
Anti-Human Trafficking Mechanisms in Africa

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Abstract:

This research addresses the phenomenon of trafficking in persons and their smuggling in the African continent, as one of the increasing and ongoing activities of terrorist groups operating under organized and transnational crimes, alongside drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and abductions for ransom. Additionally, this research examines the role played by African countries in confronting human trafficking within the framework of the African Union. The study concluded that the latter established a regional mechanism represented in African Union cooperation and AFRIPOL to prevent these various security threats. Ultimately, this reflects African states' recognition that an effective response to various organized criminal activities on the continent requires confrontation through police coordination methods, exchange of expertise, and expanding their scope in terms of training and supporting African police capacities.

Keywords: African Continent, Human Smuggling, African Union, AFRIPOL



Introduction

Human trafficking has been recognized throughout history, dating back to ancient times, until it was formally prohibited in the first half of the twentieth century. Slavery was prevalent in numerous societies, to the point where the population of enslaved individuals often exceeded that of free individuals. Prisoners of war were often enslaved rather than executed, viewed as part of the spoils of war to which the victors were entitled. Islamic Sharia established a rigorous system regarding this practice; while it did not explicitly forbid slavery, it emphasized the humane treatment of slaves and promoted their liberation through manumission. Over the years, this system contributed to efforts aimed at combating slavery and its associated trade. (Hawa. 2021. p 2)

Therefore, the international community has taken then ecessary actions to combat this crime, through the imperative of international cooperation in confronting it through International Agreements to prevent the risk of this crime's increasing danger at the international level. (Khelouf. Khadjouja. 2022. p 985)

Especially after the phenomenon's spread in African countries, which has become a burden on other global countries due to the deterioration of political, security, economic, and social conditions in most of their states.

Research Objective: The research aims to reveal the mechanisms and measures to eradicate the phenomenon of human trafficking in Africa.

Importance of research: The phenomenon of human trafficking is categorized as a transnational crime, which has gained significant importance in the post-Cold War period. This phase has given rise to a range of threats at both the (Failed States) and at the individual level (lack of human security in all its dimensions: military, political, economic, environmental, societal, and health). Human trafficking is among crimes that affect individuals from all categories. This phenomenon has spread widely in African countries that have become vulnerable to the aforementioned threats. Therefore, this study serves as a scientific addition addressing the discussion of combating this phenomenon and its mechanisms at the international and African levels.

From this perspective, the subsequent **problematic** is presented as follows: What mechanisms have been adopted in Africa to confront the crime of human trafficking?

Study Hypothesis: As the escalation of human threats in Africa increases, so do human trafficking crimes.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive method to describe the phenomenon of human trafficking and its status in the African continent. The study also used a case study method by pointing out the phenomenon in the African region.

1. The Concept of Trafficking in Persons

Organized crime groups engage in various serious offenses, including trafficking in persons to achieve their goals, particularly financial funding. Human trafficking represents a form of slavery and is emblematic of modern-day enslavement. In fact, this crime constitutes a blatant violation of human dignity, rights, and humanity in a manner that goes beyond being a crime against the state and society. Given the seriousness of this crime for both the individual and society, the international community has sought to establish numerous conventions aimed at combating trafficking in persons. The most important was the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime held in Palermo in 2000, along with its supplementary Protocol focused on combating trafficking in persons, specifically targeting women and children. (OHCHR.2014. p 3)

1.2 Definition of Human Trafficking:

Article 3(A) of the Protocol to Prevent Trafficking in Persons provides the following definition for the term "Trafficking in Persons ":

“Trafficking in Persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. Although Article 5 of the Protocol obliges each state to issue national legislation criminalizing the acts mentioned in Article 3, legislation should not follow the literal wording of the Protocol's codification, but rather that legislation should be adopted in accordance with the national legal system in order to enforce the concepts contained in the Protocol. (OHCHR.2014. p 3)

As for the European Council Convention, this convention came within the framework of combating child trafficking and contained important provisions regarding combating this crime. The European Council Convention was established to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and provide protection for the rights of trafficking in persons' victims, in addition to establishing a general framework for protecting and assisting victims, ensuring gender equality and ensuring effective procedures for investigation and prosecution. This convention also aims to strengthen international cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking and ensure the application of the provisions of this convention, particularly standards and procedures for protecting and promoting human rights.

