



Fact sheet for the Human Trafficking Victims Monitoring Report 2014-2018

Human trafficking is a violation of human dignity and integrity and breaches personal freedom. Yet despite this, the exploitation of children and adults is a daily reality. In the Netherlands, there are an estimated 5,000 to 7,500 victims every year. In 2018, only 668 of these victims were known to the national reporting centre.

THE RESEARCH

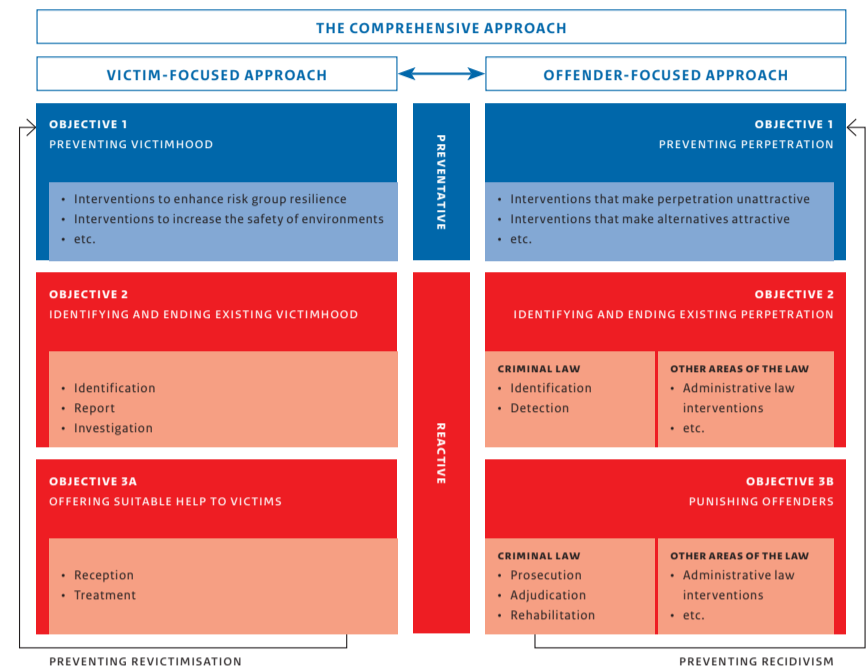
The Human Trafficking Victims Monitoring Report (Slachtoffermonitor mensenhandel) provides insight into the nature and extent of people falling victim to human trafficking in the 2014-2018 period. It describes which developments there have been in dealing with the issue and how many victims of human trafficking are known to the Coordination Centre against Human Trafficking (CoMensha: Coördinatiecentrum tegen mensenhandel) and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).



Comprehensive approach to dealing with human trafficking

In order to deal effectively with such a complex problem as human trafficking in all its various forms, a comprehensive approach is required, which is supported by all of the many various parties involved. This approach comprises measures which – as depicted in the outline – focus on preventing human trafficking, identifying and stopping human trafficking, offering suitable help to its victims and punishing the offenders. In order to learn from the approach, it is also important to monitor and evaluate the measures.

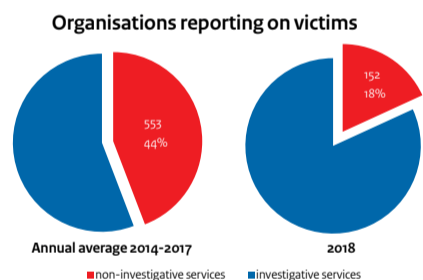
This Human Trafficking Victims Monitoring Report only deals with a limited part of the reactive victim-focused approach. Due to a lack of information and numerical data, it is not possible to monitor the entire victim-focused approach.



THE FINDINGS

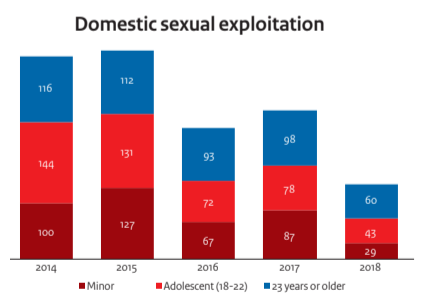
LACK OF COORDINATION AND MONITORING OF THE TOGETHER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAMME

The Together against human trafficking integrated programme approach includes many initiatives and measures intended to improve how human trafficking is dealt with. This shows that the topic is high on the political agenda. However, the relationship between the various aspects is unclear, as is how the effect of the measures is gauged.



