

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

1 Jan – 31 Dec 2016

The year 2016 was one of the busiest in the 10-year history of the national assistance system. During 2016, the number of proposals received by the system was almost 2.5 times as high as during the year before. Due to this increase in the number of proposals, at the end of 2016 the number of customers in the system was 233, of whom 167 were actual victims of human trafficking and 66 were adult victims' underage children who were in need of assistance. In 2016, 130 new customers were admitted to the assistance system.

The surge in the arrival of asylum seekers in Finland in 2015 is apparent in the assistance system statistics for 2016, since the number of customers with an asylum seeker background has clearly increased. In addition, victims of other forms of human trafficking, such as forced marriages and forced criminality, are increasingly being referred to the assistance system.

The assistance system is publishing this statistical overview for the period 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2016. The statistical overview for 2016 presents statistics on persons proposed for and admitted to the assistance system in 2016. The assistance system statistics only cover victims of human trafficking referred to and proposed for admission to the assistance system, and customers of the system.

The next statistical overview will be published in July 2017.



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NEW CUSTOMERS IN THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM, 1 JAN TO 31 DEC 2016

In 2016, 130 new customers were admitted to the assistance system for victims of human trafficking. Of these, 21 were minors when admitted. By comparison, the number of new customers admitted in 2015 was 52, all of whom were adults.

UNDERAGE CUSTOMERS

All of the minors referred to the assistance system (21) had become victims of human trafficking outside Finland. Minors are highly vulnerable to human trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation in their home countries. In many cases, the exploiter is a relative or a family friend. Minors may also be recruited for employment abroad, or may be forced to flee conditions in their home country, after which they fall victim to exploitation in another country.

Some minors end up being exploited by the human traffickers themselves. Human traffickers may also use their position of power to abuse minors or treat them violently. Unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to such exploitation and violence.

Some of the minors admitted to the assistance system have been forced into marriage or into criminality such as theft. Forced marriages are often concluded in the home country of the victim.

A practice known as *Bacha Bazi* has been increasingly observed among minors referred to the assistance system; this is a situation where adult men sexually abuse underage boys. A common form of *Bacha Bazi* is to have boys dress in women's clothing and force them to dance for older men, which usually leads to human trafficking for sexual abuse. The practice is most commonly found in countries in Central Asia.

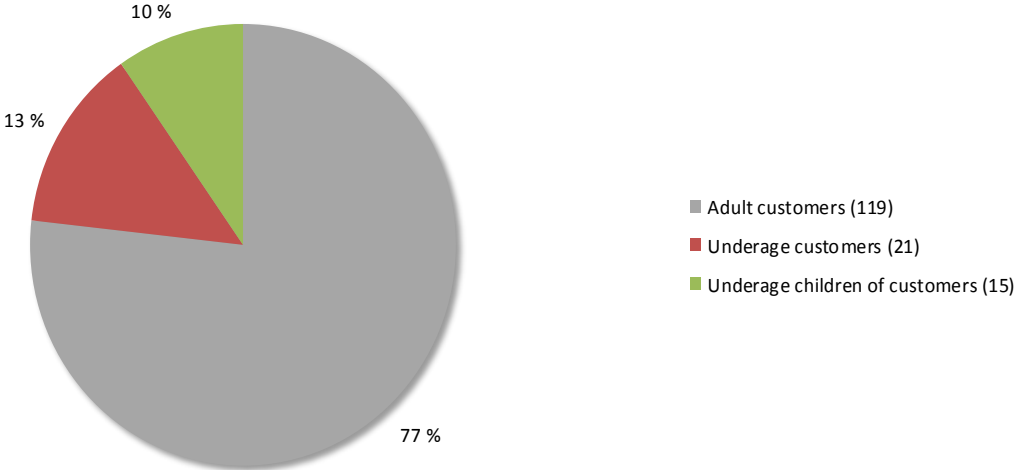
UNDERAGE CHILDREN OF CUSTOMERS

In addition to adult and minor victims of human trafficking, the assistance system may admit the underage children of adult victims of human trafficking who are themselves customers in the system. Underage children of victims of human trafficking often need special support, even if they themselves have not been victims of human trafficking. A parent falling victim to human trafficking is not always able to take care of herself/himself or her/his own children. The children may also have witnessed a parent being exploited through human trafficking.

