

**STOP THE TRAFFIK**

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



# Child Trafficking in Kenya

*Trends in Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa*



2018

**STOP THE TRAFFIK**

**Centre for Intelligence Led Prevention (CfILP)**

1 Kennington Road, SE1 7QP

London, United Kingdom.

info@stopthetraffik.org

www.stopthetraffik.org

+44 (0) 207 921 4258

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# Child Trafficking in Kenya

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Every country, regardless of its level of economic development, is affected by human trafficking and modern slavery. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2016 estimated that there are around 40.3 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, almost 62% subjected to labour exploitation.<sup>1</sup> Kenya is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking.

As with many types of exploitation, perpetrators trick people with false promises of a better life, well-paid jobs, education, and comfortable accommodation. In reality victims are forced to work long hours for little or no pay and live in poor conditions.

The intelligence shows that many people in Kenya associate human trafficking with the movement of people across borders, and often overlook what is happening within the country. Children are frequently recruited by people they know and vulnerable communities are most targeted. Sometimes parents are aware of the risks, but often they believe they are giving their children the best opportunity.

## Forms of Exploitation

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Child exploitation takes place in different forms in **Kisumu**, **Nairobi** and **Mombasa**. These include: domestic servitude, forced labour in supermarkets, hotels and restaurants or forced begging on the streets, sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Traffickers often deceive victims by offering well-paid jobs and free education. Online grooming and/or abduction are also common.

**Domestic servitude** is the main hidden industry in which child labour exploitation takes place. This is seen predominantly in private middle-class houses or hotels. Boys and girls are forced to work and are vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse. They are unable to leave the house in which they are exploited and they receive no wages for cooking, cleaning or childminding duties. This type of exploitation is hard to spot as victims are hidden from the public.

**Sex tourism** fuels sexual exploitation of children in Kenya and is most prevalent in **Mombasa** and **Nairobi**. Children are groomed and targeted online and forced to work in brothels. Parents and children are approached directly in the community or via social media with offers of work in exchange for payment of education. Traffickers lure those from low income areas such as Mukuru, Mathare and Kibera slums and traffic young girls to **Nairobi** for the purpose of sexual exploitation in areas such as Westlands. Many victims travel because of connections with friends

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage

and family who are already in the area. In **Kisumu** sexual exploitation in brothels is common as truck drivers will pass through these rural areas at night.

Incidents of **forced marriages** are also reported.

**Forced begging** occurs where children and unaccompanied minors living and working on the streets are forced into criminality. These individuals are extremely vulnerable to abuse, and unaware of their legal rights. They may also be trafficked to Somalia for radicalisation.

Exploitation in the **fishing industry** is prevalent on the lakes in **Kisumu**. Traffickers recruit victims from other countries, refusing to let them off boats, often physically abusing those who complain or try to escape.

Human trafficking occurs across Kenya in different industries. The information presented in this report is a combination of insights from local partners and data from STOP THE TRAFFIK. This does not exclude the possibility of these forms of exploitation happening in other cities or locales.

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## Recruitment & Control

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Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking, however, there are factors which make people more vulnerable to exploitation. Some of these are listed below:

- Socio-economic or family circumstances
- False sense of obligation to social connections, often in cultural context
- Psychological or physical condition
- Age
- Legal status
- Prior victimization

Traffickers can use a variety of methods to control their victims, some of these include:

- Online grooming
- Offers to pay for education and fund further studies
- Promise of gifts and money, other false promises
- Debt bondage and financial dependence
- Physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse
- Confiscation of identity documents
- Social isolation and restricted movement
- Threats of violence to themselves and their family members
- Fear of being reported to authorities and enforcement

# Spot the Signs

## Spot the Signs of Child Trafficking

- Do children show signs of psychological or physical abuse? Do they appear frightened, withdrawn or confused?
- Are children forced to stay in accommodation provided by the employer? Do children have restricted movement on leaving or entering the premises? Are they always accompanied?
- Do children work long hours with no breaks and very low pay?

## References

<sup>1</sup>International Labour Organization (ILO) (2017). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. Geneva, September 2017. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575479.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf) [last accessed 15.08.2018]

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State (2018). *Trafficking in Persons Report: the United States of America*. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282798.pdf> [last accessed 15.08.18].

Child Helpline: <http://www.childlinekenya.co.ke/index.php/about-us>

Movement Against Child Trafficking (MACT)

African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN): <http://www.anppcan.org/>

TRACE Kenya: <https://www.tracekenya.org/>

Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART): <https://haartkenya.org/>

The CRADLE (Children Foundation): <http://www.thecradle.or.ke/>

SOLidarity with WOMen in DIstress (SOLWODI)

Wetaase: <http://wetaase.org/>

A range of other local agencies have contributed to this report.

This report is a result of information sharing between STOP THE TRAFFIK and local agencies in Kenya, including ChildLine Kenya and other NGOs. For more information about the CfILP visit [www.stophetraffik.org](http://www.stophetraffik.org)

