

PERFORMANCE OF BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DETECTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Abstract: The following report outlines the human trafficking as a crime affecting the societal wellbeing of the contemporary world. It presents the different forms of exploitation arising from it such as sexual and pornographic exploitation, labour exploitation, coercion into illegal actions, organ selling, etc. The research emphasises on the necessity of developing and implementing adequate countermeasures for combating human trafficking. It also outlines the importance of formulating and applying strategies and policies in connection to the human trafficking issues. The normative documents should be aligned with the existing legislation and should set certain objectives and priorities.

Regarding all that, the report introduces the behavioural analysis as an instrument for detection of human trafficking victims. The logic behind it is connected to the assumption that the victims are likely to experience a high level of stress and express specific behavioural traits indicating they might be involved as victims in this crime. Based on the behavioural analysis these people could be distinguished and properly assisted.

That could be achieved through indicators, divided into three groups such as:

- Those affecting the physical appearance of the person – lack of medical or dental care, physical injuries and traumas, signs of malnourishment, signs of substance abuse problems, etc.;
- Those affecting the emotional state and behaviour arising from it – sudden change in the behaviour, disorientation or confusion, signs of avoiding eye contact or social interaction, nervousness or paranoia, anxious or tense behaviour in front of law enforcement officials, signs of submissive behaviour, etc.;
- Those affecting the person's actions and personal belongings – lack of official identification documents, scripted or translated responses during interactions, presence of a “guarding” person, lack of basic resources, etc.

The presented in the report indicators could be considered by the involved in the combating human trafficking process specialists and could be applied by different institutions and organizations. The behavioural analysis's indicators should be observed in their entirety and not separately in order to provide useful picture on whether certain person is a human trafficking victim or not. The abnormal behaviour should be carefully determined as such in order not to create misunderstood assumptions regarding the observed individuals and their circumstances.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Behavioural analysis, Security and defense, Societal issues

1. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a global issue leading to a serious violation of human rights and dignity. It is considered a form of organized crime which undermines the basic principles of democracy and affects the legal and societal aspects of the contemporary world. Human trafficking could negatively influence the national security of a particular country or region by disrupting its border's defense and transport systems' integrity which both play a central part in the execution and hence prevention of human trafficking. The combating process against it is a substantial challenge for the nowadays societies and requires significant countermeasures towards it. In order to achieve that united efforts of all involved in the prevention process institutions on national, regional and international level are required. The application of behavioural analysis could assist this process by providing an opportunity for detection of abnormal behaviour which indicates the presence of human trafficking victims.

2. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS A SOCIETAL ISSUE

Human trafficking is one of the biggest risks for the modern societies presenting an issue for their security and the wellbeing of their citizens since it is accompanied by violence, control against the will and coercion. Victims are usually promised false future prospects which implicates them into untruthful relations (National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Republic of Bulgaria). Those relations could evolve into serious unlawful and criminal actions which are threats not only to the victims but to third parties and other individuals as well.

Human trafficking could include numerous types of exploitations of the victims and could occur in any community around the globe. The most common exploitations are:

- sexual and pornographic exploitation;
- labour exploitation;

- coercion into a theft and illegal actions;
- selling of newborns and children;
- organs and body parts selling;
- forced submission; and others.

Human trafficking affects various of victims from different age, gender, race or nationality. It is conducted through applying methods such as violence, manipulation or false promises of well-paid occupations and even romantic relationships. All that transforms it into a problematic societal issue which requires countermeasures for timely detection and reaction towards it since it is challenging to be predicted in advance. Nevertheless, certain groups of people are more endangered by traffickers – psychologically or emotionally vulnerable individuals; people experiencing economic difficulties; individuals with lack of social safety net or stability and others. Often the political instability or occurrence of natural disaster could also provide prerequisite for human trafficking activities (United States government website, Blue Campaign).

It is estimated that more than 25 million people are victims of human trafficking worldwide (U.S. Departments of State, 2023). Analysis of the data about EU shows that these results are relatively low and yet significant for the Union itself. According to a Eurostat Statistics in 2021 were registered 7 155 victims of human trafficking in EU (59% of which were citizens of Member States of the Union) and 2 517 convinced traffickers. Moreover, 2 out of 3 victims were female (Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2023). Bulgaria as a Member State of the EU has registered around 550 victims (NRM Platform for fight against human trafficking). When it comes to Bulgaria a serious drawback should be point out – there is a lack of definite statistical data since official register for cases of human trafficking in the country does not exist. This is a common case for many countries around the globe. The lack of statistical data generally affects the response towards human trafficking by concealing the real state of the issue. It should also be taken into a consideration that even if official statistics regarding the human trafficking victims exists it does not necessarily include the alleged number of people who are victims but are not registered yet. Those numbers are most likely higher in global terms.

Frequently human trafficking involves cross-border activities which might affect given country or region based on its geological position and political governance. Specifically for Bulgaria that is related to country's vulnerability due to its location, border protection and alleged illegal channels for transportation of human trafficking victims. As well as that, the migrants aiming to illegally cross the state borders have also a critical influence over human trafficking by getting themselves involved in this process. The Ukraine crisis since 2022 also affects this issue – not only on European level but in general terms as well, raising concerns over this topic.

Combating human trafficking and protecting its victims and potential vulnerable groups is a priority not only on national but also on international level. That implies the development and introduction of specific countermeasures regarding prevention of these activities, prosecution and punishment for execution of actions connected to human trafficking and, last but not least, raising awareness among all societies, especially those endangered by it. In order all of that to be achieved an adequate strategy is required to be formulated and applied regarding the display of this issue. As an example, could be outlined the Bulgarian National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking 2017-2021. It formulates priorities and objectives related to effective and long-term countermeasures to the crime and its consequences. The document is aligned with the EU legislation and Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking. The main priorities of the document are to:

- enhance the identification, protection and assistance of human trafficking victims;
- introduce prevention measures among vulnerable societal groups;
- perform effective prosecution and punishment of crimes regarding human trafficking or crimes connected to it;
- enhance the coordination and cooperation on international and interorganizational level (National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking, 2017).