Statistics on the underage children of victims of human trafficking admitted to the assistance system have been compiled since the beginning of 2016. In 2016, 15 underage children of adult customers were admitted to the system.

Underage children of customers are not included in the statistics on new customers.

New customers and underage children of new customers (145)



NEW CUSTOMERS (130)

Although the number of customers within the assistance system increased sharply in 2016, statistical similarities can be observed with the year 2015. As in 2015, around twice as many women as men were referred to the assistance system. The percentage of male victims of human trafficking has remained roughly the same, with only a slight increase on the previous year.

There is also a clear trend by gender with respect to the distribution of new customers: women and girls are more likely to have fallen victim to human trafficking for sexual exploitation, while labour exploitation is more common among men and boys. However, labour exploitation has increased significantly in the previous year among women admitted to the assistance system. Statistics indicate that victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation form the majority of those referred to the assistance system.

In addition to the increase in human trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation, the volume of other forms of human trafficking has doubled since the previous year. Of new customers admitted during the year under review, 24 were victims of a forced marriage, forced criminality or forced recruitment as child soldiers. Also, for the first time in the 10-year history of the assistance system, persons suspected of falling victim to the organ trade have been referred to the system. However, no organ trade has been detected within Finland as of yet.

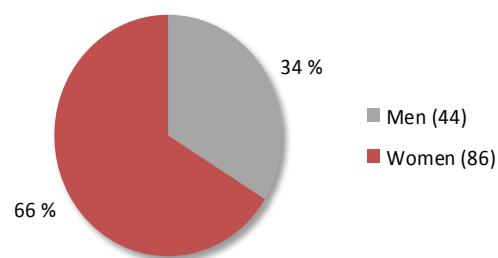
Based on cases of new customers referred to the assistance system, it seems that other forms of human trafficking are practically non-existent in Finland, since new customers had fallen victim outside Finland, whether in their home country or en route to Finland.

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS WITH ASYLUM-SEEKER BACKGROUNDS MULTIPLIED

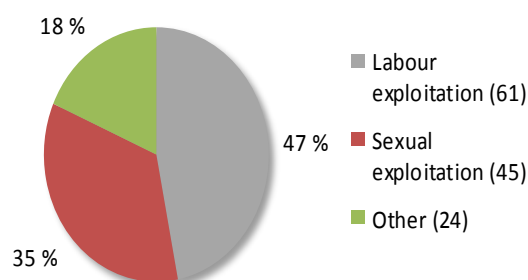
In 2016, an increasing number of asylum seekers were referred to the assistance system. Of the year's new customers, 89 arrived in Finland to seek asylum. The increase in the number of asylum seekers referred to the system is probably a result of the surge in asylum seekers arriving in Finland in 2015 and the increasing capacity of officials to identify victims of human trafficking and refer them to the assistance system. During 2016, the assistance system has trained, advised and instructed officials and authorities in the identification of victims of human trafficking and in how to refer them to assistance.

The new customers represent 23 nationalities. The statistics show that Nigerian women remain a major group among the victims.

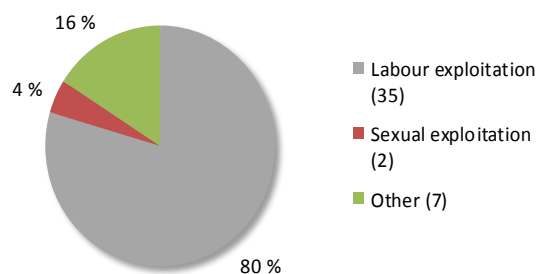
Gender distribution: new customers (130)



