

Terrorist Militias and Human Trafficking



By/ Sara Ibrahim

Edited by/Mohamed Badawy

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It is an initiative launched by Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue Foundation, and consists of 500 development associations and organizations in 9 Governorates, in order to promote Human Rights conditions in Egypt, strengthen partnerships, and exchange experience.

The NGOs and institutions participating in the initiative were distributed in 9 governorates: Cairo, Gharbia, Beheira, Alexandria, Beni Suef, Sohag, Luxor, Qena and Aswan.

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➤ **Introduction**

Human trafficking is the contemporary form of slavery, and the worst practices in which human dignity and the loss of rights are affected, regardless of the extreme impact that results from affecting the psychological and physical state. However, the practitioner of these behaviors sees it as a profitable trade, as human trafficking ranks third in terms of profit in the table of global organized crimes, after the drug and arms trade, as its activities achieve huge profits estimated at billions of dollars, and it is considered one of the most important sources of financing activities for transnational organized crime gangs, especially terrorism and money laundering.

This type of crime is of a special nature because its main commodity is human beings who are led by economic, social and political conditions, and security instability in their countries due to conflicts and wars to fall into the clutches of these gangs through material temptations, and false promises of a better life. At the forefront of the victims of human trafficking are women and children, and according to **the first report of the Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on human trafficking**, the exploitation that came Ten years after the ministerial decision to combat sex trafficking is the most common form of human trafficking in Western Europe.

Therefore, it is clear that trafficking in people is an illegal business based in some cases on the capital investment of international migration flows, and it targets vulnerable segments of society. Many societies suffer from this crime because of the low social, economic and cultural levels of some individuals in them. Moreover, this phenomenon has acquired a global dimension only thanks to its close association with organized crime, all of which confirms that human trafficking crimes represent a flagrant violation of human rights in general, such as the right to security and dignity of the person. The right to adequate work, the right to life.

Militias or terrorist organizations have played a prominent and major role in the growth and spread of the crime of human trafficking, as an army usually formed by irregular forces of citizens, and usually works in a guerrilla style, unlike the fighters of regular armies, professional soldiers, taking advantage of the collapsed political and economic conditions in countries. While the citizens' need for funds, in order to provide sources of financing their activities, and to purchase weapons.

In view of the seriousness of the crime of human trafficking, governments and international and regional organizations have tended to strengthen their efforts in combating this crime, by enacting laws and conventions, and developing strategies and measures to prevent and suppress such practices. On the other hand, we find that criminals in turn have developed their methods in committing the crime of human trafficking and have always sought to invent new ways to facilitate their shameful practices and prevent their overthrow. The most prominent thing that the modern era has known and exploited professionally by human traffickers is technological development and the information revolution.

Therefore, the report addresses some points related to Human Trafficking, through some of the following points:

1. Definition of Human Trafficking
2. Forms of Human Trafficking
3. Negative effects of Human Trafficking
4. Terrorist militias and Human Trafficking
5. International efforts to combat Human Trafficking
6. Recommendations

1. Definition of Human Trafficking

There are many definitions of the crime of human trafficking, but most of these definitions consider the crime of human trafficking as an organized crime, which includes all legitimate and illegal acts that refer a person to a mere commodity, or a victim that is disposed of by professional intermediaries across national borders with the intention of exploiting him in low-paid work, sexual work, or the like, whether this act is done by the will of the victim or coerced on his behalf, or in any other form of slavery.

Human trafficking means: "any operation carried out for the purpose of selling, buying, or kidnapping a person or people, whether men, women, or children, and exploiting them in carrying out work against their will in inhumane conditions, which includes the exploitation and abuse of domestic servants and child labor in mines and factories, sexual exploitation, whether directly or indirectly, and the sale of human organs.

All definitions coincide with each other with regard to the means used, as they provide for some of the acts provided for in the Protocol, namely

transport, shelter and reception, but they differ in terms of the purpose of exploitation,

2. Forms of Human Trafficking

The spread of the crime of human trafficking has now become a major dilemma for countries because behind the significant increase in the spread of this phenomenon in its forms and manifestations is moral decay and financial and administrative corruption, which have contributed to the increase in poverty and unemployment rates, the low standard of living of individuals, and the crisis political and security conditions that have forced individuals to leave their countries and seek refuge in neighboring countries out of fear for themselves.

The forms of human trafficking are as follows:

a) Prostitution:

It is the exploitation of people in incompatible acts and prostitution, which is a form of criminal in all Arab legislations, that is, it means the use and employment of a person for the purposes of debauchery and prostitution.

Among the most prominent forms of prostitution are: trafficking in women for the purpose of forcing them to have sex and prostitution and the establishment of prostitution and pornography networks on the Internet and sex tourism. Through these networks, girls are deluded into thinking they can obtain suitable work for good wages, and they are illegally deported to the countries where they will be exploited for the practice of vice. Some researchers have defined prostitution as the use of the body to satisfy direct remuneration and be direct sexual acts with people to satisfy unnatural desires.

b) Organized crime in more than one country: (cross-border crimes between countries)

Organized crimes in more than one country are crimes that are committed (in preparation, implementation, and after implementation) in more than one country and under more than one national sovereignty, so that these acts reflect cross-border crimes between countries; that is, human trafficking is one of the crimes that occur in a particular country, and its consequences have significant effects on other countries.

c) Trafficking in and violence against women and children:

Trafficking in women and children is linked to violence against them and their human rights, all human rights include women's sexual and reproductive

rights, and although these rights are not explicitly referred to in international legal instruments, they are implicitly referred to.

