Committee: Economic and Financial Committee (GA2)

Issue: Combating Financial Incentives Driving Human Trafficking in South-East Asia

Student Officer: Foteini Kourousi

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Economic and Financial Committee (GA2). My name is Foteini Kourousi, and I am currently a 10th grade high school student at Erasmeios Greek-German School. It is my utmost honour to serve as a Co-Chair at the 9th DSTMUN Conference. I have always been deeply interested in politics and in how people with different perspectives, opinions, and interests can cooperate to find common ground and develop meaningful solutions.

One of this year's GA2 topics is "Combating Financial Incentives Driving Human Trafficking in South-East Asia." At first glance, it may seem to be solely about human rights violations and the protection of human rights. While that is certainly a crucial aspect, the issue goes much deeper. Human trafficking is a deeply rooted economic crime driven by financial systems, corruption, and cross-border demand. Understanding these financial incentives is essential to dismantling the networks that sustain this illegal industry.

This Study Guide is intended to provide a comprehensive introduction to the topic and a foundation for your preparation. Nonetheless, I advise you not to limit your research to the material presented here. Understanding your own country's perspective, priorities, and approach to this topic will allow you to have a greater understanding of the points of view of other UN Member States as well as participate in the debate and negotiations in a more efficient manner. Even though every Member State aims to resolve the problems related to the topic in question, their priorities and ways of solving them can be very different from yours.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me at; fkourousi@gmail.com. I would be more than happy to help and contribute to making this year's conference an unforgettable experience.

I cannot wait to meet you all!

See you in November,

Foteini Kourousi

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking presents a major global economic challenge, operating as an illicit multi-billion dollar enterprise that exploits vulnerable populations for financial gain. Within the mandate of the Economic and Financial Committee (GA2), which focuses on economic growth, international trade, and financial stability, human trafficking must be addressed as a structural market failure and illegal economic activity rather than strictly a human rights issue. Traffickers systematically exert control over defenseless individuals to generate substantial profits and drive unauthorized economic operations. As defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), human trafficking is "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion... for the purpose of exploitation" [UNODC][1]. The core of this issue lies in the financial exploitation of individuals rather than the mere physical movement across or within national borders.

Human trafficking has continued to be a major economic issue in Southeast Asia due to several interconnected structural factors, including pervasive poverty, systemic income inequalities, unregulated migration flows, political instability, and the presence of organised criminal networks. Southeast Asia remains one of the regions most severely impacted by human trafficking. Large numbers of individuals regularly migrate across borders in search of employment opportunities. However, due to a lack of transparent labour market policies and accessible employment information, these migrants frequently fall victim to deceptive recruitment tactics and forced labour conditions. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Asia-Pacific region accounts for the highest absolute number of individuals trapped in forced labour globally, with approximately 15.1 million people experiencing severe labour exploitation [ILO][2]

Human trafficking affects millions of individuals worldwide and manifests across several distinct sectors of the economy [UNODC][3]. The most widespread forms include commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, and child trafficking. Commercial sexual exploitation occurs when individuals are coerced into performing sexual acts or commercial sex services under threat of violence, a phenomenon that disproportionately impacts women and young girls [UNODC][4]. Forced labour affects individuals coerced into working

[1] United Nations. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2000, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html.

[2] International Labour Organization. *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. International Labour Office, 2022. *ILO Publishing*, www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_854733/lang--en/index.htm.

[3] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022*. United Nations, 2022. *UNODC Publications*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html.

[4] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022*. United Nations, 2022. *UNODC Publications*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html.

against their will under severe physical or financial abuse, commonly found in labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture, construction, domestic work, commercial fishing, and factory manufacturing [ILO][5]. Child trafficking involves the exploitation of minors for forced labour, illegal adoption, or forced child begging,a practice where organized criminal rings forcibly deploy children onto public streets to collect daily monetary quotas for the syndicate's financial benefit [UNICEF][6]. The United States Department of State (USDOS) further notes that human trafficking encompasses forced marriage and various additional forms of severe exploitation where an individual's personal freedom, economic independence, and human dignity are forcibly revoked. [USDOS][7]

The prevalence of forced labour in Southeast Asia is directly connected to labour-intensive export industries that rely heavily on cheap operational labour. Industries such as commercial fishing, agricultural farming, construction, garment manufacturing, and domestic labour operate under intense market pressures to reduce production costs. Human traffickers exploit these market dynamics by systematically underpaying or withholding wages, imposing illegal recruitment debts, and extracting forced labour from vulnerable workers. By eliminating fair labour costs, criminal syndicates generate immense illegal revenues while undercutting legitimate businesses. According to global estimates published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), forced labour generates an estimated $236 billion in illegal profits annually worldwide. [ILO][8]

While human trafficking remains a global phenomenon affecting economies across every region of the world, its impact is particularly severe within Southeast Asia. This regional vulnerability is primarily driven by widespread poverty, which leaves large segments of the population susceptible to deceptive offers of high-paying jobs and improved living standards. According to data published by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a significant percentage of national populations continue to live below domestic poverty lines in several member states, including Cambodia (17.8%), Laos (18.3%), Myanmar (24.8%), and the Philippines (15.5%). [ASEAN][9] A secondary key factor influencing regional trafficking rates is irregular cross-border migration. Millions of undocumented migrant workers move across regional borders without legal immigration status or formal employment contracts. Exploitative employers and human traffickers routinely take

---

[5] International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*. International Labour Office, 2024. *ILO Publishing*, www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_920803/lang--en/index.htm.

[6] United Nations Children's Fund. *Child Trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific: A Regional Overview*. UNICEF, 2021, www.unicef.org/reports/child-trafficking-east-asia-and-pacific.

[7] Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2023*. United States Department of State, June 2023, www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/.

[8] International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*. International Labour Office, 2024. *ILO Publishing*, www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_920803/lang--en/index.htm.

