

# ORGANIZED CRIME-HUMAN TRAFFICING AS A FORM OF THREATS TO SECURITY WITH REFERENCE TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

REVIEW PAPER

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**Abstract:** In addition to local ethno-religious conflicts, the first two decades of the 21st century were marked by the emergence of some new forms of security threats, at the global, regional as well as local levels of the country.

Numerous security risks, challenges and threats have been defined in the modern theory of both international relations and the theory of security in science. It is these risks, challenges and threats that are defined as state and non-state factors. Among non-state factors, one of the most important according to modern theorists of international relations and security is certainly organized crime. Today, organized crime has become so sophisticated the fight against it greatly exceeds the ability and capacity of the state to fight against this pestulence of modern society on its own.

Human trafficking is one of the largest and most profitable global criminal activities, along with trafficking in narcotics, weapons and money laundering.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to point out the importance of the fight against organized crime, especially the importance of the fight against human trafficking as one of the most important and most profitable activities of organized crime.

We can, almost certainly, say that organized crime has its activities in all countries around the “world”, and it is especially evident in countries in transition. Therefore, in this paper, we will give an overview of the state of human trafficking in BiH, as a country that has been in transition for almost three decades.

**Key words:** *security, organized crime, human trafficking, BiH*

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## INTRODUCTION

Organized crime today is one of the most significant security risks of modern states, because much of the money earned from criminal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking and other criminal activities, is used to finance various illegal activities that endanger security around the “world”.

As, as we all know, human trafficking is one of the most important forms of financing organized crime. Therefore the subject of this paper is the description of human trafficking. Of course, while writing this paper, we will use the method of deduction.

In the last few decades, the theme of human trafficking has become very topical in academic circles, to which has, among other things, been contributed to by numerous major changes in the socio-economic and political spheres at the global level have contributed. Researchers' interest in human trafficking has been intensified by numerous social processes, especially migration, but also by the social and political crises that followed the Cold War.

The results of previous research point to the fact that human trafficking is a global phenomenon that affects more or less, all the countries. The available data on the scope and prevalence of this problem suggest that people living in underdeveloped countries and countries that go through social and economic transition, are more vulnerable to human trafficking.

The paper presents theoretical considerations on human trafficking, as well as presenting empirical data that indicate the flow of money earned by human trafficking from various criminal organizations, and the use of that money in financing various radical and extremist groups. Of course, in this paper we will pay special attention to human trafficking in BiH as a state that has been in the process of transition for almost more than two decades.

## 1. HUMAN TRAFFICING

Human trafficking is a complex and multidimensional problem that is studied in various scientific disciplines, and hence the diversity of approaches that seek to explain what is in the background human trafficking.

Human trafficking is considered one of the biggest problems that coexists with us. Human trafficking, and in particular its most common form, women and children trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, is a growing global problem. It has long been recognized in the world as a very dangerous form of organized crime, which is the most lucrative and profitable criminal activity at the global level. A global phenomenon, it goes through several stages in which the victim is recruited, transported and exploited, and each of these phases has its own specifics.

Human trafficking means selling and buying, that is, holding a person for the purpose of their exploitation, as well as all other actions that may be part of that process, such as transportation, storage, hiding, etc. In such cases, one's exploitation is always present. It is maintained through the use of force, fraud, threats, abduction or otherwise. It is also a form of modern slavery based on supply and demand and is a very lucrative business. The more technology develops, the easier it is to form criminal organizations that deal with human trafficking. Victims are treated as consumables and used without any investment until they become unusable when they are replaced by new victims. Human trafficking is the gravest violation of human rights and one of the most serious crimes against humanity (Milanovic, Lajovic, Barjaktarovic, Radosavljevic, 2016), since it involves the exploitation of one man for the benefit of another.

Human trafficking as a form of organized crime is a global problem, which persists despite coordinated action at the national and international levels. It affects all countries, and also any person can easily become a victim of human trafficking. The prevalence of human trafficking in certain countries is linked to the political, economic and social situation. Countries where some form of trafficking occurs can be divided into three groups:

- a) countries of origin,
- b) countries of transit and
- c) countries of destination (Briton, Maljevic 2010)

Countries of origin and transit are most often countries in political and economic transition, developing and underdeveloped countries, poor, so-called. "third world" countries, affected countries and post-conflict countries. Due to this situation, most people who are victims of human trafficking come from such countries, and the transit of victims to

their destinations is much easier to organize through countries where the social and legal system is unregulated.