Among the most prominent forms are:

- Migrant labor, which represents a large percentage in some Arab countries.
- The bad negative phenomenon known as: the "sponsor" system".
- Women are discriminated against.
- Considering and treating Muslims and Arabs as foreign workers in other Arab and Islamic countries.
- Some countries suffer from the phenomenon of "human trafficking", as organized crime gangs have been attracted to carry out activities to bring girls to the country under various justifications for their sexual exploitation.

d) Child exploitation and forced child labor:

The phenomenon of trafficking in children through buying and selling them is still prevalent to this day, and they are trafficked for several reasons, including: they are exploited to work in factories, construction sites, small shops, domestic service, or begging, and they are also exploited for sexual trade, which is the worst form of labor. In this form, children are exposed to a great deal of physical and psychological abuse whose effects last a lifetime.

e) Sexual exploitation:

Sexual exploitation means any practices taken by one person or group against another person or group that have a negative impact on the victim.

f) Begging:

Some beggars are forced to beg by others and hand over all or most of their profits to the person who forces them to do so. This is because they do not have enough money to survive no matter how much people of goodwill give them.

g) Smuggling: (smuggling of women and men)

Human smuggling became popular after World War II, and was active in poor countries with high populations and increasing poverty rates, such as Africa and Asia.

• Smuggling means:

- ✓ Securing the illegal entry of a person into a State that is not his home in order to obtain a financial benefit.
- ✓ It is the activity in which smuggling boats are used for certain amounts to board naval ships without the knowledge of ship crewers, relying on infiltration into ships and hiding inside warehouses, and the smuggling process occurs through organized gangs through global smuggling

networks that work in travel and tourism agencies that are not subject to control and inspection, and the smuggling process takes place without providing health and security guarantees during the smuggling trip, which exposes people to drowning, extortion and exploitation, and studies indicate that profits The trade in human smuggling to Europe is estimated at five billion dollars a year, half of which goes to the mafia in Vietnam.

For example: smuggling African and Arab nationalities to neighboring countries, smuggling children to neighboring countries and sexually exploiting them, and trafficking in people for the purpose of sex include an important part of total human trafficking and the majority of cases of slavery, across the borders of countries today, and here commercial sex is forced by force, deception, and coercion, and through the exercise of power and influence on the person who was forced to do so.

To carry out such acts if they are under the age of eighteen, and children constitute the most prominent victims targeted for trafficking for the purpose of sex or employment. Some children fall into the nets of sexual exploitation, which is considered human trafficking, and the recruitment of children is a unique form of human trafficking, as tens of thousands of children under the age of eighteen have been recruited to force them to participate in armed conflicts that have nothing to do with them. UNICEF estimates that approximately 300,000 children Under the age of twelve are nowadays exploited in more than thirty armed conflict zones around the world.

h) **Abduction by force and coercion:** It is the forcible abduction of children and girls for trafficking.

i) **Slavery or similar practices:**

Slavery and servitude are two sides of the same coin, as **slavery is defined as:** "the state or situation in which some or all property rights are exercised over a person". Although it is prohibited in Article IV of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that no one shall be enslaved or enslaved, it exists until now in most countries.

Slavery-like practices are defined as: "the act of transferring, attempting to transfer slaves from one state to another by any means of transport whatsoever, or facilitating it, as well as any operations involving an attempt to deface, cauterize, or label a slave or a person of low status, whether to indicate his status, punish him, or for any other reason whatsoever, or to assist in doing so."

In addition to slavery and servitude, there are practices similar to slavery such as debt bondage and serfdom, where debt bonding is considered a debt mortgage in exchange for providing personal services to a person affiliated with him in exchange for paying a debt on him, while serfdom is a situation that obliges a person to live and work on another person's land, and he is obligated to provide services to him, whether for or without consideration, knowing that the first person does not have the freedom to change his status.

j) Forced labor:

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has focused on the subject of forced labor or compulsory service as similar to slavery, defining forced labor as: "Forced labor includes all labor or services which are forcibly imposed on any person under threat of any punishment, and for which such person has not voluntarily volunteered but with the exception of compulsory military service."

The phenomenon of forced labor is of a universal nature, and no state is immune from it. Therefore, international legislation has been concerned with combating and confronting this phenomenon, by urging States to criminalize forced labor and punish it with a criminal penalty. The determination of forced labor is done by referring to the nature of the relationship between the worker and the employer, and not by referring to the legality of the work performed, as the voluntary work or the worker's voluntary work is reliable. So it is not required to describe forced labor. Regardless of whether the activity is lawful or illegal, this does not affect the being of forced labor linked to the worker's freedom to work, nor the quality or legality of the work he performs.

k) Tourist marriage:

It means trafficking in girls in tourist facilities and the existence of organized gangs that manage these crimes, as tourist marriage is the marriage of a man to a woman, two or three during his trip, and their divorce after the end of the trip, and it occurs after he is shown pictures of girls of various shapes, weights, and lengths, and then competition for marriage occurs between the most beautiful and graceful woman, and so on.

l) Trafficking in human organs.

The crime of trafficking in human organs is one of the forms of human trafficking, as it is a crime directed against humanity because it makes the human body a commodity to be bought and sold, which is a violation of the human right to protect his life and preserve his body and dignity.

Trafficking in human organs means: "any transaction carried out for the purpose of buying or selling tissues or one or more human organs, which is a

modern trade compared to the trade in people", while donation free of charge is not considered an act of trade in human tissues or organs.

The crime of trafficking in human organs is often carried out for the benefit of the rich at the expense of the poor, and the common denominator among them is a group of doctors or those who work in medical professions such as laboratories. This category is the one that facilitates the process of buying and selling and transferring the organ from the victim's body to the body of the beneficiary.