[9] ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Key Indicators 2022*. Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Dec. 2022, www.asean.org/asean-key-indicators-2022/.

advantage of this legal vulnerability by confiscating identity documents and using threats of deportation to prevent workers from reporting abuses. [IOM][10]

Abusers and criminal networks continuously exploit these socio-economic vulnerabilities because human trafficking is an exceptionally profitable activity. It combines low operational costs with exceptionally high profit margins by maximizing the output of victims through forced labour or sexual services. Human trafficking persists as a critical global issue that harms not only individual human rights but also distorts the global economy. Ultimately, human trafficking continues to be a major problem in Southeast Asia not just because vulnerable populations exist, but because traffickers derive immense financial gains from their exploitation. Criminal networks sustain their operations through these illicit revenues. Therefore, effective international strategies to counter human trafficking must focus directly on dismantling these financial incentives and neutralizing the economic rewards of exploitation.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Corruption

"Corruption is the dishonest, fraudulent, or criminal use of entrusted authority or power for personal gain or other unlawful or unethical benefits. Corruption occurs in politics, business, education, media, and other social and economic fields." [CLS][11]

In the context of human trafficking, corruption can facilitate trafficking by allowing criminal networks to evade law enforcement, obtain fraudulent documents, or otherwise abuse positions of authority for personal or financial gain.

Debt Bondage

"Debt bondage is the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of their personal services or those of a person under their control as security for a debt, where the value of those services is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined." [ILO][12]

Debt bondage is one of the most common forms of modern slavery and is frequently used by traffickers to exploit vulnerable individuals.

Financial Incentives

[10] International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024: Regional Focus on Southeast Asia*. IOM, 2023. *IOM Publications*, publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024.
[11] Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute. “Corruption.” *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell University, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/corruption Accessed 10 July 2026.
[12] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).*

Financial incentives refer to the economic incentives that prompt people or the criminal organization to engage in such criminal acts.

With respect to human trafficking, the term refers to the profits made from the exploitation of the victimsIt is this lucrative nature that makes human trafficking one of the most profitable criminal activities in the world today.

Human Trafficking

"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation." In some cases, exploitation includes sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, or organ removal. [OHCHR][13]

Human trafficking is therefore closely connected to illicit financial flows, financial incentives, corruption, and modern slavery, as traffickers generate and conceal profits derived from the exploitation of victims.

Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)

"Illicit financial flows (IFFs) are cross-border movements of money or assets that are illegal in their source, transfer, or use." [IMF][14].

In the context of human trafficking, illicit financial flows enable criminal networks to conceal and transfer profits derived from the exploitation of victims—a practice that hinders authorities from identifying and dismantling these networks.

Modern Slavery

"Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain." [ASI][15]

---

[13] United Nations. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. 15 Nov. 2000, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

[14] International Monetary Fund (IMF), The IMF and the Fight Against Illicit Financial Flows, 2023.

[15] Anti-Slavery International. *What Is Modern Slavery?* Anti-Slavery International, [date], https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/

Modern slavery entails forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriages, human trafficking, and exploitation of the individual in a manner that causes the victim to be in a situation against their will, through means of coercion, force, intimidation, deceit, abduction, and other forms of exploitation using power.

Reintegration of Survivors

The reintegration of survivors involves providing support to the victims of human trafficking in order to enable them to deal with the effects of human trafficking so that they are reintegrated into society.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) refer to parts of a country that have been defined by the government of the particular country as areas under special economic regulations and taxes. While Special Economic Zones boost the economy of the nation, the lack of labour laws in certain Special Economic Zones results in the exploitation of labour and human trafficking.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Context

The human trafficking issue in Southeast Asia has changed drastically in recent decades. Despite the fact that it has existed since the earliest times of humanity's history, different forms of human exploitation have existed throughout history; however, modern human trafficking, as defined under international law by instruments such as the Palermo Protocol, is a contemporary legal concept that refers specifically to exploitation achieved through coercion, deception, abuse of vulnerability, or other prohibited means.globalization, migration, uneven development, and technological advancement have made it one of the most lucrative crimes. The development of trade, tourism, and labour migration in the region after the turn of the twentieth century has provided the appropriate conditions for exploiting vulnerable individuals.

Organised human trafficking in Southeast Asia is the product of the Vietnam War period in the 1960s and 1970s, when there was a substantial presence of military troops that needed the services of prostitutes and entertainers Although organized exploitation existed before the Vietnam War, the conflict significantly expanded the commercial sex industry and cross-border criminal networks, creating conditions that facilitated the growth and professionalization of trafficking operations in the region rather than marking their sole historical origin.. This situation has been taken advantage of by organized crime groups that used violence to make sure that the women and girls were recruited into prostitution. Such trafficking networks have been operating even after the end of the war period. Apart from the sex trade, these trafficking groups also started concentrating on labour and domestic

servitude as well as other forms of exploitation in the period of economic dependence between countries.

During the 1990s and 2000s, fast economic growth in countries like Thailand and Malaysia has attracted a large number of migrants from neighboring poor countries like Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. The cheap labour provided by the migrants has helped these countries grow economically, but at the same time the poor labour legislation and cheap labour demand have caused human trafficking problems.

The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 has facilitated even further the flow of goods, services, and labour in the region. Although the AEC promotes regional economic integration, the movement of labour remains limited and uneven across ASEAN Member States, as labour mobility mainly applies to selected skilled professions and continues to be regulated by national immigration policies.While the integration process has brought many economic benefits to the region, it has also expanded the possibility for traffickers to operate at the international level.Yet it is due to this migration of people between nations that those seeking job opportunities have become legal; yet it is this movement which has allowed the traffickers to hide their victims under the guise of migrant trafficking It is important to distinguish human trafficking from migrant smuggling. Migrant smuggling generally involves the voluntary facilitation of illegal border crossing in exchange for financial gain, whereas human trafficking is centred on the exploitation of individuals through coercion, deception, abuse of vulnerability, or force. While smuggling may evolve into trafficking, the two constitute distinct legal concepts under international law.. It is because of the exploitation of the differences in the immigration policies, labour laws, and enforcement capacities of the criminal organizations within the ASEAN countries. Southeast Asia is currently an area of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking victims.