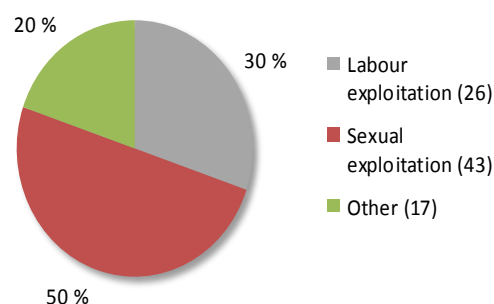
Victimisation type: new customers (130)



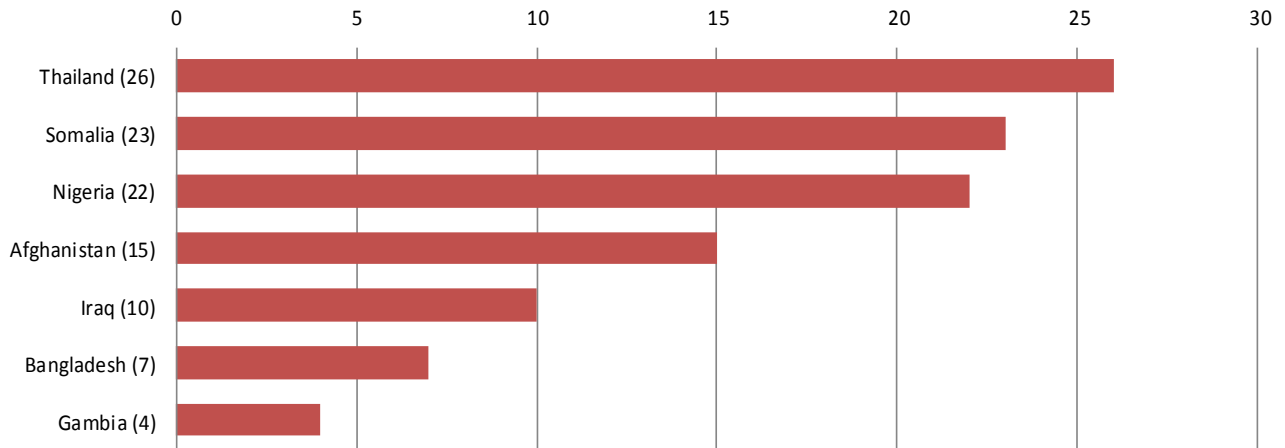
Victimisation type: men and boys (44)



Victimisation type: women and girls (86)



Top nationalities: new customers (130)



Women from Nigeria and other countries in western Africa often fall victim to human trafficking for sexual exploitation in the Mediterranean countries or Russia, as well as in their home countries and elsewhere in Europe. Nigerian women who are victims of human trafficking have also been referred to the assistance system in Finland.

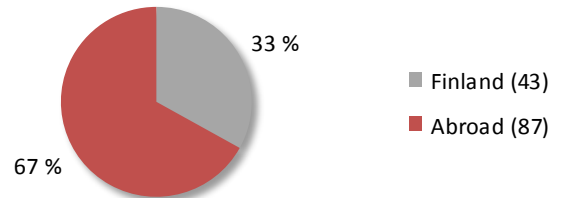
In addition, several victims have been admitted from Thailand, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Bangladesh. Persons from eastern Africa travelling through Libya to Europe are at particular risk of being abducted by human traffickers. Abducted persons are often taken to prison camps kept by the traffickers, with considerable ransoms being demanded for their release. Those who are unable to pay the traffickers are inevitably subjected to human trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation. For persons arriving from the Middle East and Central Asia, exploitation may be both sexual and labour-related, or take the form of forced marriages.

43 PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF FALLING VICTIM TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND

In addition to customers who have fallen victim to human trafficking abroad, an increasing number of customers are being referred to the system who have fallen victim to human trafficking in Finland. In 2016, 43 people are suspected of having become victims of human trafficking in Finland.

The corresponding figure in 2015 was 32.

