



NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

OVERVIEW

1 January–31 December 2017

Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking in 2017

Forced marriage and victims in Finland p. 4

The IHME project: training in human trafficking issues p. 12

INTRODUCTION

There was much discussion in late 2017 about forced marriages and their occurrence in Finland. At the time, the Ministry of Justice published the report it had commissioned on the occurrence and discovery of forced marriages in Finland. The results of the report came as no surprise to the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking: people in forced marriages or similar situations have already been referred to the assistance system in previous years. However, the report of the Ministry of Justice is important, because it clarifies the position of forced marriage as a form of human trafficking and sheds light on the forms of forced marriage that have been encountered in Finland.

In this slightly renewed overview, the assistance system highlights cases related to forced marriage in addition to the usual statistics. Even though the example cases themselves and the persons related to them are fictitious, they are very representative examples of stories about forced marriage.

In the future, too, the assistance system will highlight different forms of human trafficking in its overviews, as well as presenting examples its work with victims of human trafficking and in anti-human trafficking work.



2017 was a very busy year for the assistance system. The number of clients in the assistance system was higher than ever. The number of people within the scope of the services rose to more than three hundred – and continues to rise. The number of proposals* for inclusion in the assistance system remained at the same high level as in the previous year.

37% of all of those who became clients of the assistance system in 2017 said that they had become victims of human trafficking in Finland. This number is by no means

insignificant; even just one case is one too many.

During the year, the assistance system was contacted by an increasing number of asylum seekers who had received a negative residence permit decision and whose stay in the country had become illegal. They said that they had experienced conditions indicative of labour exploitation in their work in Finland, usually in the restaurant business. However, in the assessment of the assistance system, most of the contacts did not involve human trafficking, even if some of the cases did have some indications of human trafficking. In any case, the exploitation was serious and long term and targeted people whose situation did not allow them to seek the help of the authorities.



The following pages contain statistics on the assistance system's clients in 2017. When interpreting the statistics, it should be noted that not all people accepted into the assistance system have been officially recognised as victims of human trafficking. The assistance system has a low threshold for accepting clients, meaning that basic indications that a person might have become a victim of human trafficking are enough to initiate a client relationship. For some clients, it may be discovered that the situation did not involve human trafficking, but instead another related offence.



NB! We are renewing the www.ihmiskauppa.fi website. The aim is for the renewal to be completed by the end of May 2018.

* Making a proposal means referring the victim to the assistance system.

CONTENTS

Forced marriage – here in Finland?	4
A year in the assistance system	7
How did the victims find help?	7
Underage victims of human trafficking	8
Labour exploitation victims	8
Sexual exploitation victims	9
Summary: all new clients	10
Total number of clients 31 December 2017	11
Official identification	11
Time for recovery and consideration	12
Assistance system’s personnel	12
The IHME project	12
Contact information	13

FORCED MARRIAGE

HERE IN FINLAND?

THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN BEINGS TO CHOOSE THEIR SPOUSE AND WHETHER THEY WANT TO GET MARRIED AT ALL IS A HUMAN RIGHT. IF THIS RIGHT IS NOT RESPECTED, THE SITUATION CAN BE REGARDED AS A FORCED MARRIAGE. PEOPLE FORCED INTO MARRIAGE MAY FACE VIOLENCE, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OR EVEN CONDITIONS COMPARABLE TO SLAVERY OR FORCED LABOUR IN THEIR MARRIAGE. FORCED MARRIAGE IS A FORM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AND IT ALSO OCCURS IN FINLAND.

In 2017, the assistance system accepted as clients 12 victims of human trafficking based on them being victims of forced marriage or attempted forced marriage. Half of them had already escaped their situation when they fled their home country, but for the other half, the situation either started or

continued in Finland. One of the victims was underage when accepted as a client. However, more than half of the 12 new customers had married while they were underage.

Forced marriage is a current issue in Finland, too, and some of its victims have been identified and referred to the assistance system. Most of the cases related to forced marriage have been identified at shelters, during the asylum process and at reception centres.

However, there is one group of victims of forced marriage that has not been referred to the assistance system at all. This group mainly consists of underage girls.