LOSS OF INSIGHT ON THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VICTIMHOOD IN THE NETHERLANDS

What we know about victims of human trafficking is largely based on the CoMensha registration. The number of victims registered by CoMensha in the past five years has almost halved. The number of reports from organisations other than investigative services – such as care organisations – saw a particularly strong drop. While in 2014-2017 they reported over 550 victims on average every year, in 2018 this was just 150. The cause of this is that non-investigative services do not share victim details with CoMensha due to privacy legislation. The question is whether current reporting and registration practice is still adequate for gaining an understanding of the number of victims in the Netherlands.

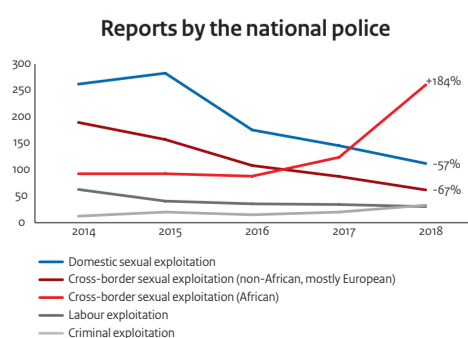


YOUNG DUTCH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ARE FALLING FROM VIEW

Domestic sexual exploitation (involving an estimated 3,000 victims) is the most common form of human trafficking in the Netherlands, involving by far the youngest victims and offenders. Nearly half are estimated to be minors (1,300). This extremely vulnerable group is falling from view in drastic fashion. In 2018, some 60% fewer victims of domestic sexual exploitation were reported to CoMensha than in 2014 and 2015; the number was just 132 victims of which only 29 minors. This would mean that only between 2% and 3% of Dutch minors who are victims of sexual exploitation are still being registered.

EXPLOITATION IN MIGRATION FLOWS REQUIRES INSIGHT

There has been a substantial increase in the number of foreign nationals who have requested asylum in another EU country (referred to as 'Dublin claimants') and are now reporting they are human trafficking victims in the Netherlands. Due to the large influx, the temporary residence arrangement for victims of human trafficking has been adapted for this group. They will now only receive protection under immigration law in the Netherlands once their report contains sufficient leads for a criminal investigation in the Netherlands. This change has had major consequences for both the protection of these victims and the detection of offenders. Exploitation within migration flows is a complex issue by definition, and currently there is too little insight into the underlying causes of this increase.



NATIONAL POLICE APPROACH TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS LACKING

The total number of reports by the national police has increased slightly for the first time in five years. However, this is related to a substantial increase in reports from a single specific group: African victims of sexual exploitation. These reports seldom lead to prosecution. The number of police reports of Dutch and European victims of sexual exploitation, on the other hand, has dropped significantly in the past five years. This means that the police identifies fewer victims and provides them with less support. This is at odds with the fact that police capacity is back up to strength since 2017 and investment has taken place in measures which should aid detection. However, various measures have not yet been implemented or implemented in full.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ENSURE COORDINATION AND MONITORING OF THE TOGETHER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAMME

The National Rapporteur recommends that the Minister for Migration ensures that the implementation of the measures from the Together against human trafficking programme are coordinated on a structural basis and that the developments are closely monitored.

2. IMPROVE REGISTRATION OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NETHERLANDS AND EXPLORE ROLE OF STATISTICS NETHERLANDS (CBS) IN THIS REGARD

The National Rapporteur recommends that the Minister for Migration improves the registration of victims of human trafficking in the Netherlands by completing and enriching the related data. In this light, the National Rapporteur specifically indicates the role that Statistics Netherlands (CBS) can fulfil as an independent statistics agency with a statutory basis.

3. PRIORITISE COMBATING DOMESTIC SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, FOCUSING ON YOUNG VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS

The National Rapporteur recommends that the Minister for Migration raises awareness of the comprehensive approach to domestic sexual exploitation and prioritises this, while focusing on the minors (and young adults) who are victims and offenders of this type of human trafficking.

4. DEVELOP AN APPROACH FOCUSED ON COMBATING EXPLOITATION WITHIN MIGRATION FLOWS

The National Rapporteur recommends that the Minister for Migration investigates in European context which causes and mechanisms related to human trafficking are involved in the current influx, and that effective policy is developed based on this research.

5. STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE FORCE IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The National Rapporteur recommends that the Minister of Justice and Security, the Minister for Migration and the police force command of the national police force implement the announced measures for detection, and to investigate which issues are proving problematic for the national police in dealing with human trafficking. This should involve establishing which conditions need to be met to implement the approach in a long-term and effective fashion.