Key Judgements 4

Relevant Background

The STOP THE TRAFFIK Group has a strong history of delivering activity with vulnerable communities that reduces their risk of being trafficked into exploitation. In the current crisis, we are working with a range of ground partners to produce this analysis.

We know from observing timelines with large unpredictable groups of people on the move (Rohingya and Syria) that initially they are subject to high levels of short term assistance. Then as they settle, the trafficking operations begin to create structures to encourage higher value individuals to go on a journey by promising them hope of a good opportunity that is exploitation. Timelines are difficult to predict, but at this point, it is not clear whether trafficking groups are organised in those refugee communities yet.

Ukrainian Refugees & Vulnerability to Trafficking & Exploitation

Introduction

It has been almost three months since the commencement of the war in Ukraine and the widespread dispersal of refugees from Ukraine is well underway, with many thousands of people arriving in nearly all European countries and further afield. The majority, whilst without resources, are currently finding some level of support to draw on from among the host communities.

The numbers of refugees outside of Ukraine are still staggeringly high (north of 6 million) and Ukraine in large parts has been physically and economically destroyed.

In a wider context, the world is still suffering economically from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and anecdotally, we are aware of businesses in the Far East actively and openly planning to cease payments to workers as an element of the recovery process.

The following Key Judgments incorporate elements of the previous editions for relevance.

Previous Key Judgements

Please see previous editions here: Key Judgements 1 and Key Judgements 2 and Key Judgements 3.

Traffik Analysis Hub

Key Judgements

1) Refugees are likely to be more at risk from those who are pre-disposed to exploit. These perpetrators are infiltrating *'homes for refugees'* and similar refugee-friendly schemes.

2) Ukraine has a pre-conflict trafficking and exploitation profile managed by Ukrainian criminal groups. These groups are likely, over time, to seek new exploitation opportunities to recruit those who are displaced and vulnerable as a result of the war.

3) There are pre-existing and vulnerable sectors across Europe, which for many years have been infiltrated by trafficking, including by Ukrainian criminals exploiting victims to steal their wages. This may be more prevalent this summer in Agriculture, Leisure, Construction, and Manufacturing sectors with this likely to be already occurring in southern European destinations.

4) As Ukraine tries to maintain and subsequently rebuild its economy and infrastructure there is likely to be a rise in exploitation of sex and labour. This assessment does not seek to criticise patriotic and volunteer work in Ukraine communities.

5) Third-country nationals (circa 200,000) have similarly left Ukraine as part of the refugee outflow and are in large numbers in Poland and Germany and are likely, in part, to have been in exploitation. In exile, these people are likely to be subject to continuing coercion that seeks any opportunity to use their labour and steal the proceeds.

6) Refugees without access to reliable information, group support and reference points on the ground where they are, will likely accept any income for work to sustain themselves and their families.

7) Unaccompanied minors (under 18s) are likely to be targeted with fake opportunities, particularly through social media and peers, to move outside support systems and into high risk.

Information Requirements

1) Multilateral and local non-profit organisations on the ground where refugees are concentrating should collect and share narratives arising from any credible attempt to traffik any refugee and share appropriately. (Consider utilising The STOP APP).

2) The locations where refugees are coalescing to be shared appropriately.

3) Any cases of fake job ads or recruitment attempts for sex work or other labour are needed as they occur.

4) Any cases of companies being contacted by individuals looking to facilitate/ coordinate jobs for refugees.

Contact Us: alanna@traffikanalysis.org // neil@traffikanalysis.org