HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL RESPONSES: THE CASE OF COMBATING HUMAN AND WOMEN TRAFFICKING

Syed Raza Shah Gilani
Assistant Professor of Law, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan,
sgilani@awkum.edu.pk

Ilyas Khan
Assistant Professor of Law, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan,
drilyas@awkum.edu.pk

Ashraf Ali
Associate Professor & Chairman Department of Law, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,
ashrafali@awkum.edu.pk

ABSTRACT
Over the last two decades, the United Nations and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have increased their efforts to combat human trafficking and women trafficking for sex around the world through international legal frameworks and conventions along with implementing mechanisms. These steps are aimed at limiting the potential victims’ vulnerability to trafficking, providing adequate help and protection for victims, and ensuring the speedy trials of the traffickers (and other important, behind-the-scene players), all while preserving the fundamental human rights of all. Given that the prohibition of slavery and human trafficking is a jus-cogens principle, states are obligated to act with reasonable diligence to prevent human trafficking, investigate and prosecute traffickers, and help and protect the trafficked individuals. Governments often tackle trafficking from the standpoint of law enforcement or criminal control (as opposed to victims’ protection and/or human rights perspective). Typically, they are preoccupied with border security, preventing unwelcome migration, combating organized crime, and lately, terrorism. This article argues that any attempts to combat trafficking are unlikely to be successful if the emphasis is on criminal prevention rather than on victim protection and rights, as demonstrated in the following pages.

Key Words: Human Trafficking, Women Trafficking, Human Rights Approach, Sexual Exploitation.

INTRODUCTION
Raymond Domenech, coach of the French World Cup football team, commented on women trafficking for sex in 2006:

It is absolutely terrible. People are talking about bringing in ladies to fulfill the basic inclinations of football fans. Football's association with booze and violence is humiliating enough for me. But it gets worse. Slaves will be brought in and placed in homes. Football is associated with the treatment of humans as though they were livestock. (Brysk, 2012)

This article not only examines the sections of the Protocol for Human Trafficking (2000) and the 1949 Convention which are focused on criminal control, but also looks at the international and regional mechanisms with the aim to address the issue of human trafficking from a human rights perspective. It assesses the various international human trafficking legal remedies in an attempt to understand why the 1949 Convention failed to address the issue of human trafficking. In addition, there is a critical examination of the Trafficking Protocol— that is considered to be the most comprehensive legal instrument in the international struggle against human trafficking (Deshpande, 2013). This paper contextualizes the provisions of the Trafficking Protocol concerning the criminalization, investigation, and prosecution of human traffickers, as well as its support and protection mechanism for victims’ protection within the broader framework of human rights.
The effectiveness of the Trafficking Protocol is being questioned as it has apparently failed to address the issue of human trafficking in a satisfactory manner. One of the article’s main points is that there is an urgent need to combat human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women using a legislative framework that blends criminal control strategies with a human rights approach. Using this insight as the central premise, the paper will examine a number of international and regional legal instruments with the aim to pinpoint their grey areas and offer suggestions for improvement. Furthermore, this article critically assesses some of the prevalent norms and standards related to the protection of the victims of trafficking and their basic rights. This will be done in conjunction with suggestions for eradicating some of the primary causes of trafficking. In the conclusion, this article provides a plan for effectively combating human trafficking and resolving some of the issues that victims of human trafficking encounter in their countries of origin as well as in their destinations (receiving countries).

**Human Trafficking: A Crime Control Approach**

The crime control method is based on the premise that criminalizing human trafficking and punishing the traffickers will reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of the crime—human trafficking. The preamble of the Trafficking Protocol emphasizes that it “must guarantee effective action to punish traffickers and safeguard victims.” Criminalization and punishment, with the goal of minimizing the risk of real victimization, are regarded as a form of victim protection. Sentencing criminals to the proper penalty is meant to dissuade both the convicted criminal (special prevention) and any future offenders (negative general prevention). In this framework, trafficking is viewed as a criminal product, punishment is used to halt the flow of this criminal activity and its victims. It is an approach which legitimates the anti-trafficking project to the criminal justice community as it necessitates a criminal justice solution. Essentially, it penalizes traffickers’ activities, rather than paying attention to eliminating the vulnerability of potential trafficking victims (Gilani S. R., 2021). In this way, discriminations based on sex, gender, class, race and poverty— that lie at the heart of patterns of illicit migration, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation— are overlooked.

**Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (The Trafficking Protocol)**

On November 15, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly created the Un Convention against International Organized Crime (Trafficking Convention hereafter), which was signed on December 12, 2000, and entered into force on September 29, 2003. Its objective was to challenge and resolve organized criminal groups' worldwide dimension. The Agreement includes two additional protocols: one to combat migrant trafficking by sea, ocean, and air, and one to prevent, ban, and punish trafficking in persons, particularly of women and children (Sutinah, 2019).

Since the Protocol's introduction in 2003, the scope of legal action in human trafficking cases has been a major source of disagreement. One of the primary difficulties throughout the Protocol’s development stage was whether it should encompass simply women and children or all human trafficking. The Protocol’s early draft targeted primarily the trafficking of women and children. Later, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted to widen the Protocol's scope to cover all types of human trafficking, including persons of all ages, genders, and ethnicities. Furthermore, there was controversy about how to define human trafficking: whether prostitution was a sort of work or a type of women trafficking for sex.

**Criminalization: Investigation and Prosecution**

The intended objective of the Trafficking Protocol is to promote international cooperation on counter-trafficking, which includes criminalizing trafficking and penalizing traffickers, as well as supporting victims of trafficking “with full regard for their human rights.” Article 2 of the Protocol outlines three of its primary goals. First, state signatories are required to prohibit human trafficking under national law. Second, states must foster international collaboration for addressing the issue of human trafficking. Finally, the signatories of the Protocol should think about providing protection and help to victims of human trafficking. Notably, the first purpose is presented in obligatory terms—that is related to a particular characteristic, whilst the other two are expressed in facultative terms—that is, “the ability to live under more than one specific environmental condition.” The criminalization requirements have been called “a basic and mandatory responsibility of all States Parties to the Protocol” (Sullivan, 2003). Article 5 of the Trafficking Protocol requires States Parties to prosecute trafficking as a single criminal offense or as a combination of offenses that include, at a minimum, the whole spectrum of activities that lie at the heart of patterns of illicit migration, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Gilani, Khan, & Ali
encompassed by the term. States Parties must also make taking part in, organizing, or directing others to conduct such an offence criminal.

It is worth mentioning here that international lawmakers consider the Protocol’s area of applicability as restricted, with the Protocol’s provisions applicable only if the offences are transnational in nature and include organized crime under Article 4 of the Protocol. However, there is evidence that suggests that human trafficking is committed by people who are not necessarily members of organized criminal gangs. Keeping this mind, the Trafficking Convention mandates penalties for offenders whether s/he is a member an organized crime gang or not (Gilani S. R., 2021). To put it another way, the necessity to prosecute cases of human trafficking applies to both international and individual circumstances, as the Protocol’s mandatory penalties are not confined to instances involving an organized crime syndicate only. But a mechanism was needed to put the Convention’s rules and regulations into practice.

**Strengthening Border Controls, Cooperation and Law Enforcement Measures**

The framers of the Trafficking Protocol were mindful of the implementation of the various agreed upon measures of the Convention. Part III of this UNGA resolution entitled ‘Prevention, Cooperation and other Measures’ includes provisions relating to law enforcement and border control. Article 10 of this resolution provides law enforcement training to assist in identifying possible victims of human trafficking and the organized crime tactics used to traffic humans. Article 10 also demands information cooperation between State Parties’ law enforcement and immigration agencies regarding transit routes, fake papers, and suspected traffickers. In terms of border control measures, States Parties are required by its article 11 to strengthen border controls to the greatest extent possible; adopt measures to prevent commercial carriers from operating; require carriers to ensure that all passengers have the necessary travel documents; and provide sanctions in cases of violation.

Furthermore, commercial carriers are compelled to repatriate any passengers who do not have the necessary travel documentation. States can also reject admission or cancel visas for those who are known to be involved in, or suspected of being involved in, human trafficking. Article 12 further requires governments to safeguard the confidentiality and reliability of travel or identification papers provided by or on behalf of a State Party. To prohibit their unauthorized development, distribution, and usage. Article 13 requires a Governing Party to conduct a reasonable investigation into the legitimacy and validity of travelling or identification permits issued or known to have been granted in its name and accused of using it for human trafficking.

