

# History of human trafficking



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## Historical Aspect of Human Trafficking Internationally

### Introduction

Human trafficking is using force, fraud, coercion, and the use of power over another person for the purpose of exploitation (unodc.org). Human trafficking is mostly associated with sex and labor exploitation, but there are other types such as bonded labor, involuntary servitude among migrant laborers, involuntary domestic servitude, forced marriage, forced child labor, child soldiers, child sex tourism, and child exploited for commercial sex. In the past decades, there have been government officials globally who have tried establishing laws to end and prevent human trafficking. Human trafficking is a part of modern-day slavery. Currently, slavery is at its highest point then it has ever been, with an estimated twenty-seven million slaves. Human trafficking has been practiced since the dawn of time, since then laws have been established and different forms of trafficking have evolved.

### Start of human trafficking and the efforts made to eliminate it

Slavery started human trafficking and because human trafficking has expanded there have been laws from as early as the seventeenth century to the present day that have tried to stop perpetrators from committing human trafficking. Slavery had started the European slave trade in Africa during the fifteenth century. In 1807, Great Britain and America passed a law that made slave trade illegal (Sexualexploitatio). The act that America passed was the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which forbade the importation of slaves into their country (Abolition, 2012). The Slave Trade Act went into effect in 1808. After the importation of slaves had been banned, people started to use white

slaves. People would trade the white slaves as they would trade the previous slaves. Their method of trading is known as the white slave trade, which started in the early nineteenth century. White slavery is a women forced into prostitution for the benefit of others (Collins, 2019) In 1910, a world-wide agreement was made against the white slave trade and the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic was established (treaties. un). By 1923, twenty-five countries signed the treaty making human trafficking illegal. In 1923, Hong Kong's British government passed the Mui Tsai Bill, which prohibited the marketing of young women as domestic slaves (Legco, 1923). In 1920, the League of Nations was established, which was intended to avoid international disputes. In 1921, an international conference was assembled to discuss important decisions, one of those issues was white slavery. The term "white slave" was changed to the "trafficking in women and children" so that the new term did not address only one specific gender and race. Government officials were required to send reports yearly to the League of Nations about human trafficking. An institution that gathered research and advised on the conditions and measures taken against international trafficking in women and children was established (Garcia, 2012). Countries all over the world have realized that human trafficking is a problem and have established laws.

### Sexual Exploitation

Sex trafficking occurs when the usage of force, fraud, or coercion provokes a commercial sex act with an adult or minor (Hughes, 2013). Sex trafficking has been practiced since prehistoric times and occurs mostly in women and children, but it does occur in men. Sexual exploitation consists of seventy-

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nine percent of human trafficking (McBane, 2014). The first movement against sex trafficking was in England by Josephine Butler who was a feminist and social reformer in the late 1800's. Josephine Butler wanted to abolish the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDAs), which allowed authorities to inspect and withhold any woman who was accused of having a venereal infection, also known as a sexually transmitted disease. The authorities could not distinguish prostitutes from women of the lower class. Reformers who had opposed to the trade and enslavement of Africans joined Josephine Butler's campaign against the CDAs. The exploitation of women in prostitution was viewed as another form of slavery to the reformers (Hughes, 2013). In 2000, the United States passed the Trafficking Victims Protections Act and the United Nations acquired a protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking (Hughes, 2013). Sex trafficking victims face severe situations. Victims can become romantically involved with someone who manipulates them into prostitution, others are lured into faulty promises of jobs, and some are forced to sell sex by their parents or family members. Victims may participate in a trafficking situation for days, weeks, or years (Polaris, 2018). The International Labor Organization estimated that there is 4.8 million people forced into sexual exploitation globally (Polaris, 2018). In 2004, a girl named Kolab from Cambodia was a victim and a survivor of sex trafficking. When she turned thirteen her foster parents sold her to a woman. Kolab had to clean, cook, and wash non-stop for the woman and her family. One day the woman's husband called Kolab into his room and raped her. She escaped and went to a province where a friend told her she could find work. Two men took her to their house and forced her to have sex with at least fifty people per day for two years. Eventually, she ran away and went to the

Accommodation of Social Affairs department to get help (Santiago). The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported an estimated one out of seven runaways were child sex trafficking victims (Polaris, 2018). More than two million children are exploited in the global commercial sex trade annually (State. gov, 2008). Child sex tourism involves individuals who travel to another country where they can engage in commercial sex acts with children (State. gov, 2008).

### Labor Trafficking

Another form of modern-day slavery is when individuals perform labor services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Debt bondage, forced labor, and involuntary child labor are factors in labor trafficking (Humantraffickinghotline). Men, women, and children are victims of being used for labor trafficking. Labor trafficking includes domestic work, traveling sales crews, agriculture, food services, and begging rings (acf. hhs. gov, 2012). Forced labor makes up seventeen percent of human trafficking (McBane, 2014). The use of labor trafficking comes from the usage of slaves and indentured servants. In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution ended slavery and involuntary servitude (memory. loc, 1774-1875). When slavery and indentured servants were made illegal, several individuals continued to practice slavery, because people did not stop using slaves, it never ended. Slavery has evolved throughout the years, but it is used for the same purposes. There are 20.9 million victims of forced labor in the world (ILO). It is estimated that 152 million children between the ages of five to seventeen are engaged in child labor (DOL). Labor traffickers use false promises of jobs, travel opportunities, and education to attract

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people into terrible working conditions (Polaris, 2018). For example, Maria a woman from Central America moved to the Caribbean with a promise of a job in teaching. Her new employer locked her in his house and forced her to work up to sixteen hours a day doing household chores. She experienced twelve years of forced labor before fleeing to the United States (af. hhs. gov, 2012). Forced labor is when people are forced to work, under the threat of violence or other punishments. Ownership is applied and their freedom is restricted. When labor is demanded as repayment for a loan it is known as bonded labor and debt bondage. Usually the work that is done is greater than the amount of money that was borrowed (ac. hhs. gov, 2012). Child labor is work that damages and is dangerous to the child. And interferes with the schooling of the child (ILO). Child labor mostly occurs in south and southeast Asia, affecting approximately fifty million children in India alone (Bentley, Streets-Slater, Ziegler, pg 928).

## Conclusion

One to two million human beings annually are bought and sold across international and within national boundaries (Bentley, Streets-Slater, Ziegler, pg 928). The elimination of human trafficking has been a goal for many individuals. Although the number of victims to human trafficking is at its highest point, there is many people who contribute to the survivors and the organizations trying to stop it. More government officials have recognized the problem and more action is being done. With more laws being established and more people helping, there is a greater chance for human trafficking to reduce.

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