It should be noted that there is a difference between the position of the Protocol to Prevent Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the position of the European Council Convention to combat human trafficking; because the former pays special attention to women and children, while the European Council Convention was directed to combat trafficking in persons in general.

As for the African Union, it did not provide a definition of human trafficking from its emergence, but rather defined organized crime, under which human trafficking is classified, until 2020 when it provided a definition within the draft statute of the Continental Operation Centre in Sudan to combat irregular migration in Addis Ababa, which stated: "Human trafficking" means "the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons through the threat of the use of force or any other form of coercion, kidnapping, fraud, deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation". (African Union.2020. p4) This is a complementary definition to what was stated in Article 3(A) of the Protocol to combat trafficking in persons.

The Algerian Penal Code also defined the crime of trafficking in persons as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, or the removal of organs". (Article 303 bis 4 of the Algerian Penal Code. 2009. p 5)

The crime of human trafficking is the third largest criminal activity after drug and arms trafficking. The International Labour Organization estimates the volume of human trafficking at two million people trafficked across borders annually, most of them women and children. The United Nations Children's Fund estimates the number of children—aged under eighteen—involved in human trafficking annually for the purpose of cheap labor and sexual exploitation at one and a half million children annually. On the other hand, the International Organization for Migration estimates the number of women joining prostitution works annually at fifty thousand women. (Al-Maghribi. 2016 .p 343)

The importance of studying human trafficking crimes and means of combating them has several justifications, the most prominent of which are:

- Being both religiously prohibited and legally deemed a crime.
- Being a violation of human dignity and freedom.
- Being the destruction of human wealth and causing its victims to suffer from deadly illnesses such as (AIDS, tuberculosis...).
- Human traffickers often resort to coercing individuals into drug addiction and inflicting psychological disorders, ultimately resulting in the degradation of the state's social, economic and security structure. (Al-Maghribi. 2016 .p 343)

Figure Depicting the Forms and Methods of trafficking in persons



Source: (Mufdhi. Al-Khamsani)

To combat that crime, all political, legal, cultural, educational, social and economic efforts must be combined in every country in the world. The matter also requires international cooperative effort to confront it, and this is what will be addressed in the following part of the research.

1.3 International Human Rights Conventions and Charters Directly and Indirectly Related to Human Trafficking

There are multiple international conventions related to the protection of human rights. Since the end of World War II, international conventions have been issued that referred in some of their provisions to human rights and the importance of observing them and enabling individuals to enjoy them, as is the case with the United Nations Charter issued on June 26, 1945, which included several principles and objectives seeking to establish individual rights and the duties of member states towards them. The Charter also states that advancing social progress and raising the standard of living in an environment full of freedom represents one of the organization's objectives, and that the United Nations may not restrict the eligibility of men and women to participate in its subsidiary bodies, and that the first function of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. However, the Charter's lack of competence in protecting various aspects of human rights prompted the United Nations to create special international conventions in this regard to ensure that individuals enjoy the minimum of those rights nationally and internationally. (Hawa. 2021. p 2)

The following is a statement regarding the key international conventions dedicated to the protection of human rights:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 10, 1948.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted 16 December 1966 by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI).



- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) dated December 16, 1966.
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted 16 December 1966 by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2006. pp. 1-37)
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 44/128 (XX) of December 15, 1989.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted 21 December 1965 by UN General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/170 (XX) of December 18, 1979.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by General Assembly resolution 54/4 of October 6, 1999 and opened for signature, ratification and accession on December 10, 1999.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November, 1989
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography adopted 25 May 2000 by resolution A/RES/54/263 at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2006. pp. 53-135)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 54/263 of May 25, 2000.
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by United Nations General Assembly resolution 39/46 of December 10, 1984.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment adopted by General Assembly resolution 57/199 of December 18, 2002.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of December 18, 1990. (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2006. pp. 135-177)

1.4 Theoretical Framework Explaining Human Trafficking

The Copenhagen School sought to present different propositions to explain the security threats facing individuals, whether in their countries or outside their countries, within the framework of the school's expansion of the concept of security and considering the individual as a unit of analysis.