Investigation by the Ministry of Justice

At the request of the Ministry of Justice, the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (Krimo) at the University of Helsinki compiled a report on the occurrence and discovery of forced marriages in Finland. Based on interviews with experts, the report identified three types of forced marriage:

1. *Forced marriages abroad and between foreign nationals.*
2. *A girl from an immigrant background (who lives in Finland and is often a Finnish citizen) is sent abroad and married to a man who lives abroad.*
3. *A situation in which a Finnish citizen living in Finland marries a foreign person. The marriage begins by mutual consent, but in reality, the foreign spouse is exploited in many*

ways in the marriage, such as sexually or financially. The marriage may involve threats and subjugation, as a result of which the woman does not have any real opportunity or sufficient information to leave her situation.

The situations in groups one and three in particular are familiar to the assistance system, and victims from these groups have been referred to the assistance system over several years. So far, no victims from group two have applied to become clients of the assistance system. According to the report, there have been a significant number of observations of girls sent from Finland to be married abroad and who may have returned from abroad married.

Forced marriage –

a diverse phenomenon

The fear of honour-based violence, low social status, pressure from family or community, violence or threat of violence, as well as a socially and financially dependent position, are all factors that may render people vulnerable to forced marriage. In some cases, a person may be sold as a spouse to pay the family's debts, or the husband may have the right to inherit the sister of his deceased wife as his new wife.

Both people involved may also have consented to marry, but as the marriage continues, the dynamics of the relationship change and one of the partners is subjected to conditions that violate their human dignity, and from which they can no longer escape.

Forced marriage in itself is a human rights violation, but in addition, a person in a forced marriage may also become a victim of human trafficking related to labour or sexual exploitation.

(...continued) Challenging identification

Identifying victims of forced marriage may be challenging. Authorities may become aware of the victim when intervening in an individual case of assault, for example. If the victim does not dare to, or is not given the opportunity to, speak about their situation calmly and without fear, the big picture can remain hidden.

Forced marriage, like other types of human trafficking, rarely involves a single act; instead, it is a series of acts and circumstances that may have continued for several years, or even decades. It is even possible that the victim does not understand her situation or be aware that other options exist.

Pressure placed on the victim may be very extensive: physical, psychological, spiritual, financial, or all of the above. The victim may also be afraid of losing her children to the husband if she tries to leave the situation.

3 Stories about forced marriage

THE THREE STORIES BELOW AND THE PERSONS DEPICTED IN THEM ARE **FICTITIOUS**. HOWEVER, THE STORIES REPRESENT FAIRLY TYPICAL STORIES OF PEOPLE IN FORCED MARRIAGES OR COMPARABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Further information about forced and child marriages:

MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland (<https://monikanaiset.fi/tag/pakkoavioliitto/>)

UNICEF (<https://www.unicef.fi/unicef/tyomme-paakohteet/suojelu/lapsiavioliitto/>)



KAREN

Karen arrived in Finland as an asylum seeker in 2015. She was 14 at the time. Her 12-year-old brother, 17-year-old sister and their mother travelled with her. Their father was too ill to travel and had to arrange for a smuggler to organise a safe journey for the family. However, the family was too poor to pay the sum of money the smuggler demanded, and therefore the father arranged for the smuggler to receive one of his daughters as payment for his work. The smuggler chose the youngest of the daughters. The marriage would take place in a cultural ceremony at the destination. Karen was proud – her sacrifice would save her mother and her siblings. The marriage would be her sacred duty. When the family arrived in Fin-

land, Karen married the 37-year-old smuggler. The marriage was not registered in the Finnish system as it was not in accordance with Finnish law. Meetings with the husband were arranged in secret from the reception centre personnel to whom the mother lied and said that the man was her own friend. However, the girl’s situation aroused concern at the reception centre and a child welfare report was filed about the issue. The child welfare services contacted the police and the assistance system for victims of human trafficking. Karen had already experienced sexual exploitation and violence in her marriage.



ANYA

each other. Anya’s friend, who could speak English, acted as an interpreter. Kari said that he was an entrepreneur and that

Kari met Anya on a holiday trip. Anya was at a bar in a tourist area, hoping to meet and marry a wealthy man. Anya’s family was very poor and from the countryside. Her family had placed their hopes on Anya saving the family by marrying a rich man. Kari bought Anya a drink and the couple got to know

he was looking for a wife. The couple stayed closely together during Kari’s holiday. They got married after three months and Anya applied for a residence permit in Finland.

