaluate, reflect, and adapt to ensure engagement with members remains respectful and positive. For example, check to make sure members are being treated as an entity of experts and that no one member is singled out in any way. Apply a trauma-informed approach to ensure that both members of the council or board and the entities for which they advise are working in ways that foster trust and collaboration. Ensure training on trauma, trauma-informed approaches, survivor leadership, and self-care is provided to all those who engage with members of a council or board.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROMISING PRACTICES**

It is widely acknowledged that integrating a trauma-informed approach is essential to meaningful and responsible survivor engagement. The following recommendations from survivor leaders are practical ways to implement trauma-informed approaches for all anti-trafficking stakeholders.

“Meaningful inclusion of survivors is not simply providing services to survivors, building capacity of survivors or bringing a survivor to a meeting. Creating leadership positions for survivors is a small part of it. Meaningful inclusion requires a shift in culture.”

Sophie Otiende,  Chief Executive Officer, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery

**IMPLEMENTING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH**

According to the HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

* realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
* recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
* seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

A trauma-informed lens upholds each person as an active agent of their own recovery process, the ability of individuals to recognize symptoms of trauma in others, and the integration of a “do no harm” approach into the creation of policies, procedures, and practices. Furthermore, trauma-informed practices build upon understanding the impact of trauma not only on individuals seeking services but also on staff members and consultants working within an organization. SAMHSA’s Six Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach (safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues) should also guide organizational responses to trauma, aiming to create and protect psychological and physical safety within the organization, foster trust through transparency, provide peer support, and level power differences through collaboration, empowerment, and cultural humility.

**Ethical Storytelling**

* Do not engage survivors solely to tell the story of their trafficking experience.
* Never share a survivors’ story without their permission.
* Employ a robust, informed consent process when featuring a survivor’s story. This means being transparent with how and in what setting a survivor’s story might be used and confirming with the survivor whether they continue to consent to that use. If circumstances surrounding use of the survivor’s story change, give the survivor the opportunity to approve how their story will subsequently be used and allow them to withdraw their consent at any point. Survivors should have control over their stories.
* If featuring a survivor’s story in fundraising materials, ensure that your organization has obtained consent from the survivor to use their story for this purpose.
* Ensure language used in all communication material (internal and public) is both trauma-informed and survivor-informed, as well as culturally sensitive, inclusive, and empowering. Work with survivors on communication materials, especially with those whose stories you are sharing, to avoid sensationalism and re-traumatization, including in photography and graphics.

**Including Survivors in Decision-Making and Addressing Barriers to Survivor Inclusion and Leadership**

* Give survivors the opportunity to continuously identify areas for professional development.
* Offer academic scholarships for continuing education and fund opportunities for professional development, leadership training, and networking so survivors can build the experience necessary to get a job or leadership position in the field of their choice.
* Ask individuals how they want to be introduced; do not automatically introduce someone as a survivor of trafficking. This empowers those who have experienced exploitation to identify in a manner they choose. Understand that this may change over their lifetime. Treat them as more than the traumas they experienced and foster their strengths. Many survivor leaders want to be valued as professionals separate from their lived experience.
* Always compensate survivors for their time, expertise, and contributions in a timely manner, whether they are participating in a focus group or providing consultant services.
* Continuously and appropriately access survivor expertise at all appropriate stages throughout program development, implementation, and evaluation.
* Create opportunities to elevate expertise from survivor leaders in a variety of ways (i.e., panel discussions, report writing, etc.). Have them participate in the design of the engagement.
* Be as transparent as possible to foster trust and build genuine collaboration with survivor leaders. Outline clear goals, expectations, and timelines for survivor input on projects—and be clear about the ways in which their expertise is intended to be and has been utilized in shaping approaches.

**Employing Survivors and Ensuring a Trauma-Informed Work Environment**

* Invite a diversity of survivor leaders to apply for positions within your anti-trafficking organization.
* Understand that not everyone who has experienced trafficking will publicly disclose their experience as a survivor. No matter the reason behind the decision, respect the individual’s choice not to disclose. Individuals should have full agency in their decision to publicly disclose, when and how to share their story, and what (if any) their role is in the anti-trafficking movement.
* Acknowledge that human trafficking survivors are more likely to live with complex trauma, which can heighten their risk of re-traumatization when working on anti-trafficking issues. Create an environment of safety for all so that if a survivor is triggered and has a trauma response, they do not feel as though they must hide or that they will be looked down on or lose employment or other opportunities. There should not be any stigma or expressions of condemnation signaling that they do not belong or are not qualified for this work. If appropriate, organize optional support groups within the organizations that offer best practices for dealing with potential re-traumatization.
* Recognize that trauma is not unique to an individual who identifies as a survivor leader; nearly every individual has experienced trauma, and it affects everyone differently. The way survivors are treated should mirror the way other staff members without lived experience of human trafficking are treated, and vice versa. Provide training and resources, such as an onsite licensed clinician, on trauma and trauma-informed approaches for staff at all levels. Failing to provide adequate resources to mitigate re-traumatization and vicarious trauma can be detrimental to the mental health of all staff.
* Implement self-care as part of organizational culture to build resilience and help mitigate vicarious trauma, including executive leadership modeling self-care best practices and encouraging staff to engage in healthy coping skills and take care of their emotional and physical health. Organizations can also implement paid mental health days, self-care plans as part of employee reviews, and organization-wide education encompassing individual wellness.
* Create grievance policies for what all staff should do if they feel harmed or re-traumatized by organization policies, programs, or other staff within the organization. Ensure survivors have a role in problem-solving.

**Establishing Administrative Processes for a Trauma-Informed Workplace**

* Ensure that benefits include mental health care for all staff members, regardless of survivorship status or disclosure of lived experience.
* Evaluate hiring practices so that survivors have equal access to employment opportunities. Consider prioritizing and institutionalizing survivor leadership by creating a budget line within the organization for consultations with and employment of survivor leaders.
* Establish compensation policies for subject matter experts who are either consultants or contractors, including appropriate compensation for such expert consultation (i.e., do not supplement or replace compensation for expert consultation with gift cards or vouchers unless it is preferred by the consultant). Ensure survivors in leadership positions are compensated commensurate with other leadership positions or expert consultants.
* Contract a third-party evaluator with lived experience of human trafficking to assess the organization’s integration of survivor leadership and trauma-informed approaches.