Destination countries are countries that are more economically developed and therefore richer. Therefore, the country of destination is usually determined by the country of origin, more precisely its development in relation to it. Of course, there is no absolute rule. It's just a general division that does not have to be the rule. Each of the countries in the world may, at some point, be a country of origin, transit or destination.

## **2. HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON A GLOBAL SCALE**

As stated in the previous part of the paper, human trafficking is a global problem, which has not bypassed Europe either. However, unlike other parts of the world, Europe is particularly vulnerable because it is a destination where victims come from a large number of countries.

According to the UNODC Report (2003), globally, the most common form of trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitation are mostly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries that provided information on the gender of traffickers, it is women. In some parts of the world, trafficking in women is the norm.

The second most common form of trafficking is forced labor (18%), this data can sometimes lead us to draw wrong conclusions for the simple reason that forced labor is very rarely detected and reported by trafficking for sexual exploitation. Worldwide, almost 20% of all victims of trafficking are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region children are the majority, the number ranging up to 100% in parts of West Africa. Although human trafficking seems to involve the movement of people across continents, most exploitation takes place near the home. The data show that human trafficking within the region and domestic trafficking are the main forms of Human trafficking.

The United Nations Protocol against Human trafficking - the most important international agreement in this area - entered into force in 2003. The report shows that in the last few years, the number of Member States that have seriously implemented the Protocol has more than doubled (from 54 to 125) from the 155 countries covered. However, there are still many countries that do not have the necessary legal instruments or political will.

Glavna predviđanja međuregionalnih tokova i važna područja podrijetla, 2013–2014. In the image below, we can see the flows of human trafficking around the world.



Figure 1: UNODC, “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016”

Doing preparations (research) for this paper, we were able to see that today it is difficult, almost impossible to find accurate data on human trafficking at the global or regional level. Based on estimates by various government and non-government experts in this field, we can say that between 700,000 and two million women and children are sold worldwide each year as victims of human trafficking. These are only preliminary estimates relating to international trafficking. Internal human trafficking in countries such as Thailand or India is not included in this assessment. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 300,000 women are sold in Europe each year. However, these days, various estimates indicate that about 3.5 million people left Ukraine due to the conflict. Taking into the fact that this is a relatively poor population, an increase in the number of victims of human trafficking in Europe is to be expected. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs alone, it is estimated that 400,000 women have been sold abroad in the last decade. The presented data indicate that in women and children trafficking for prostitution is a serious global problem, despite the fact that available data indicating human trafficking are not based on realistic assessments.

but on ones of various government and non-government experts and organizations.

### **3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE REGION OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE**

Firstly, in order to make it easier to understand the term Southeast Europe, we will define the term for the purposes of this paper.

By the term Southeast Europe we mean a geographical and geopolitical term that includes the southeastern part of Europe within the Adriatic, Aegean, Ionian, Marmara and Black Seas, with the northern land border which in a narrower geographical sense coincides with the line of river flows Sava and the Danube, while in geopolitical terms sometimes it includes the immediate adjacent areas north of the mentioned line.

The last decade of the 20th century was marked by ethno-religious conflicts in the region of Southeast Europe, which at the same time designed the political map of the region. The region was militarily, politically and economically divided, new states were created, new borders were established. Almost all the countries in the region of Southeast Europe are in a period of transition, and that is why they are facing the problem of organized crime and corruption, which are the main obstructive factors of development and regional stability. Due to the transition period, the governments of Southeast European countries are often unable to exercise effective control over the illegal economy and various other forms of crime, including trafficking in women for prostitution, due to limited economic resources. The region of Southeast Europe is an area of destination, transit, and recently more and more a region of origin of in women and children trafficking.

Organized criminal groups in the region of Southeast Europe, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation, function very well, almost perfectly, unlike the governments of their countries, and therefore they largely and successfully exploit insufficiently controlled state borders, corruption, legal vacuum and lack of regional cooperation in combating organized crime. The geographical proximity of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe has influenced the state of human trafficking in the region of Southeast Europe, as the countries of the former Eastern bloc were largely covered by this phenomenon in the post-Soviet period. The IOM calls the increased demand for women of Slavic origin "a fourth wave of victims involving women and children from Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia and Ukraine, which began in the early

1990s and continues to this day. Earlier waves affected women first, from Thailand and the Philippines, the second wave included women from the Dominican Republic and Colombia, and the third wave of women from Ghana and Nigeria. The fourth wave of human trafficking in Eastern and Central Europe as a longitudinal wave also included the countries of southeast Europe primarily because of geographical proximity, similar pasts and problems with which post-socialist societies are faced.

