

The Security and Humanitarian Approach to the Phenomenon of Human Trafficking : A Study of the Repercussions and Protection Mechanisms

BELLIL Zineb*

Lecturer -A-, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Department of Political Science

Mostafa Stamboulil University -Mascara, Algeria

Email: zineb.bellil@univ-mascara.dz

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Abstract

This study examines human trafficking as a compound threat that simultaneously undermines human security in its individual dimensions (physical, economic, and social) and national and international security in its traditional sense. The research begins with the conceptual and legal framework of the phenomenon in light of international conventions, notably the Palermo Protocol, before analyzing the multidimensional repercussions of this crime on personal safety and bodily autonomy, on economic and social stability through the weakening of the labor market and the disintegration of family structures, and on its links to the financing of organized crime and its threat to the political security of states. The study concludes that confronting this phenomenon requires moving beyond a purely security-based approach centered on deterrence and criminal prosecution, toward a comprehensive strategy that integrates preventive, protective, and developmental dimensions, grounded in strengthened international and regional cooperation to dismantle transnational criminal networks and address the structural roots of the phenomenon, chiefly poverty, unemployment, and marginalization.

Keywords: Human Trafficking; Human Security; Palermo Protocol; Organized Crime; International Cooperation; Developmental Approach; Protection Mechanisms.

Introduction

Contemporary security challenges are witnessing a profound structural transformation, according to which traditional threats based on a narrow concept of security (state and border security) are no longer the sole concern of the international community. Rather, transnational organized crime networks have emerged, most notably the crime of human trafficking, as one of the most degrading forms of human dignity and the most threatening to the stability of societies. This phenomenon is no longer just a violation of regulations and laws or a transgression of national borders. Rather, it has become “modern slavery” that undermines the development and human rights structure of countries, and puts the basic principles of human rights to a real test.

In this context, the academic and policy concept of security has evolved from “hard security” based on purely deterrent and security approaches, to the pivotal concept of “human security” that places individuals at the heart of security and development concerns. Accordingly, the study of human trafficking is no longer based on the criminal perspective alone, but rather requires finding an integrated approach in which the legal and security dimensions are integrated with the

comprehensive humanitarian vision, to ensure the transition from combating crime to protecting victims and reducing the vulnerabilities that trafficking networks exploit.

This study has academic and practical importance at the core of the conceptual transformation of human security theory. It seeks to dismantle the dialectical relationship between the expansion of the phenomenon of human trafficking and the decline in levels of human security with its various pillars (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, societal, and political security). Its practical importance also lies in providing a forward-looking vision for protection and prevention mechanisms, ensuring the alignment of national legislation and international frameworks with the requirements for effective protection of victims.

Based on the above, the problem of the study is centered as follows:

How does the crime of human trafficking undermine the foundations of human security, and what is the nature of the legal and security response gaps capable of identifying coping mechanisms and enhancing protection ?

A group of sub-questions emerge from this main problem:

- What is the conceptual and legal framework regulating the phenomenon of human trafficking and human security in international literature and studies?
- How do the different dimensions of the crime of human trafficking reflect on the various pillars of human security?
- What are the institutional and legal strategies and mechanisms to enhance human security to confront and combat human trafficking?

To achieve the objectives of the study and answer the main problem, and to cover the subject of the study with its various dimensions and achieve its objectives, the descriptive and analytical approach was relied upon to monitor the phenomenon, dismantle its repercussions, and demonstrate the repercussions of the phenomenon on the pillars of human security based on international data and indicators.

Supported by legal approach to address the international and national legislative frameworks concerned with prohibiting this crime, protecting its victims, and evaluating its effectiveness, so that it is not limited to listing texts, but goes beyond it to analyzing their adequacy and extracting legal response gaps.

The study was also based on approaching human security as the conceptual frame of reference that places the individual and his protection at the center of security analysis, that is, from the standpoint of shifting the angle of analysis from the narrow concept of security (state and border security) to “individual security” and protecting him from acute and prolonged threats.

In addition to the human rights approach, which views human trafficking as a “grave violation of human rights” and not just a criminal crime or a security breach, it also focuses on the victim and not just catching the perpetrators, and works to identify response gaps and propose integrated protection and intervention mechanisms.

In order to address the problem at hand, this study was divided into three main sections:

The first topic dealt with: the conceptual and legal framework of human trafficking and human security. The second topic shed light on the repercussions of human trafficking on the

pillars of human security, and the last topic dealt with mechanisms for strengthening human security in the face of human trafficking.

The first topic: The conceptual and legal framework of human trafficking and human security.

The phenomenon of human trafficking combines the organized criminal dimension with the human dimension linked to the dignity of the individual and his basic rights. It has received the attention of the international community since the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, the legal and reference framework for defining it and criminalizing its forms. Its accurate understanding requires going beyond the legal dimension and bringing to mind the human security dimension in its multiple dimensions, and this is what we will discuss.

The first requirement: The nature of human trafficking in light of international agreements (Palermo Protocol)

The crime of trafficking in persons is a transnational criminal phenomenon and a grave violation of basic rights and human dignity guaranteed by international conventions. The seriousness of this crime is evident in the expansion of its exploitative scope to include annually thousands of victims of different age and nationality groups (men, women, and children), whether within the borders of the territory of a single state or at the international level. Accordingly, this crime has begun to cast its shadow on the global criminal map, as the majority of countries have come to associate it with varying characteristics. Whether as countries of origin (exporting victims), transit countries, or countries of destination and exploitation.

First: Definition of the crime of human trafficking

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, using the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or the provision of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person in control of another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, below, exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of exploitation. Sexual labor, forced labor or performance of forced services, slavery or similar practices, servitude, or the removal of organs¹."

It is clear from extrapolating the international definition stipulated in Article Three of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Combat Trafficking in Persons (Palermo Protocol), that the crime is legally constituted of three pillars and essential elements that complement each other to form its criminal model, which are :

First : The material behavior (the criminal act - what he does): which is the external appearance that constitutes the material element, and is achieved by committing one of the following acts: recruiting, luring, transferring, harboring, or receiving people.

Second : The means (how to do it): It represents the illegal means adopted to control the victim and destroy his will, and includes: the threat or use of force, coercion in its forms, kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a state of weakness and vulnerability, or providing payments and financial benefits to gain the approval of a person who controls another person.

Third: The criminal purpose (the purpose - why he does it): which is the specific criminal intent directed towards “exploitation”; It includes a minimum of criminal forms, such as: exploiting the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or the performance of forced services, slavery or practices similar to it, enslavement, or the removal or removal of human organs².

Trafficking in persons is defined as the sum of legal or material practices and actions that dehumanize a human being in order to turn him into a subject of financial rights (a commodity) or a victim of organized criminal networks, where transnational criminal agents manage these operations. These practices aim to subject the victim to various types of exploitation, whether represented by forced labor and forced labor for low wages, or sexual exploitation and related forms of modern slavery. Whether this was accompanied by the victim’s formal consent or occurred under material or moral coercion³.