**Addressing Mistakes**

* Admit mistakes and make clear your organization wants to do better in this area; establish an anonymous feedback loop to give the opportunity for individuals to share feedback. Be a conscious listener and communicate updates on implementing these changes to survivor leaders and broadly throughout the organization.
* Assess organizational mission, vision, values, and processes. Make necessary changes and reflect feed-back from survivor leaders.
* Become an organization that is resilient and adaptable to change as best practices for trauma-informed and survivor-centered care evolve.

**PRACTICES FOR ENSURING INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY**

Ensuring inclusivity and diversity is essential to the application and success of survivor engagement practices. It is also key to share decision-making on human trafficking matters with survivors who have lived through the crime and navigated the aftermath and with those who are leaders in marginalized and vulnerable communities that traffickers often target. This means survivors of all forms of trafficking must be included in anti-trafficking efforts and should reflect the communities they serve.

**Ensuring Representation of Diverse Backgrounds and Lived Experience**

* Understand and promote the idea that there is no ‘typical’ survivor or story.
* Given the vast array of underserved populations across the globe, a wide range of survivor leaders must be engaged, including diversity in race or ethnicity, gender identities, religion, culture, and areas of lived experience and expertise.
* Provide the opportunity for local survivor-led organizations and survivor leaders from marginalized groups to not only participate but also lead the process from concept to completion.

**Engaging Underrepresented Survivors**

* Create safe spaces for survivors from marginalized and underserved populations to contribute and lead. Prioritize empowerment of and professional development for such survivors, as well as address barriers to participation for underrepresented groups.
* Value and seek input from survivors and survivor-led organizations that reflect underrepresented backgrounds and experiences and underserved communities, such as those from racial and ethnic minority groups, indigenous persons, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, immigrants and migrants, and populations experiencing housing instability or substance use, to provide insights into emerging trends and new solutions.

**ACKNOWLEDGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND ENGAGING SURVIVORS INTERNATIONALLY**

Promising practices identified within one context and country may not apply in another. Engaging local survivor leaders and survivor-led organizations prior to designing and implementing anti-trafficking efforts within a different country, or region within the same country, is essential. Doing this will establish trust with the community and safeguard against potential harm from culturally insensitive approaches.

* Always respect and acknowledge the cultural identity of every victim and survivor while reinforcing their dignity and potential. When engaging with or providing services to people of different cultures, it is essential not to assume people of the same ethnic background have the same beliefs or cultural practices.
* When soliciting input to inform anti-trafficking policies and strategies, ensure accessible, appropriate translation and intentional advertisement of your request to address disability and language barriers and access local expertise.
* Offer alternative ways to compensate survivors for their time and expertise, especially for those who may not have bank accounts and rely on cash transfers and mobile banking applications.
* Research survivor-led and survivor-informed programs overseas and exchange information and learnings if or when the opportunity arises. Contextualize learnings, both successes and failures, for application to efforts being planned, implemented, and evaluated in other countries, as appropriate.
* Be aware of and unbiased to the differences in laws and government practices when looking for how promising practices vary across the globe.

**FROM SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT TO SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP**

Despite significant progress, there must be continued learning on how to best recognize and engage survivor leaders as experts in anti-trafficking efforts. In partnership with survivors, anti-trafficking stakeholders should focus on strengthening trauma-informed approaches and ensuring that promising practices reflect the specific needs of a wide range of trafficking experiences; funding research and evaluation and engaging survivor leaders throughout all stages; standardizing language and definitions to allow for clear and concise understanding of terms and approaches; and prioritizing equity and meaningful inclusion so that survivors engaged are reflective of the myriad of experiences of human trafficking.

A cornerstone to implementing these recommendations is to ensure survivor leaders are at the front and center of efforts to combat this crime. This approach requires a change in mindset and culture to support, normalize, and secure the meaningful and ongoing inclusion of survivors as leaders, experts, and equal partners in decision-making processes. Many survivors advocate for a future that includes an increased focus on ensuring sustainable and empowered living and addressing the holistic and long-term needs of survivors through the creation of survivor-informed anti-trafficking initiatives and responses. By strengthening survivor engagement and making every effort to ensure survivors’ full participation in the anti-trafficking movement, we can better prevent and prosecute human trafficking while also ensuring survivor prosperity.

“Survivor engagement is a crucial part of partnership within human trafficking prevention. Government agencies have an obligation to ensure survivor input in policy and project development, not to mention implementation and funding priorities. Knowing how to work with survivors in a respectful and equitable way is not a skill that happens overnight. We continue to learn at the Minnesota Department of Health Safe Harbor program and actively seek out survivor feedback and participation throughout all of our endeavors so we can ensure our efforts are meeting the needs of those most impacted.”

Caroline Palmer,  JD, Safe Harbor Director, Violence Prevention Programs Unit,  Injury & Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health

[Understanding Human Trafficking](https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/%22%20%5Cl%20%22section-5)

“Trafficking in persons,” “human trafficking,” and “modern slavery” are umbrella terms – often used interchangeably – to refer to a crime whereby traffickers exploit and profit at the expense of adults or children by compelling them to perform labor or engage in commercial sex. When a person younger than 18 is used to perform a commercial sex act, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion involved.

The United States recognizes two primary forms of trafficking in persons: forced labor and sex trafficking. The basic meaning of these forms of human trafficking and some unique characteristics of each are set forth below, followed by several key principles and concepts that relate to all forms of human trafficking.

More than 175 nations have ratified or acceded to the UN TIP Protocol, which defines trafficking in persons and contains obligations to prevent and combat the crime.

The TVPA and the UN TIP Protocol contain similar definitions of human trafficking. The elements of both definitions can be described using a three-element framework focused on the trafficker’s 1) acts; 2) means; and 3) purpose. All three elements are essential to form a human trafficking violation.

**FORCED LABOR**

Forced labor, sometimes also referred to as labor trafficking, encompasses the range of activities involved when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person.

The **“acts”** element of forced labor is met when the trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains a person for labor or services.

The **“means”** element of forced labor includes a trafficker’s use of force, fraud, or coercion. The coercive scheme can include threats of force, debt manipulation, withholding of pay, confiscation of identity documents, psychological coercion, reputational harm, manipulation of the use of addictive substances, threats to other people, or other forms of coercion.

The **“purpose”** element focuses on the perpetrator’s goal to exploit a person’s labor or services. There is no limit on the location or type of industry. Traffickers can commit this crime in any sector or setting, whether legal or illicit, including but not limited to agricultural fields, factories, restaurants, hotels, massage parlors, retail stores, fishing vessels, mines, private homes, or drug trafficking operations.

All three elements are essential to constitute the crime of forced labor.