However, the trafficking of Rohingya Muslims who were escaping from persecutions in Myanmar and also the poor migrants from Bangladesh has become much more hazardous at the beginning of 2000. This happened due to the involvement of the criminals who moved the refugees to jungle camps situated in the border zones between Thailand and Malaysia, where refugees suffered tortures, hunger and kidnappings. The discovery of those camps in 2015 became a necessity for the cooperation of the countries in this region.

In order to deal with the problem of trafficking that is among the most important problems in the region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) approved the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The purpose of the ASEAN Convention is to provide the legal framework of prevention and investigation of trafficking. It should be mentioned that the aforementioned convention is very significant since it is the key element of the anti-trafficking strategy of the region.

Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia

The problem of human trafficking remains prevalent in Southeast Asia. Areas like Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and the Philippines form some of the regions from which the victims originate. Illiteracy, poverty, wars, and lack of employment make individuals vulnerable to being trafficked. However, at the same time, places like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and even Cambodia become destinations where the victims are taken because of the demand for cheap labour.

Southeast Asia acts as an origin, transit, and destination country since some of the trafficking routes have origins in other countries. It is possible that in some instances, victims might be recruited in one country, transported to another country, and then exploited in another country.

Human trafficking victims can be found in many different occupations – from prostitution to domestic servitude to farming, fishing, manufacturing, and construction industries and even online scams. It becomes essential to understand what the differences are between human smuggling, human trafficking, and forced migration. Human smuggling involves the voluntary crossing of international borders for financial reasons; however, human trafficking involves the use of threats and intimidation. In this particular situation, there are no international borders crossed by the victim. The forced migration involves the relocation of individuals due to various crisis situations that might arise.

Regional Challenges

There are several factors that make Southeast Asia susceptible to human trafficking. The extensive borders of the region do not always provide efficient supervision. The border porosity of nations like Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia has allowed the smugglers to easily move their victims without detection by the authorities.
The transport of the victims by means of human trafficking channels such as the Andaman Sea, the Gulf of Thailand§ and the South China Sea is also possible, especially for the victims of the exploitation in the fishing industry. The establishment of the Special Economic Zones aimed at development and investments has sometimes been combined with the lack of labour monitoring, thus increasing the chance of victim exploitation. Moreover, new technologies allow organizing human trafficking operations online. The human trafficking groups use different online webpages, social networks, encryption programs, as well as fake job offers to attract victims from other countries. One of the examples of the application of modern technologies in human trafficking operations is the scam centers operating in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos.

Another problem in connection with displacement is associated with military and political instabilities in particular countries. Displacements resulting from unrest and

conflicts in Myanmar, which occurred after the coup d'état in 2021, resulted in displacement of millions of people both within the territory of the country and abroad. People who were displaced lack legal documents and employment opportunities, as well as humanitarian assistance. In this way, they easily fall into the hands of smugglers and recruiting agencies who assure them of job opportunities abroad using the methods of forced labour, sexual exploitation, and cyber slavery.

Another problem associated with trafficking in this region is the question of refugee protection in Southeast Asia since most ASEAN member-states did not sign the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and treat such persons as illegal immigrants instead of refugees. In consequence, victims of trafficking may be imprisoned not only for being immigrants but also for crimes committed during the trafficking process.

Corruption

Corruption is another challenge to anti-trafficking efforts. Corruption is an impediment because there are instances where some government officials collabourate with traffickers when they are dealing with the act of trafficking in people, using bribery to ignore the crossing of borders illegally, the creation of false documents, and warnings of what the law enforcers do against the syndicates. There is a lack of capability among judges in recognizing the victims.

To carry out the activities of trafficking people, criminals have turned to more sophisticated means such as encryption, cryptocurrencies, recruitment, and advertisement on social networks.The usage of encryption technology ensures that traffickers can coordinate their criminal activity through a form of communication that will not allow law enforcement agencies to intercept their discussions. Another technological advancement that traffickers employ in their criminal activity includes the use of cryptocurrency, which allows them to move money across borders through a system that is much more difficult to trace than conventional financial institutions. Moreover, traffickers make use of social media and advertisements to recruit individuals who are easy to deceive by promising them employment, education, or even love. This is seen in the growing number of cyber-scam syndicates in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos.

Consequences

Some of the consequences that human trafficking victims may suffer in Southeast Asia include physical, psychological, and social effects. The physical effects faced by victims of human trafficking include physical violence, poor working environment, malnourishment, and fatigue from exploitation within various industries such as fishing, construction, domestic labour, and prostitution. The psychological effects faced by victims of human trafficking include depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder due to the

continuous experience of abuse and threats. Even when these people manage to gain their freedom, their suffering is not over.

Each of them is suffering from trauma, social isolation and adjustment problems. In cases of sexual exploitation, the victims tend to be isolated from their families. They do not have any kind of health care, counseling, education and employment facilities and therefore are at risk of trafficking once again.

Moreover, it is necessary to take into account how human trafficking can influence the economic and political problems in Southeast Asian countries. In this case, there will be no way to collect taxes from the illegal activity because the income is collected in the form of an underground economy and then laundered through money laundering networks. Moreover, human trafficking will have an effect on the labour market; it will create inequality for legal businesses, decrease the level of investments, and also increase the load on the police and judicial systems. Finally, the money that will be obtained through human trafficking can provoke criminal organizations to engage in other criminal activities like money laundering, corruption, drug trafficking, and cyber crimes.

In this way, human trafficking in this region creates distrust between countries and makes the problem of migration even harder.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

Some of the reasons that make China one of the stakeholders involved in this case is because the nation has economic power and trading relationships with countries within the region. Human trafficking across international borders takes place between China and Myanmar, where Yunnan province has been used to transport people as well as money launderers. Besides, fraudsters from China commit crimes in other parts of the world, including Myanmar and Cambodia.