Securitization Theory:

The term securitization refers to the classification of an issue as a "security" issue, meaning that issue suggests it is of importance related to the safety and continuity of the homeland or the human. The matter calls for taking emergency measures to protect the homeland and the individual together. (Robinson. 2009. p 268)

Securitization is one of the most significant contributions made by the Copenhagen School through the work of "Ole Waever" (founder of securitization theory), as he indicated that security as a speech act through his statement "**something represents a security problem when elites declare it so,**" meaning any issue can be considered a security stake only if framed through security discourse, and that it constitutes a threat requiring urgent measures (Bousati, 2019, p. 18). Security action is affected by the structure of authoritarian security speech. According to "Ole Waever," Securitization, in its essence and security's character, refers to an issue that previously did not fall under the category of security concerns, and it involves the political implications stemming from the influence exerted by state security actors. (Goudjili. 2012. p 28)

Thus, discursive construction for the Copenhagen School is based on three main pillars:

- Identifying the form and type of threats as well as identifying the threatened subject;
- Exceptional Measures taken to protect the threatened reference;
- The nature of intervention through knowing security threats. (Goudjili. 2012. p 29)

In this regard, the study concludes that international conventions which considered human trafficking a crime must be combated and adopted in national constitutions for police cooperation called for by Interpol through information exchange, facilitating its exchange through Interpol's global police communications system, and encouraging the use of Interpol's Organisation of notices and circulars to locate fugitive criminals and suspects or gather information, and providing access to the organization's databases, particularly those used to detect stolen, lost or forged travel documents and forensic evidence databases, all this helped securitize the migration issue internally and externally in order to address it. (INTERPOL. 2023. p. 2)

1 . 5 Human Security Approach

In this regard, Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. (Article 3 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948)

Individual security means: "providing the basic needs necessary for the latter to perform his vital and social functions as a member of society. His basic needs include physiological and moral needs. In contrast, individual security is linked to protecting him from any dangers that

threaten his life, property and family, as well as obtaining public services, foremost among them education and health". (Abdelrazzak. 2016/2017.p 2)

The starting point of escalating the discussion about human security was with "Mahbub El Haq," the former Pakistani Minister of Finance and economic expert at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who emphasized that the focus of security should shift to ensuring individual security from various risks, primarily diseases, terrorism, poverty, drugs, and an unjust global system, through achieving development and reforming international institutions, foremost among them the United Nations and global economic organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. (Youssef & Yazj. 2012. p 526)

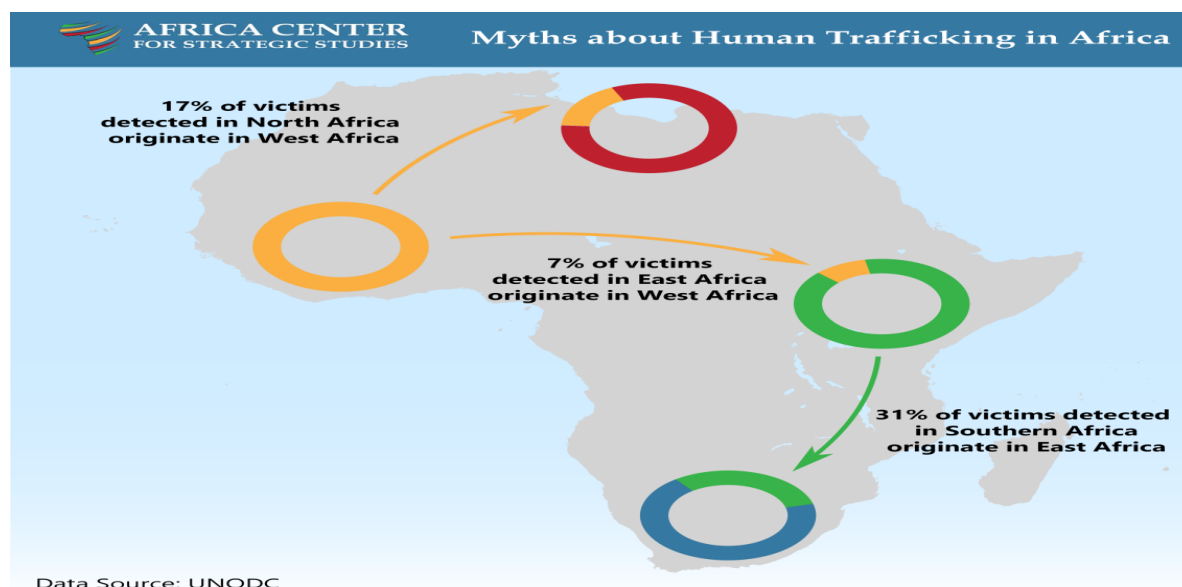
Accordingly, the human security approach describes the human trafficking as a crime with complete elements in terms of means and purpose. The means mentioned and detailed in the International Convention to Combat Human Trafficking and the manner in which trafficking in persons occurs and the risks they are exposed to, especially related to transportation operations and methods of exploitation, make these targets vulnerable to various risks that threaten their security and lives, such as threats of force, abduction, rape and sexual exploitation of women and children.