Place of victimisation: new customers (130)



New customers 2016: place and type of victimisation (130)



Statistics from aid organisations show that the majority of persons referred to the assistance system in Finland are victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation. Such exploitation typically occurs in relation to restaurants, berry picking or cleaning and child care in

private households. The number of victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation identified in Finland remains low, and few are referred to the assistance system.

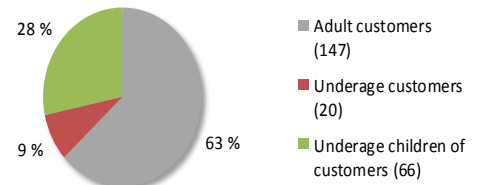
ALL CUSTOMERS OF THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM AT THE END OF 2016

At the end of 2016, there were 167 customers in the assistance system for victims of human trafficking. The corresponding figure in 2015 was 89. Of these, 147 are adults and 20 are minors. In addition to victims of human trafficking, the assistance system includes 66 underage children in Finland of customers of the assistance system, who have been regarded as being in need of assistance or special support. In all, there were 233 people in the assistance system at the end of 2016.

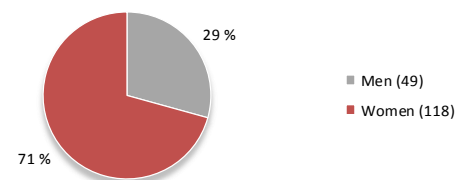
Nearly three fourths of customers of the assistance system are women (118). There were 49 men in the system at the end of 2016. The fact that the majority of customers are women is also apparent from the types of victimisation: about 50% of the customers were victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Although it is far more common for women than men to fall victim to sexual exploitation, it is not unknown for men to become victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The customers of the assistance system represent 33 nationalities, as opposed to 26 in 2015. However, the proliferation of nationalities has not resulted in significant changes to the distribution of major customer groups.

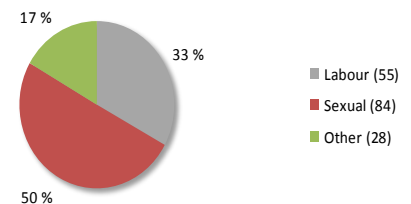
All customers and underage children of customers (233)



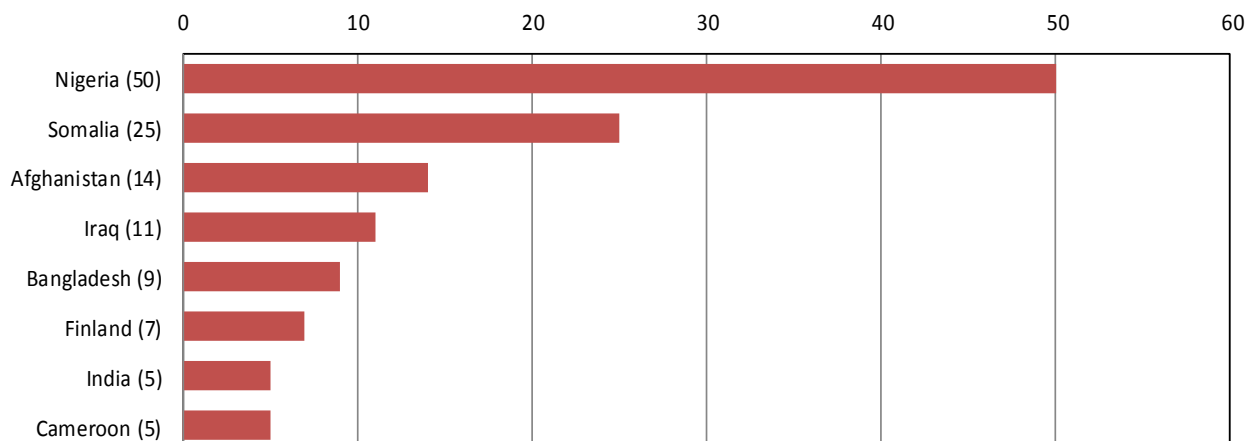
Customer gender distribution (167)