The organ may be stolen from the victim's body forcibly, where he is deceived and transferred to the scene of the crime by deceiving him, such as by kidnapping the child and then drugging him and conducting comprehensive medical examinations to ensure his physical safety, and later by the doctor, who does not have the ethics and honor of the medical profession, to remove the agreed-upon organ and sell it to the customer.

3. Negative Effects of Human Trafficking

There are psychological, health, economic, social and political effects on the phenomenon of human trafficking, which destroys the person being traded, and these effects are as follows:

a) Psychological effects:

The psychological effects of human trafficking, especially the sexual exploitation of women and children, are complex issues, as what victims of human trafficking feel most is shame and low self-esteem. The experience of human trafficking can cause many harmful short- and long-term psychological effects, these effects may lead to maladaptive behaviors, mental health concerns, and drug use. Knowing the specific effects and how they affect the victim is an important part of understanding the complexity of this crime and providing appropriate support.

The potential psychological effects of human trafficking include:

- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Anxiety disorders, including panic disorder
- ✓ Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- ✓ Substance abuse and disorders
- ✓ Shame and guilt
- ✓ Alienation and isolation from social support
- ✓ Suicidal ideation (suicidal thoughts)

b) Physical and health effects:

Victims trafficked for sexual exploitation suffer physical harm from premature sexual activity, forced drug use, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and permanent damage to their genitals.

c) Economic Impacts:

- ✓ Human trafficking imposes high economic costs.
- ✓ Increasing unemployment, increasing money laundering crimes, the spread of fictitious projects, disruption of the labor market and the imbalance between demand and supply.
- ✓ High food prices due to increased demand, a low standard of living per capita, increased inflation, and workers falling prey to extortion and exploitation.
- ✓ The penetration of professionals in organized crime gangs for human trafficking in the most influential economic positions in the state and the emergence of unsound economic habits. The most important of which is the encouragement of suspicious financial transactions and the establishment of short-term, quick-profit investments, which harm the economy and work to destabilize economic development and question the capabilities of the political and economic system in the state, which affects the stability of economic conditions and increases the burdens borne by the state economically by distorting the structures of employment and income and inflation, distorting the tax base, and financing human trafficking. Illicit activities fuel crime because human trafficking is closely linked to the arms and drug trade.
- ✓ Creating a new role and appearance for organized crime groups has had an impact on boosting the economy at the regional level.
- ✓ The keenness of developing countries to benefit from mobile foreign capital, regardless of its sources, whether money laundering or organ trade.
- ✓ Transformation of organized crime as an international phenomenon as a result of expanding global markets.
- ✓ The rapid change in the concept of the universality of systems and its impact on the radical modification of the scope of work of criminal organizations in the field of human trafficking and their keenness to develop their local systems to become global criminal organizations.
- ✓ Human trafficking organizations are keen to extend their activities through national officials to enable them to carry out their activities across national borders, especially in poor countries.
- ✓ Increase the burden on the state in providing medical care to persons who are victims of human trafficking.

d) The Effects of Human Trafficking on the National Economy:

Human trafficking activities have devastating effects on the economies of the exhibiting (exporting) and requesting (receiving) countries, below we discuss these effects in some detail:

- ✓ **As for the economies of countries exporting human trafficking goods and services**, they deprive those countries of part of the active labor force, which represents a large productive capacity that could have contributed to increasing the level of economic activity and thus the gross domestic product if women and youth victims of trafficking in human beings are employed in other productive activities. These practices also lead to the loss of the victims' ability to produce and earn a living in the future, and the forced work of children for long periods depriving them of education, and reinforcing the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, which hinders national development.
- ✓ **As for the economies of the receiving countries**, they increase the size of the hidden economy that is not included in the calculation of GDP and is not subject to the laws and legislation of those countries, which leads to the failure of many economic policies aimed at achieving economic stability and thus is vulnerable to the emergence of inflation, the deterioration of the exchange rate, and the deficit in the balance of payments.
- ✓ Not all human trafficking activities are subject to government taxes and fees, which causes the loss of large amounts of large amounts to the state's public treasury, and this creates a major imbalance and distortions in the economy of the country in which this activity occurs, making it difficult to control and control that activity.
- ✓ Increasing the financial burdens on States resulting from operations to combat human trafficking, addressing the negative effects on victims of human trafficking, purifying societies from the negative effects of this phenomenon on the family and societies in general, and bearing large financial burdens in building health and social institutions that provide the necessary services to victims of human trafficking.
- ✓ Human trafficking activity can cause a balance of payments deficit for countries exporting human trafficking services, due to the payment of the obligations of human trafficking gangs towards their customers abroad in foreign operation from official foreign exchange channels.
- ✓ The spread of the crime of human trafficking in the state contributes to the formation of huge economic entities that penetrate into the joints of the state and control decision-making positions to protect their interests and ensure the continuity of their activities. So, bribery and corruption of all kinds are used to lure ministers, senior civil servants and officers of police

and security services, so they become part of this entity because of common interests, and as a result corruption spreads in the country, weakens the performance of governments and the interests of citizens are lost.

e) **Social impacts:**

Among the most important social effects that arise from this phenomenon are the presence of undocumented persons, the emergence of cultural and social identity problems, the consolidation of the values of inferiority of manual labor, the decline of social services and the spread of societal diseases, such as theft and drugs.

According to a United Nations report, the funds of organized crime gangs and human trafficking tend to weaken young people and work on the moral decline and collapse of society, and the consequent decline in productive capacity and the consequent social disintegration, and human trafficking crimes threaten the sovereignty of the State and its social fabric.