2 .The Status of Human Trafficking in Africa

A significant proportion of victims and survivors of human trafficking come from West African countries, including Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and Senegal. Most of them cross the Sahara Desert hoping to reach Libya and then set off towards Europe by sea. The worsening security situation in certain African countries, notably Libya, Mali, and Niger, has led to the emergence of organized crime gangs that intensified their activities towards migrant trafficking, contributing to their increasing numbers. Human smuggling networks established private companies in both Gao in northern Mali and Agadez in Niger, whose mission is to transport migrants coming from tension hotspots across rugged routes, as centers for migrant trafficking and organizing their trips towards Algeria and Libya. ((Farhati & Brahimi. 2017.p 120)

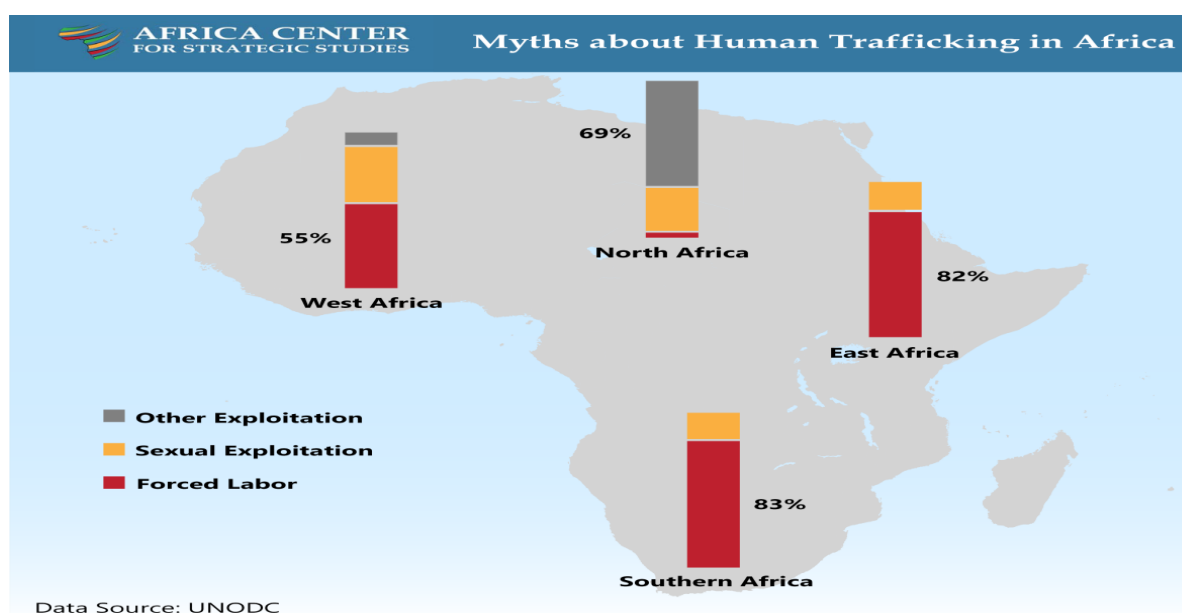
However, some reports indicate that these migrants often consider themselves victims of transnational organized crime gangs who demand exorbitant sums in exchange for deporting them to Europe. Physical and sexual assaults have also been recorded (Boubouche, 2017, p. 36). They are also exploited in forced recruitment operations in terrorist movements or prostitution networks. Some statistics record that numbers of African migrants are exposed to the risk of death during the migration path, where more than 5,000 deaths were recorded between 1995-2005 due to difficult climatic conditions, raids by highway robber networks on migrant caravans, or even by border control officials. The shooting incident in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in 2004 on 11 illegal migrants comes as an example of those violations. (Farhati & Brahimi. 2017. p 121) The following map shows the percentages of human trafficking victims in Africa.