When Anya came to Finland, Kari met her at the airport. Kari’s home was in the middle of the woods, a long way away from the airport. The first few days went well. Then Kari’s behaviour changed. He was no longer considerate, but instead shouted constantly at Anya. Then he started hitting her. Kari also wanted to have sex all the time. Anya had to submit to sex even when she didn’t want to. Sex was very painful for her

ANYA (continued)



at such times.

Kari also became very jealous and never let Anya go anywhere on her own. Anya had to stay at home and wait for Kari while he was at work – in any case, Anya wouldn't have known where to go. Anya asked Kari to buy her a mobile phone, but he refused. Kari did not give Anya any money, either, because in his opinion Anya didn't need it – after all, she couldn't even leave the woods to go shopping.

Kari did not tolerate any laziness and demanded that Anya work for her food and housing. Kari gave Anya old men's shoes and ice-fishing overalls for working outdoors. Anya had to wake up before Kari, make him breakfast and serve it to him. After that she had to provide sex. When Kari left for work, she had to clean the house and do the laundry. Then she had to go outdoors to shovel snow and cut endless cubic metres of firewood. Anya's working day only ended at midnight.

Without any language skills, Anya didn't know how to seek help for her situation in Finland, and she didn't know that she could have received help. Anya was sent back to her home country after Kari reported that her residence permit had expired and that she was living in Finland illegally.

MARWA

Marwa tried to escape from her home four times before she dared to leave her husband. Each time she came back before her husband returned from work and put her things from the suitcase back into the wardrobe.

Marwa married her husband in 1999, when she was only 14. At the time, Marwa consented to the marriage because her parents demanded it. She felt that getting married was her duty and it was not culturally appropriate to say no. However, the reality of her marriage became clear to Marwa very early on. Marwa became the property of her husband's family. She stayed at the family home and had to serve both her husband and his family. Marwa worked from early dawn until late at night. The mother-in-law would hit Marwa with a special whip made from twisted electric cables to punish her for laziness or carelessness. The doors of the house were kept locked and Marwa was not allowed to go outside without supervision. Escaping would have been futile, anyway: nobody wanted to help Marwa. In addition, she knew that the honour of her husband's family would require her to be killed if she betrayed the family. Then her children were born, her first ones born while Marwa was still a child herself. Marwa loved her children more than anything else in the world.

When Marwa's husband got into trouble in his home country due to his political activities, the family travelled to Europe. It was 2015. The trip was very expensive and the smugglers demanded astronomical sums of money to organise the trip for the whole family. When her husband brought strange men to the family dwelling and told Marwa to have sex with them to earn money for their journey, Marwa knew that she couldn't say no. The husband pimped her out several times during the

trip. When Marwa was tired and begged for mercy, he threatened to leave Marwa on her own on the journey without money or shelter. He told Marwa she would certainly be killed. He'd also threaten to take the children away so Marwa would never see them again. This absolutely terrified Marwa.

When the family came to Finland, they applied for asylum and were placed at a reception centre. There, the sounds of quarrelling from the family's room caused concern with the personnel, but when questioned, the family always denied that they had any problems. Later, the family found private accommodation outside the centre. When a social worker visited the family, the husband did the talking and Marwa just nodded in agreement.

At some point, the husband started planning the future of Marwa's daughters. He said that he would send them back to their home country for circumcision and marriage. It was then that Marwa made up her mind. She would either run away from the family and try to save her children, or her daughters would have to face the same fate as she had. Marwa's escape led her to the police station, where her situation slowly started to become clear. Marwa was initially placed in a shelter, which contacted the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking.

