

Human trafficking in syria: policy recommendations



Executive Summary

Human trafficking has been on the rise in the recent past. Many people are confirmed lost through different ways. Among the leading countries in the human trade is Syria. There are reported cases in the country of citizens being abducted and subjected to inhuman activities such as forced prostitution and early marriages. Syria is known for the increasing civil wars for the past few years. The government and some criminal groups such as ISIS have been in conflicts, which has made it possible for thriving of human trafficking. The war has also led to many citizens fleeing for their lives hence becoming refugees in their country. Others have fled to European countries for a better living.[1] Woman and children are the primary victims. There are various forms which trafficking occurs. Some women are abducted in the checkpoints while some are lured with promises of better lives in the neighboring countries. They end up being victims of sexual assault. To stop the issue, there should be sound policies which should aim in eliminating the causes of the problem rather than accommodating the refugees.

Problem: Human trafficking in Syria

Currently, Syria is experiencing the highest level of humanitarian conflict in the world. There is an approximation of about 12 million individuals need humanitarian services. 7.6 million Citizens of Syria are considered to be internally displaced since the onset of ongoing civil clashes. The country is also experiencing a high number of refugees because of the constant civic conflicts. The wars are affecting mostly women and children. These populations are considered more vulnerable to the crisis than men. Women and girls, primarily in the refugee camps and irrespective of their origin, have

high chances of being trafficked through some forms such as sexual exploitation, enforcement into early marriages, psychological torture resulting from the wars which seem to be endless, and also being overwhelmed by the economic fighting. People also try to seek refuge in the neighboring countries finding their way onto Europe. The victims are migrated in the neighboring countries such as Lebanon where they are subjected to misery. They are forced to prostitution and also early marriages affecting their growth and development as well as subjection to physical torture. For example, back in 2016, 75 Syrian women were forced into sexual slavery, the largest human trafficking network ever uncovered in Lebanon.[2]

Factors facilitating human trafficking

To develop sound policies in eliminating the problem, there is need to understand the factors which have facilitated human trafficking. The growing refugee rate is one of the factors. As the civil war continues in Syria, the number of displaced increases.[3] The refugees are forced to seek refuge in the neighboring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. The commotion and the psychological pressure makes the refugees become lured easily for trafficking. There is also no legal forum in the government where the refugees can air their grievances.

The Syrian government is negligent towards its refugees. Amidst the confusion and desperation, human traffickers take advantage of the desperate refugees and promise them a good life in neighboring countries. However, it dawns on the refugees later that they are trafficked to other nations to be used as sexual tools and forced marriages. Hence, the refugee crisis is one of the factors leading to the increased human trafficking.

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War is another factor that is increasing human trafficking. Some fighters are taking hostages and using them in facilitating the human trafficking trade. Women are involved in prostitution while children are reported to be forced into early marriages. Wars have also increased the displacement of people making them vulnerable to human trafficking. Before the war emancipated in Syria, there was a perfect life in the country. The state secularism also ensured that Syrian women had some freedom in the society. There was a certain level of personal liberty given to women.[4]

However, in the current war era, women and children feel the highest degree of effects of war. They are the primary targets of both the state and pro-nation forces, as well as the armored forces which are against the national authority.[5] Such groups include Islamic State of Iraq Sham (ISIS). Women are prone to sexual assault, psychological and physical harassment, torture, and deprivation of their human rights. The absence of men as they flee to the battleground leaves them being open to abuse during the house-to-house raids conducted by the rival groups.

Another means through which women and children are prone to trafficking and sexual harassment is when fleeing for their safety.[6] Men are mainly engaged in fighting in different areas. It leaves women to flee for their lives to avoid harassment during the households' raids. However, escaping from the war does not mean that they have fled from violence. They have to pass through militias controlled areas. In some cases, they also have to negotiate in the checkpoints increasing the chances for rape and sexual assaults. Also, the human trafficking individuals are in these checkpoints, which make it easy for them to have victims of their choice for trading.

Moreover, unscrupulous housing owners and local charity organizations sometimes abuse their legitimacy which results in exploitation of women who cannot pay their rent. They expect to have some sexual intercourse in return. Some also organize with the local human traffickers and give out information regarding the ladies present in the land for some cash.

There is need to develop sound policies which should ensure elimination of the problem. Some of the policies that should be implemented are as follows.

Policy one

There should be sound policies put in place to curb the problem. One of the policy is reducing the demand for the human as sex tools. The plan may seem complicated to implement. However, the states should follow the law of demand which should ensure that the demand and supply for sexual satisfaction diminishes. One way to make sure that there is no demand is establishing laws which are against any form of sexual assault. The victims of human trafficking are taken in the neighboring countries such as Lebanon and Iraq. The governments of these nations should implement laws which are against sex workers and prostitution. Buying of Sex should also be prohibited in these countries which will ensure that the demand for sex is eliminated. Human traders will incur losses on the trade since the services resulting from the trade are no longer needed.[7] Also, there should be sound wage systems which should ensure that no children or weak women supply any labor in the companies. It is because some kids are subjected to child labor in some production companies. If there is a sound system which ensures that employment providers are approved by the government, then the demand for children will reduce which will in return, eliminate human

trafficking. Employers will adopt other means of labor production to avoid experiencing the close part of the law.

