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Human trafficking trends in Ukraine

Oleksii Pozniak

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Ukraine's involvement in global migration processes after the fall of the Iron Curtain and dissolution of the Soviet Union has been a simple fact. But one of the negative consequences of the outward labor migration of Ukrainian nationals has been that human trafficking emerged and became increasingly frequent. In the 1990s and the early 2000s, Ukraine was a country of origin and to some extent a country of transit for persons who found themselves in the situation of slavery. Over recent years Ukraine has increasingly become a country of destination for human-trafficking victims, while cases of domestic trafficking within Ukraine are also widespread.

A number of studies were carried out in Ukraine in the 2000s, in order to explore human-trafficking issues, including studies in cooperation with international organizations (IOM, ILO etc.). Despite these studies, however, the quantitative parameters of this phenomenon have not been estimated for a long time. The scale of human trafficking was properly assessed, for the first time, in a long-term study carried out by Dr. Ronald Hampton and Dr. Dwayne Ball of the University of Nebraska (Lincoln)¹. The study dealt though only with Ukrainian nationals who became human trafficking victims abroad. It did not cover victims of domestic human trafficking and foreign nationals imported to Ukraine and transferred over its territory.

The study comprised three surveys:

1. A survey of families in five Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, in collaboration with IOM in the fall of 2006. This survey was relatively small (1,345 families were interviewed in Ukraine).
2. A survey of key informers in Ukraine in October 2007. Here the Nebraska team interviewed supervising instructors with significant work experience and elderly women ('babushkas') about the frequency of human trafficking cases among populations that these key informants knew well.
3. A set of questions aimed at obtaining information on human trafficking. This was then included in the questionnaire of the Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) carried out in Ukraine in the first half of 2007. 6,841 women and 3,178 men aged 15-49 were surveyed.

According to the estimates obtained, in the mid-2000s every year at least 22,000 Ukrainian nationals found themselves enslaved overseas. The total number of human-trafficking victims was at least 110,000 persons over three to five years before the study. However, the data obtained should rather be regarded as a minimum estimate, taking into account the probable degree of respondents' sincerity. For instance, UDHS indicates that almost every tenth (9.6%) respondent personally knew a human trafficking victim. In the course of the three years before the study 0.3% of all household members aged 15-64 or 0.7% of the household members aged 18-44 dealt with situations typical for human trafficking while abroad². These are 7.5% of all household members who worked overseas in the course of the last three years before the study.

In addition to the scale of human trafficking, UDHS effectively evaluated the awareness of human-trafficking problems among the population. The first of the three surveys mentioned above helped compare the spread of human trafficking in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. The survey of families was carried out in Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania. It relied on the same program as in Ukraine. According to the estimates obtained, Ukraine ranks first among the five countries in terms of the number of human trafficking victims. It had twice as many victims as Moldova, which ranks second, and eleven times more than Belarus that ranks fifth. However, this naturally changes if you look at

¹ Ball D., Hampton R. Estimating the Extend of Human Trafficking from Ukraine. – Kiev, 2009.

² Ukrainian Center of Social Reforms (UCSR), State Committee of Statistics (State Statistics Committee) [Ukraine], Ministry of Healthcare (MH) [Ukraine] and Macro International Inc. 2008, Ukraine Demographic and Health Survey 2007. Calverton, Maryland, USA: UCSR and Macro international

human-trafficking relative to population. In Ukraine this parameter will be much lower than in Moldova and somewhat lower than in Bulgaria, while visibly higher than in Belarus and Romania.

Research carried out by Ukrainian experts has helped identify the categories of the Ukrainian population most vulnerable to human trafficking³:

- Women aged 18-26, primarily single, with low or very low living standards, (as potential victims of sexual exploitation);
- Men aged 31-60, primarily married (vulnerable to labor exploitation);
- Children (primarily girls) aged 13-18 from single-parent and “restructured” families.

The Criminal Investigation Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior has a Division for human trafficking and vice . This division keeps records of registered crimes associated with human trafficking and criminal cases related to article 149 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code (article 124-1 of the previous Criminal Code) where verdicts were delivered by Ukrainian courts. The number of crimes kept rising until 2005 and then started to decline (table 1).

