



# TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

## IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

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## THE RESEARCH-ACTION ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

**T**rafficking in human beings in conflict and post-conflict situations is a subject on which little research has been conducted, and which is seldom addressed by the stakeholders tasked with supporting displaced people and/or refugees.

In the field, the reception or management of people fleeing conflicts, whether by international organisations, States or civil society, essentially boils down to providing humanitarian aid to meet basic needs: food and drink, medical care, shelter, and so on.

Emergency aid programmes, whether during the conflict phase or in support of exiled people, still do too little to address the exploitation or presence of vulnerable groups, such as children without a family guardian, unaccompanied women or persecuted minorities.

According to the Caritas organisations working in the field, because of the proliferation of conflicts around the world (Middle East, Ukraine, etc.), which mainly affect civilians and which result in an unprecedented number of displaced people and refugees, human trafficking and exploitation would appear to be increasingly in the forefront.

Failure to address these issues can result in the permanent entrenchment of this phenomenon in countries being rebuilt after a period of conflict.

The purpose of this research-action is to help identify more clearly the processes of exploitation resulting from conflict and post-conflict situations. It also aims to offer concrete recommendations at the local, national and international level, based on a series of experiments in various countries.

It allows all stakeholders in acts of trafficking in human beings to increase their knowledge and offers methods for intervention that best reflect the situations on the ground. It should therefore help ensure greater attention is paid to the specific vulnerabilities in both trafficking of children and adults, both during an initial emergency and in the long term.

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## 1 - TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEING IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS: A REALITY WITH MANY FORMS



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### CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

While some of the forms of human exploitation covered by this research are specific to countries directly involved in conflict – child soldiering and organ trafficking to treat wounded fighters – the remaining types of trafficking in human beings have many points in common in conflict and post-conflict periods. Recruitment methods, psychological control techniques and the forms of exploitation do not depend on particular geographic zones.

### EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE FOR THE PURPOSES OF EXPLOITATION

Our research showed that, in the countries in conflict, girls were abducted by various armed groups from their families, or near border areas, for the purposes of sexual slavery. However, in all of the countries studied, the methods of recruitment revolve around various types of arranged marriages. The girls and their families were apparently seldom aware of the risks. Whatever the religion involved, the dowry system

is regularly corrupted and turned into the purchase price of a human being. These marriages are used for one or other type of exploitation, or even for several types of exploitation at once. They turn into domestic exploitation, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, temporary marriage or debt bondage, all of which can include being forced to commit offences.

### ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

This type of exploitation, and the many forms it takes, is found in all of the countries studied. The quasi-impossibility for refugees to enter the legal job market, because of limited rights or the absence of status, fosters large-scale economic exploitation. Although there is little chance of changing domestic legislations at this point, our research showed that economic exploitation can generate other forms of exploitation, such as drug running, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, etc. This leads us to advocate for the establishment of a distinction of type, not degree, between economic exploitation and undeclared work.

### USE OF CHILDREN

In countries with large numbers of refugees, child labour can be seen in every sector that requires unqualified labour: agriculture, street vendors, shoeshiners, construction, shop salespeople, etc. The report<sup>1</sup> on minor Iraqi refugees in Lebanon showed that these practices were far from common before the conflict. In the sample quoted, 92% of the children had not worked in Iraq and 59% had completed at least elementary schooling. This exploitation through work, which sometimes turns into sexual exploitation or forced crime and is dictated by the economic hardships experienced by refugee families, tends to become commonplace, even institutionalised. The example of refugee families living in informal tented settlements on private lands in the Bekaa Valley or Northern Lebanon, who have to send their children out to work in the field of the landlord in order to be able to pay for the piece of land used, is a worrying illustration of this. Humanitarian organisations tend to work through the *chawichs* and regularly assign them the task of distributing aid (food, blankets, etc.), thereby further bolstering their position in the camps.

### VULNERABLE MINORITIES

The post-conflict situations studied in this research show that past and present civil wars lead to certain minorities being permanently rejected, on ethnic or religious grounds, by all of the belligerents. In the post-conflict period, these groups' place in society continues to be threatened. These minorities find themselves marginalised and represent a pool of potential victims of trafficking in human beings over several generations. The exclusion from social institutions in their countries of origin condemns them to living in isolation and reinforces the clan mentality and crime. The example of Bosnia and Kosovo shows that, more than 15 years after the end of the conflicts, the lack of protection for these population groups in their home or host countries generates an internal structuring of so-called grey activities that can degenerate into crime and human trafficking. These phenomena do not appear to stop at the border and are also observed in neighbouring countries, such as Albania or Bulgaria.

### MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Many studies draw a type distinction between smuggling migrants and trafficking in human beings. This is based on the assumption that, once the migrant has paid the required sum and been smuggled into the country, the person is no longer tied to the smuggler. Our research tends to prove the opposite. Migrant smuggling can be a stepping stone to trafficking in human beings. Many people who cannot afford to pay the smuggler on the spot end up in a situation of debt bondage. Some families are obliged to marry their daughters to the first suitors who come along in order to recuperate the dowry money; others, especially in Western Europe, are caught up in economic exploitation or forced crime.

1. *An Insight into Child Labor among Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon*. CLMC, Beirut, 2012.

## DÉFINITIONS

### TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Palermo Protocol (2000), which was ratified by 147 countries, provides the following definition of Trafficking in persons in its Article 3, entitled "Use of terms":

"For the purposes of this Protocol:

- (a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring 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;
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age."

European Directive 2011/36/EU, which focuses more on the protection of victims, expands on this definition in its Paragraph 11:

"In order to tackle recent developments in the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, this Directive adopts a broader concept of what should be considered trafficking in human beings than under Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA and therefore includes additional forms of exploitation. Within the context of this Directive, forced begging should be understood as a form of forced labour or services as defined in the 1930 ILO Convention No 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour. Therefore, the exploitation of begging, including the use of a trafficked dependent person for begging, falls within the scope of the definition of trafficking in human beings only when all the elements of forced labour or services occur. In the light of the relevant case-law, the validity of any possible consent to perform such labour or services should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. However, when a child is concerned, no possible consent should ever be considered valid. The expression 'exploitation of criminal activities' should be understood as the exploitation of a person to commit, inter alia, pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, drug trafficking and other similar activities which are subject to penalties and imply financial gain. The definition also covers trafficking in human beings for the purpose of the removal of organs, which constitutes a serious violation of human dignity and physical integrity, as well as, for instance, other behaviour such as illegal adoption or forced marriage (...)."

### DISPLACED PEOPLE, REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS

People obliged to leave their place of residence because of conflict and/or persecution are considered **displaced** when they remain in their country and **refugees** when they leave their country.

The term "refugee" is defined by Article 1 A (2) of the 1951 Geneva Convention: "(...) the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who: (...) owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

The signatory countries (139 countries) base themselves on this convention to define the right to asylum in their national legislation. Depending on the States, people other than refugees in the sense of the Geneva Convention may be entitled to apply for asylum. Other legal grounds may be claimed, such as being persecuted for one's opinions or belonging to an ethnic, religious or sexual minority. In France, this type of application comes under so-called "subsidiary" asylum.