Second: Distinguishing between human trafficking and some similar concepts

The study requires drawing a line between the crime of human trafficking and some crimes and phenomena that may intersect with it in some material or conceptual dimensions, in order to avoid any confusion that would affect proper legal adaptation. The most prominent of these concepts are:

First: The distinction between human trafficking and organ trafficking: Through the practical and legal reality, it is noted that there is a lack of a unified and internationally approved definition of the crime of trafficking in human organs, in addition to the international system’s lack of a legal foundation or binding reference instrument that fully comprehends its dimensions. In this context, legal practice and analyzes reveal the crystallization of this crime through three main forms:

Trafficking in persons for the purpose of removing organs: This pattern constitutes a meeting point and intersection between the two phenomena. On the one hand, it is a clear form of human trafficking in accordance with the provisions of the Palermo Protocol of 2000, and on the other hand, it represents a practical manifestation of trafficking in human organs themselves.

Transplant Tourism: It is often achieved by transporting recipients (patients) from developed countries to developing countries to obtain human organs purchased from local donors in ways that exploit their need and poverty. Thus, organ trafficking goes beyond the mere transfer of human tissue, to reflect a dynamic dual movement: the movement of people (victims) from developing to rich economies for the purpose of removing their organs, versus the reverse movement of beneficiaries from rich countries towards developing countries in the form of transplant tourism.

Organ trafficking in its narrow sense: It represents the illegal transfer and circulation of human organs themselves across international borders, away from the movement of donors or beneficiaries⁴.

Human trafficking is similar to the trade in organs in terms of the subject of exploitation and the degree of danger, and they differ in organization and concept, as human trafficking is more general and comprehensive, as exploitation is focused on the human being itself and depriving him of his freedom to subject him to multiple forms of exploitation. As for organ

trade, it targets an organ or part of a human body, whether this is done by removing it from a living body or a corpse. The removal of organs can also be considered one of the goals and possible outcomes of the crime of human trafficking.

It must be pointed out that the conceptual and normative vacuum of organ trade does not diminish the seriousness of the crime or the magnitude of its effects, as much as it is a clear indication of its many transformations and phenomenological novelty. Which puts the international community in its first steps to dismantle its dimensions and comprehend its criminal scope⁵.

Second: Distinguishing between human trafficking and migrant smuggling:

In non-specialized studies and circles, there is confusion between the concepts of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, but international criminal law has made a fundamental distinction between them through what is dealt with in the Palermo Protocol, where migrant smuggling is defined as “the arrangement of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which that person is not a national or a permanent resident, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”⁶

Field reality indicates that there are practical difficulties and overlaps that may make distinguishing between the two cases complicated for several reasons:

- Smuggled migrants can become victims of trafficking later during the journey or upon arrival as a result of detention or extortion.
- Traffickers may also act as smugglers, or use the same routes and logistics.
- The circumstances of migrant smuggling may be so bad and cruel that it is difficult to believe that the migrant consented voluntarily in the first place.

Referring to the most important points of difference between the two concepts, we mention in this table :

Migrant smuggling	Human trafficking	Comparison items
The act is carried out with the migrant's consent and prior approval by contracting with a smuggler to transport him.	The victim's consent does not count at all whenever means of coercion, deception, fraud, or exploitation of a state of vulnerability are used (done without the person's consent).	Approval and satisfaction
(done with the person's consent)	The inevitability of international transit, as the crime inevitably requires arranging the illegal entry of a person into another country to which he does not return with his nationality or permanent residence.	Geographic dimension
Internal or transnational The crime can occur within the borders of a single country (internal trafficking) or across borders.	Exploitation is the ultimate goal. The crime continues through exploitation of the victim (sexually, forced labour, slavery, organ removal) inside or outside the state.	Exploitation

The relationship ends upon arrival. The crime does not include the intention to exploit the migrant. Rather, the relationship ends upon arrival and payment for the service.	Profits are made from the continued exploitation of the victim and stripping her of her rights.	The offender's source of profit
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Table No. (01): represents a comparison between the concepts of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.⁷

Third: The causes of human trafficking

A complex set of factors and structural variables interfere in the emergence and exacerbation of the phenomenon of human trafficking. Economic reasons combine with social and family factors, in addition to the pivotal role of political and security conditions, to inevitably form multi-dimensional drivers for this phenomenon. Through this presentation, we point out the most important of them.

Economic and social reasons:

The global demand for vulnerable workers is considered one of the main reasons because the increasing demand in the economies of developed destination countries for informal and cheap labor leads to the emergence of a criminal black market that exploits the legal and material vulnerability of migrants. These people are exposed to modern forms of forced labor and servitude, in addition to systematic physical and psychological violations, and serious breaches of their work obligations by depriving them of benefits and wages and depriving them of the right to rest that protects their human dignity. The burden of these burdens doubles on the most legally and socially vulnerable groups, “particularly women and children,” making them vulnerable to forced exploitation and human commodification through forms of forced marriage, prostitution, and sexual coercion under the pressure of Material need and economic pressures⁸.

The absence of gender equality and discriminatory practices stemming from some customs and traditions also constitute an unjust environment for women. Forced marriage is a blatant manifestation of human trafficking and contemporary slavery, as it entails robbing women of their will and subjecting them to forms of forced slavery and exploitation.

Family disintegration, the decline of family cohesion, and the weakening of social ties undermine the role of the family as a first line of defense that provides the necessary protection and care for its members. This resulted in the emergence of the phenomenon of “child displacement” and made them vulnerable to lure and exploitation by organized crime networks.

The rise of consumerism, accompanied by mechanisms of economic openness and cultural changes, has created living aspirations that exceed the material capabilities of many individuals, making them more willing to take risks and fall into the trap of false promises of work or transportation⁹.

Technological reasons:

With the emergence of the scientific and technological revolution since the last century, the criminal scope has witnessed a remarkable structural transformation. Cross-border criminal networks and mafias have exploited modern technologies and advanced means of communication to expand the scope of their activities and improve the mechanisms for

committing their crimes. These activities extend to include a wide range of serious crimes, most notably: drug trafficking, money laundering, corrupt practices, and terrorist crimes, as well as modern forms of slavery and human trafficking.

Statistical indicators issued by the United Nations Commission on Crime and Criminal Justice confirm the seriousness of this expansion, as its statistics estimate the presence of about one million immigrants across the world who are subject to various types of exploitation, slavery, and forced labor under the weight of organized criminal networks (such as the Italian, Japanese, and Chinese mafia). The severity of this exploitation increases among the most vulnerable groups, as women constitute about 50% of the total victims, and they are often subjected to forms of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution under the threat of coercion and deprivation of freedom.¹⁰

Political and security reasons:

The rate of escalation of the crime of trafficking in persons increases significantly during periods of war, crises, and internal armed conflicts, and the accompanying security collapse. This phenomenon is affected by several factors :

- Diaspora and forced displacement create vulnerable groups searching for the minimum requirements for survival and a decent living. Miserable living conditions and fleeing the scourge of war push victims to accept inadequate or humiliating work for the lowest wages, making them easy prey for organized crime networks that exploit their financial need to force them into forms of forced labor and the contemporary slavery market.
- The expansion of the scope of crime is linked to the acquisition of new dimensions by sex tourism (domestic and international) in conflict areas, accompanied by an escalation in criminal demand with the establishment of military bases and camps (domestic or foreign) and subsequent entertainment and accommodation facilities. These fragile security environments are exploited to pass on images of forced sexual exploitation, specifically against women and children¹¹.