The significance of Yunnan Province has got something to do with the specific geographical location of the province. It is due to the geographical location of the Yunnan Province that makes it a significant province because of its geographical location, which acts as a bordering province between China and Myanmar. In geographical terms, the Yunnan Province acts as a bridge between the two countries, which carry out their operations both legally and illegally. Due to its geographical location near Southeast Asia, the province is very much susceptible to organized crime.

Myanmar

Currently, the problem of trafficking in persons is especially acute in Myanmar which is one of the key states in the region. The unstable political situation connected with the

military coup that occurred in 2021, civil wars, poverty and weak institutional system make citizens vulnerable to such a crime as human trafficking. Trafficking organizations can work without any problems in the border zones of Myanmar and use people in terms of forced labour, frauds, sexual exploitation, and forced crimes. Mass human trafficking carried out on the territory of border zones of Myanmar together with neighboring Thailand and China provides criminals with a great number of illegal profits through money laundering, cryptocurrency payments, and other alternative financial instruments. The cooperation between Myanmar and UNODC with neighboring countries helped to carry out some efficient anti-human trafficking operations but the lack of governmental control in civil war zones reduces the effectiveness of the efforts.

Thailand

The significance of Thailand taking into consideration its role as a recipient of the trafficked victims as well as a transit country for trafficked persons needs to be mentioned. The significance of the country is due to the reason that the economy of the country is developed and hence, the exploitation of labour will have to occur for purposes such as fishing, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and domestic work. Improving the laws regarding prevention of human trafficking, conducting efficient financial investigations and regional police coordination in Thailand will have to be considered as well. Even with issues such as corruption, bribery and proceeds of trafficking persisting, Thailand is significant for trafficking money laundering.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The ASEAN organization is the primary organization which is tasked with ensuring that the anti-trafficking efforts are coordinated through the use of the ACTIP and Plan of Actions to combat Transnational Crime. ASEAN has done very well in terms of dialogue and coordination of policy in the region, but the implementation of these policies varies greatly among the member states.In this case, the role of the ASEAN as a regional organization is extremely important because of the need for cooperation between member countries since the process of human trafficking is done by criminals who operate beyond the jurisdiction of a certain state. In this situation, the role of ACTIP Project lies in the development of the common legislative framework in which human trafficking would be criminalized, the protection of the victims and prosecution of the perpetrators. Besides, the role of ASEAN lies in the provision of information, law enforcement, capacity building and border control mechanisms. However, the problem with ASEAN is the principle of non-interference into internal affairs of its member states.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

In regard to the ILO, the problem of abolishing forced labour has been included in connection with the trafficking problem as well as decent work policies. This

process includes labour inspection, strict labour laws, and collaboration with national governments and private companies to combat exploitation in vulnerable sectors. The ILO tries to address the economic causes of forced labour and reduce the conditions that enable trafficking, although forced labour remains a highly profitable criminal enterprise worldwide.

INTERPOL

Through information sharing, cooperation, and investigation of the international networks of trafficking involved, INTERPOL facilitates cooperation among states in the field of international law enforcement. By using the database and its anti-human trafficking operations, INTERPOL assists nations in identifying the victims, apprehending the offenders, and learning about the way these offenders conduct themselves in the context of money laundering.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

One of the well-known anti-human trafficking organizations is the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In the Southeast Asian region, UNODC fights against human trafficking through such activities as combating organized transnational criminal groups, promoting international cooperation, enhancing capacity of the law enforcement agencies, and addressing the issue of modern slavery including forced labour in the field of cyber-scam business in the Southeast Asian region. It includes the cooperation of the organization with the countries and making legislative changes according to the international standards, encouragement of the countries to ratify the Palermo Protocol, training police officers, prosecutors and border guards, and also the financial investigation to discover the network of money laundering related to human trafficking. UNODC assisted in organizing joint investigations and information exchange among the countries of the Mekong region for tracing the trafficking networks. Nowadays, UNODC in Southeast Asia is dealing with such problems as human trafficking, cybercrime and money laundering in order to assist the governments in developing joint regional strategies for combating organized transnational crime.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

The potential countries for this bloc are most of the countries that are members of the EU, Canada, Australia, the United States, the UK, and some others who work very closely together. Delegates from the United States, the UK, Canada, Australia, and those of the EU member states are more likely to support the idea of taking an international strategy to fighting human trafficking, especially the issue of money laundering and financial networks used by the traffickers. These countries will be emphasizing that human trafficking is a

transnational crime, which means that there needs to be cooperation between states and international partners in dealing with this problem.

Bloc B

Countries that may form this group could be most members of the EU, Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, as well as other partners who work closely together. Representatives from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and members of the EU would support an international strategy for dealing with human trafficking, especially where the money laundering and financial networks operated by human traffickers are concerned. The countries in this bloc would recognize that human trafficking is a transnational problem that requires cooperation between countries and international organizations, and they would support strategies of cooperation and action against the financial interests of human trafficking groups.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
2nd December, 1949	**First UN Convention** The United Nations General Assembly passes the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; this is the first United Nations convention to deal with human trafficking and the exploitation of the prostitution of others.
15th November, 2000	**Adoption of the Palermo Protocol** This international organization that develops the protocol referred to as “the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,” which is also known as the Palermo Protocol, is the United Nations, whose Palermo Protocol is an annex to the UN

	Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
25th December, 2003	**Implementation of the Palermo Protocol** The implementation of the Palermo Protocol occurs. This is the process wherein the States Parties will begin the process of implementing their legislation pertaining to the problem of human trafficking and protecting its victims through the said protocol.
21st November, 2015	**Signing of ACTIP** Bohol Work Plan for ACTIP Implementation (2017-2020) is the process of ratification of ACTIP (ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children) which includes ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members. This process of signing is unique for the Southeast Asian region due to the characteristics of the treaty which is binding in nature. by the member countries of ASEAN.
13th November, 2017	**Execution of the Bohol Work Plan** ASEAN member states use the Bohol Work Plan (2017-2020) in their efforts to facilitate the process of implementation of ACTIP. The Bohol Work Plan (2017-2020) becomes the convention in practice through cooperation across borders, information sharing, and capacity building in law enforcement, victim assistance, and anti-trafficking regional coordination.