Policy Two

Another policy which should be implemented to ensure elimination of human trafficking is the stabilization of the Syrian government. The increasing rate of refugees and the civil conflicts are the primary reason why human trafficking has thrived in Syria. War results in the central government are diverting its attention from protecting human rights to fighting for the interests of some few individuals in power. If there is a stable government in Syria, human rights should be protected since the government would receive some pressures from the UN to protect the human rights.[8] However, as the wars heighten in the country, the state government is not able to provide security to its citizens but rather fight against the illegal militias. There is need to eliminate the cause of the civil wars to stabilize the Syrian government. A primary cause of the war is the thirst for power as some autocratic families have been in authority for decades. The United Nations should ensure that Syria adopts a new constitution which outlines the maximum years for one to be in authority. The democratic rights of the Syrian citizens should also be protected which will ensure that correct procedures to ascend to power are followed. The United Nations should keep in watch of the Syrian activities till the government becomes stable. It will help in providing some social services such as security and protection of human rights. If the rights of the vulnerable are protected, there are small chances of women and children becoming the victims of human trafficking.

Policy Three

Another policy which should be implemented is the provision of some social services and real working environments. Resources in Syria have also contributed in the political conflicts in the country. It is because each fighting party wants to protect its interests and have a share of the vast resources in the country. Also, some women are lured with promises of better lives in the neighboring states which make them exchange their daughters for some small amount of cash. It shows how poverty in these regions contributes to the growing human trade. Improving the economic conditions in these areas will ensure that citizens have better living standards which will lure them off from selling their daughters. They will not fall into the trap of selling their daughters for better lives since they will have the essential living commodities. Also, there should be sufficient provision of some services such as security. The refugees flee from their sources to other areas due to fear of losing their lives. Severe household attacks by the illegal militia groups have made many citizens, especially women and children flee in search of secure places. On the process of searching for security, they are forced to cross on the bandit's territories which expose them in sexual assault. Hence, if the social services are provided to the people of Syria, they would not be moving in a disorganized manner which would reduce chances for attacks.

Pros and cons of the above policies

The above policies have some benefits which can be met when implemented. Curbing the target market of human traffickers will not only apply in the Middle East countries but will involve a large section of the human trafficking regions. The human trade includes many countries with almost same

destination. Hence, if the market is dismantled, the traders will have no place to exchange hence stopping the trade. The advantage of this method is that it will not involve any conflicts with the civic groups since the governments will introduce laws and some harsh punishments which the citizens will fear breaking. However, the policy has a disadvantage in that the traders will have to implement some other means for survival. The operators rely much on the trade which leaves them with no other business. Hence, the government will have to devise another way of accommodating the traders.

The policy of government stabilization is much effective in that the Syrian government will help in the elimination of illegal militia groups. The UN together with the Syrian government will take part in fighting and eliminate the local groups which are involved in the human trade. If the government is stable, there will be other advantages which include protection of human rights and the rise of stable states. However, the policy has some disadvantage in that there may be the death of many lives which can result from the fact that the militia groups will instill some resistance in giving up their power. Some of these organizations such as ISIS are deeply rooted in these regions. They also know all the hideouts in case an attack against them is declared. It can result in the death of many civilians as war ensues between the rivals.

The policy of providing the citizens with some social services is principal in the sense that the government will have cut some cost of providing these services. Instead, the fund which would be used in providing these services in future would be utilized for other services. The regions will be opened up for international trade. The global village might shift its attention to

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these areas which may attract other investors. The primary cause of conflict between the militia groups and the government is the protection of power and some resources. These areas are rich in resources which remain unutilized due to conflicts. Hence, if the areas are at peace and working opportunities are provided, they may attract the foreign investors who will invest in these areas hence opening up for international trade.

Best Policy and Recommendation

Among these policies, the most efficient are the elimination of target market for human traffickers. The strategy is effective because the governments in the target markets will only implement some laws against sex trade and forced labor. In return, sex buyers will fear the effects of the law which will reduce the demand for human trafficking. Governments should implement laws which forbid selling and buying of sex in all countries. The policy will need few efforts since the governments will aim at implementing the laws hence reducing demand for human traffickers. Similarly, there will be no bloodshed in the implementation of the policy since the laws of demand will apply which will eliminate human trafficking.

Human trafficking in Syria is one of the global challenges which has attracted the attention of the international human rights agencies. There has been a lot of kidnapping in the region which exposes the victims in some humanitarian crisis such as exposure to sexual assault. The perpetrators of the crime have formed a long link in almost every corner of the world. The refugees and the prisoners, specifically women of war are more prone to the trade than men. There is need to fight the trade starting from the ground and not just to accommodate the refugees. Sound policies should be

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implemented which will ensure that the problem is eliminated in the society. Among these strategies include stabilizing the Syrian government, disrupting the target market of human trafficking as well as promoting an efficient economic working environment. The best policy should focus on having the least adverse outcomes upon its implementation. The UN has a significant role to play in ensuring that human trafficking is eliminated from the society.

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