The second requirement: dimensions of human security

The concept of Human Security has emerged as a critical and analytical approach that aims to reformulate the traditional security philosophy, as it is based on ensuring individuals' sense of security through the implementation of human rights and empowering societies to achieve the goals of sustainable human development, reaching equal and acceptable levels of quality of life and benefiting from development gains.

The roots of this conceptual crystallization go back to the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for the year 1994, which created a paradigm shift by transcending the narrow classical perspective of national security that is inevitably based on protecting the state's borders and its institutions, towards making the individual himself the focus and goal of security policies along with protecting the state's sovereignty.

Concurrent with this transformation, the governmental actor or nation-state is no longer the sole monopolist of influence and decision-making in the network of international relations, as the international arena has witnessed the emergence of non-international actors with tangible influence, such as international and regional governmental organizations, non-governmental

organizations, and civil society institutions, which have come to play a pivotal role in formulating the international security agenda and embodying the dimensions of human security in the field reality¹².

First: Definition of human security

In its 2003 report, the Commission on Human Security defines human security as: protecting the vital essence of life for all human beings through methods that enhance human freedoms and human self-realization. It means protecting basic freedoms that represent the essence of life, protecting people from critical (severe) and widespread (widespread) threats and situations, using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations, and creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks for survival. Survive, earn a living and have dignity¹³.

The procedural definition of the concept of human security was crystallized at the 1995 Ottawa Summit, where it was framed as: "ensuring the protection of individuals from all forms of threats and risks, whether associated with violent activities or embodied in non-violent images and practices." This definition highlights the centrality of the "individual" as the basic unit of analysis and the fundamental goal of security policies, which constitutes the precise dividing line between the concepts of human security and human development¹⁴.

While the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, defined human security as: "It means more than the absence of armed violence. It includes human rights, good governance, the right to access to education and health care opportunities, and ensuring that every individual has the ability to meet his or her own needs. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth, and preventing conflicts. Achieving freedom from need, freedom from fear, and the freedom of generations to inherit a healthy environment. These are the interconnected pillars of achieving human security and then national security¹⁵.

While the International Commission on Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) considered in its report in 2001 that human security means: the security of people, meaning their physical safety, economic and social well-being, respect for their dignity and ability as human beings, and the protection of human rights and their fundamental freedom.¹⁶

In general, the definitions have unanimously agreed that human security is a set of measures that aim to achieve the individual's security from various threats and at various levels¹⁷.

Second: Human dimensions

The dimensions of human security are defined in several integrated axes identified by the 1994 Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme, affecting various aspects of human life. It is a multi-dimensional concept, and in general it is represented by:

- **Economic security:** Economic security constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the concept of human security, as embodied in the Human Development Report issued in 1994, as it is based in its essence on adopting measures and mechanisms to protect the economic system from the risks and challenges resulting from the intersection of interests and the phenomenon of interdependence. The importance of this dimension stems from

its direct impact on the security of the individual, as its imbalance results in placing the individual in a state of constant threat that affects his ability to secure his basic needs and material requirements that guarantee the preservation of his dignity and living stability¹⁸. In the context of human security literature, economic security is the state of liberation resulting from poverty and destitution, through enjoying a sustainable financial income and reliable sources of income that ensure the ability to meet the requirements of an individual's daily life and support his family. The essential component of achieving this dimension is the provision of productive employment opportunities and stable jobs that secure the basic financial resource, and in a way that ensures the protection of human dignity and stability of living¹⁹.

- **Food security:** Food security is understood as the organized ability of society to ensure the basic nutritional needs of all its members, ensuring that they are able to lead a healthy and active life, with special attention given to the most vulnerable groups whose income levels prevent them from reaching that minimum. To achieve this goal, sustainable methodologies rely on a balance that combines enhancing local production and meeting the deficit through self-financed imports. Specialized literature argues that maintaining the sustainability of food security and protecting it against external shocks and threats remains dependent on raising self-sufficiency rates. The higher the coverage rate through local production, the greater the independence of nutritional decisions and the lower the degree of dependency and the risk of fluctuations in international markets²⁰.
- **Health security:** Health security is defined in the 1994 Human Development Report as protecting individuals from diseases; This requires the provision of proactive health care and effective investment in it by increasing sectoral spending and creating a safe, healthy environment for all. This dimension has gained central importance as one of the pillars of human security in the wake of the Corona pandemic, whose heavy toll of victims has revealed the fragility of existing health systems, stressing the urgent need to move from merely superficial strengthening to restructuring them and developing their ability to confront and withstand²¹.
- **Environmental Security:** Environmental security is defined as a comprehensive system that targets various threats resulting from pollution, environmental degradation, and scarcity of natural resources. This concept is fundamentally linked to protecting the individual from all emerging risks and threats that affect his environment and threaten the sustainability of his life. The seriousness of these threats lies in their direct impact on the quality of human life, due to their close intertwining with various aspects of human daily activity. In this context, the United Nations Development Program report for the year 2009 emphasized the centrality of environmental security as a basic pillar for ensuring economic and social security, based on considering natural capital as a container and determinant of social and financial capital. The report also highlighted the phenomena of environmental migration, climate change, and air and water pollution as the most prominent current challenges facing the entire human security system²².

- **Community security:** Community security, within the framework of the human security approach, means consolidating the individual's sense of belonging within his social and institutional environment. Whether this is embodied within the family, the local community, structural organizations, or ethnic and racial groups. These entities derive their conceptual importance from their ability to provide their members with a coherent cultural identity and an integrated value system that achieves psychological and emotional stability, as well as providing a system of practical support and solidarity that contributes to enhancing the protection and empowerment of individuals within society²³.
- **Political security:** Political security means ensuring the protection of individuals from the tools of oppression and threats, and sparing them the consequences of conflicts, wars, and forced displacement. It is the umbrella that guarantees the exercise of human rights and basic freedoms without discrimination or exception in an environment free of authoritarian violence. This concept expands to include the inherent right of individuals to exercise political independence by choosing their representatives, actively engaging in political participation and expressing legitimate opposition, within frameworks that enshrine democratic practice and the principles of good governance²⁴.
- **Personal security:** The essential component of personal security is determined by ensuring the comprehensive protection of a person's physical entity to protect him from forms of assault and physical violence, which gives him a position of prominence and effectiveness within the dimensions of human security because it touches on the core of physical integrity and the innate right to life. However, achieving this dimension faces a number of emerging variables and threats that undermine the individual's self-stability. Its most prominent forms are embodied in the expansion of organized violence, the escalation of criminal practices, and the repercussions of armed conflicts, in addition to the various forms of infringement and violation directed against human dignity and humanity²⁵.