11th March, 2020 – 5th May, 2023	**Pandemic and Cyber Trafficking Surge:** Introduction of the coronavirus disease 19 creates more risks of individuals being victims of human trafficking as poverty and unemployment have created room for more people who can easily be used by human traffickers. Human trafficking has been found to recruit its victims through different online platforms. There has been a rapid increase in the case of cyber trafficking.
10th May, 2023 – Present	**Addressing Cyberspace Exploitation** Convention against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (ACTIP) (2015) This convention is an international agreement that was formed in 2015 with the aim of strengthening the existing joint effort against the problem of human trafficking. ASEAN Convention has various responsibilities that are required of ASEAN member states. Some of these responsibilities include criminalization of human trafficking, cross-border investigation and intelligence collection, victim assistance, and cooperation among law enforcement bodies. Currently, the responsibilities of ASEAN Convention are employed in addressing the problem of human trafficking through cyberspace in Myanmar and Cambodia.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN General Assembly Resolution 55/25 – United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)

Adopted on 15 November 2000, the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the first international convention which has dealt with the issue of transnational organized crimes in a comprehensive manner. Because many cases of human trafficking involve organized criminal networks operating across national borders, it is evident that human trafficking is yet another arena wherein UNTOC can be applied successfully. According to UNTOC, the states are supposed to take efforts to ensure that association with organized criminal groups becomes an offense, money laundering activities are controlled, criminal assets and proceeds derived from crime can be identified, frozen, seized, and confiscated in order to deprive traffickers of the financial benefits generated by their criminal activities, and increase international cooperation through the process of extradition, mutual legal assistance, and joint investigations. It not only concerns itself with the apprehension of the criminals involved in human trafficking but also with the breaking up of their organization. Despite the success of UNTOC in international cooperation, the efficacy of UNTOC lies in the national implementation process of UNTOC. The ways of implementing the strategy differ from one country to another because of the challenges posed by those countries, such as the lack of financial and technological ability, corruption within the government agencies, poor judicial system and poor police force, inadequate training for the prosecutors and investigators, and their readiness to address the issue of human trafficking. UNTOC seeks to lessen the financial motivation which makes human trafficking highly profitable by confiscating assets of traffickers and engaging in anti-money laundering, financial investigations, and international cooperation against organized crime.

Palermo Protocol

Passed alongside UNTOC on 15 November 2000, the third protocol complementing UNTOC is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol. It was through the protocol that the first ever universally acceptable definition of human trafficking was developed; and it was in this same protocol that the widely recognized "3 Ps" were introduced; prosecution, protection, and prevention. It is evident from the above discussion that this protocol has contributed significantly to promoting greater consistency in national laws concerning trafficking crimes by providing a common legal definition and framework, although the extent of implementation differs considerably among states. In addition, the protocol has played a key role in promoting international cooperation in handling crimes of trafficking. In truth, most of the UN member states have ratified the protocol. Nevertheless, the application of the protocol has not been very successful.The variations could be because of many reasons such as difficulties in implementing within the country, shortage of money

and other resources, corrupt practices, no protective system available for the victims, and inability of the law enforcement authorities. In this way, although many countries have enacted laws regarding the act of trafficking, there are significant variations in terms of its implementation and protection of the victims.Although mostly aimed at preventing the crime, protecting the victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators of the crime, this Protocol may also prove useful in decreasing financial gain from human trafficking due to international cooperation and prosecution of human traffickers and the criminals who illegally profit from the crime.

UN General Assembly Resolution 64/293 – Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Passed on 30 July 2010, UN Resolution 64/293 is responsible for implementing the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and is the first international plan adopted by the UN concerning the issue of human trafficking. It emphasizes the "3Ps" concept, namely, prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution of traffickers. In addition, special attention is paid to the need for international cooperation. Furthermore, the resolution aims at establishing the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons that will provide assistance to victims in the form of humanitarian, legal and financial help with the help of NGOs. Human trafficking is described in the Global Plan of Action as a form of transnational organized crime that generates substantial illegal profits for criminal networks (UN General Assembly Resolution 64/293, Annex, Section III: Prosecution, paragraphs 25–28). That is why the Plan of Action involves the investigation of the economic aspects and the confiscation of criminal assets, international cooperation, and reduction of the profitability for the traffickers. Furthermore, the Resolution advocates for strengthening the efforts of the Member States towards combating money laundering, carrying out financial investigations, improving international cooperation in exchanging information, as well as tracing, freezing, confiscating and seizing proceeds of trafficking in order to dissuade criminal financial operations and reduce the financial motivation of trafficking networks. Nevertheless, while the Resolution calls for international cooperation and focuses on the victim approach, the implementation of the Resolution by the Member States has been inconsistent because of different national laws, lack of resources and lack of political will. This is how this document relates to the committee’s topic since it suggests that Member States should work to undermine financial motivation behind human trafficking by confiscating assets, money laundering, and financial cooperation internationally.

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

Adopted on 31 October 2003, different from the Palermo Convention, on the other hand, the UNCAC is the first legally binding international agreement aimed to fight against corruption. Although it does not address the issue of human trafficking directly, it is quite important, because the agreement is related to corruption, which, in turn, contributes

significantly to human trafficking through such mechanisms as bribes, forgery, money laundering, and corruption among border officials, which can facilitate the illegal movement of victims across borders and allow traffickers to evade detection. As far as the obligations established by the UNCAC are concerned, it includes the following list: criminalization of corruption, creation of institutions in the public sector, increase in transparency, asset recovery, and international cooperation in law enforcement and investigations. In order to stop corruption that allows organized crime to exist, these measures should be undertaken. Considering the perspective of this commission, UNCAC is extremely significant because it makes the process of trafficking more expensive and risky due to its anti-corruption essence. This is provided through the following aspects of UNCAC such as transparency, accountability in the public sector, asset recovery and international cooperation, which help avoid the performance of criminal activities by criminals, money laundering and financial stimulation for trafficking crimes. It should be mentioned that there may exist some discrepancies in capacities of the parties to the convention.In this way, by fighting corruption and improving financial transparency, UNCAC increases costs and risks of human trafficking thus undermining its financial motivations.

ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)

Signed on 21 November 2015, ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (ACTIP) is a legal instrument adopted by ASEAN as the first legally binding regional convention in Southeast Asia on combating human trafficking. The adoption of the Convention proves that the problem of trafficking was viewed by ASEAN as an international crime and requires a concerted action to address it. The major provisions of the Convention correspond to the basic notions of the Palermo Protocol, taking into account the specifics of the situation in ASEAN countries. The Convention states that offenders must be brought to justice, victims' rights should be respected, and cooperation between law enforcement authorities must take place; these authorities should exchange information, conduct investigations jointly, and render each other legal assistance. In addition, the Convention promotes cooperation between ASEAN members in dismantling organized crime groups and coordinating actions of the national authorities. Nevertheless, although the Convention established the appropriate legal basis for regional cooperation, its implementation proved to be rather challenging because of different national legislation, varying levels of political commitment, limited financial and technical resources, differences in law enforcement and judicial capacity, and low capacities of the national authorities. Through regional cooperation and joint investigations, ACTIP undermines trafficking networks and hence the financial gain from human trafficking in Southeast Asia.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Capacity-Building Programmes

Capacity Building Programmes are run by the UNODC at the international level for the purpose of assisting nations in combating human trafficking. Capacity Building is essentially a process wherein these individuals undergo training and are taught how to recognize victims of trafficking, conduct investigations and try cases in the same as well as ensure international cooperation. The UNODC assists nations in implementation of international legislation such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent Trafficking in Persons, particularly women and children.Analyzing these efforts critically indicates that while the UNODC's campaigns have been successful in terms of developing a consistent vocabulary against human trafficking as well as training thousands of individuals, their effectiveness is still in question. One of the main issues with these efforts is the use of a standardized curriculum without taking into consideration any local corruption, poor domestic justice system or lack of necessary resources in developing countries. Many times, people who undergo the training come back to work in departments which lack the most fundamental forensic and technological equipment, making the training useless. High turnover rates in domestic police forces make it necessary to train individuals all the time, which is a very costly process.

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) efforts

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is one of the key instruments that enable combating human trafficking in an international context by conducting various activities related to facilitation of international investigation processes and coordinating efforts of law enforcement agencies of different countries. Using its global police communication system (e.g., I-24/7), INTERPOL helps to share intelligence, coordinate cross-border joint operations and issue targeted notices to uncover human trafficking rings to rescue victims and arrest traffickers. From a critical perspective, the initiatives of INTERPOL show highly successful outcomes in terms of localized, short-term crackdowns of the operations, but fail to apply sustainable pressure on transnational syndicates. Being only a coordination body and lacking any authority in terms of policing and arrests, the efficiency of the organization depends entirely on the political will, laws and readiness to act of the respective country. One of the regular problems in INTERPOL-coordinated operations is that the second victimization of trafficked persons occurs, which means that local law enforcement agencies identify victims as migrants or criminals and arrest and deport them rather than protect them. Besides that, political disagreements between the members of INTERPOL prevent intelligence from being shared in places where the trafficking networks

operate. Also, there were instances of cancellation or postponement of planned joint multilateral operations because of regional geopolitical tensions. In order to improve its impact, INTERPOL should introduce victim-centered standards of conduct for the involved domestic forces before joint operations and include the financial intelligence unit in the operational task force.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Still, efforts made internationally towards dealing with the finance aspect of human trafficking have been encouraged by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) through its 2018 report entitled 'Financial Flows from Human Trafficking'. The report gives useful suggestions on how to identify suspicious financial transactions in connection with human trafficking based on specific indicators, investigations and practices. FATF has also established some international guidelines on how to deal with money laundering (AML), where nations are called upon to enhance their information sharing with regard to financial intelligence units, law enforcement bodies and financial institutions. Examining this strategy critically, one sees that while the aim of attacking the financial motivation behind trafficking goes to the source of the problem, there are significant weaknesses when it comes to implementing the solution because of disconnects between the public sector and the private sector players involved. Financial institutions, afraid of possible penalties for violations, often tend to submit defensive reports – filling up intelligence units with hundreds of generic Suspicious Activity Reports that cannot be processed by law enforcement due to their shortage of personnel. Moreover, FATF guidance has always been primarily concentrated on the official banking sector and has left a huge operational void in regard to informal value transfer systems, mobile money services, and cryptocurrencies which are currently preferred by human traffickers.

Anti-Trafficking Activities of China

To address the issue of trafficking of persons and crimes through cyberspace, China is now cooperating with Myanmar, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries. China has launched an international anti-trafficking drive between the two countries, increased patrol activities at the borders of Yunnan Province and worked with neighboring countries to free those who have become victims of trafficking and bring back their nationals who have been compelled to work for these illegal organizations. Another approach taken is to counter the criminal syndicates engaged in cybercrimes and money laundering.However, critically analyzing these attempts to tackle the problem highlights that while such a strategy ensures short-term tactical successes, including the shut-down of certain scam compounds and repatriation of large numbers of people, there are serious shortcomings in its strategic and humanitarian aspects. The multilateral enforcement campaigns that China and other regional states plan have on numerous occasions been cancelled or delayed because of complicated questions of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and involvement of local armed non-state actors in border enclaves that gain economically from scam compound activities. From the

operational point of view, the reason for problems lies in the fact that the enforcement-centric approach of China has always emphasized the national security interests and economic crimes rather than development of victim protection programs, so that the victims of forced labour end up becoming suspects once they get back home. Moreover, enforcement raids have a hydra effect since they simply drive the syndicates to switch to another territory with more lax regulation. There is much room for improvement in the approach that China applies through integration of border security with economic aid to vulnerable regions.

