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**VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A STATISTICAL PROFILE – 2012**  
**IOM MOLDOVA**

In 2012, IOM Moldova provided assistance to 205 (98 in 2011 109% increase) - victims of trafficking (VoT).

**OVERVIEW:**

The National Referral System for Assistance and Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking (NRS) is a comprehensive system of co-operation between governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in promoting human rights and combating human trafficking based on common and internationally recognized standards. The implementation of the NRS in the regions of Moldova was done through the creation and training of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) which are the main operational units of the NRS, operating on different levels and bringing together a wide range of specialists (social workers, policemen, prosecutors, doctors, teaching staff or other educational officials, representatives of public registry, bodies, lawyers, psychologists etc.). MDTs identify and assist victims and potential victims of TIP in their rehabilitation and reintegration process by referring them to service providers. To date, the NRS covers the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova at the district level. The NRS methodology was also introduced in 6 out of 7 territorial units in Transnistria to ensure equal access to services for beneficiaries from this region. Based on the in-depth knowledge gained from working with victims of trafficking (VoTs) over the past decade, it became increasingly clear that all victims had been in particularly vulnerable situations, which put them at risk before they fell prey to traffickers: situations such as: victims of domestic violence (in 2012, 30% of VoT's had been victims of domestic violence), single parents (in 2012 43% of the VoT's were single parents), children from boarding schools or persons with low education and/or from poor rural areas with minimal opportunities (in 2012 89% of VoT's were unemployed prior to their exploitation and the vast majority left the country to seek work). Thus, prevention of TIP through social and economic measures for potential victims is an integral part of the NRS. The multidisciplinary teams, in cooperation with the IOM Moldova and local NGOs, provide assistance to persons identified as vulnerable to human trafficking, such as victims of domestic violence, families in extreme economic hardship, single mothers and fathers, persons with disabilities and children whose parents are working abroad.

In 2012, IOM Moldova, in cooperation with national and international partners, identified and provided assistance to 205 VoTs: 189 adults: 134 women and 55 men, (signifying an increase in the proportion of men to women from 21% in 2010, and 25% in 2011 to 29% in 2012) and 16 children (11 girls and 5 boys). Unlike in the previous year, when VoTs were predominantly in their 20s, only 50% of the victims were aged between 18 and 30, perhaps a reflection of the increased number of male victims who tend to be older, and a sign of the rise in labour exploitation. In 2012 46% of the victims were trafficked for labour exploitation, an increase from 35.7% in 2011. A small proportion of the VoTs also get exploited for begging purposes (3.0%) or face combined exploitation (2.0%) such as labour and sexual exploitation

The most common country of destination changed from Russia to the Ukraine. The main destination countries were: the Ukraine (36%), Russia (19%), the United Arab Emirates (10%), Turkey (10%) Kosovo (8%). In the Ukraine, more than half of the victims were men, with 92% of men and women trafficked for labour exploitation. In Russia, a third of the victims were men, and 37% of all victims were exploited for labour, while 24% suffered sexual exploitation. In 2012, unlike in recent years, Kosovo was identified as an important country of destination. In Kosovo, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey all of the victims were women aged 19-31 trafficked for sexual exploitation. The number of identified cases in Moldova did not change, with 16 in 2011 and 16 in 2012, with underage victims accounting for half of the infernally trafficked cases in both years. The overall number of minors trafficked has increased from 11 to 16, with 8

trafficked for labour, 5 for sexual exploitation, 1 for a mixture of the two, and 1 for begging. Generally speaking, most of the VoTs identified in 2012 had schooling until class 8 or 9, came from rural areas and were unemployed, seeking work abroad to leave a bad financial situation.

In 2011 most victims of labour exploitation were identified at the local level - after they returned home from the country of destination - by the MDTs of the NRS or through operations and intelligence of law enforcement agencies. In 2012, 28% of victims were identified by government bodies at the local level (with 20 identified by NRS regional teams, and 21 by the police), 30% of victims were referred by the IOM field offices, and 28% were identified by NGOs. Many of the victims treat the trafficking experience as failed migration and rush to find a new job in order to provide for their families. Hence they do not identify themselves as victims and thus refuse the psychological and additional types of assistance available to them through the Centre for Assistance and Protection (CAP). However, many did benefit from various types of assistance – 34% accessed medical help, 69% were given social assistance, 33% took advantage of psychological support and 46% benefited from legal aid. The number of identified cases of re-trafficking has fallen from 14% in 2011 to 7% in 2012.

Many of the VoTs identified had experienced violence prior to the trafficking experience. Nearly half, 45%, of the VoTs helped in 2010 had previously been victims of violence (physical, sexual and/or psychological). In 2011 this proportion went down to 38% of the VoTs having previously been victims of violence. In 2012 the percentage again fell to 30%. It is important to note that not only women were previously physically abused (10 men were identified as domestic violence victims), and that most of the under age victims had been previously abused.

The recruiters of VoTs identified in 2012 were often people known to the victim (50%), with men (57%) recruiting more than women, a change from 2011 when women constituted 2/3 of the recruiters. As in 2011 The male VoTs indicated to have had only male recruiters with few exceptions, while female VoTs had been recruited by both men and women. Minor girls were recruited by men and women, and in 2012, minor boys were recruited by couples and men. These traffickers generally have established relationships in the country of destination and know the local language, legislation and traditions. Therefore these women have a high ability to convince potential victims by fraud. Although crimes of trafficking in persons, according to the international data, usually involve more men than women, in the case of Moldova, regarding initial contact with the victims, more women are involved. However, mostly men are involved in actions following the recruitment, such as transportation. In 2012 there were also 2 cases of kidnapping.

### **RECENT TRENDS:**

The trends in trafficking are constantly changing. In comparison to previous years, the duration of exploitation for sexual services decreased from 1-2 years prior to 2011, and an average of 4 months in 2011, to around half of the cases falling in the 2-10 week category in 2012. While in 2011 only exceptional cases lasted for many years, in 2012 14 victims endured 1 to 5 years of exploitation, and 6 were captive for more than 10 years.

The conditions of exploitation are “better,” the victims are paid small amounts of money; they are allowed to contact their parents/children and are allowed partial freedom of movement. These manipulative techniques have caused many victims to fall under an illusion of well-being where they consider their traffickers as friends: causing some to return to their traffickers/pimps after being rescued or arrested by police and deported.

Fewer victims are identified abroad. Most of them are mistaken for prostitutes and deported – it was found that many beneficiaries came into trafficking from prostitution and vice-versa. The level of self-identification is also low. Many victims do not know their basic human rights and do not realize they were

actually sold and exploited, mainly due to the changed conditions in which VoTs find themselves. They do not know they can ask for assistance and have the right to be protected. Others do not ask for assistance, and do not have similar acute medical and psychological needs as victims in previous years. In regards to recruitment, most of the victims knew or suspected what would happen to them abroad; however, the promises they were given upon recruitment were immediately broken upon entry into the countries of destination.

There is a rising trend of labour exploitation in Russia and the Ukraine, with an increased proportion of men being trafficked to those countries. However the main type of exploitation remains sexual and targeted at women in certain countries, such as the UAE, Kosovo and Turkey. It is important to note that the trends in 2012 are heavily influenced by two large cases, one in the Ukraine where a large number of victims of labour trafficking were discovered working on a farm, and one in Kosovo where 22 victims of sexual exploitation were identified in one place. The size of the groups identified in both cases partially explains some of the variations in the data between 2011 and 2012.

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