Third: Characteristics of human security

The concept of human security differs from the concept of traditional security and is characterized by a set of characteristics that we mention in the following points:

- Human security is universal in nature, as it aims to ensure all individuals' livelihoods and dignity and to protect them from existing and emerging threats that are widespread in several areas.
- Human security is multidimensional, as it involves attention to many aspects. It is concerned with economic security, which is threatened by poverty, food security, which is threatened by famine, health security, which is threatened by diseases and epidemics, political security, which is threatened by persecution, and societal security, which is threatened by ethnic tensions and conflicts.
- Human security is a preventive approach that calls for comprehensive, people-centred responses adapted to each context in a way that enhances the protection and empowerment of individuals and their communities.

- Human security enhances internal solutions derived from local reality, and thus governments retain the main role in ensuring and maintaining their needs, while society complements the role of these governments²⁶.

The third topic: The dialectical relationship between the lack of security and the growing phenomenon of human trafficking

The relationship between the absence of security and the growing phenomenon of human trafficking constitutes one of the most complex conceptual and realistic relationships in studies of international security and modern political science, as one cannot be treated as an independent variable and the other as a dependent variable in a simple linear manner. Rather, they are interconnected within a closed, malicious circle (Vicious Cycle) in which causes intertwine with results, and in which the two phenomena exchange roles of influence and influence. Through this proposition, we indicate the direction of influence and the direction of being affected by indicating the cause, arriving at the result, and knowing the opposite effect. Finally, conclude the end result.

First: The relationship of influence between the crime of human trafficking and human security.

The absence of security, with its various political, institutional, economic, social, personal, health, food and societal dimensions, constitutes the fertile structural environment in which cross-border organized crime networks thrive. The dynamics of this effect are crystallized through the following mechanisms:

- Institutional disintegration and the decline of sovereign deterrence constitute one of the reasons for the state's weakness in implementing its national legislation and applying deterrence mechanisms. The absence of security and the disorder in state institutions lead to the functional paralysis of law enforcement agencies and judicial and supervisory institutions (which is known as the disintegration of the deterrence system). This sovereign vacuum turns troubled areas into "safe havens" to regulate the management of networks and exploit victims without fear of legal prosecution²⁷.
- In the absence of a security environment that guarantees legitimate economic activities, "shadow economies" or "conflict economies" are formed, where the human being is redefined as a commodity with a high financial return and low investment risks compared to arms or drug smuggling, which raises the rates of "demand" for victims²⁸. Shadow money may lead to major economic problems, changing labor market laws with the abundance of cheap labor in front of trained and regular labor, in addition to the spread of begging, robbery, gang formation, drug promotion, prostitution, and human trafficking. This dimension of risk is linked to the amount of shadow money that circulates in society, so that it cannot be counted or its value predicted, in addition to financial transfers abroad through intermediaries. It can be counted among the group of reasons that led to the economic crisis in Greece in 2010, and the economic crisis in Italy in 2016: An increasing proportion of shadow economies²⁹.
- Insecurity generates severe cases of forced displacement, asylum, and many manifestations of human fragility, such as violating the residency system and the border system, which constitutes a threat to the state. Among its most prominent risks is a

change in national and social identity, not to mention illegal residency, which results in begging, robbery, and the formation of gangs to promote contraband, prostitution, and human trafficking. All of this puts pressure on public and health services as a result of not knowing the number of immigrants³⁰. In addition to the collapse of social and economic protection systems. These situations create a state of complex helplessness among vulnerable groups (especially women and children), which makes it easier for trafficking networks to lure them through deception or coercion into forced labor, sexual exploitation, or human organ trade³¹.

Second: The relationship between the crime of human trafficking and human security.

Human trafficking does not stop at the borders of being a result or a side effect of the security collapse, but rather it transforms itself into an active variable that feeds into the lack of stability, through the following paths:

- The threat posed by the phenomenon goes beyond the traditional dimension of state security to affect human security in its basic centers (personal, societal, and economic security). Its spread leads to the disintegration of the societal fabric, the spread of violence and exploitation, and the spread of cross-border diseases, as well as the threat to social cohesion in transit and destination countries³².
- Human trafficking crimes constitute an extremely serious structural threat to economic security at the national and global levels, due to the flow of their illicit profits (estimated at approximately \$150 billion annually, especially those resulting from the exploitation of women and children) to mediation networks and parallel activities away from the official budgets of countries. Depriving the formal economy of including these huge financial flows within the approved tax and banking frameworks leads to feeding the “hidden economy” system, resulting in imbalances in public financial balances and distorting the monetary and development policies of countries³³.
- The huge profits resulting from human trafficking operations are also a major source of funding for armed groups, terrorist organizations, and cross-border crime gangs. These revenues are used to buy weapons, recruit mercenaries, and perpetuate conflicts, which reproduces civil chaos and prevents the state from regaining its prestige³⁴.
- Human trafficking networks rely on penetrating national borders, deepening the phenomenon of “soft borders,” and employing corruption across national institutions. This continuous penetration weakens the state’s ability to control its national territory, and creates areas not subject to effective control (Ungoverned Spaces) that threaten the entire regional and international security³⁵.
- Globalization is one of the factors influencing the spread of new security threats caused by humans, through its contribution to the opening of borders, the flow of information, and the ease of communication between nations and peoples. This has led to the easy spread of many asymmetric security threats in which a single individual or group of individuals can pose a threat to the state, most notably the spread of terrorist groups, irregular migration, organized crimes including money laundering, crimes of information theft and hacking, and the spread of unlicensed weapons among citizens, in addition to human trafficking crimes³⁶.

To point out the dialectical interaction and the malicious circle after treating both parties, the relationship between the lack of security and the growth of human trafficking is an interactive, reciprocal and complementary relationship. While the security vacuum acts as an explanatory and motivating condition for the phenomenon by creating the “supply” (vulnerable victims) and the “safe environment” for crime, human trafficking acts as a nourishing and deepening factor for the security collapse by financing chaos, undermining human security, and demolishing state institutions.

The second topic: The repercussions of human trafficking on the foundations of human security (analytical aspect)

The criminal phenomenon has negative repercussions and effects on various economic, social and political levels, and these effects intensify when the “human element” itself becomes a subject of criminalization and a subject of exploitation, as human trafficking has become one of the most lucrative criminal projects on the international scene, as a result of its structural connection and field intersection with various types of transnational organized crime. These criminal practices lead to the spread of institutional corruption and the erosion of the ability of state agencies to enforce criminal justice, not to mention what they constitute as a blatant attack and a serious violation of the package of human rights guaranteed by law and law, the most important of which is the right to life and freedom, freedom from modern forms of forced labor and slavery, preserving physical and health integrity, and defending human dignity against all forms of violence or cruel treatment. It is a human rights system that constitutes the basic barrier to ensure the security of individuals, and the legal foundation to deter all forms of violence. Commodification and human exploitation. This has a negative and direct impact on the various pillars of human security (personal, economic, social, and health security), going beyond the concept of traditional national security to threatening the security and survival of the individual.

The first requirement: Threats to personal security and physical sovereignty (violence, exploitation)

Personal security represents a fundamental pillar in building a human security approach, given its organic and direct connection to protecting the lives of individuals and preserving their physical integrity. In this context, crime in its various types and forms emerges as one of the most dangerous threatening aspects to societal stability, due to the structural disruption and profound psychological repercussions it causes, as its impact extends to spreading a state of apprehension and extended fear among members of society about the possibility of falling victim to these activities. Thus, “fear of crime” goes beyond its limits as a side effect and turns into a stand-alone phenomenon whose psychological and societal effects outweigh the direct danger of the criminal act itself³⁷.