There are certain types of forced labor that are frequently distinguished for emphasis or because they are wide-spread:

**Domestic Servitude**

“Domestic servitude” is a form of forced labor in which the trafficker requires a victim to perform work in a private residence. Such circumstances create unique vulnerabilities. Domestic workers are often isolated and may work alone in a house. Their employer often controls their access to food, transportation, and housing. What happens in a private residence is hidden from the world—including from law enforcement and labor inspectors— resulting in barriers to victim identification. Foreign domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to language and cultural barriers, as well as a lack of community ties. Some perpetrators use these types of conditions as part of their coercive schemes to compel the labor of domestic workers with little risk of detection.

**Forced Child Labor**

The term “forced child labor” describes forced labor schemes in which traffickers compel children to work. Traffickers often target children because they are more vulnerable. Although some children may legally engage in certain forms of work, forcing or coercing children to work remains illegal. Forms of slavery or slavery-like practices—including the sale of children, forced or compulsory child labor, and debt bondage and serfdom of children—continue to exist, despite legal prohibitions and widespread condemnation. Some indicators of forced labor of a child include situations in which the child appears to be in the custody of a non-family member and the child’s work financially benefits some-one outside the child’s family; or the denial of food, rest, or schooling to a child who is working.

**SEX TRAFFICKING**

Sex trafficking encompasses the range of activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child to engage in a commercial sex act.

The crime of sex trafficking is also understood through the “acts,” “means,” and “purpose” framework. All three elements are required to establish a sex trafficking crime (except in the case of child sex trafficking where the means are irrelevant).

The **“acts”** element of sex trafficking is met when a trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, patronizes, or solicits another person to engage in commercial sex.

The **“means”** element of sex trafficking occurs when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion. Coercion in the case of sex trafficking includes the broad array of means included in the forced labor definition. These can include threats of serious harm, psychological harm, reputational harm, threats to others, and debt manipulation.

The **“purpose”** element is a commercial sex act. Sex trafficking can take place in private homes, massage parlors, hotels, or brothels, among other locations, as well as on the internet.

**Child Sex Trafficking**

In cases where an individual engages in any of the specified “acts” with a child (under the age of 18), the means element is irrelevant regardless of whether evidence of force, fraud, or coercion exists. The use of children in commercial sex is prohibited by law in the United States and most countries around the world.

**KEY PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT**

These key principles and concepts relate to all forms of trafficking in persons, including forced labor and sex trafficking.

**Consent**

Human trafficking can take place even if the victim initially consented to providing labor, services, or commercial sex acts. The analysis is primarily focused on the trafficker’s conduct and not that of the victim. A trafficker can target a victim after a victim applies for a job or migrates to earn a living. The trafficker’s exploitative scheme is what matters, not a victim’s prior consent or ability to meaningfully consent thereafter. Likewise, in a sex trafficking case, an adult victim’s initial willingness to engage in commercial sex acts is not relevant where a perpetrator subsequently uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim and cause them to continue engaging in the same acts. In the case of child sex trafficking, the consent of the victim is never relevant as a child cannot legally consent to commercial sex.

**Movement**

Neither U.S. law nor international law requires that a trafficker or victim move across a border for a human trafficking offense to take place. Trafficking in persons is a crime of exploitation and coercion, and not movement. Traffickers can use schemes that take victims hundreds of miles away from their homes or exploit them in the same neighborhoods where they were born.

**Debt Bondage**

“Debt bondage” is focused on human trafficking crimes in which the trafficker’s primary means of coercion is debt manipulation. U.S. law prohibits perpetrators from using debts as part of their scheme, plan, or pattern to compel a person to work or engage in commercial sex. Traffickers target some individuals with an initial debt assumed willingly as a condition of future employment, while in certain countries traffickers tell individuals they “inherited” the debt from relatives. Traffickers can also manipulate debts after the economic relationship begins by withholding earnings or forcing the victim to assume debts for expenses like food, housing, or transportation. They can also manipulate debts a victim owes to other people. When traffickers use debts as a means to compel labor or commercial sex, they have committed a crime.

**Non-Penalization**

Governments should not penalize or prosecute victims of trafficking in persons for the unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit. This principle aims to protect victims from being held legally responsible for conduct that was not their choice, but rather was driven by traffickers. If a government has penalized or punished a victim in such a way, the government should vacate the conviction and/or expunge the victim’s record.

**State-Sponsored Human Trafficking**

While the TVPA and UN TIP Protocol call on governments to proactively address trafficking crimes, some governments are part of the problem, directly compelling their citizens into sexual slavery or forced labor schemes. From forced labor in local or national public work projects, military operations, and economically important sectors, or as part of government-funded projects or missions abroad, officials use their power to exploit their nationals. To extract this work, governments coerce by threatening the withdrawal of public benefits, withholding salaries, failing to ad-here to limits on national service, manipulating the lack of legal status of stateless individuals and members of minority groups, threatening to punish family members, or conditioning services or freedom of movement on labor or sex. In 2019, Congress amended the TVPA to acknowledge that governments can also act as traffickers, referring specifically to a “government policy or pattern” of human trafficking, trafficking in government-funded programs, forced labor in government-affiliated medical services or other sectors, sexual slavery in government camps, or the employment or recruitment of child soldiers.

**Unlawful Recruitment or Use of Child Soldiers**

Another manifestation of human trafficking occurs when government forces or any non-state armed group unlawfully recruits or uses children – through force, fraud, or coercion – as soldiers or for labor or services in conflict situations. Children are also used as sex slaves. Sexual slavery, as referred to here, occurs when armed groups force or coerce children to “marry” or be raped by commanders or combatants. Both male and female children are often sexually abused or exploited by members of armed groups and suffer the same types of devastating physical and psychological consequences associated with sex trafficking.

**Accountability in Supply Chains**

Forced labor is well documented in the private economy, particularly in agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, construction, and domestic work; but no sector is immune. Sex trafficking occurs in several industries as well. Most well-known is the hospitality industry, but the crime also occurs in connection with extractive industries where activities are often remote and lack meaningful government presence. Governments should hold all entities, including businesses, accountable for human trafficking. In some countries, the law provides for corporate accountability in both the civil and criminal justice systems. U.S. law provides such liability for any legal person, including a business that benefits financially from its involvement in a human trafficking scheme, provided that the business knew or should have known of the scheme.