Table 1. The number of crimes registered and the number of verdicts delivered by Ukrainian courts for cases related to article 149 (previously article 124-1) of the Ukrainian Criminal Code

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of crimes	2	11	42	91	169	289	269	415	376	359	322	279	257	197	162
Number of verdicts	-	1	1	2	10	29	62	86	75	83	69	71	85	106	96

Source: data of Ukrainian Ministry of Interior

3,240 crimes were registered in this field by the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior 1998-2012 and the courts delivered 776 verdicts. Over recent years the number of registered crimes went down, while the number of verdicts went up. This indicates the enhanced efficiency of law enforcement agencies in the combat against human trafficking. In recent years the Ukrainian government achieved certain success in this field. In 2005-2010 there was a Department at the Ministry of Interior for crimes associated with human trafficking; now its functions are performed by the Department of Criminal Investigation. 1 March 2007 the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers adopted a State Program against human trafficking up until 2010. Public awareness was raised during implementation by using the mass media; the fight against human trafficking was included in educational programs for the young; the efficiency of law enforcement agencies fighting against human trafficking was enhanced; cooperation between Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and other countries was strengthened; and assistance was rendered to human-trafficking victims, not least on their return home.

20 September 2011 Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada passed a Law “On Counteraction against Human Trafficking”⁴. This Law establishes the organizational and legal foundations for: the suppression of human trafficking; the key directions of government policy and the principles of international cooperation in this field; and the scope of authority of executive bodies, procedure for determining the

³ Social analysis of the main factors of human trafficking: real situation and ways to prevent / A.V. Alekseeva, Yu.M. Galustyan, I.A. Shvab etc. – Kiev, State Family and Youth Institute, 2003 [in Ukrainian]; human trafficking from Ukraine for the purpose of labor and sexual exploitation: draft report – Kiev, Research Institute of Labor and Employment, 2003 [in Ukrainian]; Prevention of trafficking in children for the purpose of their use for forced labor and sexual exploitation: draft report of the sociological research for the purpose of quick evaluation – Kiev, Center of Social Expertise of the Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences, 2003 [in Ukrainian].

⁴ <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3739-17>

status of human trafficking victims and procedure for rendering assistance to such persons. The Ukrainian Cabinet by its Regulation of 21 March 2012 adopted the State Target-Oriented Social Program for the Counteraction against Human Trafficking for the Period until 2015. This determines tasks and measures aimed at preventing human trafficking, enhancing the efficiency of assistance rendered to human-trafficking victims, ensuring proper law enforcement activities to suppress trafficking. It identifies the volume and the sources of funding for these activities.

However, despite significant efforts on the part of the Ukrainian government to eliminate human trafficking, Ukraine does not yet fully correspond to even minimum world standards in this field. According to the 2012 Trafficking in Persons Report⁵ published by the US State Department experts on the basis of 2011 results, Ukraine is a second-league country: countries whose state agencies do not fully comply with minimal standards of the Law on the protection of human-trafficking victims, but which undertake significant efforts to bring their activities into compliance with these standards. The insufficient efficiency of state agencies fighting human trafficking is demonstrated by the low awareness of the Ukrainian population about this phenomenon. According to UDHS (2007) 48% of respondents have never heard of human trafficking cases; 51% of respondents could not assess their own risk of becoming human-trafficking victims; and 56% of respondents could not estimate whether the risk of becoming a human-trafficking victim had gone up or down over the three years prior to the survey. All three parameters are lower in the cities than in the villages and go down with better education and prosperity (table 2).