4. **Terrorist Militias and Human Trafficking**

It was not excluded that terrorist militias were trafficked in human beings, in order to obtain the necessary funds to finance their activities and purchase the necessary weapons and equipment, which led to the emergence of what is known as "Jihad al-Nikah". Therefore the record of terrorist organizations was full of the ugliest human trafficking practices, as the practices of ISIS and other terrorist organizations set humanity back centuries, as well as re-circulating terms and labels for behaviors that are supposed to have become extinct and no longer exist in the dictionary of human relations.

a) **Hezbollah militia:**

The Lebanese Hezbollah militia controls the border areas between Syria and Lebanon, which are considered one of the most important smuggling areas between the two countries. As the Fleita road, the Rankous road, the Tufail and Assal al-Ward road, and the Zumrani crossing road, near the town of Qara in Damascus countryside, are among the most prominent crossings used by the party's militia to smuggle drugs and people.

The border areas adjacent to the smuggling crossings are also considered areas of influence for the Lebanese militia "Hezbollah", where it has established factories for narcotic pills inside Syrian territory, and the work of the party's militia serves dozens of young men and smugglers from the villages and towns

of the western Qalamoun barrens. The Fourth Division collaborates with Hezbollah in many areas to protect roads and prevent people from reaching some sites occupied by Lebanese Hezbollah elements.

The Lebanese Hezbollah militia and the Fourth Division are one of the largest human smuggling networks in all directions, taking advantage of their influence and extending it from Iraq to the Sea of Lebanon, from which death boats depart for Cyprus, Greece, and Sicily, in addition to transporting citizens from various Syrian regions to Lebanon and back in exchange for money.

- **Z.H. said that** he went to Lebanon in early 2023 to work there with his relatives and took the path taken by all those who went to Lebanon from Idlib. Z.H. stressed that he moved with a group of young men between the different sectors of control, starting from the areas of the pro-Turkish factions, then the SDF to the regime areas, where they were received by a person working with the Fourth Division and the Lebanese Hezbollah, and they crossed the Syrian provinces without the intervention or inspection of regime forces until they reached the governorate of Damascus countryside and crossed Lebanese territory in one day. Z.H. also added that the smuggler was charged \$600 for the trip.
- The area witnessed kidnappings for ransom and carried out by smugglers and workers with the Lebanese Hezbollah, where the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights indicated that kidnappers released two young men (M.G) and (A.G) from the town of Sons of Hafir Al-Fawqa in the western Qalamoun area of Damascus countryside, in exchange for ransom money, as they had been kidnapped about a month ago, while on their way to Ham governorate. It is noteworthy that a commander in the regime forces close to the Lebanese Hezbollah kidnapped them.
- **A group of "Al-Zuaiter" kidnapped** a young man and his sister from the city of Nawa in the countryside of Daraa, near the Syrian-Lebanese border, while they were going to Lebanon, where the kidnappers communicated with their families asking for a ransom in exchange for their release or killing them in the event of non-payment of the ransom, and members of the Lebanese Hezbollah and their workers commit violations against the people of the region to expand the party's influence, through the purchase and acquisition of agricultural land in the western Qalamoun region for the benefit of the Lebanese Hezbollah militia.
- Despite the enthusiastic speech made by the leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah militia, Hassan Nasrallah, in January 2023, after the sinking of the migrant boat off the coast of Tartous, in which he blamed the drowning of refugees on the countries of Europe itself. Syrians in Lebanon revealed

human smuggling operations run by the Hezbollah militia and that some of them were threatened with weapons or drowning during their short-lived journey before being arrested by the Greek Coast Guard.

Munther Abdel Latif, a Syrian refugee in Lebanon, said: "A while ago, I decided with a group of my comrades to go to Europe, and of course we had to leave the city where we live towards the northwest of Lebanon, specifically Akkar, where we met a smuggler. After we told him about our destination (Cyprus), he asked us to choose the type of trip we want, as prices start from \$ 200 and end at \$ 9,000".

Abdul Latif pointed out that the price and fares of the trip depend on the means of transportation that will transport the person from the shores of Lebanon towards the country of destination, which is one of three (Cyprus - Greece - Italy).

He added: "The \$200 trip depends on a small fishing boat that is worn out and cannot accommodate more than 4 people, as it is loaded with a minimum of 7 people and sent to sea," pointing out that this trip is like paying \$200 in order to drown and not in order to travel.

According to Abdellatif, prices reach \$9,000 if a person decides to travel smuggled on ships in international waters, where smugglers deal with some captains in order to hide migrants inside ships and disembark them in the country they want.

- **Omar al-Ibrahim, who arrived in Italy last year, said,** "Most of the smuggling networks in Lebanon are affiliated with the Hezbollah militia. They run smuggling operations in Akkar and its town of Benin, where smuggling takes place via small boats designated for short distances such as Cyprus, or that these small boats meet larger boats at sea, to which migrants are transported".

He explained that "the easiest, safest, and most expensive way is to travel on a tourist yacht or ship heading to any European country, especially Italy. My comrades came out of Lebanon in this way, and they were placed inside one of the shipping containers until they arrived, but I preferred to travel on one of the large boats, exactly with the same mechanism that was followed with the shipwrecked Tartus boat, and here fate and luck play their roles in whether that trip reaches its destination or its passengers move to the world of the dead".

- **According to one of the refugees arrested by the Greek Coast Guard, Fahad L.L., he and others on a boat were threatened with weapons.** "During the voyage, which lasted no more than an hour and a half until we were arrested, we received dozens of threats from the smuggler and his assistant, who was driving the boat, and told us that he would stab us or throw

us into the sea if the coast guard told us that he was the smuggler if we were caught".

The threats also included their arrest by Hezbollah and their liquidation after returning to Lebanon, **he said**.

