



# VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS AND THE SUPPORT YOU CAN EXPECT

Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

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## WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking in human beings is widely recognised as a serious criminal offence and a human rights violation, under both international and domestic law. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. This crime occurs when a trafficker uses, for example, force, fraud or coercion to control another person for the purpose of, for example, engaging in commercial sex acts or soliciting labour or service. Human trafficking can include, but does not require, movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were exploited in their home town, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously agreed to work for a trafficker, participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked, or the exploitation has taken place. A child is considered to be a victim of human trafficking regardless of whether any means (force, fraud, abuse of position of vulnerability etc.) have been used to recruit the child for the purpose of exploitation.

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN FORMS OF EXPLOITATION?

- SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
- FORCED LABOR
- FORCED BEGGING
- FORCED MARRIAGE
- REMOVAL OF ORGANS
- FORGING OF COMMITTING CRIMINAL ACTS

## HOW CAN YOU RECOGNISE THAT YOU ARE A VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING?

If somebody forced you to work against your will or under conditions that you did not choose and were not free to leave you could be a victim of trafficking. This may have happened to you while looking for a job or traveling to another country or another town for some other reason – maybe they deceived you about the kind of work

you would do or the conditions of work and took away from you your money, your passport or other identity document, and forced you to stay in such a situation with threats of violence against you, your family or people you love.

While not an exhaustive list, these are some signs that could alert you:

- Your passport and other ID documents have been taken from you.
- You are forced to use false identity (somebody else's passport or ID card).
- You are forced to give sexual services to clients.
- Your body is used for recording pornography.
- An organ has been taken from your body without your permission.
- You are suffering physical, mental or sexual violence (ill-treatment, beating, rape, hunger, intimidation, and alike) because you did not agree to do what you were asked to.
- You have been married against your will and feel that your spouse or his family is abusing you.
- You are forced to work against your will, under unacceptable conditions, you serve for a minimum wage or no wage at all, you suffer physical and mental violence and your movement is restricted.
- You are forced to smuggle drugs or other illicit objects.
- You are forced to beg, you are physically disabled on purpose or you must pretend that you are disabled in order to get more money.
- You are constantly under life threat.
- Your movement is restricted and controlled, you are constantly followed for what you are going to do or say.
- You are always escorted when you go out.
- You have no access to communication (phone, Internet, etc.).
- You are threatened that your family will be hurt.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

Report your situation to the Social Work Centre, or associations of citizens (contact phones are given at the end of the brochure) or nearest police station.

### PERIOD OF DECISION-MAKING

If after the initial conversation with the police you do not feel ready to share information about your suffering, a period for decision-making can be provided to you so that you can recover and decide whether you will cooperate with the competent bodies, regardless of whether you are a national or a foreign citizen.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) will refer you to a safe accommodation and other available services that will help you to recover. The period of decision-making is up to two months, and if you are a child (under 18 years of age), this period may be extended.

The protection is provided through the NRM Office within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of the Interior, the Unit for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Migrant Smuggling, as well as the NGOs Open Gate and For A Happy Childhood in the Centre for Persons Victims of Human Trafficking.

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE

- **SAFE TRANSPORT AND ACCOMMODATION OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING** – Whether you are a foreign or a national citizen, if you do not have a safe accommodation, you will be housed in the Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking, where you will be assisted by the professional staff.
- **PSYCHO-SOCIAL AID AND SUPPORT** – It will be provided to you by professionals from the Centre for Social Work. You will be provided counselling for recovery, assistance in establishing contact with your beloved ones and assistance in the provision of personal documents (birth certificate, ID card, health card, etc.).
- **MEDICAL ASSISTANCE** – You are entitled to basic medical aid with compensation of the mandatory co-financing by you. If you are a foreign citizen, the basic medical services are paid completely. Basic medical aid includes, for example, general medical check-ups, basic laboratory tests and a basic gynaecological check-up.
- **EDUCATION** – If you have discontinued your education, you can be actively included in the educational process, depending on your age. Elementary and secondary education is obligatory in the country.
- **EMPLOYMENT** – If you are unemployed and have reached the age of 15, you can apply at the Employment Agency where you can obtain information about possibilities for employment as a victim of human trafficking. If you are a foreign citizen, in order to be able to be employed in the country you must have a work permit and your stay as a foreigner must be regulated. NGOs may assist you in obtaining information about employment opportunities.
- **SAFE RETURN** - If you are a foreign citizen, you are entitled to safe return to your home country. If you are a child (under 18 years of age), you have to be escorted on the journey by a temporary guardian. If you are a child of Macedonian citizenship, the decision on the permanent place of residence will be made by the social worker from the competent Centre for Social Work, after your opinion is obtained.
- **REINTEGRATION** – You are entitled to be involved in the creation of an individual plan for your long-term reintegration including psycho-social support, legal assistance, education and life skills, economic empowerment programs, family counselling etc.
- **LEGAL AID** – You will be assisted by a lawyer who will explain to you the legal system in the country, represent your rights in front of the court or other authorities, and help you exercise your right to compensation of damages. Additionally, the foreign victims of trafficking have a right to be granted temporary residence permit, to claim asylum in the country etc.
- **COMPENSATION** - You have the right to compensation for damages you suffered while exploited in the human trafficking chain, including material damages, emotional pain, fear, injuries to your honour, reputation, freedom, personal rights, dignity etc.



## CONTACTS OF RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS FOR PROVIDING AID AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

- **The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - National Referral Mechanism,**  
Phone: 02 310 6443,  
mob. 076456795, mob.075311726
- **Police: 192**
- **Association for Action Against Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings – Open Gate**  
Toll-free SOS line  
0800 11 111; 02 27 00 107  
www.lastrada.org.mk;  
email: lastrada@lastrada.org.mk
- **Ombudsman:**  
ul. Makedonija br. 19  
Phone: 023129335; 023129359;  
e-mail: contact@ombudsman.mk

## ABOUT OPEN GATE

*The Association for Action Against Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings – Open Gate/La Strada is a national non-governmental organisation, fully committed to combating human trafficking. Since its establishment in 2000, Open Gate has comprehensively treated the problem of the human trafficking and actively participated in building policies and strategies with a purpose of reducing the number of victims of human trafficking and ensuring better treatment of trafficked people. Open Gate manages a shelter where the victims of human trafficking are taken care of and provides services for successful reintegration; provides information about the problem of human trafficking and manners for prevention via the SOS telephone line that is toll-free for local calls.*

This brochure is not intended as legal advice and does not substitute for seeking legal advice.

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