One of the combating measures could be concerning the behavioural analysis and more specifically the early detection and recognition of signs of human trafficking. Regarding that, the author suggests the application of behavioural analysis instrument as a supplemental method for identifying the presence of human trafficking traits among potential victims. That could be achieved through conduction of trainings among the security specialists, border guards, security check-in experts and others interested and involved in the process of combating human trafficking.

3. BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS SIGNS FOR RECOGNISION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

In many cases the victims of human trafficking are experiencing a high level of stress and fear and are isolated from their safety social relations which hinder them from the opportunity to receive an adequate assistance. Due to the

applied manner of the traffickers which commonly involves violence, terror and manipulation people might not completely realize they are victims of this crime. Even if they do, they might lack the courage or ability to enquire help.

However, those victims could possess specific behavioural traits indicating they are involved in human trafficking and intentionally or unintentionally attract the attention of the security specialists and surrounding third parties, through which they could receive an adequate assistance and support.

In order that to be achieved those behavioural traits should be categorized and made public in order to raise awareness not only among the involved in the combating human trafficking organizations and individuals but also to the mass public who could as well support this process and help the people in need.

Human trafficking often involves an international transportation of the victims through different types of transportation vehicles and transportation entities, as well as security checkpoints. The right to non-discrimination and ethical behaviour towards different nationalities and ethnicities prohibits the use of systematic patterns of profiling which could be discriminatory. Hence, behavioural analysis is beneficial first line of security in deciding which individual to select for more detailed second-line security checks. Security guards rely on various variety of factors into a consideration when selecting passengers for further examinations, with a particular emphasis on behavioural analysis. A conducted by Agency of Fundamental Rights survey among border guards confirmed the importance of behavioural analysis. The respondents are asked to consider which indicators are “very helpful”, “helpful” or “not helpful” for effective recognition of irregular manners in people attempting to enter the country. “Behaviour during the check” and “Behaviour when approaching a checkpoint” are considered as helpful or very helpful indicators by the respondents and they are the most commonly answered indicators in this question of the survey (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

The *behavioural analysis* could be divided into three groups:

- **Those affecting the physical appearance of the person:**
 - signs of numerous bruises or physical injuries (could be in various body parts or in different stages of healing);
 - signs of substance abuse problems;
 - signs of having been denied basic medical or dental care (United States government website, Blue Campaign);
 - signs of malnourishment or dehydration;
 - signs of sleep deprivation;
 - tattoos/branding on the neck and/or lower back (Nevada Attorney General website, Warning Signs of Human Trafficking);
 - seeking for medical assistance for performing an abortion and/or with a history of multiple abortions (American Psychological Association, Identifying the Signs of Human Trafficking);
 - seeking for treatment for sexually transmitted infections or having a history of untreated sexually transmitted diseases (the last two are regarding institutions providing medical health care), etc.;
- **Those affecting the emotional state and behaviour arising from it:**
 - signs of sudden or dramatic change in behaviour (could arise from the change of the environment or communication with the security specialists);
 - signs of fearful or submissive behaviour (United States government website, Blue Campaign);
 - signs of mental abuse;
 - signs of depression;
 - signs of disorientation or confusion;
 - avoiding interaction with authority figures/law enforcement officials or willingness to cease the communication with them;
 - avoiding eye contact;
 - signs of timid behaviour;
 - signs of nervousness or paranoia (frequently looking around and searching for a person or a manner for an escape);
 - signs of anxious or tense behaviour in front of law enforcement officials, etc.;
- **Those affecting the person’s actions and personal belongings:**
 - the person appears disconnected from family, friends and community organizations (United States government website, Blue Campaign);
 - lack of basic resources while simultaneously using some expensive/luxurious possessions;
 - unreasonable security measures such as presence of a “guarding” person or untypical physical assets which could be used as instrument for restricting the victim;

- lack of official identification documents or having such in the control of another person (American Psychological Association, Identifying the Signs of Human Trafficking);
- the individual appears to be monitored by another person when communicating with other people or security specialists (National Human Trafficking Hotline, U.S.);
- the person is not allowed to be unaccompanied in public or interact alone (another individual may insist to be present or translate for the person);
- scripted or rehearsed responses in social interactions (Nevada Attorney General website, Warning Signs of Human Trafficking), etc.

The above listed indicators should not be taken into a consideration separately. Instead, their entirety is essential for the appropriate conduction of behavioural analysis. The existence of one of these signs should not ultimately imply that the person is a victim of human trafficking. Stress levels could be high based on personal issues of the individual or due to the security measures on the territory of the facility. Frequently what is most commonly observed is abnormal behaviour not only in general terms (based on the physical appearance of the person) but also regarding the behaviour of the individual during the security checkpoints and interacting with the official representatives. The sudden change in the behaviour could be a crucial indicator for some abnormality that ought to be investigated. Similarly, when a particular person exhibits more behavioural traits indicating for signs of human trafficking the following should be additionally inspected.

4. CONCLUSION

Human trafficking is a serious threat for the wellbeing of the contemporary world, representing a societal issue for all individuals and nationalities. The number of victims of human trafficking is constantly emerging which requires the introduction and implementation of adequate and effective measures aiming its combating. As such could be outlined the behavioural analysis which is based on predetermined indicators regarding the physical appearance of the person, his/her emotional state and actions. It could be beneficial in the combating of human trafficking and facilitate the involved in that process specialists, structures and organizations, as well as mass public.

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