- **In the context of answering the reason for choosing the north as a smuggling destination, "Abu Ali," a former smuggler, said:** "The south is more dangerous than the north and also exposed, there are UNIFIL peacekeeping forces ships and there may be IDF cruisers at sea, those cruisers will fire directly at any ship or boat, and sailing from the north is safer due to the rocky nature of the southern coasts."

b) Ankara's factions in Syria:

Armed terrorist factions loyal to Turkey in northern Syria use kidnapping as a means of profit and financing after demanding ransom from the families of the kidnapped, which amounts to \$ 40,000 per hostage.

In 2020, the sources confirmed that 10 people from different cities in northeastern Syria were kidnapped after arriving from Manbij to Jarablus 10 days ago by gunmen of the Syrian armed factions in areas loyal to Ankara, including a couple who recently married, and the kidnappers demanded an amount of \$ 20,000 for each hostage.

Human smuggling networks along the border strip separating Syria and Turkey have recently increased, reaching a dangerous juncture and kidnappings for ransom have increased because the profits of human trafficking mafias are large.

- **Sherwan Mahmoud, a native of the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli**, was one of the victims of a human smuggling network discovered after arriving on the Turkish side with 10 people that it was a mafia linked to the leaders of the Syrian opposition factions and the Turkish border guards known as the Gendarmerie.

Mahmoud told "Sky News Arabia" that a smuggler named Samir entered with them through the village of "Patrizani" in the countryside of the border town of Al-Jawadiyah, east of Qamishli, 9 months ago for \$ 3,000 for each person, and his destination was with his companion the city of Istanbul to travel from there by sea through other smugglers to Europe.

According to Mahmoud, they were surprised by bursts of bullets from the Turkish border guards raining down on them and arrested them, but 3 of them and the smuggler fled and they remained in detention, adding, "They took us to the city of Serekaniye from the Turkish side and handed us over to

opposition gunmen in the city of Ras al-Ain, which Ankara occupied last year".

Sherwan said that they remained in the prisons of the factions' gunmen for about 10 days, during which they were severely beaten by the jailers and then handed over to Jabhat al-Nusra after being transferred to the city of Idlib, where they were absent in prison for 4 months, during which the militants threatened to cut off their heads after fabricating several charges against them, the first of which was that they were fighters from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Shirwan explained that a person named Abu Maria al-Iraqi was in charge of conducting the interrogation with them, so he offered to communicate with their families and demanded a ransom of \$40,000 for each person in exchange for their release.

- **Ibrahim Sheikho, director of the Human Rights Organization in Afrin, which operates in the areas of the Democratic Autonomous Administration, revealed that** the organization documented many cases of hostage killings after receiving the ransom by the leaders of the factions and the Al-Nusra Front, amounting to more than 10 cases.

Sheikho told Sky News Arabia about the killing of an 11-year-old boy in Jabhat al-Nusra prisons in Idlib, Batal Hassan, who hails from the countryside of Afrin and fled with his family to the Turkish city of Hatay during the occupation of his city. He was arrested by the Turkish police months ago on charges of dealing with a Kurdish terrorist organization.

He added: "Turkish security deported the child to Idlib and handed him over to Jabhat al-Nusra after his lawyer proved his innocence of the fabricated charge against him, but he was slaughtered by Jabhat al-Nusra despite the fact that his family paid the ransom demanded by Jabhat al-Nusra (\$10,000)".

- **Batal was not the only hostage who died after paying the ransom, as the Human Rights Organization in Afrin published on its official Facebook page** a video clip of a young woman identified herself as the niece of Abu Wael Al-Manbiji bin Hamouma. The former leader of the Eastern Falcons faction, in which she talks about her uncle's kidnapping of a Kurdish young man during the latter's passage at the Aoun Al-Dadat checkpoint between Manbij and Jarablus.

The young woman revealed that Manbiji, who currently works in the ranks of the military police, had demanded \$50,000 from the young man's sister and killed the hostage after receiving the ransom.

- The trade of human smuggling is spread across the border, through smugglers. As thousands of Syrians crossed those borders during the years of the Syrian crisis at separate times, and some of them paid large sums to

cross different routes, including what is relatively safe and short and what is bumpy and dangerous, according to **Issa Khalil, a young man in his thirties who worked as a smuggler between Syria and Turkey before moving to live in Europe 7 months ago.**

Khalil revealed to "Sky News Arabia" the danger of all smuggling routes from northern Syria into Turkish territory, but the most terrifying is the gate of the city of Ras al-Ain, so the passers-by were not spared from kidnappings, demanding ransom or waiting for death.

Khalil presented the price list of smuggling from Manbij to Jarablus, northeast of Aleppo province, and then to Turkey, costing \$ 3,000 for the elderly and families, supervised by the leaders of the Syrian factions, while from Manbij to Idlib, the price of smugglers ranges between \$ 3,000 and \$ 3,500 per person.

- **For his part, the director of the Center for Documenting Violations in Northeastern Syria, Mustafa Abdi, told Sky News Arabia** that the center counted (1084) cases of kidnapping and ransom demands that affected civilians at the hands of the Syrian armed factions, including (7027) cases of arrest and (1016) cases of torture, while the fate of the rest of the detainees is still unknown.

By resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017), the UN called on UNHCR and the international community to act to address trafficking in persons during armed conflict, particularly related to the activities of armed terrorist organizations.

The annual report of the US State Department's Office of Monitoring and Combating Human Trafficking on Human Trafficking for the year 2022, highlighted the extent of this phenomenon around the world and efforts to address it and indicated that the Syrian Democratic Forces and the People's Protection Units (YPG) recruit children as young as 12 years old in northeastern Syria, train them, and use them as soldiers to fight in Syria and Iraq. According to the report, since 2017, international observers reported that the SDF has been recruiting children in camps forcibly displaced in northeast Syria.

During the reporting period, thousands of foreign women remained in camps in northeast Syria, some of whom had family ties to IS foreign fighters, some of whom may be victims of unidentified trafficking.

