

What is Forced Begging

Forced begging is a form of human trafficking in which individuals—often children or people with disabilities—are coerced, deceived, or forced to beg in public. The money collected is taken by traffickers, leaving victims with no control over their earnings. Forced begging exploits vulnerability and is internationally recognized as both a serious human rights violation and a form of human trafficking.

It is one of the most visible forms of human trafficking, with victims exploited openly in plain sight.

Key facts about Forced Begging

Scale

- Forced begging happens all over the world — no country is free from this problem. It takes place both within countries and across borders.
- Around **1% of identified trafficking victims** globally are exploited through forced begging, though the true scale remains unknown. (UNODC, 2024)
- Traffickers who force children, including those with disabilities, to beg, generate an estimated \$10,000–\$40,000 in illegal profits each year (IOM; Anti-Slavery International).

Key Facts

- Forced begging is often **linked with forced criminality**, such as pickpocketing and petty crimes.
- Victims are typically forced to surrender **most or all of their earnings** to traffickers and often endure physical, psychological, and emotional abuse..
- Some are **deliberately injured**, denied proper clothing, or chosen because of visible disabilities to generate more sympathy and money.
- Victims — including children — are made to work long hours, endure constant abuse, and **face a high risk of sexual exploitation** by both traffickers and the public.
- Children are sometimes forced to play instruments or perform tricks to attract donations.
- In most cases, children are exploited by **family members, and people they know**.
- In some cases, children are **kidnapped by gangs**, forced to beg, and even given drugs that cause addiction, making them dependent on their exploiters (for example in India, Bangladesh or Pakistan).

Legal Frameworks



In many countries, forced begging is treated as human trafficking and a form of “forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery”, in accordance with The Palermo Protocol.



In many countries, **begging is not a crime**, but **forced begging is** and is prosecuted as exploitation in trafficking in persons.



Using a child for begging is considered a **worst form of child labor under ILO Convention No. 182 (1999)**. It can be classified as slavery or a slavery-like practice, forced labor, (the result of) child trafficking, or involvement in illicit activities (Anti-Slavery, IOM).

Forced Child Begging

Forced child begging takes many forms. Some children are made to beg by parents or guardians — often Roma children, who may be beaten if they fail to bring money — while others are exploited by third parties, including informal networks or criminal gangs. In some cases, children are deliberately drugged and maimed to make them more compliant and easier to exploit for forced begging (e.g., in India, Bangladesh). Children have also been forced to beg by Koranic teachers (e.g., in West Africa).



People at Risk

- People with disabilities
- Children with disabilities
- Very young children (often under 10)
- Children from impoverished or marginalized communities (in Europe, Roma children are most affected)
- Children who have dropped out of school or are in conflict with the law
- Migrants from impoverished backgrounds

Key Risk Factors



Poverty and Social Exclusion



Limited Education



Ethnic Discrimination



Disabilities or Visible Vulnerabilities



Family or Community Pressure



Migration and Forced Migration Background

Survivors Stories

Maria, a 13-year-old from Romania, was trafficked to the UK after her father paid a criminal network for her travel. She was exploited in domestic servitude and forced to beg, steal, and sell magazines, beaten regularly, and denied food, clothing, and any of her earnings.

Manik, an adult male from Bangladesh, was promised construction work in Italy but was forced to beg under threat and abuse by an acquaintance.

Yaro, an 18-year-old boy with disabilities was lured from his parents in Tanzania, trafficked to Kenya and forced to beg on the streets of Nairobi at the age of just 14. Unable to escape his traffickers, he has been held captive for half of his life.



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Learn more at:
www.antitraffickingresponse.org

(UNODC Case Law Database; BBC, IOM)