[Topics of Special Interest](https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/%22%20%5Cl%20%22section-6)

**FORCED LABOR: THE HIDDEN COST OF CHINA’S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE**

Since 2013, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has been implementing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—a trillion-dollar infrastructure development and economic integration strategy connecting at least 144 countries around the world with raw materials, technological and financial resources, and labor for large-scale projects in construction, mining, and manufacturing, among other sectors. Most BRI projects employ PRC nationals and are managed by PRC-owned enterprises. The program has enabled the PRC to find a home for its own excess manufacturing capacity and surplus laborers, while ensuring its continued access to invaluable raw material inputs, edging out other world powers from international development partnerships and economic cooperation, securing intelligence, and amassing political, military, and economic leverage over participating countries through the accrual and manipulation of debt.

Between the macroeconomic ripples of this system is a tragic human cost: forced labor. PRC and host country nationals employed in some BRI construction projects, mining operations, and factories in African, European, Middle Eastern, Asian, Pacific, Latin American, and Caribbean countries experience deceptive recruitment into debt bondage, arbitrary wage garnishing or withholding, contract irregularities, confiscation of travel and identity documentation, forced overtime, and resignation penalties, as well as intimidation and threats, physical violence, denial of access to urgent medical care, poor working and living conditions, restricted freedom of movement and communication, and retaliation for reported abuses. Those who escape often find themselves at the mercy of local immigration authorities, who are not always trained to receive or care for trafficking victims.

Last year, a man from a rural community in the PRC hoping to raise money for his family responded to a recruitment ad for a high-paying steel production job in Indonesia. When he arrived, his employers took his passport, told him he would be paid significantly less than he was promised, and forced him to work hours far beyond the schedule to which he had agreed. Within months, he was sneaking away from his workstation to post surreptitious pictures of himself online with handwritten notes begging for someone to help him get home. His family contacted the local PRC consular services to try and pressure the factory to return his passport, but to no avail. He and four other laborers eventually managed to pool their money to hire a PRC national broker to help them leave the country, but the broker just took their money and brought them to yet another PRC-affiliated industrial park in Indonesia where they toiled for months under similarly abusive conditions. They continued saving money until they could pay a smuggler to take them to Malaysia, but when they reached their destination, the smuggler dumped them in the water off the coast. They had to swim to shore, where they were shot at, arrested, and detained by the local authorities.

Stories like this are not uncommon in dozens of BRI countries. The PRC has not created a central governing body for the BRI, nor has it made public a full list of BRI-affiliated projects. Historically, PRC authorities have not exercised sufficient oversight of recruitment channels, contracts, or labor conditions to prevent abuses, and PRC diplomatic services have routinely failed to identify or assist those exploited within the program. Many of these vulnerabilities intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when local travel restrictions, slowed hiring practices, and reentry bans imposed by the PRC government prevented workers from leaving and reporting abusive conditions. For example, at one BRI project in Papua New Guinea, nearly half of PRC workers reported being unable to return home in 2021 due to the pandemic.

All countries should be able to pursue development opportunities without sacrificing their respect for human rights. Countries interested in or currently hosting BRI projects must ensure their citizens, PRC nationals, and other migrant workers are protected from human trafficking. If a BRI project employs local workers, the host government must scrutinize recruitment channels and contracts to ensure its citizens are not lured under false pretenses and exploited. Governments must enhance their physical inspection of BRI worksites to monitor working conditions and screen for forced labor indicators—especially document withholding; these inspections must be frequent and unannounced, to avoid giving project leadership time to conceal their abuses, and they must involve victim—centered interview methods that prevent retaliation against workers. Countries must also ensure PRC nationals and other migrant workers feel comfortable coming forward to report their abuses, rather than made to fear deportation due to visa irregularities. This can be achieved through outreach and awareness raising in key BRI project areas and training for immigration authorities. If forced labor is detected, countries must be prepared to receive and protect victims—be it through shelter services, medical care, or consular assistance in the case of PRC nationals and other migrant workers who wish to return home – and to initiate and support relevant criminal investigations and/or civil remediation.

Participating countries must also be aware that vigilance is crucial not only at BRI worksites but also in their surrounding communities as well. Sex trafficking, child forced labor in hazardous work, and exploitative marriages featuring elements of sex trafficking and forced labor have reportedly increased in some areas where BRI construction projects are underway. The displacement of local communities to make room for BRI projects—often carried out with little or no timely compensation for those who lose their homes —compounds many of these vulnerabilities.

Without greater attention to these details, countries may not be able to safely or ethically benefit from BRI-affiliated projects, and the implications go beyond infrastructure. The international community is paying increasingly close attention to, and making policy and investment decisions based on, the eradication of forced labor from global supply chains.

But countries do not have to face these challenges alone; to best protect against the human rights and reputational implications of forced labor in BRI projects, governments should be ready to foster and partner with a robust civil society that includes shelter organizations, direct service providers, watchdog groups, survivors, and NGOs conducting awareness raising.

**FORCED LABOR AND THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION: FINDING A RESPONSIBLE WAY FORWARD**

Forced labor in supply chains is a pervasive and pernicious element of the global marketplace, affecting individuals, businesses, and governments across a variety of industries and regions of the world. Although progress toward supply chains free of forced labor has been generally slow moving in most industries, the increasing demand for clean energy technologies to address the climate crisis presents an opportunity to emphasize the importance of establishing new clean energy supply chains that uphold human rights, enable countries to meet global climate targets, and generate economic growth. The accelerating growth of renewable electricity worldwide has led to the emergence of a new global energy economy, increased demand for key mineral inputs, and expanded mining and extraction activities. Coupling respect for human rights as resources with mobilization towards accelerating the clean energy transition will reduce the number of individuals vulnerable to labor abuses, including forced labor, as well as the risk of climate disasters.

Silicon metal for solar photovoltaic (PV) modules and cobalt for electric vehicle (EV) batteries are examples of inputs needed for important clean energy technologies that are often sourced from areas with long and complicated histories of human rights abuses, including forced labor and forced child labor. Credible evidence indicates that manufacturers of silicon metal—used by the solar supply chain and other sectors—in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC)–directly engage in state-sponsored forced labor programs targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, amid the ongoing genocide and other crimes against humanity. Direct use of forced labor in the solar industry appears concentrated in the raw material mining and silicon metal production processes, increasing the risk that downstream component producers (e.g., solar cells and solar modules) are using tainted supplies. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), artisanal and small-scale mining of cobalt has been associated with forced child labor and other abuses. These examples highlight the urgent need for adherence to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in extractive sector supply chains to avoid labor and human rights abuses and ensure a just energy transition.