At least 527 children in camps in northeast Syria, including al-Hol, were victims of human trafficking and were used in direct hostilities or in support roles by armed militias.

c) **Houthis in Yemen:**

The Houthi terrorist militias bear direct responsibility for the deterioration of health conditions, due to the crimes committed by this Iranian-backed terrorist faction, and the latest Houthi crimes were the seizure of a number of hospitals by the terrorist militias and turning them into secret massacres and headquarters for human trafficking gangs.

The Houthi militias also kidnapped children, stole their entrails such as the liver or kidney, and returned those weeks later in a deplorable state, or assaulted and killed them.

Most of the victims of crimes committed by the Houthi militias are victims of violations from the poorest group or those who suspect that they are not loyal to the militias.

- **Local sources revealed that** there are more than 20 children in Sana'a, Al-Bayda and other governorates kidnapped by militias. They were found weeks later in one of the roads and they were subjected to internal operations, and it turned out that some of the victims lost half of his kidney and others liver and other viscera, and one of the victims died last week in Al-Bayda governorate due to the theft of his kidney.
- **During December 2019**, Houthi feminist gangs abducted more than 35 girls and students from their places of study and work in order to traffic them.
- **In February 2020**, the Houthi group kidnapped student Balqees Abdulaziz in front of her school.
- **In March 2020**, a video circulated on social media of a group of children who fell into captivity after fighting with the Houthi group, while the child Abdul Salam Muhammad Qassem, a fourth-grade student, showed the way the Houthi group lures children to fight with them. One of the Houthi leaders named Rabie Saleh convinces the child to go to a culture course, but instead goes to the various battlefronts, and it is estimated that the Houthi militias have recruited nearly 30,000 children on various battlefronts.
- **In May 2020**, the Houthi militia bought 4 children in Ibb governorate, where one of the militia's leaders, Bakil Saleh Al-Fatimi, took advantage of the psychological state of a citizen from Raymah governorate, Ismail Ghalib, by buying his four children and pushing him to sign a waiver for them.
- **A human rights report issued by human rights organizations documented** 1,181 cases of arrest against women committed by the

Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist militias during the period from December 2017 to December 2020

- **The report issued by the Women for Peace Coalition in Yemen, the March 8 Bloc for Yemeni Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking documented 274 cases of enforced disappearance, 292 detained activists, human rights defenders, and the education sector, 246 cases of relief and humanitarian workers, 71 cases of rape, 4 cases of suicide, and dozens of cases of male and female children who were detained with their detained mothers**

He pointed out that among the detainees are 8 cases belonging to the Baha'i sect and so far 321 detainees have been released, pointing out that the number of detainees under the age of 18 amounted to more than 293 cases, and the violations varied between killing, mutilation, detention, arrest and kidnapping.

d) Militias in Libya:

Despite years of condemnations and successive crimes committed by people-smuggling gangs in Libya, successive governments in Tripoli have taken steps to combat crime. Known detention centers, migrant crematoriums, smuggling corridors controlled by gangs by force of arms, and killings and human trafficking continue without the authorities acting on the crimes.

- **The teams of the Libyan Red Crescent Society recovered 15 bodies, some of which were found charred, off the coast of Sabratha, against the backdrop of clashes between elements of human traffickers, which is not the first crime, since 2011, Libya has become a hotbed of illegal immigration operations in light of the high spread of heinous crimes.**
- **In 2020, the murder of a Nigerian migrant by burning at the hands of members of the Tripoli militias raised several questions about the relationship of the Sarraj government and its successor. The terrorist Brotherhood organization with human smuggling gangs in Libya and the concentrations of terrorist organizations loyal to Qatar and Turkey on Libya's common borders with a number of African countries.**
- **The International Organization for Migration (IOM) revealed that 1,614 migrants were victims of human trafficking during two years in Libya, which is an activity practiced by militias in the west of the country, between July 2020 and the same month of 2022. The migrants who were subjected to these violations are among 11,173 migrants assisted by the International Organization for Migration with specialized protection services in Libya during that period.**

"The identified victims hailed from Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan, while the nationalities of the traffickers were from Nigeria, Libya, Somalia and Sudan," **the IOM said.**

As for the abuses to which migrants are subjected, it said that the most "are kidnapping for extortion, forced labor and sex trafficking, and the most common means of controlling victims is physical abuse."

In May 2020, the Tripoli government in Libya announced that 30 migrants had been killed in the southwestern town of Mizda, which is under the control of extremist militias and criminal gangs. The mountainous town of Mizda, located about 150 km southwest of Tripoli, is one of the preferred routes for illegal migrants generally coming from the Sahel, West Africa and even Asia.

e) **ISIS "is one of the largest terrorist organizations responsible for the growing phenomenon of human trafficking in the world):**

The term jihad al-nikah became famous in places where ISIS was present, especially in the Syrian and Iraqi territories, where the weapon of sex and women is widely used to attract fighters and join their terrorist camps.

It was revealed that some women receive sums ranging from 300 to 500 dollars per month as a result of their presence within ISIS to spend them on their children or on themselves in exchange for serving the men of the organization and practicing jihad marriage with ISIS members. The age of women who procreate and take care of household affairs ranges between nine and seventeen years most of the time.

In addition, the organization after 2014 recruited about 4 thousand women, and the first task for it was to empty sexual repression in men, considering that jihad is an end, and men must be psychologically prepared for this jihad. So, the organization issued many fatwas on the discharge of the desires of instinctive suppression of men as a result of their preoccupation with wars most of the time.