Table 2. Dependence of awareness about human trafficking problem on respondents' welfare, place of residence and level of education

	Prosperity quintiles					Place of residence		Level of education	
	highest	above average	average	below average	lowest	city	village	higher	no higher
The share of persons who had never heard about human trafficking, %	64.4	52.0	47.1	43.4	30.0	43.9	58.5	37.7	57.2

Source: data of UDHS, 2007

The International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organizations take records of human-trafficking victims who asked them for help. Unfortunately this category is not representative of the general population of human-trafficking victims. The IOM has rendered assistance in the reintegration of human-trafficking victims since 2000. 9,111 human trafficking victims received assistance within the reintegration program of the IOM over 13 years. Their number was going up until 2007 and stabilized in 2008 (table 3). Before 2007 women were predominant in this population, but over recent years the ratio between two sexes became more balanced, and in 2012 men were somewhat dominant. 45.5% of victims who received assistance in 2004-2012 were subject to sexual exploitation and 49.4% to labor exploitation. Some were subjected to mixed forms of exploitation or were forced to beg. The share of persons subject to sexual exploitation among those who received assistance from the IOM is going down and the share of persons subject to labor exploitation is going up.

⁵ US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2012. <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/>

Table 3. Human-trafficking victims who received assistance from IOM, 2004-2012

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of victims, persons	626	828	937	1.121	820	773	1.085	823	945
Share of women, %	86.3	86.1	81.2	75.7	76.2	77.1	63.9	57.4	43.8
Share of persons who were subjected to sexual exploitation, %	64.4	67.4	63.6	51.8	47.8	51.4	34.0	24.7	13.2
Share of persons who were subjected to labor exploitation, %	30.4	28.0	34.1	44.9	49.3	43.6	56.4	69.7	80.5

Source: IOM data

Most victims came back to Ukraine from the following countries: Russia (3,535 persons in 2000-2012), Poland (1,236), Turkey (1,227), the Czech Republic (394), Italy (283), the United Arab Emirates (230), Germany (151), Portugal (140), Israel (133), Macedonia (123), Greece (122), Spain (100), and Serbia and Montenegro (93). Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain and probably Greece are among the main recipients of Ukrainian workforce. So despite the relatively large absolute number, human-trafficking victims constitute a small share among migrants to those countries. Other countries mentioned above are not among key importers of workforce from Ukraine. Migration to the former Yugoslavia, Middle East and other developing countries is associated with the highest risk of becoming a human-trafficking victim. This fact is indirectly confirmed by data obtained in the course of UDHS (2007) on the different scale of human-trafficking in different Ukrainian regions. Thus, in the south of Ukraine 18% of labor migrants faced human trafficking, while in the other four large regions of the country this figure was 2-7%⁶. At the same time the highest share of persons working outside the EU, CIS and North America among labor migrants is also registered in the southern region according to the selective survey on labor migration (2008)⁷: 6.3% versus 1.8% for Ukraine in general.

Among those who received IOM assistance in 2000-2012 there were 536 persons who were subjected to human trafficking in Ukraine and 468 foreign nationals. 115 foreign nationals were imported to Ukraine as a country of destination and for 353 Ukraine was a country of transit. Among foreigners imported to Ukraine 47.8% of human trafficking victims were Moldovan citizens, 29.6% were citizens of Uzbekistan and 4.3% were citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Assistance to victims includes medical, psychological and legal aid, obtaining travel documents, provision of temporary accommodation, reintegration grants, restoration of documents, training, retraining etc. Over half of those who asked for help were given jobs (mostly in private business). IOM does a lot of work, but it covers only 9,000 people, i.e. less than a tenth of all human trafficking victims in Ukraine. Most do not come for help or remain abroad. In addition to the IOM, 30 non-governmental organizations render assistance for the reintegration of human-trafficking victims. They are located all over the country, in 23 cities of 22 (out of 27) regions of Ukraine.

⁶ Ukrainian Center of Social Reforms (UCSR), State Committee of Statistics (State Statistics Committee) [Ukraine], Ministry of Healthcare (MH) [Ukraine] and Macro International Inc. 2008, Ukraine Demographic and Health Survey 2007. Calverton, Maryland, USA: UCSR and Macro international

⁷ Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms (UCSR), State Statistics Committee (SSCU) Ukrainian External Labour Migration. Kyiv, 2009.

Therefore, the problem of human-trafficking is very pressing for Ukraine. Despite certain successes achieved by the government, the risk of falling into the hands of human traffickers remains the most dangerous risk associated with outward labor migration.