The absence of personal security “as one of the fundamental pillars of human security” is evident in the direct threats and risks resulting from the expansion of criminal activities, most notably the crime of trafficking in persons, as it entails a direct violation of the safety and physical freedom of individuals. In confirmation of this proposition, the global report issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that the spread of this phenomenon has led to the undermining of the system of individual safety by depriving the victims of their freedom and subjecting them to forms of forced labor, detention, and violent

practices that... Depriving them of the right to tranquility and physical integrity, in addition to the expansion of systematic forced exploitation to include prostitution and the removal of human organs, which places victims in a state of constant threat to their lives and psychological and health safety, exploiting the states of fragility and need among the groups most at risk (especially women and children) and depriving them of enjoying the minimum legal and personal protection, according to what was indicated in the report issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime :

- %74 of traffickers work within organized criminal groups.
- In 2022, victims of 162 nationalities were trafficked to 128 different countries.
- About 70% of people investigated, prosecuted or convicted for trafficking in 2022 were male.
- Victims of African descent were the most vulnerable to cross-border trafficking, accounting for 31% of cross-border trafficking flows³⁸.

The extreme danger of human trafficking crimes is represented by their wide geographical scope and the increasing number of victims globally, as International Labor Organization estimates indicate that about 21 million people are subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation across various countries of origin, transit and destination. Despite the methodological difficulties that hinder the accurate accounting of this phenomenon, statistical data based on documentary reports for the year 2005 confirm that 12.3 million individuals were subject to forced labour, including 2.4 million victims who were exploited through human trafficking networks, and the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children, constitute the critical mass of the total number of these victims³⁹.

Human trafficking crimes do not stop at increasing the number of victims, but rather extend to represent a grave aggression against basic human rights, most importantly the right to freedom, personal security, physical integrity, movement, and freedom from all forms of forced labor and enslavement. These crimes take on an extremely dangerous nature, as they are considered threatening behavior and are classified as crimes against humanity, as they constitute a blatant violation of the national and international human rights system and a clear denial of moral values and religious principles, in addition to the direct undermining of individual security and human dignity⁴⁰.

Given the multiple effects of organized crime, its spread threatens the political security of individuals when sources of livelihood are depleted in the state, people are deprived of enjoying their political and economic rights guaranteed under international laws, and affecting opportunities to eradicate poverty. All of these practices will inevitably lead to the adoption of political violence as an inevitable result of the tension among members of society due to the policy of exclusion and marginalization that prevails in the state. Crime is the greatest source of concern for many individuals, and therefore the individual's safety from harm and all forms of violence committed by individuals

Or groups, the state, or even the self⁴¹ 'It can only be done by protecting individuals from all kinds of threats .

The second requirement: economic and social effects (weakening the labor market, family disintegration...)

The phenomenon of human trafficking results in severe economic and social repercussions, and these repercussions can be summarized and limited to the following proposition.

First: Economic repercussions: The most important economic repercussions resulting from the crime of human trafficking can be identified within the following main points:

- Compromising the efficiency of human capital and the structure of the labor market: In this context, human trafficking destroys primary human capital, as exploitation of vulnerable groups, especially children, deprives them of building their capabilities and qualifying them, which undermines the future labor force and deprives society of strategic productive capabilities.
- The phenomenon of disguised unemployment is also worsening and human trafficking is declining, as workers' energies are wasted in illegal activities that generate quick returns without a real contribution to the gross domestic product accounts, which hinders comprehensive economic growth rates.
- In the same context, human trafficking affects the health of the workforce, which makes the state incur additional financial burdens to provide social and health care for victims of trafficking, especially with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among young people, which weakens their productivity and development contribution.
- Monetary and structural disturbances in the macroeconomy: Human trafficking creates inflationary pressures and exacerbates the trade deficit, through foreign cash transfers resulting from criminal activities, an increase in demand for consumer goods without being matched by a real increase in productivity, which raises inflation levels and distorts the price structure. In developing countries affected by resource deficits, the gap between import and export widens, causing the trade deficit to increase.
- Human trafficking also disrupts the tax justice base. This occurs as a result of the circulation of funds outside official frameworks, resulting in the parties to the crime obtaining high incomes without subjecting them to tax deduction, which harms the state's public revenues.
- Financial and security repercussions: Trafficking networks resort to money laundering operations to legitimize their revenues, which creates a sharp disparity in the distribution of national income, and reduces tax collections in exchange for increased government spending to reduce the effects resulting from the phenomenon.

This is known as the depletion of public funds and poor distribution of income.

Suspicious financial flows also cause sharp fluctuations in securities prices (up and down), which inflicts huge losses on investors, i.e. destabilizes financial markets, stimulates the consumption pattern at the expense of rates of saving and productive investment, and ends up weakening the overall productivity of the economy⁴².

Second: Social repercussions:

- The crime of human trafficking constitutes an extended threat whose direct impact goes beyond the victims to affect the entire social and family structure. This crime leads to the

disintegration of the family fabric through the forced separation of individuals from their families and their exploitation in forced labor and various exploitative activities, which leaves deep and continuing psychological and emotional traumas and setbacks for the affected families.

- At the level of local communities, this phenomenon causes the erosion of social capital, the shaking of just trust between individuals, and the decline of the value system and moral standards governing society. Moreover, conditions of sexual exploitation and forced labor in environments lacking minimal sanitary safety contribute to exacerbating public health risks, particularly by accelerating the spread of clandestine and infectious diseases such as HIV (AIDS) among vulnerable and exploited groups⁴³.

The third requirement: Human trafficking as a source of financing for organized crime and a threat to the political security of countries

Human trafficking constitutes a billion-dollar trade with enormous profits that feeds various organized crime networks and contributes to revitalizing illicit economies. The impact of the phenomenon extends from a mere humanitarian violation to a direct threat to the sovereignty, internal stability, and national security of states. Through this request, we highlight the dual dimensions of this phenomenon.

First: The complex criminal dimension of human trafficking

The crime of trafficking in persons is one of the most profitable and organized criminal enterprises at the international level, as it forms an integrated fabric of crimes intertwined with several forms of transnational organized crime, and its most prominent dimensions and risks are embodied in:

- This crime is directly linked to organized crime gangs, as its methods integrate with money laundering operations to legitimize the huge revenues obtained from them, and crimes of forging travel and identity documents to facilitate movement, as well as its field intersection with networks of migrant smuggling and smuggling of narcotic substances and weapons.
- Security and criminal analyzes reveal the existence of reliable links and mutual interests between human trafficking networks and terrorist groups, as this crime is exploited as a vital funding source to fuel terrorist activities, or as a tool to subjugate victims and force recruitment.
- The boom and expansion of transnational organized crime weakens formal institutions and erodes the state's ability to implement legislation and enforce criminal justice; As a result of mafias using methods of infiltration, corruption, and intimidation, which negatively affects security stability and the rule of law⁴⁴.