**Silica in the PRC**

In the drive to decarbonize the global economy, one of the most important options for renewable power is PVs, used to convert sunlight into electricity. The PRC dominates global solar supply chains, including the supply and processing of silicon metal, solar–grade polysilicon, and the ingots, wafers, and cells that ultimately form a finished solar panel. The PRC accounts for 77 percent of global polysilicon production, 45 percent of which originates in Xinjiang, where the PRC government is carrying out a mass detention and political indoctrination campaign that subjects predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups to forced labor under the guise of “vocational training.” The world’s largest supplier of silicon metal, Hoshine Silicon Industry, has operations in Xinjiang and has been found to be directly involved in state–sponsored forced labor programs in the region.

Evidence indicates that solar products and input at nearly every step of the production process in the PRC, from raw silicon material mining to final solar module assembly, are linked to known or probable forced labor programs. Some of the world’s largest suppliers of solar panel materials and components reportedly have ties to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corp, a state–owned economic and paramilitary organization that has been sanctioned by the U.S. government for serious human rights abuses. Because nearly half of global polysilicon production occurs in Xinjiang, much of the global solar energy supply chain currently includes components likely made with forced labor from that region.

**Cobalt in the DRC**

As part of the clean–energy transition, increasing demand for EVs is driving exponential increases in demand for cobalt, a key component in most rechargeable lithium–ion batteries used in EVs. Because the DRC has large cobalt reserves, the country plays an important role in EV battery supply chains. Today, about 70 percent of global cobalt is mined in the DRC, with approximately 10 to 30 percent produced by artisanal miners operating in dangerous conditions. Despite nascent efforts to formalize and regulate the artisanal mining sector, poverty–driven child labor remains prevalent. Since 2015, the TIP Report narratives on the DRC have highlighted forced labor of children in artisanal cobalt mines. Integrating artisanal and small–scale mining into mainstream economies and ensuring local communities benefit from extractive activities are central to creating sustainable supply chains. In 2020, the DRC joined the Global Battery Alliance’s Cobalt Action Partnership, which is a means of fostering transparent, verifiable, and responsible artisanal and small–scale mining in cobalt supply chains.

**The Way Forward**

The urgent need to tackle the climate crisis presents governments and the private sector with both a challenge and an opportunity to build new critical supply chains that incorporate human rights, transparency, and sustainability standards by design and prevent human trafficking. With the right array of coordinated and focused policies and efforts, governments, industry leaders, and civil society stakeholders can accelerate current efforts to make all supply chains more responsible, transparent, and traceable. These efforts are not only critical to support the clean energy transition, but also are vital to eliminating labor and human rights abuses and increasing the resilience and responsibility of global manufacturing chains.

Improving sector governance, including protections for labor rights, through adherence to the highest ESG standards, can help ensure stable supply chains that support the clean energy transition. Regarding the sustainable production of critical energy minerals, several public and private sector initiatives have examined mineral supply chains and can inform policy decisions regarding minerals sourcing and positive sectoral governance.

* The Organization for Economic Co–operation and Development’s Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict–Affected and High–Risk Areas promotes accountability and transparency in supply chains coming from conflict zones.
* The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development’s Guidance for Governments: Managing artisanal and small–scale mining provides guidance on sectoral management as well as supporting local communities by bringing informal mining sectors into the formal economy.
* The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’s Standard for Responsible Mining defines good practices for what responsible mining should look like at the industrial scale including environmental and social aspects.
* The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’s Standard for Responsible Mineral Processing defines best practices at operations beyond the mine gate and focuses on development and production of minerals.
* Government to government initiatives, such as the Department of State’s Energy Resource Governance Initiative, also serve to build governance capacity in energy mineral rich developing economies to create more responsible and resilient mining sectors.
* The Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued a Withhold Release Order (WRO) instructing customs officials to detain shipments containing silica-based products made by Hoshine and its subsidiaries.

Science and technology innovations can also support just and equitable supply chains. For example, evolution in battery chemistry toward lower cobalt content and/or advances in recycling provide pathways for reducing raw-material extraction and limiting associated human rights and ESG problems.

A clean energy transition is essential to combating the climate crisis; however, it is equally essential for that transition to respect human rights. Those involved at all stages of the supply chain must be provided safe and fair employment, free of exploitation. Governments and industries can leverage existing frameworks to establish and enforce a new global standard in transparent and safe supply chain operations and, in doing so, may usher in a new future not only for energy but for all stakeholders involved in the energy transition.

**THE CLIMATE CRISIS: EXACERBATING VULNERABILITIES AND THE LOOMING INCREASE OF EXPLOITATION**

The climate crisis, and the many ways it will reshape the world, necessitates that governments everywhere sharpen their focus not only on taking action to limit the severity of this crisis but also on mitigating the worst outcomes for vulnerable populations. Political and civil instability and economic uncertainty exacerbate pre-existing human trafficking vulnerabilities. Crisis situations often expose deficiencies in the efforts of governments, international organizations (IOs), and the global community to protect and support vulnerable populations from human trafficking. Climate change-linked events such as wildfires, droughts, flooding, extreme weather conditions, heat waves, environmental degradation, and rapid ice loss have cost hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars in damages. While climate change does not discriminate, displaced populations, vulnerable migrants, Indigenous communities, women and children, and minority populations are more likely to experience its impacts and, consequently, are likely to become even more vulnerable to exploitation. Global and government commitments to combat human trafficking and protect the world’s most vulnerable from further exploitation must accelerate given such trends.

**Climate Change - A Humanitarian Crisis**

Climate change is a threat multiplier. It exacerbates risks and creates numerous insecurities that place more people at risk. The UNHCR 2021 Mid-Year Trends Report estimated that by the first half of 2021, millions of people around the globe were forcibly displaced due to generalized violence, human rights violations, armed conflicts, and increasing threats caused by climate change. As environmental conditions worsen, the percentage of those vulnerable to exploitation will increase. The UN Environment Programme indicates that human trafficking has the potential to increase by 20-30 percent during humanitarian disasters due to lost livelihoods and disrupted families.

**Displaced Populations and Refugees**

Asylum-seekers, IDPs, and refugees are at very high risk of trafficking due to their lack of legal, financial, and food security. Limited access to legal protections such as identity documents and citizenship rights exacerbate displaced populations’ vulnerabilities to traffickers. Climate change has the potential to become one of the main drivers of population displacement, internally and across international borders. Extreme weather can cause sudden and long-term damage to homes and communities. Some studies have estimated 150 million people could be displaced due to the climate crisis by 2050. Moreover, people that are forced to leave their homes due to extreme weather events generally do not benefit from legal protections under international refugee law, leaving them particularly vulnerable. Without effective strategies, a uniform understanding of the movement of populations caused by climate change and its implications, and international mechanisms to protect these populations, a rapidly warming planet presents geopolitical risks and threatens the survival of marginalized societies.