Map 1: Shows the movement of human trafficking operations and their percentages within the African continent



Source: (Myths about Human Trafficking. 2019 .p 4)

Map 2: Shows the percentages of human trafficking types occurring in Africa



Source: (Myths about Human Trafficking. 2019 .p 4)

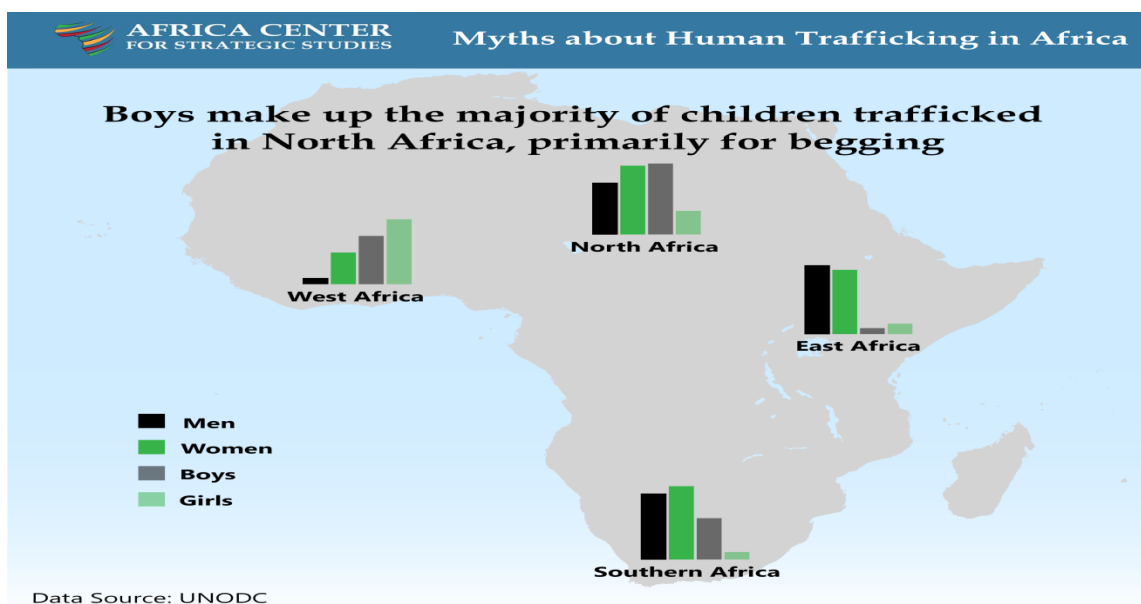
In this regard, the International Organization for Migration issued a joint report with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) addressing the exploitation to which those young migrants coming from Africa in general and from sub-Saharan African countries in particular towards



Europe are exposed compared to other migrants from other countries of the world. The report concluded that the main factor for those differences most likely returns to racism practiced against them because of skin color or African origin. The report was based on testimonies from 22,000 migrants and refugees, including 11,000 children and youth, and analyzed the levels of risks these people face across two migration routes, one from Africa and the other from the eastern Mediterranean through Syria and Turkey (UNICEF. 2017)

Afshan Khan, UNICEF's Regional Director for Europe, said: "The absolute truth is that it has become common for children crossing the Mediterranean to be subjected to assaults, trafficking, beatings and discrimination." The report added that adolescents and youth who traveled alone or who had lower levels of education were more vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation practices. The report revealed that those originating from countries in sub-Saharan Africa who migrate via the eastern Mediterranean route have exploitation rates increase fourfold compared to other migrants. A report issued simultaneously by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees indicated that 3.5 million refugee children aged between 5 and 17 years were outside the scope of education during the past academic year. (UNICEF. 2017)

Map 3: Shows the categories exploited in trafficking in persons (children, women, men)



Source: (Myths about Human Trafficking. 2019 .p 4)

According to a report released by the British organization "Save the Children," conflict zones in Africa have experienced "55,000 serious crimes" against children over the past five years. The table below illustrates this data.