## 2 - PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH-ACTION

### RELEVANCE

According to the Caritas organisations working in the field, because of the proliferation of conflicts around the world (Middle East, Ukraine, etc.), which mainly affect civilians and which result in an unprecedented number of displaced people and refugees, human trafficking and exploitation would appear to be increasingly in the forefront. Failure to address these issues can result in the permanent entrenchment of this phenomenon in countries being rebuilt after a period of conflict. This research-action provides insights into trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations to all stakeholders so that they can put forward the solutions best suited to the situations in the field.

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand trafficking in human beings in conflict and post-conflict situations: the forms it takes and how it is carried out;
- Help Caritas and its partners more effectively support refugees fleeing conflicts and who are at risk of or victims of trafficking, by producing new tools;
- Draw up a series of recommendations, based on local research and trials, to better address trafficking in human beings in aid programmes for conflict and post-conflict situations, and disseminate them to local, national, regional and international stakeholders.

### PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

#### PARTICIPANTS

The plan to conduct a research-action was discussed among the Caritas organisations involved in the Euro-Mediterranean anti-trafficking in human beings project in Madrid in January 2014. Caritas organisations started working together on this issue following their meeting at the World Social Forum 2011 in Senegal. For three years, various Caritas organisations shared their experiences in raising awareness of trafficking in human beings, protecting at risk populations, supporting victims of all forms of trafficking and advocacy. At a meeting in Lebanon in May 2014, more targeted discussions were held on the objectives and methodology, and a document presenting the research-action on trafficking and conflict situations was produced. Based on this document the Caritas organisations in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, France, Lebanon, Turkey and Ukraine<sup>2</sup> decided to take part of this research. Other Caritas organisations can

now benefit from the first experiments carried out by the organisations actively involved today to combat this blight.

#### METHODOLOGY

The term "research-action" refers to a variety of approaches developed by the social sciences to boost social change. A panel of international researchers produced the following tentative definition<sup>3</sup>: "Research in which there is deliberate action to transform reality; research with a dual objective: transform reality and gain insights into these transformations."

In this work, the link between research and action, managed by the head of the Secours Catholique's "trafficking in human beings" unit, is made in the following steps:

Step 1: conduct research, in the participating countries, into the different types of trafficking in human beings in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Step 2: the participating Caritas organisations decide to develop tools through concrete experimentations on one or more of the types of trafficking identified.

Step 3: assess the impact of the tools used.

Step 4: disseminate the research-action and advocate recommendations to put into practice.

In Step 1, each Caritas organisation involved in the study appointed a research officer (sometimes the Caritas coordinator for efforts to stop trafficking in human beings, or some other person). The latter conducted documentary research and interviewed institutional stakeholders and stakeholders in the field. Whenever possible, the researchers gathered first-hand accounts from victims or people at risk, using two methods:

- semi-guided interviews;
- focus groups<sup>4</sup> conducted with refugees (from Syria and Iraq for example).

The research officers were supported by a researcher specialised in trafficking in human beings.

For Steps 2 and 3, four experiments were conducted by Caritas Albania, Caritas Armenia, Caritas Lebanon and Caritas Turkey. Each Caritas organisation developed an action aimed at one of the target

2. Because of the circumstances, Caritas Ukraine was only able to partially contribute to this research.

3. At a symposium held at the INRP (National Institute for Educational Research) in Paris.

4. This tool provides a comparison of different stakeholders' viewpoints that is more apt than individual interviews to bring out differences of assessment, internal reasoning, possible malfunctions, etc.

groups identified during the research phase as being particularly vulnerable to trafficking in human beings. Although any experiment is, by definition, limited in scope, several criteria had to be met in order to be eligible, based on the defined methodology:

- the action should be carried out in partnership with the public authorities as a guarantee of sustainability;
- the direct impact on the situation of victims or potential victims was a key evaluation criterion;
- finally, the experiment had to be designed so that, if the results were positive, it could give rise to larger-scale projects in the countries concerned or elsewhere.

This work is now being built on collaboration with universities (political science, international action, migration) in some countries researched.

With regard to Step 4, work carried out with Caritas Internationalis enabled the initial results of the study to be presented to the United Nations Assembly in Geneva, in June 2015. Since then, other discussions based on the study have taken place within the UN in Amman (November 2015) and Geneva (June 2016). The research-action was thus cited in the 2016 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which was presented at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council<sup>5</sup>. Caritas Lebanon also presented the research during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul (May 2016).

At the regional and local level, advocacy work based on the conclusions of the research-action has been carried out by Caritas organisations and their partners, to ensure that the question of victims of trafficking in human beings is taken into consideration in both emergency assistance and reconstruction programmes. In France for example, the work carried out on trafficking and conflict situations provides the basis for collaboration with MIPROF – the inter-ministerial unit tasked with implementing the national action plan to combat trafficking – and the various ministries concerned, and CNCDH – the national consultative commission on human rights –, who acts as national rapporteur on trafficking as human beings. The issue is also being further studied with partners from the Collective “Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings”, which pools together 25 member associations working to combat trafficking.

#### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH-ACTION: EXPLORING A LITTLE-KNOWN TOPIC

This research-action, which spans a period of two and a half years, consists of a qualitative analysis of the forms

and operation of trafficking in human beings among people who are displaced or refugees as a result of conflict and post-conflict situations.

The number of interviews of victims or people at risk per country was limited (maximum of approximately 30 per country). This makes it impossible to report on the quantitative scale of the phenomenon, and thus limits the possibility of providing an exhaustive listing of the various forms of trafficking that are being conducted in the respective countries. The study focuses on a qualitative approach in order to better identify and target trafficking.

Similarly, the financial and human resources allocated during the experimentation phase were limited. The impact evaluation therefore applies to a limited number of situations. Experiments that target a limited number of people may only be relevant to particular cases, which are not always representative of all situations.

Very little research has been done on trafficking in human beings, so documentary research had to be extended to include press articles, especially to corroborate certain information provided by the refugees but not necessarily recorded by studies.

The scope of action among the engaged Caritas organizations is geographically limited, so it was not always possible to report on specific regional features within the different countries.

The victims or people at risk who took part in the interviews and/or focus groups had been identified by the Caritas organisations or their partners, so the group polled was, de facto, not representative of all victims. A series of filters inherent to social work sometimes meant that certain categories of victims (women, people who spoke the language of the specific country where the study took place, etc.) were more likely to be selected to participate.

The techniques used to exploit and gain psychological control over people change according to the person's status, the practices of the stakeholders in the field, the arrival of new vulnerable populations, etc. The analysis presented here, therefore, corresponds to a partial snapshot of the various forms taken by trafficking in human beings at a given time.

5. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/090/48/PDF/G1609048.pdf?OpenElement>

### 3 - CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT ON THE REFUGEE ISSUE AND INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF PEOPLE



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#### CLOSURE OF EUROPE'S BORDERS AND INCREASED ROLE OF THIRD COUNTRIES IN RECEIVING AND TAKING CHARGE OF REFUGEES

According to research by Gérard Noirel<sup>6</sup>, beginning in the 1980s, Western countries introduced policies to curb the filing of asylum applications in their respective territories and to lower the acceptance rate. In 1980, the rate of acceptance of asylum applications in European Member States stood at 85%, whereas, in the 2000s, the proportion was completely reversed and reached an 85% rejection rate. Over the years, the status of refugee has thus become less protective. The future prospects it procures are increasingly uncertain. An analysis of the figures on the distribution of Syrian refugees between the Middle East and Europe confirms this trend.

In February 2016, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the number of Syrians living in neighbouring countries at more than 4.5 million (out of a population of 22 million), with a million having reached Europe. The majority of them are living in the following countries: 1,069,111 in Lebanon, 2,503,549 in Turkey, 635,324 in Jordan, 245,022 in Iraq and 117,658 in Egypt. Again

according to UNHCR, 13.5 million people have been displaced within Syria. These figures are actually an underestimate, since they only include people of Syrian nationality who are officially registered. If we take the case of Lebanon, registration with UNHCR has been increasingly difficult since early 2015 and many Syrians are therefore not registered. Moreover, there are other nationalities in both Europe and neighbouring countries, who have fled their countries because of conflict (Iraqis, Sudanese, etc.).

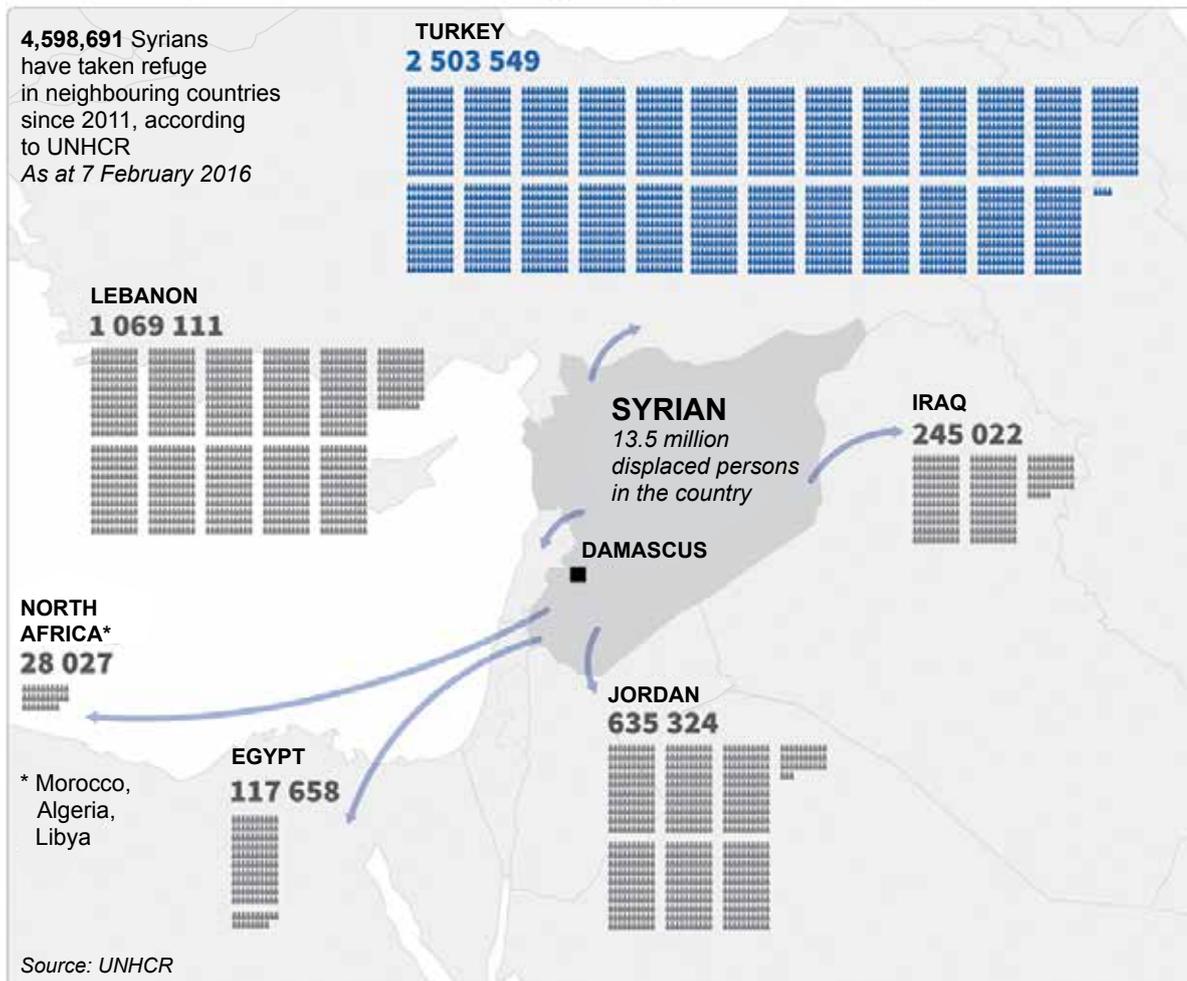
When we compare the figures, we can see that only 18% of Syrian refugees are in Europe, with a very uneven distribution between countries, with Germany, Greece and Sweden among those most affected. Since early 2016, the European Union has placed mounting pressure on the countries adjoining conflict zones to accept onto their soil the flow of people fleeing the fighting. Although the European Union has allocated substantial sums to these States, to international organisations and to NGOs, as a result of the ever-increasing number of refugees and domestic legislation in the host countries, actual protection of refugees remains limited. Among the countries currently hosting the largest number of refugees,

6. Gérard Noirel, *Réfugiés et sans-papiers, La République face au droit d'asile XIX<sup>e</sup> - XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris : Hachette / Pluriel, 1999.

Lebanon is not a signatory to the Geneva Convention and Turkey has placed a geographical restriction on the Geneva Convention, to the effect that it accepts only asylum seekers coming from Europe. To remedy the resulting lack of status among those seeking asylum, temporary hosting protocols have been signed with UNHCR. Even so, the status of refugees remains very limited in terms of protection. It varies with the refugee's nationality and on negotiations with the national authorities, which are pushing for a more and more restrictive status in order to protect their labour markets<sup>7</sup>. As a result, refugee status provides few prospects for the future (temporary status, ban on working, etc.). In addition, migration routes to Europe are closing. Until November 2015, there were no nationality criteria for people taking the

Balkans route. By the end of November, only Iraqis, Syrians and Afghans had the right to cross legally from Greece into Macedonia. Three months later, this authorisation was restricted to people from certain cities in the three countries. At the end of March, all the borders of the countries adjoining Greece were closed to all refugees. The agreement between Turkey and the European Union on sending refugees back to Turkish soil began to come into effect at the same time. This increasingly restrictive level of protection makes refugees even more vulnerable to trafficking in human beings. The closure of borders results in a resurgence of the network of human smugglers, which leads to indebtedness and therefore increases the risks of debt slavery.