Second: Economic profitability and the threat to the political security of countries

Transnational criminal organizations have become increasingly involved in the phenomenon of trafficking in women for the purpose of subjecting them to sexual exploitation and forced prostitution; It relies on a set of methods to trap women into the trap of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. These methods are :

- **Systematic exploitation of conditions of poverty and material deprivation:** Trafficking networks exploit conditions of economic fragility and poverty in source countries as a main

entry point to reach victims. Material deprivation and social inequality are a fertile environment that facilitates recruitment and control operations.

- **Fraud and deception through false job promises:** These organizations rely on the method of deception and deception by presenting a false job offer and fictitious pledges to obtain prestigious job opportunities or contracts with lucrative financial returns in the countries of destination, so that upon arrival, victims find themselves under the burden of detention, deprivation of their freedom of movement, and coercion into practicing prostitution.
- **Direct coercive acts and criminal re Commodification:** Organized crime practices reach more serious stages through forced kidnapping and cross-border smuggling, where victims are forced to work in prostitution networks under the threat of weapons or physical and psychological violence, or subjected to “sale and exchange” between other organized networks as commercial goods that enhance the profits of the hidden criminal economy.

Transnational criminal organizations turn this activity into one of the main tributaries of the underground economy of organized crime. This strategic shift in criminal networks is due to two pivotal factors:

- **High profitability and criminal economic growth:** The human trafficking (especially the sexual exploitation of women) is ranked third in the world in terms of the size of illegal financial returns and profits, closely followed by the drug and arms trade. This trade is characterized by the possibility of exploiting the “same victim” multiple times and generating continuous returns, unlike tangible material goods whose value ends with sale or consumption.
- **Low legal and security risks:** Criminal organizations benefit from loopholes in national legislation and disparities in international cooperation frameworks to reduce detection and prosecution rates. This makes trafficking in women an activity with a low security and judicial risk compared to weapons or drug smuggling crimes, and stimulates organized crime gangs to expand their activities and coordinate their networks across borders⁴⁵.

The third topic: Mechanisms for enhancing human security in the face of human trafficking

This research deals with the most important mechanisms for combating the crime of human trafficking through legislative and institutional effectiveness, the role of international and regional cooperation in besieging criminal networks, and reaching the development approach as a strategic solution that addresses the roots of the phenomenon.

The first requirement: legislative and institutional effectiveness (prevention, prosecution, protection)

The crime of human trafficking is classified as a direct threat to human security in the modern sense. This premise requires confronting this phenomenon with legislative and institutional methods that ensure its criminalization through an integrated trilogy of prevention, prosecution, and protection, which is the trilogy adopted by the Palermo Protocol as a global frame of reference⁴⁶.

First: Legislative and institutional effectiveness in the field of prevention

The Palermo Protocol is considered among the protocols that addressed the issue of prevention of the crime of human trafficking, as Article 9 obligated States Parties to take comprehensive measures that combine research, information, awareness-raising campaigns, and social and economic initiatives, with special attention to addressing the structural factors that make certain groups, such as women and children, more vulnerable to exploitation, most notably poverty, marginalization, and lack of equal opportunities⁴⁷.

Despite this, there is a deep gap between the legal text and its actual application among countries, which constitutes a fundamental obstacle to combating efforts and fuels the exacerbation of the seriousness of human trafficking crimes. In this regard, the inadequacy or absence of criminalization of these crimes within national penal codes in some systems is highlighted, which allows transnational organized crime networks to escape punishment, and undermines international judicial and security cooperation frameworks as a result of the legislative discrepancy in the legal definition of the crime (between a felony and a misdemeanor) and the different penalties resulting from it⁴⁸. To correct this legislative and institutional imbalance, there is a scientific and practical need to formulate unified and comprehensive legislation based on the following methodological axes:

- ✓ Achieving coordination between national systems and compatibility with relevant international and regional conventions, especially in confronting phenomena that fuel trafficking, such as “early marriage” and the resulting sexual exploitation and forced labour.
- ✓ Formulating the proposed legislative rules from a perspective that takes into account the global and transnational criminal dimension of the phenomenon.
- ✓ Activating protection and positive citizenship frameworks by motivating individuals and families from the most vulnerable groups to preventively report, and supporting this with specialized procedural mechanisms by establishing specific security units at police stations to receive reports and deal with them⁴⁹.

Institutionally, most countries have tended to create national bodies or committees to coordinate between the various sectors (security, judicial, social, health) within the framework of national strategies to prevent and combat the phenomenon, similar to the national committees for coordinating measures to combat human trafficking, which have become an approved mechanism in an increasing number of countries, sometimes in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in training field actors such as border station officials and judges⁵⁰.

Second: Legislative and institutional effectiveness in the field of prosecution

The Palermo Protocol stipulates that the acts constituting the crime of trafficking must be criminalized, investigated and prosecuted, especially when these crimes are cross-border in nature and involve organized criminal groups⁵¹. However, the effectiveness of prosecutions encounters structural obstacles in practice:

- ✓ The transnational nature of the crime is complex.
- ✓ Difficulty collecting evidence in light of the secrecy of criminal networks.
- ✓ Weak judicial coordination between countries exporting, transiting, and receiving victims.

In the same field, the statute of limitations for public lawsuits constitutes a complex legal and legal dilemma in the field of human trafficking crimes, as the psychological and procedural position of the victim fluctuates between fear and hesitation to file a criminal lawsuit. This situation is based on a legitimate fear of the oppression of transnational organized crime networks and the tools of threat and revenge they possess, which imposes on the victim a state of moral coercion that prompts him to postpone reporting until the danger passes, so the legislative hopes established for prosecution expire with the passage of time and the crime is dropped with the passage of time. In addition to this, there are serious psychological and physical effects resulting from exploitation, which require a longer period of time to recover and gather the necessary forces to confront the perpetrators before the judiciary, which ultimately results in the impunity of the perpetrators and the forfeiture of the right to criminal and penal retribution⁵².

UN statistics reveal the widening of this gap between criminalization and punitive effectiveness, as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recorded a noticeable decline in the number of convictions issued in human trafficking cases globally, from about 7,300 convictions to approximately 2,300 only between the years 2017 and 2020, and a total of about 47 thousand victims were registered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the year 2020, about 39% of whom were used in forced labor. Or were sexually exploited. About 10% were forced to commit crimes⁵³. In contrast to a continuous increase in the number of discovered victims, the number of whom were children has tripled in fifteen years.⁵⁴

This discrepancy between the growth of the phenomenon and the decline in indicators of actual prosecution raises fundamental questions about the extent of the ability of the national judicial and security agencies to keep pace with the rapid development of criminal network methods, especially with their increasing exploitation of digital communication means for remote recruitment and recruitment, which are used as a safe means of communication and transactions between members of the organization to avoid monitoring and the traditional aspects of security and judicial prosecution, in addition to the use of electronic tracking and surveillance techniques to tighten control over victims and ward off their escape attempts, ensuring that they remain under direct exploitation of these networks⁵⁵.