**Article 6: Assistance and Protection for Victims of Trafficking**

This section is mostly based on UNGA Resolution (hereafter UNGAR) 55/25. Part II of the Resolution includes provisions for the protection of human trafficking victims. These are contained in Article 6, which contains six paragraphs covering topics such as: the protection of privacy and identity; the adoption of appropriate measures for providing victims with information; the examination of methods for ensuring physical, psychological, and social recovery of victims, including counselling and housing; the consideration of age, gender, and special needs of victims; providing for victims’ physical safety; and ensuring compensation. Article 6.1 states that States Parties must protect the privacy and identification of human trafficking victims. Furthermore, Article 6.1 specifies that a State Party “must guarantee that its domestic legal or administrative system incorporates measures that, in appropriate instances, give protection to victims of human trafficking” (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 2000). However, the language is not clear, with words like ‘in suitable instances’ appearing to allow governments to offer help to certain victims of trafficking but not others. States Parties are encouraged but not compelled to consider implementing measures to provide victims with protection, assistance, and redress (Dewi, 2020). Fundamentally, this does not require states to comply with a positive human rights commitment, a failing that jeopardizes human rights protection.

Article 6.3 specifies victims’ rights to social benefits and rehabilitation. These rights include the right to psychological, physical, and social rehabilitation, which might take the form of housing, counseling, and information, medical and psychiatric assistance, material assistance, and employment, education, and training. Again, the phrasing of the article is problematic; in 6.3, it specifies that a government “must examine” and act “in suitable instances,” yet it does not compel governments to act (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 2000). Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the Trafficking Protocol, on the other hand, should be interpreted and executed in tandem with Articles 24 and 25 of the Trafficking Convention. As a result, countries shall give some level of aid and protection in accordance
with the promise made in Article 25.1 of the Trafficking in Persons Convention (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008).

Article 6.5 of the Trafficking Protocol requires states to ensure the physical protection of the victims of trafficking. However, it fails to provide the same protections to their family members or important witnesses. Nonetheless, under Article 24.1 of the Trafficking Convention, states are expected to take reasonable actions to safeguard victims and witnesses who may experience reprisal, intimidation, or victimization during or after judicial proceedings.

Article 6.6 of the Trafficking Protocol requires states to provide victims with a chance to seek restitution. While the Protocol does not specify potential sources of victim compensation, the UNODC proposes the following measures as adequate to satisfy the Protocol's requirements. Furthermore, Article 25(2) of the Trafficking Convention Mandates States to develop mechanisms to compensate and restitution victims in order for them to reintegrate into society. Receiving recompense is crucial because it provides psychological, physical, and pecuniary benefits to victims of human trafficking. It might give individuals hope for a fresh life by providing energy for their future pursuits. It may also be a critical stepping stone for victims to overcome their trauma, financial difficulties, and abuses (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008). As a result, compensating traffickers recognizes that trafficking is a crime, and compensation, or the option of a fee paid by traffickers, can act as a form of punishment and/or deterrence to other traffickers.

**Article 7: Status of Victims in Receiving Countries**

Article 7 of the Trafficking Protocol covers the status of the trafficked individuals in the receiving countries and asks such states to “consider” enacting measures that allow victims to reside temporarily or permanently. Such measures, if implemented, would encourage the victims of trafficking to come forward and testify against their traffickers. Furthermore, states must make it simpler for groups to urge victims who use their services to report events to the authorities. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that the Trafficking Protocol does not require States Parties to implement legal measures pertaining to the resident status (temporary or permanent) of the victim. The inability of the Protocol to oblige States to adopt measures to permit the resident status of the trafficked persons suggests that the Protocol is not doing enough to protect or address the human rights of victims.

However, a number of governments have incorporated a short-term residency period as a time of reflection for victims into their anti-trafficking laws, such as the US, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium. In Belgium, for instance, the residency period is 45 days, and in the Netherlands, it is three months (Pearson, 2002). Support, including counselling, housing, medical and legal services, financial assistance, and the right to work is also made available to the victims of trafficking in India. (Naik, 2018). Article 18 of the Alien Law of Italy provides for a six-month provisional social protection residency permit that can be renewed for maximum to eighteen months. According to Pearson, "residency rights for trafficking victims are founded on the suspect's need for social benefits rather than a desire to testify" and/or assist with the authorities in Italy. This debate indicates that a temporary or permanent residence status might assist human trafficking victims in mustering the fortitude to testify against the offenders of this heinous crime (Pearson, 2002).