The most common types of crime in the South East Europe region are still the smuggling of drugs, weapons and cigarettes as the most lucrative types of crime during the 1990s, while human trafficking became more conspicuous in the late 1990s. As an international organized crime, trafficking in human beings needs to be combated through an integrated approach at the national, regional and international levels. By signing the Ministerial Declaration on the 2000 Stability Pact in Palermo, and establishing the work group for human trafficking (Stabiliti Pact Trafficking Task Force, hereinafter referred to as SPTF, Southeast European governments agreed that they should play a leading role in anti-trafficking activities. The system of regional cooperation, coordinated by the SPTF, has influenced each country to develop a unified, structured system of combating human trafficking in the form of a National Action Plan. These plans include the cooperation of government, non-government and international agencies, and provide a very useful and effective theoretical framework for combating human trafficking.

#### **4. HUMAN TRAFFICING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

The first cases of human trafficking in BiH occur at the end of 1996. This does not mean, however, that there were not such cases. They were just not recognised as one of the dangerous forms of crime. Such cases were primarily recorded as cases of illegal immigration or individual cases of prostitution. They were treated as a misdemeanor, and persons who provided sexual services were punished on the basis of legal provisions on public order and peace and on the stay and movement of foreigners. The approach to this problem changed significantly when it took on a wider scale. In the initial phase of recognizing human trafficking as a dangerous form of organized crime, BiH was assessed as a country of transit towards Western Europe, but also a country of destination for victims of



human trafficking from Central and Southeast European countries. However, in the past few years, a new phenomenon has emerged - trafficking in women and girls recruited into human trafficking chains at the local level, for the purpose of sexual exploitation in other parts of the country, while the number of identified foreign victims of trafficking is declining. The number of the women from BiH identified as victims of trafficking in BiH by 2009 are on the rise. By increasing internal trafficking within BiH, law enforcement agencies have faced new challenges in identifying and investigating trafficking crimes.

Currently available publications, scientific and professional papers, frequently state some of the following causes of human trafficking in BiH.

#### *4.1. The breakdown of the social system - the breakdown of responsibility*

Until 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina was an integral part of the SFRY. In April 1992, a civil war broke out that ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Ohio, USA, and in November 1995. The Dayton Peace Agreement established BiH, consisting of two equal entities, Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH. The Dayton Peace Agreement established international supervision by the Office of the High Representative (hereinafter OHR), which was given high powers by the international community to interpret the civilian part of the peace agreement, with high powers to appoint and recall BiH officials at all levels of government, as well as making decisions and laws. The war conflict on the territory of BiH, which had traces of territorial, ethno-religious one, led to the collapse of the social and economic structure in BiH. This led to the disintegration of the social structure and legitimacy of the state for a long period. Conflicts in the region since the early 1990s have resulted in millions of refugees and displaced persons, who are vulnerable categories for traffickers. Refugee women were often without or separated from family members, and as a result often became targets for various forms of abuse, including human trafficking. The inability to integrate into the countries that received them or to return to their countries of origin often leads refugee women to the white slave trade.

In the post-war period, BiH was extremely politically unstable.



Entity security agencies, burdened with ethno-religious intolerance, with a very low level of co-operation. The BiH border was insufficiently controlled, making it attractive for organized crime groups to exploit the weaknesses of the “soft” border, smuggling narcotics, weapons and people. High profits, minimal risk of detection and minimal penalties have made trafficking for prostitution very attractive in BiH.

#### *4.2. Legacy of illicit trafficking and smuggling - an advantage that traffickers knew how to take advantage of*

The war and post-war illegal economy shaped the development of BiH society in the post-war period. Market supply, which was based mainly on smuggling, developed smuggling awareness, created well-established smuggling networks and channels. The trade flows defined in this way provided a good starting logistical basis for human trafficking. The type of goods traded is not important, the profit generated by these activities is important. Scientific and professional articles dealing with the state and consequences of such established trade often state that the large markets that were part of BiH during the war were part of BiH (regional principle) and were like “paradise islands” for alcohol smuggling, tax-free cigarettes, drugs, stolen vehicles although weapons could be found. During that period, according to available estimates, BiH institutions lost about \$ 30 million due to non-payment of taxes on goods sold in those markets.