Third: Legislative and institutional effectiveness in the field of protection

In addition to prevention and prosecution, various relevant international legislations stipulate the issue of protecting victims of human trafficking. This protection takes two forms, being legal and objective. By this, we mean the protection of the victim is the protection of every natural person who has been exposed to material or moral harm, whether that harm resulted from one of the crimes covered by this law and regardless of the perpetrator, whether his identity is known or unknown, he was arrested, convicted, or sentenced. It includes legal protection:

- ✓ Identifying the identities of the victims, their nationalities, and their ages so that you can protect them from the perpetrators, and this is what various international agreements stipulate
- ✓ Protecting victims from retaliation or threats and protecting their personal privacy. Their identities must not be announced to the public except in exceptional cases that require this.
- ✓ Protecting victim witnesses from retaliation. Sometimes the victim is himself a witness to the crime, and in this case he will inevitably be exposed to retaliation in person or through his relatives or family members.

- ✓ The substantive protection was as follows:
- ✓ Lack of criminal or civil liability for any human trafficking crime if the victim is one of them.
- ✓ Do not expel the victim and allow them to remain within the state's territory, temporarily or permanently, according to circumstances and what they require.

International agreements also include direct protection for victims of human trafficking, indirect protection for them, represented by helping them claim their rights before justice, and various other rights related to their being victims and parties to the criminal case, as this assistance ensures that their livelihood is secured in the best possible way by providing appropriate and safe housing, psychological and material assistance, and their access to appropriate medical treatment.

Protection does not stop at the points referred to, but is concerned with their integration and return to their homelands. This is done by giving the victims opportunities to work, educate and train them, and taking into account their safety, rights and dignity in the event that they are returned to their homelands⁵⁶.

This commitment has been translated institutionally, in a number of countries, through the creation of what is known as "National Referral Mechanisms," which is a procedural system that aims to unify the roles of the various intervening bodies (security, judicial, health, and social) within an integrated path that usually passes through four stages: identifying the potential victim according to approved indicators, sheltering her and providing her with health, psychological, and legal support, collecting evidence and enabling her to access justice, then searching for permanent solutions, including voluntary return or return. Inclusion, she also pointed out the need for governments to fulfill their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of victims of human trafficking, and to coordinate their efforts in a strategic partnership with civil society organizations, victims and the private sector⁵⁷.

Despite the importance of these mechanisms, their practical application is hampered by the limited capacity of shelter centers, the difficulty of distinguishing on the ground between a victim and an irregular migrant, as well as the challenges posed to the social and economic integration of victims in the long term. It must be noted that the protection granted to victims remains a hostage to the available institutional capabilities rather than an actual guaranteed right, which opens the door to strengthening international and regional cooperation mechanisms as a complementary approach.

The second requirement: The role of international and regional cooperation in besieging criminal networks

Legislative and institutional effectiveness represents the first line of defense against human trafficking, and as a result of the cross-border nature that characterizes the crime of human trafficking, it makes international and regional cooperation indispensable in besieging criminal networks that are active in any region. In general, cooperation takes several forms, which we mention below:

First: international security and police cooperation

The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) occupies a pivotal position in this framework. The forms of operational and tactical support that the International Criminal

Police Organization (Interpol) provides to national police agencies are evident in managing and coordinating field operations aimed at dismantling cross-border criminal networks, especially those active in the field of human trafficking. These tactical interventions are preceded by an intensive preparatory phase that includes organizing workshops and specialized training courses to raise the efficiency of police officers in advanced investigation and interrogation techniques. In parallel with field empowerment, Interpol provides advanced technical and intelligence frameworks that enable law enforcement agencies to cooperate on a global scale, exchange security data and coordinate precautionary measures with high effectiveness. “Operation Spartacus” is a prominent applied model of these efforts. Close police coordination between 25 Central and South American countries resulted in the rescue of large numbers of victims, the dismantling of at least seven organized criminal networks, as well as the arrest of 134 suspects, which highlights the direct impact of international police cooperation in curbing the criminal phenomenon⁵⁸.

Within the framework of international coordination, Interpol has established strategic partnerships with many international and non-governmental organizations concerned with combating the crime of trafficking in persons, with the aim of exchanging best practices and experiences with bodies of common interest. The most prominent partners in this field are: ECOWAS, Eurojust, Frontex, International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organization of American States (OAS), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), South-Eastern European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), United Kingdom Office of Missing Persons, as well as the United Nations Office on Drugs and crime (UNODC).»⁵⁹

Second: International judicial and legal cooperation

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) established two basic mechanisms for judicial cooperation: extradition and mutual legal assistance.

The procedure for extraditing criminals is subject to several controls and legal mechanisms required by international conventions, the most important of which is the availability of the condition of dual criminality. So that the act attributed to the person whose extradition is requested constitutes a crime punishable by the legislation of both the requesting state and the state to which extradition is requested, provided that this crime is covered by the provisions of the regulating convention or falls within serious crimes. The extradition process depends either on the existence of a bilateral/multilateral treaty, or on taking these agreements as a direct legal basis for its conduct, while being completely subject to the provisions and procedures determined by the internal legislation of the requested state or the applicable treaty. In implementation of the principle of “either extradition or trial” (Aut Dedere Aut Judicare), the state that rejects the request is obligated to refer the case to its competent authorities to take judicial prosecution measures, all while ensuring fair and just treatment for the person requested to be extradited, and protecting him from any forms of discrimination in accordance with the stable principles of human rights⁶⁰.

The provisions for mutual legal assistance in the areas of investigation, prosecution and judicial procedures are determined when there is a suspicion of the transnational nature of the

crime, as this assistance is procedurally subject to the provisions of the internal legislation of the implementing state (receiving the request), as well as the relevant regional and international treaties, agreements and arrangements. Legal assistance is primarily aimed at achieving a set of procedural goals, including obtaining evidence, completing people's statements, communicating documents and judicial papers, executing search, seizure and freezing orders, inspecting objects and sites, in addition to providing information and evidence, expert documents, relevant records and symbols, and tracking the proceeds of crimes, leading to facilitating the voluntary appearance of people before the judicial authorities in the requesting state.⁶¹

The importance of these two mechanisms lies in overcoming the problem of the difference in national legislation and the varying capabilities of law enforcement agencies from one country to another, which is imposed by the nature of transnational organized crime that exploits borders and sovereignty as a safe haven for its perpetrators. However, the practical application of these two mechanisms remains dependent on the slowness of diplomatic and judicial procedures, and the varying degree of commitment to the agreement between the signatory countries.

Third: Regional cooperation and joint programs

Regional initiatives that complement global frameworks to combat the crime of trafficking in persons and address the conditions specific to each geographical region are evident in the following points:

In addition to global frameworks, regional cooperation initiatives have developed geared to the specificities of each region; In Africa and the Middle East, the European Union, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, launched the "Global Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants" (GLO.ACT) program, with funding of nearly 11 million euros over four years, with the aim of strengthening national legal frameworks, the role of national coordinators, and consolidating regional cooperation among 13 beneficiary countries⁶².

In the same context, the role of the European Council in this field is highlighted through the European Commission on Crime Problems (CDPC), as a specialized body in criminal law that aims to dismantle the mechanisms of organized crime and propose advanced formulas for international cooperation, whose efforts have culminated in the adoption of crucial recommendations to protect witnesses and victims in organized crime cases. The European Union has also developed joint security cooperation and law enforcement mechanisms to include combating forms of human trafficking and strengthening cross-regional security partnerships.