## Over 2.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey



7. For example, since 2015, Syrians in Lebanon have had to sign an undertaking not to work (signed before a notary) with the UNHCR certificate in order to renew their visas.



## 4 - IDENTIFICATION OF THE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS OF EXPLOITATION IN COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT, THIRD COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES IN RECONSTRUCTION

### TRAFFICKING IN COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT

#### SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

In the focus groups, a number of women refugees from the city of Mosul said that Muslim girls and those girls who were members of religious minorities (Christians and Yazidis) had been kidnapped from their homes by the Islamic State or other armed militia. To stop them from escaping and returning to their family, they are raped in front of their parents, creating an indelible feeling of shame with regard to their family. After being abducted, they are made the sexual slaves of the fighters. Although it is hard to know the full extent of the phenomenon, similar facts have been reported in a number of press articles. The Huffington Post UK<sup>8</sup> reported on the rare story of a Yazidi girl who managed to escape, a few weeks after having been reduced to the role of sex slave. She described her ordeal and mentioned that 40 other girls were with her, the youngest of them aged 12.

In three interviews conducted by Caritas Turkey, Syrian women refugees in Istanbul between the ages of 17-24 stated that they had been raped during the conflict in Syria and that, due to fear of social exclusion, they could not let their families know. Among girls and women involved in prostitution, most of them had been victims of rape in Syria. In Turkey, four male and three female interviewees stated that prostitution is socially unacceptable in the Syrian culture, but girls or women have no other choices due to the economic situation of refugees.

#### ABDUCTION OF WOMEN FOR THE PURPOSES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ABROAD

Numerous observers in countries at war confirm that, apart from the cases of sexual slavery, women and teenagers are being abducted and then sold abroad, mainly for the purposes of forced prostitution. As early as 2003, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported an increase in abductions of young women<sup>9</sup>. The same year, the NGO Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq reported that 400 women had been kidnapped in the Kirkuk region<sup>10</sup>. There was evidence that 18 of them had been sold for sexual exploitation in nightclubs in Egypt<sup>11</sup>. More recently, the NGOs contacted for this research drew attention to possible sales of women,

primarily to buyers in the Gulf States. In Iraq and Syria, the risk of abduction is currently highest in the border areas. Numerous armed groups use these crossing points to raise finance by smuggling migrants and selling women.

#### FORCED / EARLY MARRIAGES TO OBTAIN PROTECTION AND/OR PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY'S NEEDS

During the conduct of research for this study, reports were made of numerous cases of Syrian girls in Turkey being forced to marry and become the second or third wife. This also has been corroborated by articles in the press<sup>12</sup>. According to accounts by victims, the usual scenario is as follows: Turkish men, generally quite old, contact Syrian go-betweens to find Syrian wives aged between 13 and 25. Once the deal has been made, they go to areas on the Syrian border in the south of Turkey. The Syrian go-between then crosses the border with the wife and hands her over to the future husband in exchange for the sum of money negotiated beforehand. The payment is used to pay the bride's dowry to the girl's family in Syria and remunerate the go-between. Caritas investigations suggest that the main motivations of the men who contract for such brides are:

- the fact that the dowry amount is much smaller than what is paid for Turkish women;
- the opportunity for men over the age of 50 to have a young and docile wife.

From the many testimonies of victims collected by NGOs and journalists, it became possible to understand the recruitment procedure. The victims explained that they were obliged by their uncle or father to take a Turkish husband. If they agreed, it was to help their family financially through the dowry money paid to the family. According to their accounts, the amount was between \$150 and \$200. On arriving in Turkey, the victims found that the go-between (often a relative or neighbour of theirs) had deceived them about the husband's material circumstances and family status. In the majority of accounts, the latter had been described as a widower or childless, in comfortable financial circumstances. It was only when the new Syrian wife entered his home that she discovered that her husband had several wives and

8. [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/09/08/yazidi-sex-slave-isis\\_n\\_5782714.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/09/08/yazidi-sex-slave-isis_n_5782714.html)

9. Human Rights Watch (2003) : *Climate of Fear*.

10. Over 400 Iraqi women kidnapped, raped in post-war chaos, *Jordan Times*, August 25, The Arab Regional Resource Center on Violence against Women. Aman News Center : [www.amanjordan.org](http://www.amanjordan.org)

11. Mlodoch, Karin : Lange Schatten der Vergangenheit, *ai-journal*, amnesty international, Heft 10, Oktober 2003, pp. 12-13.

12. [http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyeli\\_kuma\\_ticareti\\_kira\\_veremiyorsan\\_kizini\\_ver-1172732](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyeli_kuma_ticareti_kira_veremiyorsan_kizini_ver-1172732)

**FOCUS ON**
**ABOUT FORCED/EARLY MARRIAGE AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking, forced marriage, as distinct from arranged marriage, may occur as:

- 1) a method of recruitment for trafficking – for example, by the promise of dating or marriage abroad leading to sexual exploitation;
- 2) the result of trafficking, in other words, being trafficked for the purposes of marriage, usually accomplished via the threat of force, fraud, or coercion. The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery also refers to servile marriage, in which a woman might be promised and/or given in marriage without her consent.

"Child marriage can be said to be slavery, primarily if the following elements are present: firstly, if the child has not genuinely given their free and informed consent to enter the marriage; secondly, if the child is subjected to control and a sense of "ownership" in the marriage itself, particularly through abuse and threats, and is exploited by being forced to undertake domestic chores within the marital home or labour outside it, and/or engage in non-consensual sexual relations; and thirdly, if the child cannot realistically leave or end the marriage, leading potentially to a lifetime of slavery"<sup>13</sup>.

In 2013 the first United Nations Human Rights Council resolution against child, early, and forced marriages was adopted; the resolution recognizes child, early, and forced marriage as involving violations of human rights which "prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and that has adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education, [and] the right to the highest attainable standard of health including sexual and reproductive health, and also states that "the elimination of child, early and forced marriage should be considered in the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda"<sup>14</sup>.

13. Extract from the website "girls not brides" <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/when-does-child-marriage-become-slavery/>

14. <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/states-adopt-first-ever-resolution-on-child-marriage-at-human-rights-council/>

15. See the US Department of State's 2014 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which reports that children in Syria, in particular, are being abducted for use as child soldiers.

16. During the war between Afghanistan and the USSR, minorities, i.e. people seen as ethnically non-Russian, were sent to the front before the others.

17. *Foreign Fighters, an Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, Soufran group, New York, December 2015

dependent children. The housing conditions were much poorer than had been announced. The girls who told their story explained that they had been held in a situation of domestic and/or sexual exploitation. They had also been abused by the other wives, who resented their arrival.

### ENLISTMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED MILITIA OR FOR "JIHAD"

Information from Caritas Ukraine indicates that children are being used to build barricades against the regular army. Some of them are enlisted in separatist militia. Similarly, in the focus groups conducted in Lebanon, women refugees reported that boys were regularly kidnapped and then enlisted in armed militia. This information has been corroborated by the US Department of State's report on Syria<sup>15</sup>, which refers to boys being forcibly recruited into armed militia. When Caritas Armenia interviewed Armenian refugees from Syria, the latter said they were particularly exposed to child soldiering because of their religion. According to them, boys from religious minorities or considered non-Sunni were targeted more than others. While this information is plausible because it reflects strategies that are common practice during conflicts<sup>16</sup>,

we should nevertheless remain cautious. The number of testimonies collected to this day is not sufficient to determine whether the faith-based criterion increases the risk of forced enlistment, and if so, in what way.

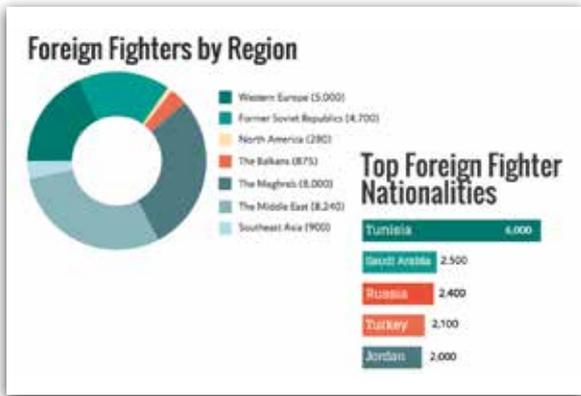
The enlistment of foreign fighters by armed militias and terrorist groups (Al Nostra, Islamic State, etc.) on the pretext of Jihad seems to us to be a similar phenomenon to trafficking in human beings and affects a large number of countries.

The girls enlisted are mainly used for reproductive purposes. They are married to fighters who are allocated to them once they arrive. According to information from the French Intelligence and Internal Security Service (DGSI) in 2015, girls represented 35% of recruits from France.

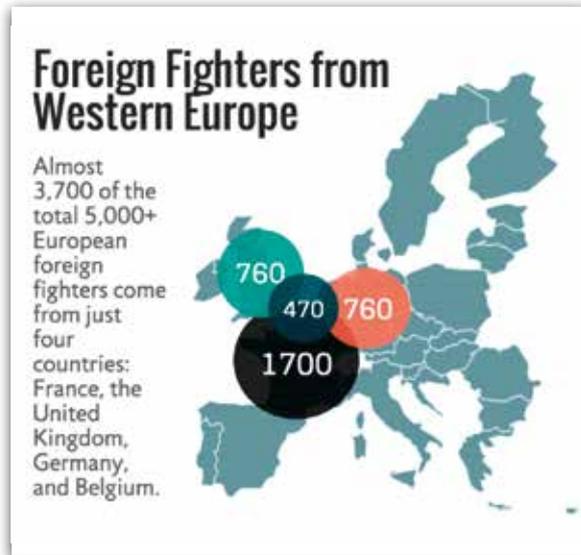
As regards adolescents and young men recruited to be enlisted by warlords in Iraq, Syria or Libya, the estimates calculated by the various Western intelligence services agree on a figure of 60,000 fighters, with half of them coming from abroad. According to the study<sup>17</sup> carried out by the Soufran group, the foreign fighters present in Iraq and Syria

come from 86 countries. The most significant contingents are from the Middle East, the Maghreb and then Western Europe.

Finally, with regard to Western Europe, the main contingents come from four countries: France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium.

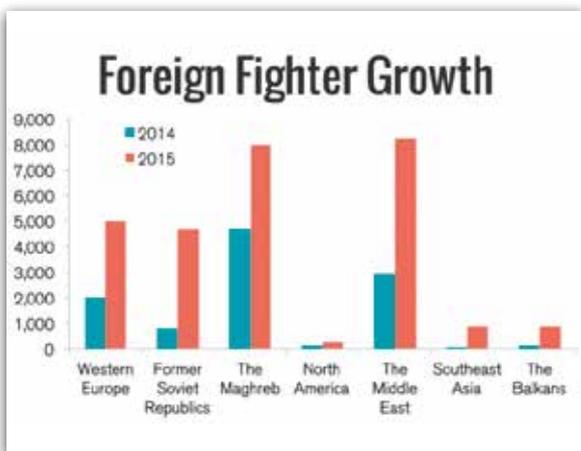


Source: Soufran group



Source: Soufran group

Similarly, according to the same study, recruitment doubled between 2014 and 2015. Recruitment techniques combine gaining a hold over individuals and financial motivation.



Source: Soufran group

**TRAFFICKING IN ORGANS**

In the focus groups, the Syrian and Iraqi refugees were adamant in stating that trafficking in organs was indeed observed. Although, to our knowledge, there have been few reports or articles on this information, the testimonies collected were relatively precise. Several women reported that people underwent operations in hospitals for the removal of a kidney without their knowledge. Others in the group reported that, on the road to Lebanon, there had been attempts to threaten them into donating their organs. If such trafficking probably existed before the conflict, it seems to have intensified. The most detailed testimonies reported situations of wounded fighters in Syria, who, for security reasons, sought treatment in Turkey in the border town of Kilis, but later were found dead with organs missing. Several articles<sup>18</sup> seem to corroborate this situation. UNHCR's report on trafficking in Syria (published in November 2014) also confirmed this point. Several cases of trafficking in organs among Syrian refugees in Lebanon were described, which suggests that the trade is growing fast. During our interviews in Tripoli (Lebanon), a Sunni Syrian family explained that they had contacted the local sheikh to seek help, and in return were asked to donate a kidney. The increase in trafficking is thought to be explained by the financial difficulties faced by refugees in dealing with ever-higher costs of living, along with the ban on refugees working. Hiring a tent in Tripoli, for example, costs between \$100

18. *Organ smuggling: Turkish hospitals Traffic Injured Syrian Citizen Organs* by Centre for Research Globalization 02/2014 <http://www.globalresearch.ca/organ-smuggling-turkish-hospitals-traffic-injured-syrian-citizens-organs/5367869> and "L'EI, J.Foley et le trafic d'organes" In *Le monde* blog 12/12/2014.

19. Anything related to personal status is ruled by the person's religion. There are 18 officially recognized religious groups in Lebanon.