Table 1: Illustrates the number of children in Africa exposed to crimes committed against them

Type of Trafficking	Number
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Sexual exploitation	4600
Recruitment	11000

Source: (55,000 crimes against children in Africa in 5 years. 2020)

Table 2: Illustrates cases of child trafficking in Mali

Type of Trafficking	Number
Recruitment	More than 200
Mine Labour	6000
Sexual exploitation	1000

Source: (UNHCR. 2020)

On the other hand, the instability, conflict, and lack of governmental oversight and capacity in Libya, particularly since 2011, have significantly contributed to the ongoing prevalence of human trafficking crimes, enabling traffickers to achieve substantial profits. Trafficking victims—adults and children alike—are highly vulnerable to severe violence and human rights violations in Libya by governmental and non-governmental armed groups, including physical, sexual and verbal assault, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, arbitrary killings, in addition to detention of persons and recruitment of children. Observers reported that the Libyan National Army recruited or used child soldiers. Reliable reports since 2013 also indicate that some armed groups and militias, some of which are used as combat or security enforcement forces by the government, have recruited and used children in armed operations. (UNICEF. 2017)

2.1 Causes Leading to the Spread of Human Trafficking in Africa

Addressing organized crime and human trafficking in Africa requires a deep understanding of the main causes and comprehensive reforms aimed at strengthening institutions and improving economic and social conditions. The causes of the spread of organized crime and human trafficking in Africa are multiple and manifest in several economic, social and political aspects.

Spread of Poverty

Harsh economic conditions such as poverty and unemployment are among the main motivators of organized crime. The International Labour Organization report indicates that about 65% of Africa's population lives amid poverty. This latter creates a conducive environment for criminal activities that exploit people in moments of weakness and despair. (Wali. 2024)

Spread of Corruption

On the other hand, weak government institutions play a pivotal role, as weak or unstable governments are considered an ideal environment for the growth of organized crime. Many African countries suffer from corruption that hinders their ability to fight crime and deliver justice, allowing criminal groups to operate freely in human and drug trafficking operations.

Corruption also weakens governments' ability to strengthen their authority and enforce laws, thereby creating a conducive environment for the spread of crime. In addition, weak compliance with laws, whether due to lack of legal effectiveness or improper application, is considered an obstacle to efforts to address these criminal phenomena.

Armed Conflicts

Ongoing armed conflicts in some areas lead to the collapse of central authority, creating chaos that armed groups exploit to practice human and arms trafficking. This allows crimes of this type to spread across borders more easily, as criminal networks invest in refugees or migrants fleeing mass killings or ethnic cleansing, as happened previously in Rwanda and is happening now in Sudan. (Wali. 2024)

2.2 Combating Human Trafficking in Africa

Both the African Union and international law enforcement agencies have increased their efforts and collaboration to combat human trafficking organized crime through initiatives established by the African Union and the Interpol-Afrapol Operation FLASH-WEKA initiative.

2.3 African Union Initiative

The African Union plays an important role in combating human trafficking, especially since the acceleration of events in Libya and the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. It works to strengthen cooperation between member states and enhance local capacities to combat this crime. The President of the African Union Commission issued a statement regarding the plight of African migrants in Libya on November 12, 2017, to take swift action to identify the perpetrators of these crimes and their accomplices, through:

Coordination with international organizations: The African Union works to strengthen coordination and cooperation with regional and international organizations.

Regional initiatives: The African Union has launched regional initiatives to address human trafficking in Libya. For example, the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling aims to strengthen regional cooperation, information exchange and joint operations between Horn of Africa and North African countries, including Libya, to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling. (Mahmoud Abdel Rahman. Abdelhafid. & Abdelhafed. 2025. p 42)

Border monitoring and law enforcement: The African Union supports efforts to strengthen border monitoring and law enforcement mechanisms in Libya. This includes providing training and technical assistance to improve the ability of border officials, police and law enforcement agencies to detect, prevent and investigate human trafficking cases. The African Union encourages the establishment of specialized anti-trafficking units and task forces and promotes cross-border cooperation.

Victim support and rehabilitation: The African Union emphasizes the need for comprehensive victim support and rehabilitation services. It encourages member states to

provide trafficking victims with access to medical care, counseling, legal assistance and safe, supportive shelters. The African Union calls for developing victim-centered approaches that prioritize the rights and welfare of surviving victims.

Regional legal frameworks: The African Union works to develop and implement regional legal frameworks to combat human trafficking. Examples include the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. The African Union supports combating human trafficking crimes and prosecuting perpetrators.