Anti-Trafficking Activities of Thailand

Various measures have been put in place in Thailand to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of crimes associated with human trafficking. In order to meet regulatory requirements imposed upon the country by the international community, the Thai government has created special regulations such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, anti-human trafficking units within the Royal Thai Police and judiciary, as well as the specialized victim identification centers. Monitoring activities in the country have been concentrated on the sectors that are considered to have high risks such as commercial fishing, agriculture, and sex industry, and Thailand is known as an important base for cooperation on cross-border operations in the Mekong sub-region. Critical evaluation of the efforts made by the country proves that although the laws seem to be comprehensive, their execution is seriously hindered by numerous structural weaknesses. Problems of such type are mainly caused by the corruption of government officials who accept bribes, forge documents, or provide protection for the offenders. Besides, quick processes of victims' identification at the victim identification centers are hindered by the language problem and strict criteria which result in numerous cases when trafficked migrant workers from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos are treated as illegal immigrants and deported. Some recommendations concerning the improvement of the current situation include the creation of the independent investigation and prosecution bodies of officials' corruption, decoupling of the victim protection services from the immigration enforcement status, as well as participation of civil society organizations and trade unions in the process of victims' identification.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Financial Surveillance Improvement

One of the other ways that might be successful in preventing human trafficking crime is elimination of the motive of profit behind human trafficking crime through financial surveillance improvement. From this point of view, the government, FIUs, central banks, commercial banks, and FATF should improve their capability of detecting financial

transactions linked to human trafficking through financial surveillance and suspicious transactions reporting. Furthermore, it is essential for the government to introduce stringent money laundering legislation and confiscate the proceeds of crime, while at the same time sharing financial information across borders.

But then, putting in place a complete financial surveillance program is fraught with several challenges. For instance, commercial banks tend to oppose any form of mandatory financial surveillance on account of compliance cost, while intelligence departments may be flooded with thousands of reports from low-level suspicious activities without concrete information. Moreover, as financial surveillance gets more stringent on formal banks, it is inevitable that the traffickers will move their resources to unregulated systems, such as hawala channels, mobile payments, and crypto currencies. After implementation of the proposed solution, criminal gangs will be faced with slim profit margins and increased risks, which means that they will be operating as smaller and fragmented groups. But then, the government needs to consider how to control the unintended consequence of over-regulation that might lock out marginalized migrants.

Ethical Supply Chain Promotion

Most of the individuals who become victims of human trafficking usually become so due to industries like fishing, farming, manufacturing, and construction. It is vital to ensure the presence of ethics in the supply chain. The companies should carry out human rights due diligence, risk assessment, and monitoring of their subcontractors and suppliers. Whistle-blowing systems and labour policies should be established by the companies along with the training on labour exploitation. Governments should make the requirements obligatory for the companies and conduct labour inspections in companies employing forced labour while NGOs may help in the monitoring process. This would reduce the demand for labour and profits of exploiting firms.

Although supply chain ethics must be enforced within international business channels, the task has its own serious issues concerning jurisdiction and feasibility. Many multinational companies simply do not have knowledge about their deep-tier subcontractors who operate in developing countries because they cannot go past the first tier of their suppliers. labour inspections may fail due to the shortage of resources, difficult conditions when labour inspection is conducted (such as offshore fishing) and bribery of inspectors. At the initial stage of implementation of compulsory laws, it is expected that the cost of production will increase for businesses and that there will be some economic friction in areas that depend on inexpensive labour. However, in the long run, although the ethical auditing is able to stop forced labour within official channels, it can force all unethical activity into informal channels.

Enhancing Economic Opportunities

Those who do not have economic opportunities present themselves as a great risk to be victims of human trafficking because they can easily engage themselves in such risky ventures due to their economic status. In order to ensure that people are economically empowered, there is a need for national governments, international institutions such as ILO and UNDP, non-governmental organizations, and even the private sector to provide education and training alongside enhancing economic opportunities. Such strategies include providing jobs that are suitable for victims of human trafficking, provision of low interest loans, and job fairs among others.

The implementation of sustainable economic empowerment programs tends to be impeded by corruption, deficits within developing countries, and structural inequality. Micro loan schemes and job fairs tend not to yield successful results if there is little economic activity or if the economic development program is disrupted due to instability in the region, climatic effects, or political crises. In addition, creating vocational training programs in situations where there is little market demand will simply train people who remain unemployed and as susceptible to exploitation. The consequences of such successful creation of economic opportunities will include an increase in community resilience and a reduction in the number of people in need of employment who are exploited. On the other hand, state institutions have to be ready to deal with socio-economic changes, which will result from the reduction of exploitable labour sources through provision of subsidies to local firms.

Promote Collaboration Among Nations

The individuals who are involved in human trafficking can be termed as criminals who act in a way that goes beyond the territorial borders of the country they hail from. Some level of collaboration ought to exist between the Southeast Asian nations with regard to investigations and intelligence gathering. It is imperative that there is more cooperation between ASEAN and its members, UNODC, INTERPOL, and other law enforcement agencies in terms of establishing joint investigative teams, intelligence gathering systems, harmonization of human trafficking laws, and conducting operations against human trafficking and money laundering.