**Article 8: Repatriation of Trafficked Persons**

Article 8 of the Protocol against Human Trafficking calls for the safe repatriation of trafficked individuals to their countries of origin. Article 8 requires governments to assist and accept the repatriation of victims who are citizens or have the right of permanent residence in their territory at the time of admission into the receiving country. Furthermore, the country of origin is expected to help with the receiving country in authenticating the victim's nationality and residency, as well as granting travel papers to allow the victim to return.

There are some challenges associated with the safe return of trafficking victims to their countries of origin. For example, once a trafficked person testifies against traffickers or trafficking gangs, the ‘victims become vulnerable to retaliation’, intimidation, and/or to being trafficked again. In this situation, both the sending and receiving states are obliged to guarantee the return of victims with due regard to their safety and in accord with the status of any ongoing legal proceedings. In other words, a receiving State is required to investigate and ensure that there is no danger to the victim's life before returning them to the country of origin, and that they will not subject to reprisals by traffickers (Naik, 2018). Moreover, repatriation should not be forced by receiving states, rather voluntary repatriation should be facilitated in cooperation with sending states. The victims of human trafficking
must be provided with transportation and accommodation facilities on humanitarian grounds and without unreasonable delay.

**Provisions Concerning Prevention Measures for Reducing Vulnerability to Trafficking**

Part III of the Trafficking Protocol deals with the obligations upon states to prevent trafficking. For instance, Article 9.4 requires them to take measures to alleviate factors such as poverty, inequality, etc., that make victims vulnerable to trafficking. Article 9.2 encourages states to conduct research, public awareness campaigns, and economic and social programs to help the poorest members of society. All of this requires authorities to collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and democratic society to raise awareness about the horrible crime of sex trafficking. Article 9.1 of the UNGAR calls on States to undertake policies, initiatives, and other measures to combat and prevent trafficking, as well as to protect victims, particularly women and children, from re-victimization. Article 9.4 compels nations to take action, including bilateral and multilateral collaboration, to address the situations that make persons susceptible to trafficking, particularly women and children (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 2000).

Furthermore, states are encouraged to take steps for ameliorating poverty so that poor people become socially and financially independent, which in turn will reduce the chances of human trafficking in the hope of better future. States can achieve this by adopting legislation or strengthening their legal systems, along with educational, social and cultural initiatives.

**A Human Rights Approach to Human Trafficking**

The human rights approach, as evidenced in international treaties, makes it obligatory on states and governments to respect individual human rights. The overarching goal of human rights within the trafficking context is to restore individual rights, re-empower the individual and address the vulnerabilities of individuals. States are required to enact legislation and establish governmental policies and programs to protect vulnerable people from being trafficked. States are also required to investigate, prosecute, and redress wrongs done to trafficked persons with the aim to put an end to human trafficking—especially the trafficking of women.

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

CEDAW is concerned with women's rights. It aims to offer comprehensive protection for women's rights and is the first human rights pact to require nations to take meaningful, enforceable actions toward gender equality. Furthermore, CEDAW is a critical tool for encouraging women's full and equal involvement in and enjoyment of their rights in all aspects of life, reducing their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. The Convention stresses the steps that states must take to eliminate prejudice in areas such as civil and political rights, women's legal status, reproductive rights, and non-discrimination based on culture or tradition (United Nations Human Rights (UNHR), 2014).

The trafficking of women is categorized as a discrimination against women. Article 2 of the Convention places general obligations upon states and requires them to undertake a series of measures to end all forms of discrimination against women. Member countries are therefore expected to enshrine the following measures in their legal system: prohibition of all discriminatory acts against women; tribunals to be established to protect women against discrimination effectively; abolition of all laws that discriminate against women; and ensuring legal systems incorporate the principle of equality for women and men. Furthermore, the Convention plays an active role in preventing the causes of trafficking that lead to the vulnerability of women to exploitation and abuse by prohibiting sexually discriminating activities that lead to violations of the fundamental rights of women.

