

# CHRISTMAS DONATION

DECEMBER 2018



**SINCERE WISHES FOR A PEACEFUL HOLIDAY**

***ALLIANCE ANTI TRAFIC, VIETNAM***

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Each December, Tundra Fonder makes a small financial contribution to a carefully selected organisation working on important societal issues. Previous Christmas donations have been to educational institutions, a non-profit hospital in Pakistan and to ECPAT (PEaCE) Sri Lanka - an organisation fighting to end sexual exploitation of children. This year we have chosen **Alliance Anti Traffic (AAT)**, Vietnam.

AAT is a non-profit organisation operating in Southeast Asia with the goal of combating sexual exploitation and trafficking in the region. Active since 2001, AAT was the first and one of the main organisations in Vietnam to successfully establish a comprehensive anti-trafficking program. It prioritises actions such as: regional rescuing, repatriation, rehabilitation and community education. AAT works closely with the Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with different embassies and police forces in Southeast Asian countries to rescue and repatriate victims.

Research however shows that repatriation alone is not enough. Survivors of human trafficking need immense support to help them reintegrate into society [1]. They need support in terms of housing, healthcare, education, psychological services, and vocational training. In 2003, AAT opened a rehabilitation centre in Vietnam, which at the time was criticised by the government as a waste of money [2]. It runs large-scale programmes for the rehabilitation and social reintegration such as healthcare services, vocational training, social engagement activities and micro loans supporting entrepreneurship and small enterprise. AAT launched an educational programme in 2008 creating awareness around reproductive health and preventing sex-related risks. The programme has reached more than 110,000 children and parents in public schools. It also has a unit dedicated to reaching out to and supporting women and under-aged girls involved in prostitution. The goal is to help improve the lives of these women and to prevent their family members from being dragged into the same situation. It draws attention to supporting at-risk children and those who have mothers or sisters involved in prostitution.

AAT's tireless efforts prove that with a support network and resources rescued victims can change their futures. Supporting anti-trafficking efforts requires gathering representatives from government, civil society, business and to implement collective interventions. At Tundra, we aim to pursue ambitious collaborations designed to make a difference.



# TRAFFICKING: GLOBAL ESTIMATES

Human trafficking, also known as modern slavery, remains a global threat that deprives millions of people around the world of their freedom, dignity and future. According to Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (2017) nearly 40.3 million people worldwide were victims of modern slavery in 2016 [3]. Although modern slavery has no legal definition, it is frequently used as an umbrella term covering a wide range of exploitation including human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, debt bondage, domestic servitude, other slavery and slavery-like practices (see chart below). Women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery; accounting for over 70% of the total estimate. Asia and the Pacific placed second in terms of the prevalence of modern slavery in the world with 6.1 per 1,000 people. In the region, North Korea, Afghanistan and Pakistan have the highest prevalence of modern slavery; while India, China and Pakistan have the highest absolute number of people living in modern slavery.

Within the Asia-Pacific region, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) exhibit some of the most dynamic human trafficking flows characterised by cross-border patterns [4].



Source: Global Slavery Index



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Vietnam placed 77th among 167 countries (Sweden ranks 152) in the Prevalence Index Rank regarding modern slavery, with an estimated 4.5 victims per 1,000 population [5]. The country has been predominantly identified as a source country for trafficking, commonly to countries within the GMS for forced marriages, sexual exploitation and forced labour but also to other countries including Europe [6]. Persons trafficked to Vietnam mainly come from Cambodia. Victims are forced into begging and working in the agriculture sector.

### TRAFFICKING TRENDS AND PATTERNS

In pursuit of better job opportunities, Vietnamese women and men migrate abroad; many fall victim to forced labour in sectors including construction, fishing, agriculture, mining, logging and manufacturing [7]. There have been reports of increasing numbers of victims trafficked for forced labour in the United Kingdom and Ireland, continental Europe, the Middle East, and in Pacific maritime industries. Since 2013, a large proportion of trafficked persons discovered in the U.K., many forced into cannabis production have been identified as Vietnamese [8]. Vietnam has been identified as one of the top three countries globally that traffic persons to the U.K. Many victims are young and extremely vulnerable to false promises of attractive working condition overseas as offered by traffickers. They are frequently misled by fraudulent employment opportunities, for instance several Vietnamese women and children were sold to work in brothels in China, Laos, Cambodia and elsewhere in Asia including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea [9].