The profit made from illegal activities is large, and enables the creation of financial power and social influence of organized smuggling groups. The damage that society suffers from the black economy is manifold; primarily, well-established and organized networks of smugglers have been created, capable of efficiently smuggling various types of goods across the state border; they exploit the weaknesses of the “soft” border, and at the same time, these criminal groups exploit the high level of corruption and the low level of responsibility of customs or police officers.

The next consequence of the war and post-war illegal economy is visible in the creation of well-organized smuggling groups with high operational capabilities to carry out illegal activities. Criminal groups have an efficient modus operandi, modern technical equipment and manpower to control and monitor “shipments”, as well as a network of contacts and acquaintances based on corruption in case something “goes beyond

the planned activities”. The methods of smuggling people across the state border are mostly similar to the methods of smuggling other goods.

#### *4.3. International peacekeeping forces — a growing need for the sex industry*

With the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, in accordance with Annex 7 of the Peace Agreement in BiH, 76,000 members of the peacekeeping force were deployed, as well as a large number of members of other international organizations and agencies. That number has decreased over time, as more stable and secure conditions have been created in BiH, and the possibilities for a new conflict have diminished. In 2003, the number of peacekeepers was 12,000, with a tendency to further decrease in 2004, and the takeover of the SFOR mission by the European Union at the end of 2004 was just under 2,000 today. The arrival of peacekeepers, especially in the first years after the signing of the peace agreement, encouraged the development of the sex industry in BiH. The sex industry is an extremely good source of income, especially in a country where industry was destroyed or production stopped during the war, in a country that was one of the least developed republics of the former Yugoslavia in addition to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the first years after the war, it was important to maintain peace, and prevent the potential for new conflicts to break out. human trafficking has slowly taken hold of BiH society in all segments, gaining epidemic proportions. Nightclubs, as the most typical forms where prostitution took place, sprang up daily along demarcation lines, along roads, in towns and villages. New business was created, new business opportunities were on the horizon in the war-torn country, where the legal economy was replaced by black market suppliers. The night bars were also opened by the owners of catering facilities without a criminal past, noticing an opportunity to earn money. In those years, given the large international presence, sex was an easy tempting “commodity” for foreign clients in BiH.

#### *4.4. Poverty as a garden for recruitment*

The high poverty rate poses a threat to BiH becoming a country of origin for human trafficking on a larger scale. Poverty in BiH is not limited to a certain population, but is epidemic. Therefore, it is one of

the key issues in society, which greatly affects the economic, social, political processes in BiH. On 31.1.2021. in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were 415,027 persons on the records of employment offices and services in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Report of the BiH Employment Agency). Compared to the previous month, the number of unemployed persons increased by 1,400 persons or 0.34%. Out of the total number of job seekers, 236,245 or 56.92% are women. Compared to the same period last year, unemployment in BiH is higher by 8,860 people or 2.18%.

Increased poverty poses a risk of recruiting potential victims of trafficking among the categories of employees. Material misery strengthens the impulse to get out of the ghetto of poverty, thus strengthening the desire to emigrate, which can lead to the acceptance of false business offers abroad and entering the world of human trafficking.

## **5. ORGANIZED CRIME AS A FACTOR FOR ENDANGERING SECURITY**

In the previous part of the paper, we saw that organized crime affects all parts of a society while paralyzing the activities of state institutions, as is the case in BiH. In such conditions, there is an increase in various forms of extremism, such as religious, national, cultural, etc.

In the past, criminal organizations were guided by one motive, and that was to make a profit as well as increase it, while in today's world, criminals have some other aspirations. Financial power, as well as positions in the political, economic and security sectors are used for non-institutional and other influences on the state, i.e. for taking positions in society that cannot be achieved by participating in regular legal processes. The new "negative energy" of organized crime threatens the security of many countries, including the international community.