Furthermore, General Recommendation No. 19 calls on nations to take action to eliminate all types of gender discrimination. It holds states accountable not only for their personal violent acts against women, as well as for violence done by private individuals against women, where the state fails to take reasonable precautions to avoid violations of rights, investigate as well as prosecute instances of violence, or compensate victims. In addition, Basis of the recommendations No. 19 asks for particular preventative and disciplinary measures to address human trafficking and associated with sex exploitation of women. States Parties are asked to provide any data on legal, preventative, and disciplinary measures to address human trafficking and associated with sex exploitation of women. States Parties are required to enact legislation and establish governmental policies and guidelines on culture or tradition (United Nations Human Rights (UNHR), 2014).

**The Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking**

They were explicitly intended to address some of the weaknesses of the Trafficking Protocol, such as its optional rather than obligatory provisions for victims’ protection (as discussed earlier). They were
to be used to facilitate and promote integration of human rights perspectives at all levels of anti-trafficking interventions, policies and laws, and are based on informal consultations with experts and officials of relevant intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).

Based on its victim centered provisions, the Recommended Principles and Guidelines are more specific, detailed and enforceable than the victims-related provisions contained in the Trafficking Protocol which are non-obligatory, hence weak by comparison. For example, principle 7 raises requirements for help and protection for victims of trafficking when entering and residing illegally in the destination and transit countries so that they are not prosecuted, charged or detained because their situation is a direct consequence of becoming victims of trafficking. Principle 8 ensures that victims of trafficking have access to psychological and physical care and are protected from greater harm and exploitation so that their care and protection does not depend on their cooperation (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002). In addition, providing them with appropriate care and protection cannot be made contingent upon their cooperation with the police in legal proceedings—in terms of the willingness or capacity of the trafficked individuals to testify against the traffickers (Yenny, 2020).

Human trafficking should not solely be regarded as trafficking people for profit. This is recognized in the guideline 2, which requires the traffickers and the trafficked persons to be carefully identified. This guideline establishes additional factors of exploitation, coercion, and deception throughout various stages of the trafficking process that distinguishes migrant smuggling from human trafficking. Often, active investigation is required to prove the differences between migrant smuggling and trafficking, which might be thought to be obvious but victims’ rights could be denied further if trafficked victims are not correctly identified (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, no date). This guideline places obligations on States to ensure that identification of trafficked victims can and does take place, and traffickers are identified. Principle 11 establishes an obligation on the origin State and the destination State to guarantee trafficked victims safe return to their home or legal repatriation alternatives when it is believed that returning victims to their home country could pose a safety risk to victims or their families (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime U. , 2019). Crucially, the Recommended Principles and Guidelines focus on the need to identify the underlying causes of human trafficking so that preventative strategies take into consideration what is fueling this abusive global supply and demand for humans. Intergovernmental organizations and States must ensure that interventions address the factors that make individuals vulnerable to trafficking, as discussed in this article.

CONCLUSION
This essay examined global legal responses to human trafficking, notably of women, from the perspectives of criminal control and human rights. The first section discussed the control technique as well as the provisions of the 1949 Convention and the UN Trafficking Protocol. This approach has been chastised for focusing on punishment and preventative measures while neglecting to protect victims or address root causes of trafficking such as poverty, inequality, and gender discrimination.

The national human rights instruments that take a human rights perspective, including pertinent sections regarding the protection of trafficked persons and the necessity to address trafficking's core causes. Article 6 of the Agreement just on Rights of the Child specifies that nations must take all necessary steps, including legal action, to combat all forms of human trafficking and abuse of women’s prostitution. Articles 12 and 13 address, among other things, women's rights to health and work. Furthermore, this article puts emphasis on efforts to promote gender equality and the inclusion of mandatory measures of protection such as: obliging states to provide assistance to all victims of trafficking; provide the necessary legal and socio-economic support; work diligently with the international community in the identification process of the trafficked persons, as effective strategies to end this inhuman activity. Therefore, all these international legal instruments, if honestly and evenly applied by all the signatory states of the UN conventions on human trafficking, will more constructively address the heinous crime of human trafficking—especially the trafficking of women.
REFERENCES