20. Following complaints by a number of associations, including Caritas Lebanon, the page was blocked by Facebook. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/May-22/257377-facebook-page-promoting-syrian-refugee-brides-blocked.ashx#axzz3DN2fGlgY>

21. <http://levant.tv/blog-posts/syrian-crisis-temporary-marriages-and-sexual-exploitation-by-sara-yasmin-anwar/>

22. [http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyeli\\_kuma\\_ticaret\\_i\\_kira\\_veremiyorsan\\_kizini\\_ver-1172732](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyeli_kuma_ticaret_i_kira_veremiyorsan_kizini_ver-1172732)

23. "One family reported that there was an office in Tripoli that helped facilitate the marriages of Syrian girls and women to foreign men. Although they had never seen the office, it was said that after arriving in Lebanon, a foreign man would come to this office where he would be presented with several Syrian girls and women from which he could choose a bride. Once he had made his choice and the arrangements were made, he would travel back to his home country with his bride".

and \$200 a month. Even for families viewed as the most vulnerable, financial assistance from UNHCR is limited to a maximum period of six months.

This is reminiscent of another recent organ trafficking scandal: in 2013, one of nine suspected of illegal organ trafficking at the Medicus clinic (a private Kosovo/Turkish Clinic) in Kosovo pleaded guilty to all charges of having committed such crimes during the previous years. The clinic was founded in 1999 by a European philanthropist who helped during the war in Kosovo. Officials say that it secretly evolved into a centre for illegal organ trafficking. An investigation into the practices of the clinic began in 2008, and the centre was closed. Thirty illegal transplants are said to have taken place at the site, with donors falsely promised up to 15,000 euros for their kidneys. The donors were often left in frail condition and without any payment.

## TRAFFICKING IN A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY OR A THIRD COUNTRY WELCOMING EXILED PEOPLE

### MARRIAGES TO OBTAIN PROTECTION

The various stakeholders interviewed for our research in Lebanon spoke of the risks associated with the growing practice of marrying Syrian refugee girls to Lebanese or foreign adults. These practices are legal under the domestic legislation. Girls as young as 12 are allowed to marry. Depending on the many family codes in force<sup>19</sup> (15 in all), in some communities, the marriageable age can even be lowered to 9. In rural Syria, early marriage was a common practice before the conflict, but it was part of a tradition that gave the wife a certain number of guarantees and protections. Among refugee families in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey, such marriages have been perverted. They are losing their symbolic value as a uniting of two families and are becoming a means for the parents to find a safe haven for their daughter and/or obtain money.

Several testimonies in the focus groups recounted similar stories. The women we interviewed all said that they knew parents who were trying to marry their 13 or 14-year-old daughters in an attempt to give them a better future. Others talked more about the economic criterion, saying they knew families trying to find wealthy husbands for their daughters. These strategies are not without risk for the health of the young brides. If they become pregnant at an early age, their anatomy is not yet sufficiently developed and their health is jeopardised.

### "TEMPORARY" MARRIAGES AMONG GIRL REFUGEES

These marriages could be a front for sexual exploitation, encouraged by go-betweens who take advantage of the families' vulnerability to urge them to marry their daughters without being too inquisitive about the husband. There is a real market in these marriages, as witnessed by the creation of a Facebook page entitled Syrian refugees for marriage<sup>20</sup>.

These marriages are in fact known as temporary marriages. To avoid sexual relations outside marriage, Muslims are allowed to take a wife for a very short period (sometimes 24 hours). After a matter of days or weeks, the girls are repudiated by their husband. Depending on the families, they can be taken back by their parents, or rejected because of the shame associated with their status as repudiated wives. If they were taken to live abroad when they married, especially in the Gulf States, the fact of being abandoned condemns them, in effect, to prostitution in the new country so that they could earn a living<sup>21</sup>.

Research has shown that the dowry paid to the family is one of the reasons that parents try to marry their daughter on arrival in Lebanon. Poor families or those that left everything behind in their hurry to leave went into debt to be able to cross the border. Often they have no / few alternative but to marry their daughters to escape from the usurers.

The economic hardships experienced by refugee families in Lebanon or Turkey (especially outside the camps) because of the cost of living and rent<sup>22</sup> have made practices akin to child prostitution commonplace. The Lebanese association ABAAD<sup>23</sup> mentioned the existence of an office in Northern Lebanon (Tripoli), where men come from throughout the region to choose a bride<sup>24</sup>. Similar phenomena have been reported in Jordan, in the vicinity of the Zaatar camp, said to be a market for temporary brides<sup>25</sup>. These underage girls, under the pretext of repeated temporary marriages, are forced to prostitute themselves to help their family.

### FORCED PROSTITUTION

In 2013, the Lebanese anti-trafficking department identified 27 victims of trafficking in human beings for the year. In May 2014, 22 cases already had been identified. The majority of cases involved Syrian girls sold in Syria by relatives. Col. Asmar, Head of the Internal Security Force's Vice Squad, stated in an interview that there were several scenarios:

- Syrian men send their wives to Lebanon with a



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promise of decent work. But once in Lebanon, the women are forced to work in bars or forced into prostitution by Lebanese and / or Syrians;

- Poor Syrian families wanting to marry their daughter decide to use a Lebanese go-between, who then takes the girl to Lebanon. Once there, he sells the girl or forces her into prostitution.

To obtain a better understanding of the recruitment procedure, the question was raised during a focus group. The participants emphasised that the family is seldom aware of fate that awaits their daughter. If the family married her to a foreigner, it was in an attempt to give her a better future. They said the majority of recruiters relied on deceit.

A report<sup>26</sup> released by Harvard University in January 2014 states that the police had broken up a prostitution ring on the outskirts of the refugee camps set up in the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon). At certain times of the day, Syrian girls approached Lebanese men, asking them if they needed anything. This type of practice seems to be relatively common around the camps. There are also phone numbers in circulation for obtaining paid sexual relations, making the activity more difficult

to detect. According to the NGOs questioned, some of these girls are underage.

Although it is difficult to determine the role of the family or husband in these situations of forced prostitution, the number of cases recorded by the Lebanese Vice Squad seems far short of the actual numbers. The main reason for this seems to be that few cases are reported by the local stakeholders (NGOs included).

In Turkey, many alleged incidents of trafficking for sexual exploitation in prostitution involving Syrian refugees have been reported in the Turkish media<sup>27</sup> (T24, 2014; Milliyet, 2014) as well as international media. Many of the interviewees in the Tarlabası region of Istanbul also reported such cases. One household mentioned that it has been three weeks since they last heard from their 17 year-old daughter. She had been working in a textile factory, and they believe she was trafficked and taken to another city. However, the family's efforts to find out the whereabouts of their daughter gave no result. The family was afraid to contact the authorities due to the fact that they were not registered in Turkey and because the father was working illegally.

24. Information reported in *Running out of Time*, Harvard FXB Center, January 2014, USA.

25. "Marriages of shame. Child marriages among Syrian refugees have turned into a lucrative business" in *Now*, Ana Maria Luca, 15/11/2013.

26. *Running out of Time*, Harvard FXB Center, January 2014, USA.