The main problem standing in the way of efficient cross-border cooperation is geopolitics, the differences in the interpretation of trafficking crime, and the issues of sovereignty. Countries are often wary of passing any confidential information because of concerns of data security, the involvement of the state itself, and even corruption of the foreign law enforcement body. Moreover, bureaucratic delays in extradition procedures enable criminal gangs to transport their victims faster than law enforcement bodies manage to cooperate on the issue. In case the operation is efficiently carried out, the first thing which will happen is the elimination of cross-border trafficking hubs and the increase in the

number of prosecutions of the syndicate leaders. Nonetheless, the member states will have to face the difficult post-operation task of handling a large number of victims in a manner which would not involve their deportation and further victimization.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Bibliography

Anti-Slavery International. "What Is Modern Slavery?" *Anti-Slavery International*, n.d. https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP).* ASEAN, 21 Nov. 2015. https://agreement.asean.org/media/download/20160303122945.pdf. Accessed 13 July 2026.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime 2026–2035.* 2025. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/04.-ASEAN-Plan-of-Action-in-Combatting-Transnational-Crime-2026-2035.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN.* https://asean.org. Accessed 13 July 2026.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (2017–2020).* Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore. https://cil.nus.edu.sg/databasecil/2017-2020-bohol-tip-work-plan/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
ASEAN Statistics Division. *ASEAN Key Figures 2025.* ASEANstats, 2026. https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/akf_2025_120126.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Key Indicators 2022.* Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Dec. 2022. https://www.asean.org/asean-key-indicators-2022/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Asian Development Bank. *Special Economic Zones in Asia.* Asian Development Bank. https://www.adb.org/publications/special-economic-zones-asia. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Caballero, Anthony. "Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia." *Finance & Development*, International Monetary Fund, Sept. 2018. https://www.imf.org/en/publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia-caballero. Accessed 10 July 2026.
"Creation of a Review Mechanism for the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Its Protocols." *American Journal of International Law*, Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-journal-of-international-law/article/abs/creation-of-a-review-mechanism-for-the-un-convention-against-transnational-organized-crime-and-its-protocols/B82CB7D6B9A92F5D7839764ADD26C418. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute. "Corruption." *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell University. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/corruption. Accessed 10 July 2026.

Financial Action Task Force. *Financial Action Task Force.* https://www.fatf-gafi.org/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. *Forced Labour.* https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. *Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).* https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/c29-forced-labour-convention-1930. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage.*International Labour Office, 2022. https://www.ilo.org/publications/global-estimates-modern-slavery-forced-labour-and-forced-marriage. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. "Post-2025 ASEAN Roadmap to Eliminate Child Labour Progresses." https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/post-2025-asean-roadmap-eliminate-child-labour-progresses. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour.* 2nd ed., International Labour Organization, 2024. https://researchrepository.ilo.org/esploro/outputs/report/995358743102676. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Monetary Fund. *The IMF and the Fight Against Illicit Financial Flows.* 2023. https://www.imf.org/en/about/factsheets/sheets/2023/fight-against-illicit-financial-flows. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Organization for Migration. *Counter-Trafficking.* https://www.iom.int/counter-trafficking. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Organization for Migration. *International Organization for Migration.* https://www.iom.int. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Organization for Migration. *MRS No. 2.* 2000. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_2_2000.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024: Regional Focus on Southeast Asia.* IOM, 2023. https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024. Accessed 10 July 2026.
INTERPOL. "Global Human Trafficking Operation Detects 1,194 Potential Victims, Arrests 158 Suspects." 2025. https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2025/Global-human-trafficking-operation-detects-1-194-potential-victims-arrests-158-suspects. Accessed 10 July 2026.
INTERPOL. "INTERPOL Releases New Information on Globalization of Scam Centres." 2025. https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2025/INTERPOL-releases-new-information-on-globalization-of-scam-centres. Accessed 10 July 2026.
INTERPOL. *Human Trafficking.* https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Human-trafficking. Accessed 10 July 2026.

INTERPOL. *Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.* https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Refugees International. "At Risk Twice Over: Displacement and Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia." https://refugees.org/at-risk-twice-over-displacement-and-human-trafficking-in-southeast-asia/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations. *Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.* Resolution A/RES/64/293, 30 July 2010. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/293. Accessed 13 July 2026.
United Nations. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2000. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html. Accessed 13 July 2026.
United Nations. *United Nations Treaty Collection.* https://treaties.un.org. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Children's Fund. *Child Trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific: A Regional Overview.* UNICEF, 2021. https://www.unicef.org/reports/child-trafficking-east-asia-and-pacific. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Children's Fund USA. "What Fuels Human Trafficking?" *UNICEF USA*. https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/what-fuels-human-trafficking. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Development Programme. "Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks to Reinforce Thailand's Financial Sector Against Modern Slavery." https://sdgfinance.undp.org/news-events/strengthening-regulatory-frameworks-reinforce-thailands-financial-sector-against-modern. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations News. "Human Trafficking Audio Report." June 2026. https://news.un.org/en/audio/2026/06/1167726. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations News. "Human Trafficking News Story." Feb. 2026. https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/02/1167012. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022.* United Nations, 2022. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Human Trafficking.* https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/. Accessed 13 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Human Trafficking.* https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Human Trafficking Portal.* https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.* https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/protocol.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Transnational Organized Crime.* https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. *Inflection Point 2025.*2025. https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2025/Inflection_Point_2025.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. "South-East Asia Future Anti-Corruption." June 2026. https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2026/06/south-east-asia-future-anti-corruption/story.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. "Southeast Asia Combat Trafficking." July 2025. https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2025/07/southeast-asia-combat-trafficking/story.html. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. *Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.* https://www.unodc.org/roseap. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United States Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report.* https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United States Department of State. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2023.* Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, June 2023. https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United States Department of State. *Understanding Human Trafficking.* https://www.state.gov/understanding-human-trafficking. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. 15 Nov. 2000, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
World Bank. *Special Economic Zones.* https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/competitiveness/brief/special-economic-zones. Accessed 10 July 2026.
World Health Organization. *Human Trafficking.* https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-trafficking. Accessed 10 July 2026.

Media Bibliography

International Labour Organization. “Data and Research on Forced Labour.” *International Labour Organization.*https://www.ilo.org/topics/forced-labour-modern-slavery-and-trafficking-persons/data-and-research-forced-labour. Accessed 10 July 2026.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022.* United Nations, 2022. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
Asian Development Bank. *Asian Economic Integration Report 2015: Special Chapter—How Can Special Economic Zones Catalyze Economic Development?* Asian Development Bank, 2015. https://aric.adb.org/pdf/aeir/AEIR2015_specialchapter.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.
International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour.* 2nd ed., International Labour Organization, 2024. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Profits%20and%20poverty%20-%20The%20economics%20of%20forced%20labour_WEB_20241017.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2026.