- **"Ghada Sultan", a female character who played a starring role in the operations of Jihad al-Nikah, was the defendant in the case of Sinai Province and the fiancée of one of the cadres of ISIS called "Ahmed Salman". She began with the help of another called "um Omar or Hala Ahmed", who was in a relationship with a takfiri leader called "Ammar Ali", in the practice of attracting terrorist elements with sex, as well as attracting women, by buying them with money, and preparing them to travel to North Sinai to practice jihad marriage.**
- **In April 2022, the Public Prosecution in Germany announced the arrest of 4 women upon their return at Frankfurt Airport, who had joined the**

organization in 2013 and 2014 after traveling to Syria and Iraq. According to the prosecution, the detainees hold German citizenship, explaining that one of them is accused of committing war crimes, human trafficking and her husband's participation in treating a Yazidi woman as a "slave".

Over the past two years, Germany has received 91 citizens from Syrian camps, including 22 women and 69 children, and government estimates indicate that 1,050 Germans joined ISIS, 15% were women, and 33 to 45 percent of children and women returned.

- **On 25 January 2022**, the trial of a woman returning from ISIS began before the State Security Court in the German city of Naumburg on charges of belonging to a foreign terrorist organization, and the prosecution accuses the 22-year-old woman of assisting in human trafficking, violating the Arms Control Law and violating the Weapons Law.

According to the federal prosecutor, the defendant traveled to ISIS in Syria via Turkey when she was 15 years old, joined the group, married an ISIS fighter, enslaved a Yazidi girl with him, and was looking for women to join the organization.

According to the Federal Prosecutor's Office, the woman also worked independently for ISIS and was sent to a hospital run by the militia for three months, and the woman — who has two children in Syria — allegedly also had a semi-automatic pistol and an assault rifle to prove her affiliation with ISIS.

- **A British court has begun hearings** to challenge the decision to revoke the citizenship of jihadist bride Shamima Begum, who was to join ISIS in Syria, and the court heard that Shamima Begum, who left the UK for Syria as a teenager to join the Islamic State, was a victim of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Shamima traveled to Syria in 2015, and was stripped of her citizenship on national security grounds in 2019.

Lawyers for Begum, now 23, told the court that the decision by then-Home Secretary Sajid Javid to withdraw her British citizenship was illegal because it did not take into account whether she was a victim of human trafficking.

"At its core, this case concerns a 15-year-old British girl who was persuaded, influenced and influenced with her friends by a determined and effective ISIS propaganda machine," **said lawyer Samantha Knights, adding:** "Insufficient and hasty steps were taken to deprive her of her citizenship forever within a week of being questioned by a British journalist".

According to an official assessment by Britain's domestic intelligence service MI5, "Shamima Begum's activities before and during her travel to

Syria demonstrated determination and commitment to the alliance with Daesh".

The Home Office also said that information provided to police in November 2015 "indicated that Begum did not share Sultana's desire to return home and remained supportive of ISIS after arriving in ISIS territory", and once in Syria, Shamima married a Dutch conscript and lived under ISIS rule for more than three years. In 2019, The Times found her as she was nine months pregnant in a Syrian refugee camp, and her baby later died due to Pneumonia. Begum said she had lost two other children in the past.

5. International Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

- **At the international level:**
 - a) **The competent United States authorities have** recruited the equipment and provided it with the human, technical and material potential to confront organized crime gangs. Especially trafficking gangs, and if the United States of America is historically considered the attractive country for immigrants. However, immigration and residency laws in America strictly prohibit migrants' entry. As well as cruel treatment, particularly after the events of 11 September 2001, and America's policy of immediate removal of those attempting to enter through smuggling, It has developed a program for the immigration system to make the treatment of immigrants from the Muslim world harsh and harsh.
 - b) **The States of the European Union have** undertaken many efforts to reduce the crime of trafficking in human beings through the Xinjin Convention, signed by thirty countries, through which security and political information are exchanged with a view to tightening border controls, tracking and prosecuting smugglers and migrants, and establishing an European information bank to prevent trafficking in human beings.
 - c) **The United Nations prepared** a manual to support international cooperation to combat trafficking in human beings in Ban Cook, Thailand, from 18-25 April 2005. The conference produced a number of recommendations to reduce the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, **including:**
 - ✓ Developing and sharing information and expertise on human trafficking offences at the international, regional and national levels, identify perpetrators, methods and means of trafficking and protect victims.
 - ✓ Operationalize laws on trafficking in human beings and take the necessary measures to implement them.
 - ✓ Developing cooperation between States and international, governmental and non-governmental organizations to combat human trafficking.

- ✓ Increase the capacity of law enforcement and immigration agencies to combat human trafficking.
- ✓ Taking serious action so that the relevant border guard agencies can play a more effective role in preventing, detecting and controlling trafficking in persons.

❖ **International conventions against smuggling and trafficking in human beings:**

- ✓ International conventions and treaties to abolish prohibit and combat trafficking in human beings (86)
- ✓ The Brussels Convention of 1889.
- ✓ The establishment of the Anti-Slavery Association in London in 1963 (the Association's report shows that slavery is 5 images: procurement, religion, shellfish, "land slavery", forced marriage, adoption and sham, with 12 million men, children and women worldwide).
- ✓ One of the most important international political conventions concerned with combating smuggling is the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, which aims at strengthening cooperation to prevent and combat crime more effectively

The Convention consists of additional articles containing provisions on international cooperation for the purposes of confiscation, extradition, transfer of sentenced persons, mutual legal assistance, joint investigations, cooperation in the collection and exchange of data and analysis of information on the nature of organized crime, with a view to improving States' capacity to combat the crime of trafficking in human beings. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. signed the Protocol against Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings. On 15 November 2000, the Protocol aims to maximize the fight against the activities of organized criminal groups.