27. (2014) 'Suriyelilerle evlilik ticarete donustu', Milliyet Daily newspaper, 26 January 2014. Available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriyelilerle-evlilik-ticarete/gundem/default.htm>



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### "SURVIVAL SEX"

In Lebanon, Armenia, Turkey and France, several cases of people forced to have sexual relations for economic reasons were recorded during our research. One of the people (an Armenian woman refugee from Syria), interviewed for our research in Armenia, said that she had been the victim of sexual harassment by her boss. Her refusal to accept his advances had, she thought, led to her dismissal and the non-payment of the remuneration due to her. She explained that this type of advances on the part of employers was frequent.

Similarly, the only one comprehensive report about the sexual exploitation of non-camp Syrian refugee women and girls in Turkey (Mazlumder, 2014) emphasizes that the social and cultural discrimination faced by Syrian refugee women makes it difficult for them to raise their voices and denounce sexual harassment and exploitation.

The Harvard report relates several stories by Syrian women in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon who, in order to obtain a tent in a camp or additional food vouchers, had sexual relations with the camp manager, NGO employees, etc.

Although it is impossible to calculate the number of victims of these various forms of sexual exploitation from the research, UNHCR<sup>28</sup> has estimated that 10%

of Syrian women refugees have suffered sexual or physical violence, which represents more than 100,000 people. The problems of early marriage, forced marriage and forced prostitution existed in Syria before the conflict, but the vulnerable situation in which women refugees presently find themselves have resulted in an unprecedented increase in sexual exploitation, which, through the various forms of marriage described here, have turned into a fully-fledged industry.

### THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN

Our research into exploited children identified various background profiles:

- children or teenagers who are helping their refugee family settle in the country;
- children tasked by their family to go abroad and regularly send back money;
- children or teenagers who have lost their parents and are consequently living in the street.

Whatever forms of exploitation the children are subjected to, this variety of backgrounds seemed to be present: begging, selling small objects, construction work, waiting at table, sewing, etc. Even with this overview of activities in which the children are engaged, it remains difficult to determine the vulnerability of the children or the danger to which they are exposed as a result of the activities in which

28. 2013 Syria Regional Response Plan, United Nations, 2013.

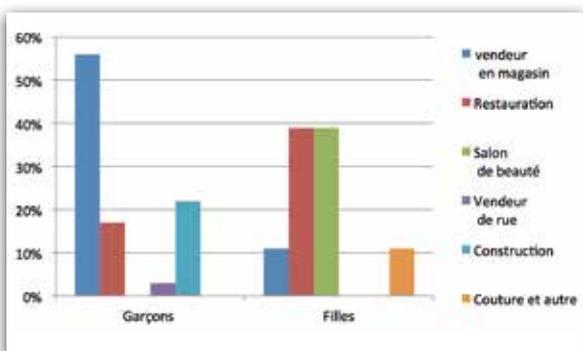
they are engaged. However, this background profile remains a determining factor in terms of social support.

### Children tasked with helping their family

In 2012, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center conducted a study<sup>29</sup> on 1,957 Iraqi refugee children settled in Lebanon. All of them were living with their families. Those forced to work represented between 4.8% and 8.9% of the sample group. With the arrival of new families and the worsening economic situation, the proportion probably has increased.

The children identified in the study who were forced to work ranged in age between 11 and 17 years: 92% of them had not worked in Iraq; 59% had completed at least an elementary school education. There is not necessarily any correlation, therefore, between the social level in the original country and the fact that the children have to work. The determinant is to be found elsewhere: it is thought to stem from the parents' inability to work in Lebanon. According to the study, in 44% of the cases, the children explained that their parents were unable to work because of a chronic illness or a disability.

Both boys and girls are engaged in child labour. Whatever their work, the younger the children are, the less they are paid. The breakdown by activity is as follows:



Source p.39 *An Insight into Child Labor among Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon*. CLMC, Beirut, 2012.

These situations of economic exploitation of children result in:

- health problems for 54% of the boys in the sample and 46% of the girls;
- the risks of missing school: a third of the children had had to drop out of school.

Concerning this last point, apart from the phenomenon of exploitation, the influx of refugees

is making the situation increasingly critical. For the 2014-2015 school year, the Lebanese Ministries of Education and of Higher Education can enrol only 75,000 refugee children (only in the morning). The number of children who will attend classes in the afternoon has not yet been notified by the ministries. However, UNHCR estimates the number of school-aged refugee children at 425,000.

Fieldwork in Turkey in the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood and its surroundings (Istanbul) showed that child labour constitutes the most common form of trafficking of Syrian children. Most of the children work either in textile factories or sell food on the streets. The interviews showed that it is mostly the younger children who work while the older one goes to school. In most cases, the child is the breadwinner either because the father is wounded, or because there is no adult male member in the household, or because the adults cannot find work. Some children interviewed indicated that, at the end of the work day, their money is stolen from them on their way home, and some stated that they are beaten up by the older youth in the neighbourhood. For Kurdish children, it becomes easier to ward off such attacks through establishing patronage relations with the older local Kurdish youth in the neighbourhood. Some children have stated that they work in workshops established by Syrians. In such cases, child labour exploitation is also very common, with the children not being able to get their salaries or working for very low wages.

Lastly, child labour situations sometimes mask other forms of exploitation. A number of journalists' investigations<sup>30</sup> have gathered testimonies from children who complained of mistreatment and sexual abuse by their employers.

Through fieldwork in Turkey 3, other households indicated that they have witnessed sexual exploitation of Syrian children in parks and other public places around Tarlabaşı. Those families were not willing to provide information about the traffickers or about what the children or the families were offered in return. However, local witnesses also confirmed the phenomena of sexual exploitation of Syrian children in Tarlabaşı.

### Street children

Only a very small amount of information is available concerning refugee children who work in the streets of large cities throughout the region. However the nature of their activities makes them more exposed

29. *An insight into Child Labor among Iraqi refugees in Lebanon*. CLMC, Beyrouth, 2012.

30. "Exploitation et abus, le difficile quotidien des enfants syriens réfugiés au Liban", in *Le monde* dated 24/09/2013



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to abuse and a higher degree of exploitation. A report produced by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) on behalf of humanitarian agencies working on the Syrian refugee in Lebanon in May 2015 provides some accurate data on this phenomenon. The report is based on information provided by UNHCR and partner agencies.