Alongside the more common trafficking trends of forced labour and sexual exploitation, Vietnamese women reportedly have been subjected to bride-trafficking [6]. This pattern of trafficking is considered one of the most harmful consequences of a serious demographic tilt in China, a consequence of the 'one-child' policy (1979-2015) and preference for male children, which lead to sex-selective abortion [9]. Responding to a high demand for brides, traffickers prey on vulnerable women and girls from poor areas, especially from ethnic minority groups in the northern highlands of Vietnam [10].

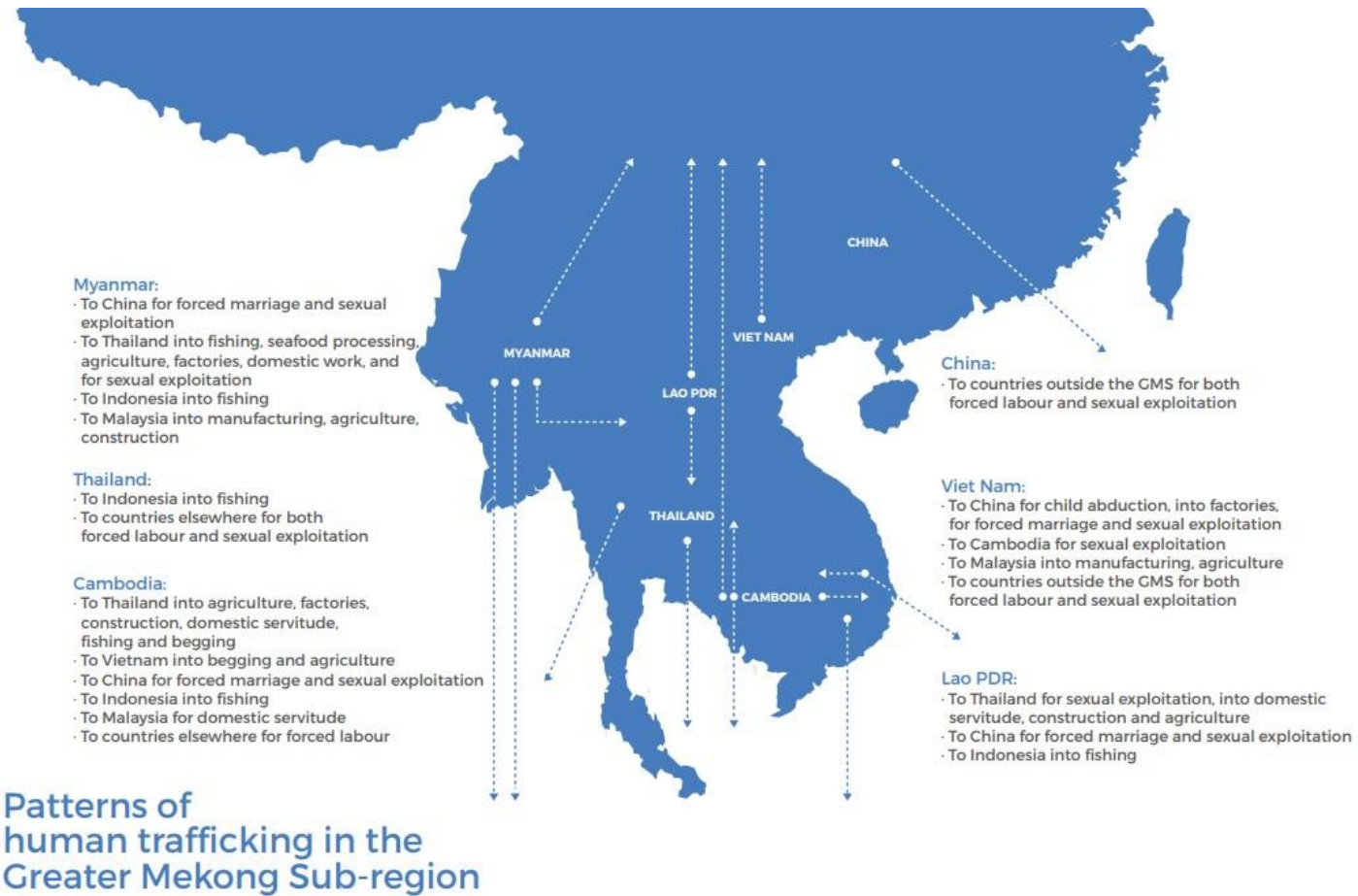


Official statistics from the Government of Vietnam state that between 2011 and 2017, there were 2,700 reported cases of human trafficking with nearly 6,000 victims mainly from poor, rural families [11]. Some women were lured to China with false promises of jobs and better lives, or were misled by someone they trusted, a relative, a friend or even a Vietnamese boyfriend while others were kidnapped. In some cases, victims may have voluntarily gone to China with the purpose of finding a foreign husband, but ended up severely mistreated or even forced into prostitution. Increasingly, traffickers have started using the internet, gaming sites and social media channels such as online dating sites to lure potential victims; some even pose as police officers to gain the victim's trust [7]. The situation is not much better in Vietnam, children, mainly from impoverished rural areas, are forced into street hawking and begging in major urban centres. They may also end up working under harsh conditions in informal garment and brick factories, urban family homes and privately-run rural gold mines. To make matters even more difficult, Vietnam is a destination country for child sex tourism attracting perpetrators from Asia, U.K. and Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States. Cases of adults being forced into labour or trafficked for the purpose of organ removal have also been reported.

## GOVERNMENT ACTION FALLING SHORT

In response to this situation, the government has increased its efforts to combat trafficking by enacting penal code amendments, increasing security in vulnerable border areas, and initiating an assessment of the implementation of its national action plan. Nevertheless, there is significant room for improvement and action. There is an absence of formal implementation guidelines on the