**Women and Children**

Climate variability and extreme weather impact human health and safety, food and water security, and socio-economic conditions globally, but with especially severe effects in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and Asia, with particularly negative repercussions on women and children. NGO studies show that drops in crop productivity or increases in pest, flood, and drought damage have a significant impact on food security and, consequently, the livelihoods of women. The International Labour Organization has reported that economic and food insecurity are directly linked to an increase of both forced child labor and child sex trafficking. Experts are concerned that rising temperatures will exacerbate women’s and children’s vulnerability to human trafficking. As a result of high youth populations and labor-heavy industries like agriculture, domestic services, and manufacturing, children and youth in climate-vulnerable countries are often forced to work in dangerous, vulnerable, or isolated situations. With limited options for work, women and children become more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and familial trafficking.

In addition, traffickers frequently target girls and exploit the vulnerabilities created by compounded, systemic inequalities, such as a lack of access to education, which are driven by cultural norms that undervalue women and girls. In more rural and low-income countries, social expectations often result in girls being pulled out of school to complete domestic and agricultural chores. With natural disasters, droughts, floods, extreme weather, increased exposure to zoonotic (diseases that can be transmitted naturally from animals to humans) and vector-borne diseases, and air pollution, those expectations only increase for girls, further delaying girls’ return to education. The NGO Malala Fund found that four million girls in low and lower-middle income countries will be prevented from completing their education due to climate change and, consequently, will be more vulnerable to exploitation.

**Marginalized Populations, including Indigenous Populations**

Racial and ethnic minority groups, the LGBTQI+ community, and Indigenous populations are extremely vulnerable to exploitation due to social, legal, and cultural marginalization. Marginalized groups are more likely to endure human rights abuses, racism, discrimination, and trauma and have limited access to job opportunities and community resources, including healthcare. These same groups are more likely to be affected by climate change as it places them in more vulnerable situations. Indigenous communities are often at additional risk due to their symbiotic relationships with the environments in which they live. Extreme weather events that are exacerbated by climate change, such as high temperatures, severe flooding, drought, tornadoes, and high–winds—and their resulting destructive impacts on land and modern infrastructure and, therefore, food and water sources—disrupt local economies and force displacement. Those inhabiting coastal regions and low–income urban communities are more likely to be affected by the damage of severe weather and, consequently, be more vulnerable to exploitation, while limited access to resources increases their vulnerability to traffickers’ coercive tactics.

**Taking Action: Governments, International Organizations, and Community Activists**

Significant legal and governmental action is required to protect and support those impacted by the climate crisis. Lack of action will expose an overwhelming number of people to the risk of trafficking. Climate change and its many repercussions also hinder strides that governments and the global community have undertaken to address and prevent human trafficking. Leaders, activists, governments, NGOs, and IOs are increasing efforts to protect those most vulnerable by mitigating and preparing for climate–related disasters, developing programs for those displaced by climate change, and advocating for rights of those marginalized and most vulnerable to climate change and exploitation. All such efforts should be informed not only by climate experts but also by survivor leaders and other individuals who have experienced displacement or other vulnerabilities as a result of climate change.

**Examples of proactive actions taken to combat climate change and reduce exploitation include:**

* The UN has unveiled six key actions governments can take to prepare for the climate crisis. The actions include accelerating decarbonization, investing in green jobs and sustainable growth, further implementing sustainable solutions, confronting climate risks, and advancing cooperation, as no country can succeed alone. With these actions, governments can mitigate the impact of climate change and better protect those most vulnerable to exploitation.
* The NGO Refugees International created the Climate Displacement Program. The program plays an important role in advancing, developing, and promoting solutions to ensure that people displaced due to climate-related disasters receive humanitarian assistance and are not subject to human rights abuses.
* President Biden issued an Executive Order instructing U.S. Federal agencies to develop and work with international multi-stakeholder initiatives on protections for those displaced by climate change that will offer more legal protections and reduce exploitation.

**PROMISING PRACTICES IN DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND DISSEMINATION**

Collection and analysis of data is imperative for governments to understand the manifestation of human trafficking within its borders and among its nationals abroad, to track progress towards anti-trafficking goals, and to innovate responses to trafficking in partnership with key stakeholders. Unbiased and comprehensive data is crucial to highlighting trends, informing decision-making on domestic policies and priorities, updating anti-trafficking legislation, and appropriately allocating resources, from the local to the national level. Governments should work to attain the necessary technological tools and create data infrastructure to effectively integrate data systems across government agencies, ensuring standardized and comprehensive collection and, as appropriate, integrate civil society datasets with confidentiality policies to protect survivors. While advanced software and database systems can be helpful, they are not essential to building informative data. Instead, consistency and usability across stakeholders, integration into existing administrative data systems, and security of victims’ identities are key.

When approaching data infrastructure, the following are important considerations:

* **Government ownership and stakeholder buy-in** are prerequisites for creating data collection infrastructure that will be fully adopted by all stakeholders, which is needed to build trafficking in persons data and integrate it within existing administrative data systems. All government agencies identifying and providing services to victims and investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking should work to provide input on their current data practices, their interactions with victims and perpetrators, language accessibility for those collecting and entering data, and technology requirements to create adoptable systems. Incorporation of NGO data should also be considered, while being cognizant of privacy, sensitive law enforcement information, and duplicative data from multiple agencies assisting the same victims or investigating the same cases. Methods of input should be considered for all contributors to ensure the system is usable in their daily workflows.
* **Uniform data** is necessary to combine data across agencies to compare trends internally and, when collaborating across borders, with other governments. IOM created international trafficking data standards for governments and civil society to promote uniformity across data collection systems and facilitate sharing across governments. These data standards can be found at https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/relatedresources/tools/htcds. Governments may consider these guidelines to ensure robust and standardized collection and adoption of appropriate confidentiality standards.
* **Victim identification and protection data**, or data generated from agencies working directly with victims, is crucial to understanding the following: the effectiveness of victim identification efforts across sectors; the success of law enforcement investigations, awareness, and identification efforts for the protection of victims; and the quality and effectiveness of services provided by a country’s protection infrastructure. Victim identification and protection data is particularly challenging to collect and standardize given that strict confidentiality protocols must be followed to protect victims’ identities and avoid re-traumatization, and data collection and standardization efforts often span several government agencies and civil society organizations.
* **Disaggregating prosecution data** is essential to understanding the effectiveness of anti-trafficking legislation. Since traffickers are sometimes charged, prosecuted, and convicted under other statutes, such as immigration or commercial sex-related offenses, it is key to properly classify the charges under which traffickers are convicted to assess the effectiveness and use of anti-trafficking laws to successfully prosecute sex and labor trafficking cases as trafficking in persons. Additionally, details about the crime, including the type of trafficking and demographic information of both traffickers and victims, should be collected to determine if there are gaps in application of anti-trafficking laws.
* **Hotline/helpline data**, collected by both government agencies and civil society, also provide critical information on trafficking trends and the needs of victims through providing a mechanism to connect victims to services and funnel information to law enforcement. Hotline operators and civil society may assist victims who do not interact with governmental systems; however, given the necessary confidentiality of hotlines, the use of anonymized and aggregated data can make preventing duplication difficult when analyzing hotline data. Civil society and governments may have different thresholds for classification of victims. Also, victims may not provide consent, and aggregation may not be possible due to small numbers. For these reasons, close collaboration is needed to standardize and reconcile information and safeguard victims’ identities. Additionally, hotlines rely on public awareness, so their data may overrepresent certain populations. For this reason, hotline data cannot demonstrate prevalence, but can supplement other data sources to inform on trends and highlight gaps in services or accountability in investigations.