✓ **Enactment of the Strategy for the Convention and Protocol against Trafficking in people developed in 2000 in the so-called Palermo Convention:**

- Criminalize trafficking in persons. The following are measures to prevent trafficking in persons (States Parties have printed strategies and programs to prevent trafficking in people).
- States' research, studies and adoption of propaganda and information campaigns and social initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.
- States shall cooperate in the prevention of trafficking in persons with non-governmental organizations, and States shall cooperate in the sharing of

information on perpetrators and types of trafficking in persons, travel documents and the prosecution of traffickers.

- States Parties shall strengthen border controls to prevent and detect trafficking in persons, as well as cooperation between border control agencies.
- Ensure the safety and security of travel documents, identity and visas.

- **At the Arab level:**

Initially, the responsibility for combating the crime of trafficking in persons rests with governments, communities and individuals. Therefore, if we look at ways of preventing this crime, each party must perform a duty. Governments can line decisions and act to implement them because the executive power is in their hands and they punish the offenders.

Furthermore, the Arab Penal Code does not agree on the determination of the age of children eligible for protection. This requires the determination of the age of eligible children, especially in the light of the existence of laws criminalizing the abduction and forced labor of children.

Some Arab States' actions to combat human trafficking are as follows:

- a) **Saudi Arabia's actions to reduce human trafficking offences:** given the seriousness of trafficking offences, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons System is severely punished. **Article III of this Code stipulates** that: "Anyone who commits trafficking in persons shall be liable to a term of up to 15 years' imprisonment or a fine of up to 1 million Saudi riyals.

The Kingdom also adopted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in 2000, with reservations to certain clauses. This was followed by the Kingdom's adoption of the Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Trafficking in Human Beings, in particular for women and children, as well as Saudi Arabia's adoption of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air and supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. As well as the Kingdom's accession to treaties on slavery and the slave trade, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the abolition of forced labor and the Convention on Labor and the Legal Age for Work, to combat human trafficking.

- b) **Sudan's actions in criminalizing, preventing, and combating trafficking in people are as follows:** Article 310 of the Sudanese Penal Code stipulates that whoever sells or buys any person, hires or rents a person under 21 years of age, or in any way arrives at the possession of a person intending to use that

person for prostitution or for any unlawful purpose shall be punished by 10 years' imprisonment.

- c) **The Egyptian system's measures to combat trafficking in people are as follows:** article 288 of the Egyptian Penal Code stipulates that anyone who abducts a child under 16 years of age shall be punished by hard labor and article 290 by hard labor for life.
- d) **Actions of the UAE regime in combating trafficking in human beings are as follows:** Article 344 of the UAE Penal Code states that anyone who abducts a person who is arrested or detained for the purpose of earning or carrying out an offence shall be liable to life imprisonment.
- e) **The Sultanate of Oman's actions to reduce the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings are as follows:** Article VIII of the Omani Code states that the offender of trafficking in human beings shall be punished by a term of not less than 3 years, not more than 7 years, and a fine of not less than OMR 5,000 and not more than OMR 100,000.
- f) **Jordanian law's procedures for combating trafficking in human beings:** Article 302 stipulates that anyone who abducts a person by circumvention or coercion and flees him to one of the authorities. The abductee was a female; the perpetrator shall be punished by temporary hard labor.

Notwithstanding the existence of these international conventions and national laws, which aim at reducing this phenomenon. However, it is considered to be a very fragile legal framework, with many gaps heard in the increase in the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings. There are no clear legal provisions for penalizing States that assist or permit human trafficking, and the recruitment of women and children by non-State actors such as terrorist organizations and militias did not discuss the recruitment and involvement of children in various conflicts engaged with regular armies for involvement in human rights violations before the international community or in bridging combatants' deficits. As well as the sexual exploitation of women in so-called struggle jihad, with no provision for international officials.

➤ **Conclusion**

The crime of human trafficking is considered one of the most heinous and dangerous crimes to human beings because its perpetrators use various means to exploit the victim in the most heinous ways, in order to achieve illegal material goals. Human Trafficking is a transnational organized crime, which is also carried out by terrorist organizations, taking advantage of the economic and social conditions suffered by the victim. Therefore, this crime occupies the entire international community because of the dangers and the repercussions that it entails, which would harm the security of the State and entity, and its economic and social systems, and it is considered a problem that kills thousands of victims, especially of women and children who are subjected to the worst forms of exploitation.

Hence, working to put an end to these violations is the duty of everyone: States, organizations and individuals, and in this context, this research has contributed to the fight against this crime.

➤ **Recommendations**

1. Calling for the development of a comprehensive Arab strategy to combat human trafficking, and the adoption of the necessary mechanisms to put it into practice in terms of legislation, regulation and international cooperation.
2. Paying more attention to victims of human trafficking crimes through the efforts of society in all its categories.
3. Human rights and legal institutions should play their responsible role in detecting international crimes related to the transfer of human organs, which are the first target of human trafficking.
4. Local, regional and international media institutions should play their humanitarian role in exposing human trafficking crimes as an aid in confronting this crime, which has dimensions that affect all humanity.
5. Working to coordinate the efforts of human rights institutions: global, regional and local in confronting crime, through holding specialized conferences to discuss this issue.
6. Supporting the role of criminal justice institutions in law enforcement and victim protection.
7. International cooperation between all countries to eliminate human trafficking, especially after this crime has taken international forms, in addition to being considered transnational. This necessitates cooperation at the international level, especially the country of origin or origin, the country of transit and the country of destination, with the need to

emphasize the adoption of an international position on countries that do not comply with international conventions in the field of combating trafficking in people.

8. The need to stipulate explicitly in the Anti-Human Trafficking Law that the victim should not be punished for acts that he may have been forced to do and that constitute a violation of the laws.

Egyptian Coalition for Human Rights and Development