At the African continental level, the African Union played a pivotal role by establishing the "African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights" to advance and protect the human rights system and provide regional cover to prevent exploitation.

Within the Arab regional framework, the Arab countries strengthened their national agreements and measures to confront organized crime by adopting the "Arab Guidance Law to Combat Human Trafficking Crimes," which is considered a guiding legislative reference that supports member states in developing their own national laws until the issuance of integrated and independent legislation to confront this crime.⁶³

Remaining besieged by criminal networks operating in the field of human trafficking requires the combination of three levels of cooperation: executive security, judicial-legal, and regional institutional financed and structured through long-term partnership programs. The effectiveness of this system remains dependent on the extent of the political commitment of countries to implement the agreements they have signed, and their ability to keep pace with the speed of criminal networks' adaptation to modern technological tools for recruitment and camouflage, which requires completing the security approach by addressing the structural factors that generate the phenomenon.

The third requirement: The development approach as a strategic solution to confront the crime of human trafficking

The development approach to addressing the phenomenon stems from its structural roots, based on the assumption that poverty and weak opportunities for a decent living constitute fertile ground that trafficking networks exploit to attract their victims, and that any purely security or legal confrontation will not achieve sustainable results unless it is complemented by a development treatment of these driving factors.

First: The strategy of strengthening social frameworks

Specialized literature agrees that poverty, low standards of living, and the absence of decent work opportunities are among the most prominent factors driving people to fall victim to human trafficking. Material deprivation and structural poverty, in addition to the systematic reliance on forced labor and forced labour, represent two main inputs to the exacerbation of the phenomenon of human trafficking and its societal repercussions, which calls for the adoption of comprehensive intervention strategies concerned with strengthening social security frameworks, developing the educational system, and providing sustainable job opportunities.

At the level of institutional confrontation, combating corruption, consolidating the rule of law, and enshrining good governance practices are essential pillars for curbing this organized crime. In this context, the importance of raising community awareness is highlighted as one of the most effective preventive mechanisms to undermine the phenomenon, through media awareness campaigns and targeted educational programs recommended by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to reduce the demand on victims and raise awareness of the risks resulting from it.

The preventive system is completed by modernizing the legislative and legal frameworks to address the causes of trafficking, and to ensure effective protection for the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and migrant workers, in line with the directives of the International Labor Organization calling for adopting a victim-centered approach that supports the empowerment of survivors and ensures their access to the necessary social, legal, and financial care⁶⁴.

Second: Sustainable development goals as a strategic framework to address the phenomenon

The inclusion of combating the crime of human trafficking constitutes an international legal obligation closely linked to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and an explicit recognition of the developmental dimension of the phenomenon, specifically through the activation of the human rights-based approach. This link is

evident in the fifth goal (gender equality), which aims to dismantle gender-based exploitation and eliminate grave violations and trafficking in women and girls, as they are the groups most vulnerable to structural vulnerability.⁶⁵

This protective framework is integrated with the eighth goal (decent work and economic growth), which imposes a strict ban on forced labour, forced labor and contemporary slavery in accordance with the basic conventions of the International Labor Organization, stressing that economic sustainability is absolutely incompatible with trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation and wasting the protective rights of the worker.

To ensure the effectiveness of these principles, the sixteenth goal (peace, justice, and strong institutions) comes to provide the procedural and substantive legal framework, as goal (16.2) is concerned with ending the exploitation of children, which obliges countries to harmonize their national legislation with the Palermo Protocol, and activate criminal prosecution mechanisms against cross-border organized crime networks, while adhering to the principle of non-punishment to victims and providing them with legal and judicial protection, in order to establish the rule of law and the concept of effective justice⁶⁶.

In general, the development approach represents a necessary strategic complement to the legislative and cooperative approaches, but it remains the weakest link in terms of activation, as it is often formulated in the form of general recommendations without binding financing and implementation mechanisms. Therefore, building an effective and sustainable response to the phenomenon of human trafficking requires an integrated treatment that combines legal deterrence, international and regional coordination, and development investment in addressing the roots of social and economic fragility.

Conclusion

Through the above theoretical and applied analysis of the phenomenon of human trafficking through the three sections of this study, it becomes clear that this crime no longer falls within the circle of ordinary crimes that are dealt with only by the logic of traditional criminal deterrence, but rather it has become one of the most dangerous complex threats to human security in its comprehensive sense, as a phenomenon in which individual human rights violations intersect with economic and social structural imbalances, and is organically linked to the transnational organized crime system that threatens the stability and sovereignty of states.

The study started from the international legal framework, first and foremost the Palermo Protocol, and although it constituted an important normative basis for unifying the concept of human trafficking and its criminalization, it remains incomplete unless it is read in the light of the human security system in its multiple dimensions, which reveals the growing dialectical relationship between the lack of security in its broad sense and the exacerbation of this phenomenon.

Through applied analysis, we have seen that the repercussions of human trafficking extend from the direct assault on the physical sovereignty of victims and the practice of violence and exploitation in its various forms, through the weakening of the formal labor market and the dismantling of family ties, all the way to the transformation of this crime into a major source of funding for organized criminal groups, making it a direct threat to the political security of countries and their institutional stability.

This study confirmed that confronting this phenomenon cannot be achieved effectively except through a three-dimensional approach that combines legislative and institutional effectiveness based on the triad of prevention, prosecution, and protection, activating international and regional cooperation mechanisms to besiege transnational criminal networks, and moving from the logic of situational treatment to the logic of a strategic development approach that targets the structural roots of the phenomenon, most notably poverty, unemployment, and social marginalization.

Based on the above, it can be said that reducing the phenomenon of human trafficking depends on the extent of the ability of states and international organizations to transcend the duality of national security versus human security, and move towards an integrated vision that restores consideration of the individual as a central subject of any security policy, in a way that achieves a real balance between the requirements of security in its traditional sense and the requirements of human dignity and the rights of victims.

Recommendations

- ✓ Review national legislation to ensure its full compatibility with the Palermo Protocol and other relevant international agreements, while filling legal gaps related to the definition of new forms of exploitation.
- ✓ Strengthening social and psychological protection mechanisms for victims, and establishing or activating specialized shelter centers that ensure social and economic reintegration away from the logic of secondary criminalization of the victim.
- ✓ Intensifying international and regional security and judicial cooperation, especially in the field of intelligence exchange and extradition of criminals, to besiege transnational criminal networks and dry up their sources of funding.
- ✓ Integrating the development dimension into national strategies to combat human trafficking, through employment and anti-poverty programs directed at the most vulnerable groups and those exposed to exploitation.
- ✓ Intensifying awareness and training programs directed at law enforcement agents, judges, and civil actors, to improve the ability to early detect trafficking cases and deal with them according to an approach that preserves the dignity of victims.
- ✓ Encouraging scientific field and statistical research on the scale of the phenomenon and its changing patterns, enabling the formulation of public policies based on accurate data instead of approximate estimates.

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