Victimisation type: all customers (167)



Top nationalities: all customers (167)



PROPOSALS FOR ADMISSION INTO THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM, 1 JAN TO 31 DEC

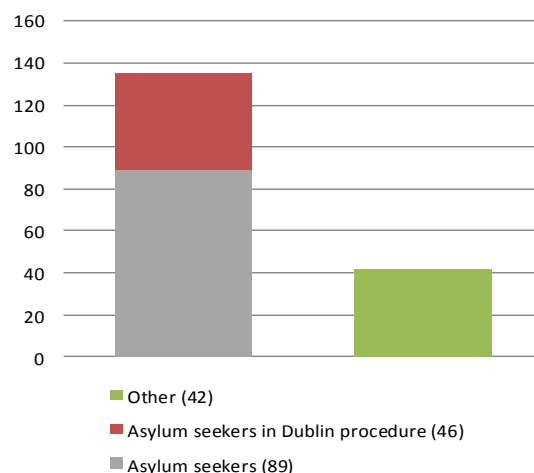
During 2016, a total of 182 proposals were made for admission to the assistance system. The number of proposals and the number of positive and negative decisions more than doubled compared to 2015. The number of positive decisions was 52 in 2015 and 131 in 2016.

The number of proposals for admission to the assistance system was high at the beginning and end of the year. In the latter half of 2016, the assistance system received 109 proposals, about 1.5 times as many as in the entire previous year. The busiest month was September, with 35 proposals.

The increase in the number of asylum seekers is apparent in the proposals for admission to the system. The highest numbers of proposals came from reception centres (68) and the Finnish Immigration Service (35) which, because of their operations, play a key role in identifying the hallmarks of human trafficking in cases of people seeking asylum. Among other authorities, the police submitted four proposals involving a total of 26 persons. The Border Guard only submitted two proposals. The total number of proposals from authorities was 131.

Proposals for admission to the assistance system were made not only by the authorities, but also by the legal counsels of alleged victims of human trafficking. Proposals submitted by legal counsels mainly concern asylum seekers. In six of the cases, the party submitting the proposal represented a minor.

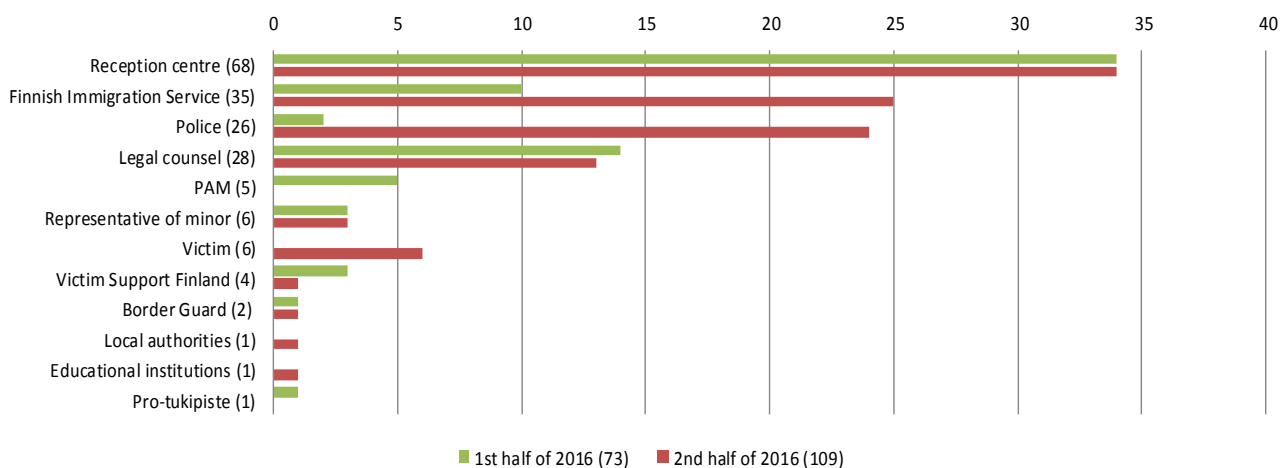
Persons proposed for admission into the assistance system in 2016 (177)



NGOs and trade unions also submitted proposals. Service Union United (PAM) submitted five proposals, invariably involving human trafficking for labour exploitation in Finland. Victim Support Finland (RIKU) proposed one person for admission to the assistance system, and Pro-tukipiste proposed one person.