"The exact number of street children in Lebanon is difficult to gauge. But a February 2015 survey by the International Labour Organisation, UNICEF and Save the Children (SCI) under the patronage of the Minister of Labour indicates there are at least 1,500 children, nearly three-quarters of them Syrian, begging or working as street vendors. Most street children are boys and half are under 12 years of age. Some are as young as two. Most live with their impoverished parents or relatives who have had to make the heart-breaking decision to send their children into the streets so the family can eat, pay rent or afford other basic essentials. The study indicates that children are concentrated in the busy neighbourhoods of Beirut and its suburbs (e.g. Corniche el Mazraa, Gemmayzeh). Some are transported daily from the northern city of Tripoli to the streets of Beirut

and back. Street and working children often work excessive hours to earn the necessary income to support their families. Of the 77 children interviewed by International Relief Committee in January and February, 28% reported working over 11 hours a day and 14 percent reported working a seven day week. They sell gum, tissue paper and flowers or work shining shoes and begging. Their income depends on the type of work they do. Shoe shiners, for example, earn around \$23 a day on average. Beggars earn between \$8-25 a day, and gum sellers between \$10-20 a day. Children working at night and younger children usually earn more. Many street children assisted by International Relief Committee explained that their income is mainly used by their parents to cover the rent. Street and working children are among the most vulnerable children and are at high risk of violence in the streets. They are at high risk of sexual exploitation and harassment by passers-by as well as by other children and adults with whom they compete. They are also at risk of neglect by their parents and live in constant fear of being arrested by the police, and of being fined or detained."<sup>31</sup>

During the mission in Lebanon, we were able to

31. "Lebanon inter-agency update Street Children", UNHCR, May 2015, Beirut.

see that these minors have very limited protection. When children are assaulted in the street, the police take them to one of the few children's homes. The staff shortages and under-funding in these establishments (which are mainly financed by private foundations) mean that the majority of children, once placed, decide to run away.

### Agricultural child labour

During missions to Lebanon with partners from the various countries, we were taken to visit some refugee camps. On the road leading there, trucks were transporting children to work in the fields for approximately \$4 per day. This first-hand information is corroborated by a number of reports<sup>32</sup>, which state that many children are used in the Bekaa Valley to collect and bag potatoes and to prepare the fields by picking up rocks. In the Tripoli area (Northern Lebanon), children work in market gardens and orchards. They are regularly abused by the landowners, who beat them if the yields are low.

During interviews of refugees living in two camps in the Bekaa Valley, the families living in tents told us that they had to pay for their tent space. To pay their rent, electricity and day-to-day expenses, they had to work and/or send their children out to work.

To gain a better understanding of this quasi-institutionalised exploitation, we need to look more closely at the operation and appearance throughout

Lebanon of these informal settlements, where the majority of the refugees are massed.

### Risk of teenage enlistment

The camps located on the Syrian border sometimes are used as a support base by combatants who have installed their families there. Similar situations exist in Iraqi Kurdistan. Some wounded combatants stay there several weeks to recover. To have combatants and families living in close quarters increases the risk of teenagers being recruited by armed groups. Although little research has been done into this particular aspect, the enlistment of children, including refugees, is part of the strategy of the majority of militia, as a recent Human Rights Watch report<sup>33</sup> points out.

### BELONGING TO A MINORITY REJECTED BY ALL BELLIGERENTS

Recent conflicts have taken on the features of civil wars. They oppose people living in the same country, on ethnic or faith-based grounds. Some minorities that had a place in society in the past are particularly at risk in the present situation. Overnight, they can find themselves hunted by some or all of the belligerents and forced to leave everything behind them to avoid becoming victims of genocide. A sudden, rushed departure and tensions with the rest of the population, some of whom are refugees, make them particularly vulnerable to exploitation wherever they go.

32. In particular *Running out of Time*. Harvard FXB Center, January 2014, USA.

33. "Maybe We Live and Maybe We Die" *Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Groups in Syria*, June 2014, New York.

34. The name meant lieutenant in the Ottoman army.

35. Since summer 2014 the number fell and the decline is expected to continue as the government announced that the borders would be closed for Refugees <http://www.lorientlejour.com/article/892156/le-liban-sur-le-point-de-fermes-frontieres-aux-nouveaux-refugies-syriens.html>

## INFO BOX

### CHAWICH AND LEBANESE LANDOWNER

A *chawich*<sup>34</sup> is a person of Syrian origin who was sometimes present in Lebanon before the Syrian crisis. He exercises a form of moral authority over the inhabitants of his village. He is also the person that deals with people outside the camp, UNHCR staff, NGOs, Lebanese employers, etc. Due to the influx of Syrian refugees and increasing rent prices, the refugees started renting pieces of land from Lebanese landowners in the Bekaa Valley to set up the tents that are cheaper than renting an apartment. In the beginning of the crisis, it cost around \$200 to rent a piece of land on the field. Because of the steady influx of which the peak (June 2014)<sup>35</sup> was 2,500 new refugees a day, according to UNHCR, the prices have gone up. It costs a refugee family between \$660 and \$1,000 a year – between \$60 and \$80 a month to hire a tent. The camps we visited had around 80 tents. A tax of \$10 a month is levied for electricity, etc. In one of the camps visited, the families, mostly made up of women and children, told us that the monthly expenses for living in the camp amounted to between \$100 and \$150. To cover these expenses, they had no choice but to work and/or send their children out to work.

Since 2015, Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR have had to make an undertaking before a notary not to work any longer, in order to have their visa renewed. Again, based on our interviews on building sites or in the fields, only the men are checked and can be placed in a detention centre if they work illegally. As a result, women and children have become the main contributors to household budgets. To find an employer, they approach the *chawich*, who negotiates their pay directly with the landowner or Lebanese employers. The wages of the people and children are then paid directly to the *chawich*, who deducts the amounts due for living in the camp.



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### Iraqi christians and yazidis

In early August 2014, when the Islamic State seized control of Mosul and Qaraqosh, approximately 200,000 Christians and Yazidis were forced to flee their homes (sometimes overnight), leaving behind all of their belongings. At first, they had no choice but to take refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan. Because of the very high cost of living and the risk of young people being forcibly enlisted in the Peshmerga (Kurdish fighters), Iraqi Kurdistan is seen as a transit zone by refugees hoping to leave as soon as possible, mainly for Turkey. According to the interviews, Turkey was seen as accessible (an ID card was all that was necessary to enter the country), more stable than its neighbours, and with a lower cost of living. Once there, however, the sums asked for rent can lead to forms of economic exploitation. Some men are obliged to work for their landowner for no pay in order to pay off their debts. Because these migrants have arrived only very recently, our research was unable to identify other forms of exploitation. Careful watch should be kept on the situation, however, because the lack of an established Christian or Yazidi community in Turkey for the majority of these families, and the prejudice against these minorities (and especially the Yazidis), make them potentially very vulnerable.

### The dom people

The Dom people, who live in many Middle Eastern countries, have a similar ethnic origin to that of the Roma in the Balkans. They do not have a specific religion, and most use a language, Domari, that is spoken only by their group. The majority populations hold many stereotypes about Doms and identify them as working in commerce or marginal activities, such as music, dance, begging, selling flowers, etc.

The increasing visibility of adults and children begging in Istanbul is frequently reported. The Caritas Turkey field observations show that such begging by children usually involves the entire family, or a group of children. This issue is also widely covered by the local media. It is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Syrians begging and homeless in Turkey (Yeni Şafak, 2014). While some of them later accepted voluntarily to go to the camps, some have refused, according to the statements of the governor of Istanbul (Reuters, 2014; Yeni Şafak, 2014). Some upper class Syrian business owners and politicians in Turkey have requested Turkish authorities to remove the Syrian beggars and place them in camps since they cause "bad reputation" for Syrians. Also, many Syrians state that the beggars are mostly "gypsies" and they used