new penal code amendments, specifically for Articles 150 (on human trafficking) and 151 (on trafficking of a persons under 16) of the new penal code. Article 150 criminalises labour and sex trafficking of adults with penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment and fines from Vietnamese dong (VND) 20 million to 100 million. Article 151 criminalises labour and sex trafficking of children under the age of 16 with penalties of up to 12 years in prison and fines from VND 50 million to 200 million [7].

While the laws are stringent, they do not criminalise all forms of trafficking in child sexual abuse. There is an urgent need to develop and train officials on implementing these articles. The government has yet to create a national database on trafficking statistics. This type of data collection needs to be fully integrated into law enforcement efforts or judicial proceedings. Effective law enforcement efforts have been further hampered by a lack of inter-agency coordination and provincial agencies not acting in accordance with the national action plan. At the village level, government officials are complicit in trafficking, taking bribes from traffickers and extorting profits in exchange for turning a blind eye.



Source: UN-ACT Annual Progress Report 2017

As of 2017, it appears that victim protection activities were insufficiently funded by national authorities in an effort to decentralise responsibility [7]. There are entirely too few policies and government efforts to identify and assist victims among vulnerable groups including migrant workers, individuals in prostitution, and child labourers. The total number of victims assisted through counselling, healthcare services, legal aid and financial consultations have also decreased compared to 2016. Social protection centres for a wide range of vulnerable groups including trafficking victims are operated by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MoLISA). However, these centres are unevenly staffed, under-resourced and do not have appropriately trained personnel to assist victims. Effective implementation of the third phase of the 2016-2020 National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan (NAP) was constrained by insufficient funding and a lack of inter-ministerial cooperation. Widespread public awareness raising campaigns were organised but these failed to engage high-risk communities.



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