Partnership and cooperation: The African Union cooperates with various regional and international partners to address human trafficking in Libya. It works closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other relevant organizations to coordinate efforts, exchange information and support joint initiatives to combat human trafficking and protect victims. (Mahmoud Abdel Rahman. Abdelhafid. & Abdelhafed. 2025. p 42)

On the other hand, the International Organization for Migration representative presented- the IOM presentation focused on combating human trafficking and began by defining illegal trafficking and aimed to identify the main elements of human trafficking and its victims. The presentation also clarified the manner in which trafficking occurs, referring to recruitment, transportation and exploitation, describing the kidnapping process as the main element of illegal human trafficking. The difference between illegal trafficking and smuggling was also clarified based on the availability of consent regarding smuggling. The presentation also revealed the purpose of exploiting human trafficking through the sex industry and services that can be called slavery and genital organ removal in some cases. Although the majority of trafficking victims are women and children, all sectors of society are victims as well, given that most countries are affected by this problem almost. It is estimated that the size of the problem ranges between 600,000 and 700,000 people trafficked in Africa. Globally, the rate of illegal human trafficking annually reaches one million, and the benefits accruing from illegal trafficking amount to eight billion. (3–7 December 2007. p13)

2.4 AFRIPOL and AFRIPOL-INTERPOL Initiative

AFRIPOL managed during **the WEKA initiative** launched between June and November 2022 to save about 700 human trafficking victims within the framework of an Interpol-led operation. Its results included the arrest of a total of 300 people, including 88 people suspected of involvement in human trafficking and 83 people involved in migrant smuggling. (Magdy. Adam. 2025)

The second operation comes through the **FLASH-WEKA** initiative as the first collaboration between Interpol and AFRIPOL against human trafficking crimes between May and June 2023, in which police elements from 54 African countries participated. This cooperation and coordination led to the arrest of more than 100 people. On the other hand, Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock clarified: "The organizational complexity that characterizes human trafficking gangs hinders efforts to combat them." He added that: "Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are often part of a highly complex criminal gang activity, and this is why the close cooperation between Interpol and AFRIPOL is important, to unite our resources and

dismantle these networks and ultimately save thousands of victims". (Increasing Threat to Africa... Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Gangs. 2023)

In the same context, Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock sees that the joint operation is on the right track to achieve more good results. He said: "The results produced by Operation **Flash Weka** will undoubtedly lead to more arrests and bringing those involved in human trafficking to justice." In addition to another operation carried out in two phases during May and June 2023, aimed at dismantling the complex network of organizations responsible for human trafficking and migrant smuggling, it revealed that those gangs do not only operate within Africa but also outside it and that the network extends beyond the African continent. (Increasing Threat to Africa... Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Gangs. 2023)

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, trafficking in persons has become one of the most perilous transnational crimes carried out by organized crime gangs that target individuals whom security, social and economic conditions in poor countries force to fall into the hands of criminal organizations. It was also shown that the crime of trafficking in persons targets state borders and sovereignty, as it has become a global problem in various countries, whether the country of origin, transit country or destination country, and its victims are women, men or children. It was also shown that Africa suffers from this phenomenon more than any other continent, as it is the continent where all factors of human trafficking spread, whether political, security or even social, such as civil wars, terrorism and declining levels of living and welfare that make many Africans resort to illegal immigration and thus their exploitation within human smuggling networks, as happened in Libya in 2017 when criminal organizations enslaved migrants and sold them in public auctions. The study concluded the following:

- Human trafficking is a crime that poses a danger to people's freedom and safety, like terrorism and other transnational crimes.
- The African Union sought to establish necessary measures to mitigate the phenomenon and criminalize it, but instability in African countries prevented achieving the effectiveness of those measures.

Study Recommendations

The study presents the following recommendations:

- The need to raise youth awareness about the risks of falling into human trafficking networks by organizing national seminars and awareness days in public places like universities and schools.
- The need to tighten the penalty for human trafficking and adopt international legal rules in national constitutions and laws.

- Including educational programs aimed at raising awareness about human trafficking within youth curricula.
- Paying attention to the youth segment and working to improve their living conditions and developing strategic plans to eliminate unemployment and thus reduce illegal immigration that leads them to fall into the hands of human traffickers.
- Paying attention to education as a pivotal tool in building a strong society capable of addressing crime, as strengthening education mitigates opportunities for exploitation of children and youth by criminal networks.
- Intensifying regional and international cooperation is considered a decisive factor in strengthening efforts to combat organized crime and human trafficking, helping to exchange information and expertise necessary to confront this phenomenon.

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