



QUICK FACTS

Human Trafficking

January 2022

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international sustainable development, and mutual security for all people.

In the past decade, human trafficking has emerged as one of the fastest-growing criminal activities in the world. This modern-day form of slavery claims an estimated [24.9 million victims](#) of all ages around the world and is a serious violation of human rights. Although some trafficking is global, human trafficking is largely a regional and local issue with [65% of trafficking](#) happening domestically. Traffickers use violence, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to manipulate victims into engaging in commercial sex acts, labor services, or other [forms of exploitation](#) against their will. Traffickers particularly [target](#) marginalized or vulnerable populations, including children, undocumented migrants, and LGBTQ+ people. Though awareness and concern around this industry have grown in recent years, human trafficking is consistently underreported due to its covert nature, low community awareness, lack of law enforcement, limited resources for victim recovery, and social blaming of victims.

[Sex trafficking](#) is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, or soliciting of a person for commercial sex acts through force or other forms of coercion. As a growing global industry, sex trafficking occurs in a wide variety of venues including residential brothels, online escort services, fraudulent massage businesses, strip clubs, and on the [m.m.](#) Under federal law, any minor under the age of 18 who has engaged in commercial sex is a [victim of sex trafficking](#) regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime reports that [50% of human trafficking victims](#) were trafficked for sexual exploitation globally.

Similar to sex trafficking, labor-trafficked victims are coerced; however, instead of being sexually exploited, victims are abused in a variety of labor settings including farms, factories, and domestic work in homes. Trafficked victims in these industries often work long hours and receive little

to no pay, but are forced to work by traffickers through debt bondage, violence, or other forms of coercion. Globally,

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