Finally, governments should facilitate and encourage independent research on trafficking trends. The academic community can often be a resource in establishing data collection systems, data governance, and data literacy campaigns. When governments share appropriate information with the academic community, it can result in new insights and further innovative responses to human trafficking.

**Country Examples of Innovative Human Trafficking Data Collection, Management, and Dissemination:**

* **Philippines.** The Government of the Philippines created the Integrated Case Management System, which is a single technology platform leveraged by several government agencies to address longstanding issues around interagency coordination needed to assist Filipino trafficking victims, who are often exploited outside the country, and to prosecute their traffickers.
* **Uganda.** In partnership with an NGO, Uganda’s Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions developed the Trafficking in Persons Mobile App Platform, which collects and disseminates standardized data pertaining to human trafficking investigations and prosecutions, enabling government agencies to track suspected and convicted traffickers and trends in trafficking in persons.

**LINKING EFFORTS TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

On December 6, 2021, the White House released the first United States Strategy on Countering Corruption. It outlines a whole-of-government approach that includes an emphasis on better understanding and responding to the transnational dimensions of corruption, along with steps to reduce the ability of corrupt actors to use the U.S. and international financial systems to hide assets and launder their illicit proceeds. This commitment to combat corruption supports another long-time priority of the United States: to combat trafficking in persons in all its forms; to prosecute and punish perpetrators, including by confiscating their ill-gotten gains; and to assist and protect the victims of this crime.

The U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption highlights human traffickers among those that benefit the most from environments with endemic corruption. A 2021 research report by UNODC and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime also highlights the role of corruption in facilitating trafficking in persons and perpetuating impunity for traffickers. Another paper published in 2021 by TRACE illustrates the role corruption plays in facilitating human trafficking by highlighting individual cases of trafficking victims from around the world, covering multiple sectors and contexts, including fishing, domestic service, the kafala system, and construction in advance of the FIFA World Cup, among others. The paper highlights how impunity remains the norm in many places and industries, as both human traffickers and the corrupt officials who facilitate these crimes operate with little fear of prosecution.

Trafficking-related corruption is committed by a range of government officials from junior law enforcement officers to senior officials at the highest level. Officials engage in corruption, for example, by assisting unscrupulous or unlicensed recruitment agencies during the recruitment of workers for overseas employment, providing false documentation, and enabling illegal movements across borders and immigration controls. They can also facilitate or turn a blind eye to ongoing illicit activities such as prostitution or drug cultivation or facilitate the acquisition, sale, or border crossing of goods that may have been produced by forced labor. Perhaps most perniciously, corrupt officials who accept bribes hamper criminal justice proceedings by obstructing the reporting and gathering of evidence, influencing witnesses, tipping off traffickers of pending raids and investigations, or otherwise interfering with the prosecution of perpetrators of illegal activities. Through selective law enforcement, governments may fail to investigate or prosecute traffickers, while in other cases authorities may target political opponents with unfounded trafficking allegations. Corruption by the police and the judiciary emboldens human traffickers to operate with impunity, contributes to the loss of public trust, and facilitates the further victimization of the very individuals they are supposed to protect from crime. Some government officials abuse their position of authority to extort sex or forced labor from individuals in their care in exchange for access to food, medicine, education, or other benefits or goods.

Earlier research by the UNODC points out that trafficking in persons could not occur on a large scale without corruption. It notes that “trafficking in persons and corruption are closely linked criminal activities, whose interrelation is frequently referred to in international fora;” and yet, the linkages between the two crimes are mostly overlooked in the actual development and implementation of anti-trafficking policies and programs.

The international anti-corruption framework includes several instruments and initiatives that can be used to further anti-trafficking efforts. One such instrument is the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which is the only legally binding and virtually universal anti-corruption instrument with 189 States Parties. While the Convention does not specifically define “corruption,” it does cover different forms that corruption can take, such as bribery, trading in influence, abuse of functions, and various acts of corruption in the private sector. Most, if not all, of the mandatory provisions in the UNCAC support and complement international obligations under the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) UN TIP Protocol, also widely ratified with 190 Parties to the UNTOC and 178 Parties to its TIP Protocol. Under the UNCAC, States Parties are obligated, under the fundamental principles of their legal systems, to establish public procurement systems based on transparency and competition; to criminalize forms of domestic and foreign bribery; to criminalize the laundering of proceeds of a crime; and to the greatest extent possible within its domestic legal system, to freeze, seize, and confiscate such proceeds. States Parties also are obligated to cooperate with other States Parties on criminal anti-corruption investigations, prosecutions, and judicial proceedings of Convention-related offenses; and promote the participation of civil society in the fight against corruption. Both the UNCAC and the UNTOC have peer review mechanisms that assess States Parties’ compliance with the respective conventions that include recommendations and identification of specific needs for technical assistance.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (the Anti-Bribery Convention), ratified by 44 members (38 OECD countries and six non-members), is the first anti-corruption instrument to focus on the supply side of bribery, namely the persons or entities offering, promising, or giving bribes—whether directly or through intermediaries. States Parties agree to establish bribery of foreign public officials as a criminal offense under their national laws and to investigate, prosecute, and sanction this offense. The OECD Working Group on Bribery monitors the implementation and enforcement of the Convention and related instruments and recognizes that achieving progress requires efforts at the national level, as well as multilateral cooperation.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), through its November 2021 Call for Action on Trafficking in Persons, identified corruption as one of the drivers of human trafficking and called for a global government response to address the underlying social and structural inequalities that enable environments where corruption takes root; to tackle trafficking in persons in a holistic manner that also addresses corruption and impunity; and to enhance investigations of corruption and illicit financial flows associated with trafficking and the related seizure of proceeds of crime.

