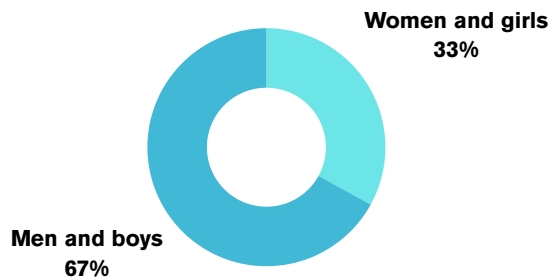


What is Labor Trafficking

There is no single universally accepted definition of 'labor trafficking'. However, labor trafficking is understood as a form of human trafficking where individuals are forced, deceived, or coerced into working under exploitative conditions. It occurs in both legal and illegal industries, and affects people of all ages, nationalities, and backgrounds.

If the person is under 18, certain forms of labor may be considered trafficking even without force, fraud, or coercion depending on the country.

Who is Affected



These are the identified victims reported by the International Labor Organisation, and Global Estimates 2022, and do not reflect the actual number of people trafficked for labor.

Common Industries of Labor Trafficking

Agricultural and Farm Work

Trafficking victims are exploited in crop harvesting, livestock farming, forestry, fishing, and/or plantation work. Conditions often involve long hours in extreme heat or hazardous environments, with little or no pay.

Construction and Manual Labor

Victims are exploited in construction, mining, road building, brick kilns, and large infrastructure projects. Work typically involves dangerous tasks without adequate safety equipment.

Manufacturing and Supply Chains

People are exploited in factories producing items such as textiles, garments, electronics, footwear, toys, and other consumer goods. Exploitation is often hidden in complex subcontracting chains, where smaller, unregulated providers supply to larger companies which make supply chains multi-layered and hard to trace, allowing traffickers to profit while brands and consumers remain unaware.

Hospitality and Service Industry

People are exploited in hotels, restaurants, bars, cleaning services, and other parts of the service sector. Women in this sector are especially vulnerable, facing not only forced labor but also sexual harassment and violence. The interaction with customers in hospitality jobs can make exploitation hidden in plain sight.

Fishing and Maritime Work

Victims are trafficked onto fishing vessels, cargo ships, or seafood processing sites, where they may be trapped for months or even years at sea. It also feeds into global supply chains for seafood.

Beauty Services and Massage Parlors

Workers, often women and girls from migrant backgrounds, may be trafficked into nail salons or beauty/massage parlors. Because these are customer-facing businesses, exploitation is hidden behind a normal business activity and difficult to detect.

State-Imposed Forced Labor

Forced labor can be mandated/tolerated by governments, including compulsory work in prisons, military conscription, or public projects, often under threat of punishment.

Forced Labor in Illicit Activities

Victims are coerced to work in illegal sectors such as drug production, scam farms, smuggling, or illegal mining.

Definition



"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".

United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)

Facts and trends

- **Labor trafficking** now constitutes **42% of all identified human trafficking victims** — surpassing sexual exploitation at 36%, a notable shift in exploitation dynamics.
- Despite its growing scale, labor trafficking accounts for only **17% of trafficking convictions globally**.
- **3.9 million** of victims are in State-imposed form of labor trafficking.
- The **annual profit per victim** was estimated at \$8,269 in 2014 and \$9,995 in 2024.
- **Scam centers**, particularly in Southeast Asia (e.g., Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos), exploit victims — often lured with false job offers — in large-scale online fraud, generating \$12.5–\$19 billion annually and involving 100,000–150,000 trafficked individuals.

UNODC (2024), ILO, The Times



Signs and indicators

- No written contract or contract in a language the worker doesn't understand.
- Employer holds passport, ID, or work permit.
- Not allowed to speak freely or contact family conditions.
- Lives in overcrowded, substandard, or employer-controlled housing.
- Wages withheld, underpaid, or non-existent.
- Threats of deportation, violence, or harm to family coercion.
- Physical or verbal abuse by employer or recruiter.

Learn more at
www.antitraffickingresponse.org