A victim may submit a proposal on behalf of himself/herself. This may happen in a case where the victim is somehow conscious of his/her situation and is able to seek help, for instance by phoning the assistance system helpline.

Parties submitting proposals



REFERRING A POSSIBLE VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

The assistance system for victims of human trafficking does not engage in outreach work. For possible victims of human trafficking to be referred to the assistance system, either a party that encounters the victim or the victim himself/herself must apply for admission to the assistance system. Such an application is known as a 'proposal'. The person submitting the proposal does not need to have certain knowledge that the person named in the proposal actually is a victim of human trafficking; suspicion of this is enough.

A proposal for admission to the assistance system may be submitted by an authority, an NGO, the victim himself/herself, or a public or private service provider. In urgent cases, both the proposal and the decision may be presented orally, so that assistance measures can be begun immediately.

The assistance system provides help in submitting proposals and identifying victims of human trafficking. The

OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION OF A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2016, the assistance system officially identified eight persons. An officially identified victim of human trafficking is entitled to the services of the assistance system until the need for services ceases, or the person himself/herself decides to leave the system. Official identification is performed as per section 38 of the *Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and the Aid to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (746/2011, the 'Reception Act')* in cases where the criminal investigation authority, prosecutor or Finnish Immigration Service has not identified an individual as a victim of human trafficking. For further information on official identification and its legal impact, consult the information package prepared by the assistance system in 2015; the package is available from the system.

RECOVERY AND REFLECTION PERIODS GRANTED BY THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM, 1 JAN TO 31 DEC 2016

RECOVERY PERIOD

During 2016, the assistance system granted a 30-day recovery period to eight persons for the purpose of allowing victims of human trafficking to recover from their ordeal and reflect on their willingness to cooperate with the authorities investigating the crime. In two cases, the recovery period was extended by 60 days to a total of 90 days.

Under section 36 of the Reception Act (746/2011), a recovery period may be granted to persons legally resident in Finland. A recovery period may also therefore be granted to a Finnish citizen when admitted into the assistance system. During the recovery period, criminal investigation authorities and prosecutors may not contact the customer without the customer's consent, and the assistance system may not inform the criminal investigation authorities that the customer has been admitted into the system. The minimum recovery period is 30 days, and it may be extended up to a maximum of 90 days.

By the end of 2016, the number of customers in the assistance system had stabilised at over 150. The total number of persons in the system, including the underage children of customers, was more than 200 throughout the year.

The biggest factor contributing to the doubling of the number of customers in 2016 was the surge in immigration in 2015. However, persons who have fallen victim to human trafficking in Finland have increasingly been referred to the system.

REFLECTION PERIOD

The assistance system is also authorised, as per the *Aliens Act (301/2004)*, to grant a reflection period to persons who do not have a legal right of residence in Finland. As with the recovery period, the reflection period is intended to give a victim of human trafficking time to rest and recover from his/her ordeal and decide whether to cooperate with the authorities investigating the human trafficking offence of which he/she was a victim.

The minimum reflection period is 30 days and it may be extended up to a maximum of six months. In 2016, the assistance system granted a reflection period to three persons, of 30 days, three months and six months.

CONCLUSION

Within the assistance system, it is estimated that the impact of the immigration surge will continue to be seen in the form of growth in the number of customers in the assistance system throughout 2017.

Since the beginning of 2017, the assistance system has been incorporated with the Finnish Immigration Service. Via this administrative merger, in 2017 the assistance system will seek to improve its expertise as a key expert body in combating human trafficking in Finland.