



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fourth session

11 September–13 October 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Iranian Elite Research Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 August 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking in the United States of America**

Slavery was the first human rights issue to arouse wide international concern. Yet it continues today and slavery-like practices also remain a grave and persistent problem. Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that ‘No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms’. Child trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that might involve hard labor, servitude, sex work or other services. Children are trafficked for purposes such as domestic labor, armed groups, criminal activity, and even adoption.

Underage kids, particularly those who were abandoned, sold or have very poor/abusive family backgrounds, are by far the most vulnerable group. The depraved criminals who engage in such illicit activities specifically target unfortunate children and given there are millions of them all around the globe, particularly in war-torn areas, the "recruitment pool" is effectively endless. Unfortunately, the demand on the black market also seems to be constant and growing, making it a very lucrative and appealing prospect for criminals.

The legal definition of sex trafficking is “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age”.

The United States of America is the most profitable market for such criminal activities. In 2018, adults purchased children for sex at least 2.5 million times a year in the United States of America. It is estimated that up to half a million children are trafficked in the United States of America every year, with another 300,000 at risk. Some are abducted, others are runaways, while some are sold by relatives, acquaintances and even closest family members. This is a massive business in the United States of America and it's not only present in big cities and core urban areas, but virtually everywhere, around the entire country. Everyone from regular people to those in the highest positions of power take part in it.

In the country a total of 10,360 unique cases (incidents) of potential human trafficking were reported to the Hotline in 2021. A single human trafficking situation may involve a single potential victim or many potential victims.

In 2021, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of child sex trafficking from all the States of the United States of America. In 2021, of the 25,000 children reported missing to NCMEC who had run away, 1 in 6 were likely sex trafficking victims. In 2023, Tara Lee Rodas disclosed the United States of America's federal government has become the “middleman” in a multi-billion dollar human trafficking operation targeting unaccompanied minors at the southern border.

We urge the Human Rights Council to remind its Member States to:

Strengthen their efforts to protect children from all forms of trafficking in persons;

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to provide protection and assistance to victims of trafficking in children, including a possible referral mechanism, where applicable, that takes into account the special needs of children;

Enhance training for all relevant officials, as appropriate, on preventing and combating all forms of trafficking in children;

Develop or amend, as appropriate, national laws to ensure that trafficking in children in all its forms is liable to sanctions that take into account the gravity of the offence and, depending on the gravity of the offence, subject to a long statute of limitations period, as appropriate, and to maximize the effectiveness of criminal justice systems in holding traffickers accountable;

1. <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/National%20Report%20For%202021.docx%20%283%29.pdf>
2. <https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/CST%20Identification%20Resource.pdf>
3. <https://www.themainewire.com/2023/04/u-s-is-middleman-in-billion-dollar-child-trafficking-op-whistleblower/>