As the main policymaking body in Vienna on criminal justice issues, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) complements the UNTOC and its TIP Protocol. The TIP Protocol is the central international framework to prevent and combat human trafficking, and it provides a floor for government action, similar to the congressionally mandated minimum standards that are used to assess governments’ efforts in TIP Report country narratives. The implementation of the TIP Protocol is often raised in the context of CCPCJ discussion, particularly through resolutions negotiated each year. Other fora such as the G7 Roma Lyon Group (RLG) also address corruption and trafficking in persons. The RLG focuses on crime and terrorism issues, including both corruption and trafficking in persons, among others.

Under U.S. law, the TVPA requires the Secretary of State to describe government efforts to combat trafficking each year and places great focus on corruption and complicity, which undermine such efforts. As part of the Minimum Standards indicia of “serious and sustained efforts,” the TVPA requires an assessment of whether a government took law enforcement action against officials who participated in, facilitated, condoned, or were otherwise complicit in human trafficking crimes. Furthermore, the TVPA directs the Secretary to consider, as proof of a country’s failure to make significant effort to fully meet the Minimum Standards, a government policy or pattern of trafficking; trafficking in government-funded programs; forced labor (in government-affiliated medical services, agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, or other sectors); sexual slavery in government camps, compounds, or outposts; or employing or recruiting child soldiers. Thus, concerns of official complicity in trafficking crimes weigh heavily in the TIP Report’s country assessments. In cases of official complicity in trafficking crimes in a country, the relevant TIP Report narrative encourages the government, often as a top recommendation, to increase efforts to hold complicit officials accountable or reform an existing government policy or pattern of trafficking – underlining the importance of ensuring state entities and officials do not perpetrate the crime.

**Recommendations for Linking and Furthering Anti-corruption and Anti-trafficking Efforts:**

The following recommendations draw from various sources and are based on a multi-sectoral approach involving government entities, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and civil society, including trafficking survivors. They aim to proactively link efforts to prevent and combat both corruption and trafficking in persons.

* Ensure robust, transparent criminal investigation and prosecution of government officials who allegedly facilitate or perpetrate trafficking crimes, including through corrupt practices or trafficking-related selective law enforcement.
* Establish comprehensive anti-money laundering laws and enforce them, monitor seizure/confiscation of proceeds—including from offshore accounts and cryptocurrency—and provide training/assistance/tools to governments, banks, etc., to enhance these efforts, in line with legislation, treating trafficking in persons as a predicate offence to money laundering, in line with the UN-TOC.
* Conduct financial investigations. Curb illicit financing, including through enhanced investigations of corruption associated with human trafficking along with the related freezing, seizing, and confiscating of proceeds of this crime and through enhanced training of relevant public and private entities, such as law enforcement, financial intelligence units, tax authorities, and banking institutions, using red flag indicators to help identify transactions related to human trafficking.
* Include corruption when addressing core drivers and facilitators of trafficking in persons, and link anti-corruption efforts with those designed to tackle transnational organized crime such as human trafficking, including understanding and disrupting networks, tracking flows of money and assets, and improving information sharing with international and non-governmental partners, as appropriate.
* Recognize that combating corruption and transnational organized crime are mutually reinforcing by underscoring the importance of effectively implementing international obligations under the UNCAC and UNTOC in the development and execution of anti-trafficking policies and programs, as well as incorporate as relevant recommendations from the UNCAC and UNTOC COP reviews.
* Bolster the existing international anti-corruption architecture in reinforcing the approach of corruption as a global problem that also facilitates trafficking in persons by addressing the transnational aspects of corruption through human and financial resourcing, intelligence analysis, foreign assistance, and robust public-private partnerships that include the private sector, multilateral organizations, banking institutions, civil society, and media actors, with a view to eliminate safe havens for corrupt actors and their criminal proceeds.
* Increase digital expertise and appropriate usage of new technology in anti-trafficking investigations and responses, including collection of evidence, sharing of information, and presenting evidence in court.
* Establish transparent public, private, and institutional procurement and acquisition systems.
* Incorporate measures to address corruption and impunity in anti-trafficking strategies, using a multi-stakeholder approach that incorporates the expertise and recommendations from trafficking victims and survivor leaders.
* Encourage the private sector to develop effective internal controls, ethics, and compliance measures to prevent and detect bribery of foreign public officials and to prevent human trafficking, including in supply chains.
* Provide support for civil society, survivor, and media reporting on corrupt practices related to trafficking, to include anonymous reporting mechanisms and whistleblower protection.

[Child Soldiers Prevention Act List](https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/%22%20%5Cl%20%22section-7)

Section 402 of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, as amended (CSPA) requires publication in the annual TIP Report of a list of foreign governments identified during the previous year as having governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces, or government-supported armed groups that recruit or use child soldiers, as defined in the CSPA. These determinations cover the reporting period beginning April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

For the purpose of the CSPA, and generally consistent with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the term “child soldier” means:

1. any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities as a member of governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
2. any person under 18 years of age who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
3. any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces;
4. or any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state.

The term “child soldier” includes any person described in clauses (ii), (iii), or (iv) who is serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a “cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard, or sex slave.”

Governments identified on the list are subject to restrictions, in the following fiscal year, on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment. The CSPA prohibits assistance to governments that are identified in the list under the following authorities: International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Financing, Excess Defense Articles, and Peacekeeping Operations, with exceptions for some programs undertaken pursuant to the Peacekeeping Operations authority. The CSPA also prohibits the issuance of licenses for direct commercial sales of military equipment to such governments. Beginning October 1, 2022, and effective throughout Fiscal Year 2023, these restrictions will apply to the listed countries, absent a presidential waiver, applicable exception, or reinstatement of assistance pursuant to the terms of the CSPA. The determination to include a government in the CSPA list is informed by a range of sources, including first-hand observation by U.S. government personnel and research and credible reporting from various UN entities, international organizations, local and international NGOs, and international and domestic media outlets.