How does organized crime affect global, regional and local security? For the answer to this question to be quite relevant, it must contain the following premises:

- Connection of criminal organizations with the political and economic elite of a certain state, but also with new centers of financial power (so-called tycoons or oligarchs);
- The connections mentioned above are used to legalize illegally

acquired money (money laundering);

- Liaison of criminal organizations with various non-governmental organizations, also in order to legalise money while at the same time influencing the levers of civil society;
- The inhabitants of Southeast Europe, we can freely say, feel. Connection with security structures - a combination of organized crime and security structures, and live with it since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the famous transition process;
- Recently, the financing of certain media by criminal organizations has become very important, as well as constant pressure on public opinion, on legislative, executive and judicial bodies, on rivals from the criminal milieu, on potential witnesses, etc.;
- Liaison of criminal organizations with various intelligence services of other countries. This connection is primarily used as a support and logistics for domestic and foreign intelligence services to perform intelligence tasks, as well as certain “dirty” jobs.
- Finally, in scientific and professional papers, one can find more and more theoretical considerations of the connection between criminal organizations and terrorism, i.e., with the organizers and participants in armed uprisings and other forms of political crime.

Reading various works of contemporaries, in which the differences between organized crime and various radical movements are often emphasized, we can conclude that the traditional difference, which everyone pointed out, is slowly but surely disappearing. Even some criminal organizations use various radical methods in order to intimidate state institutions and individuals so to achieve their goals. Such methods have so far only been used by radical organizations.

As we have already mentioned, in the last decades in scientific and professional works, connections and various comparisons on the relations between organized crime and terrorism have become more and more prominent. These links generally exist in the following cases:

- Organized crime with its illegally obtained profits finances terrorist organizations or groups, or through “facade companies and offshore companies” mediates in financial transactions of terrorists and financiers;
- Organized crime smuggles weapons and equipment for terrorist

movements and / or smuggles foreign mercenaries and terrorists to the country where the terrorist organization operates;

- Terrorist organizations, independently or in cooperation with criminal groups, undertake certain organized criminal activities in order to provide material and military means for committing terrorist acts;
- Organized crime, with pronounced political aspirations, resorts to terrorism in order to directly come or bring its “political current” to power (Milakovic, 2009).

Finally, organized crime, that is, human trafficking, as one of the most profitable activities of organized crime, is becoming an increasingly significant and serious threat to the legal state, democracy, rule of law, international peace and stability. In an increasing number of countries, the fight against organized crime is becoming a political priority in many countries around the world, especially in countries in transition. Although, according to some understandings, this must be approached primarily or exclusively from the aspect of national security and protection of national interests, the interests and values of human and international security must not be neglected (Piccarelli, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

Human trafficking in beings, in addition to trafficking in weapons and narcotics, is the most lucrative branch of organized crime and the most serious form of human rights violations.

Human trafficking and organized crime in general are an almost perfect form of organization that leaves no segment of its activities to chance, from the selection of members to corrupt activities and methods of legalizing dirty capital. A very important feature of organized crime, which allows its longevity and success, is the rapid ability to adapt to new situations. For the successful fight against human trafficking, the awareness of both the individual and the community needs to mature.

A very important fact is cooperation at the international level. This cooperation must be constant and well focused on clear problems. Security authorities, government offices and NGOs should be involved in this co-operation. Constant exchange of information can help successful

preventive work and cutting smuggling channels. Without cooperation and teamwork, confronting this problem is very difficult.

We have seen that no country in the world is spared human trafficking, and therefore each country can be found in one of three groups (country of origin, country of transition and country of destination).

The most risky countries are countries in transition, countries recovering from war conflicts or countries where war conflicts are raging.

BiH is a country in transition, a country that, due to the unresolved relationship between the three constituent peoples, has a vacuum of political power where the three national elites do not want to cooperate and eliminate deviant social phenomena. BiH, which immediately after the bloody conflict on its territory was a country in transition for women trafficking for the purpose of prostitution, ie, the sex industry, became a country with developed internal women trafficking in prostitution and developed sex industry.

When it comes to the relationship between terrorism and organized crime, it is clear that they are characterized by a high degree of organization and conspiracy, as well as planned, devised, organized and long-lasting actions. The key to their relationship is manifested in the fact that terrorism most often relies on organized crime in order to obtain financial resources, since terrorist activities require a large amount of money and stable sources of financing. In addition to their connection, there is a key difference between them, which is reflected in the ultimate goal.

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