

Human Trafficking Background and Overview

Facts about Human Trafficking:

- There are an estimated 40.3 million victims of [modern-day slavery worldwide](#). Of these, 25 million are victims of labor or sex trafficking and 15 million are people trapped in forced marriages.
- Nearly 30% of all victims are men and boys; increasing to 46% for victims of forced labor
- Unfortunately, stakeholders have increasingly found that individuals in situations of forced migration, such as refugees and unaccompanied children, are [particularly vulnerable to labor and sex traffickers](#).
- Victim identification remains a significant challenge to U.S. efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and protect victims.
- Calculated as a 150-billion-dollar industry, modern day slavery has become the fastest growing source of illicit profit for criminals worldwide.

The Church's Position on Human Trafficking:

- The elimination of human trafficking is a priority issue for the Catholic Church. Because every life is a gift from God and is sacred, it deserves to be protected and nurtured; we each have a responsibility to fight against the violation and degradation of our brothers and sisters.
- The Catechism of the Church forbids acts that cause the enslavement of humans. During the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Church further stated “slavery, prostitution, the selling of women, and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profits rather than free and responsible persons are infamies and supreme dishonor to the creator.” (Gaudium et Spes, 1965).
- In 2014, Pope Francis stated during his Declaration on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: “[M]odern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.”
- Men and women religious have also played an integral part of in the battle against human trafficking. In 2001, nearly 800 women leaders of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) passed a resolution dedicating over one million members “to work in solidarity with one another within our own religious communities and in the countries in which we are located to address insistently at every level the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children . . .” [The U.S. Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking](#) is the domestic response to this call.