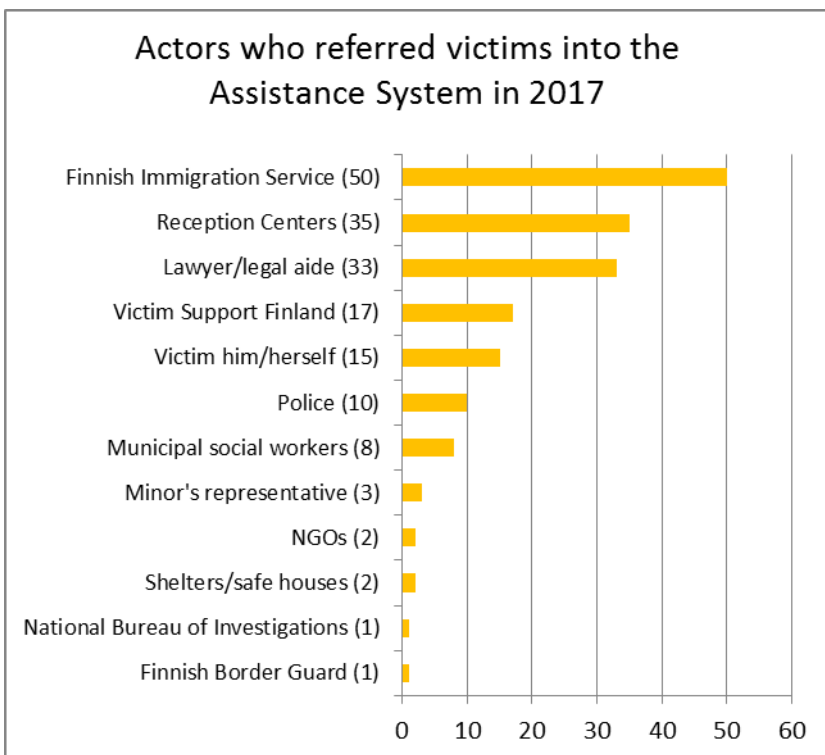


A YEAR IN THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

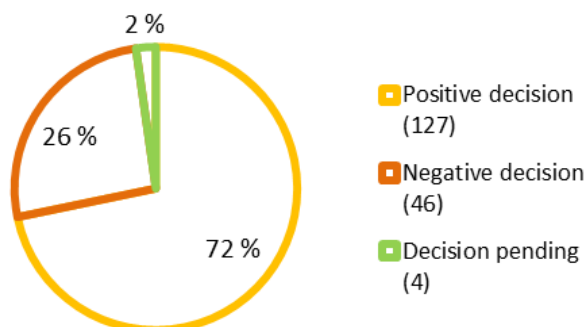
WHAT HAPPENED AND WHO GOT HELP?

DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM ACCEPTED 127 NEW CLIENTS REPRESENTING 31 DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES. MOST COMMONLY, THE PERSONS ACCEPTED AS CLIENTS HAD BECOME VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION; THE SECOND MOST COMMON CASE WAS HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND THE THIRD MOST COMMON CASE INVOLVED FORCED MARRIAGE.

STATISTICS RELATED TO THE CLIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN 2017 ARE PRESENTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.



Throughout 2017, the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking received 177 proposals to accept a potential victim of human trafficking as a client. 127 of them became clients of the assistance system. 46 people received a negative decision. The most common reason for a negative decision was that the assistance system did not consider the person to specifically be a victim of human trafficking. At the end of the year, there were 4 applications waiting to receive a decision.



How can a potential victim find the assistance system?

The assistance system does not engage in outreach work. Instead, people in need of help either seek the assistance system themselves or are referred by another party, usually an authority or an NGO worker.

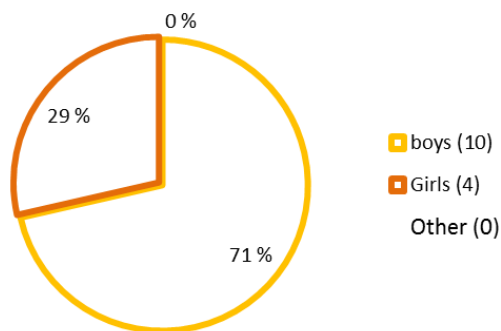
In 2017, only 15 people sought the assistance system themselves. In fact, most new client relationships start with an authority, organisation or parish, for instance, referring the victim to the assistance system.

The parties making proposals are usually those who have recognised signs or indicators of human trafficking in the victim's story or circumstances. Often the victim might not know that they are entitled to help, or how to seek that help. The victim may also be completely lacking in foreign language skills and/or be illiterate. This means that the parties that identify victims and refer them to the assistance system play an important role in helping victims.

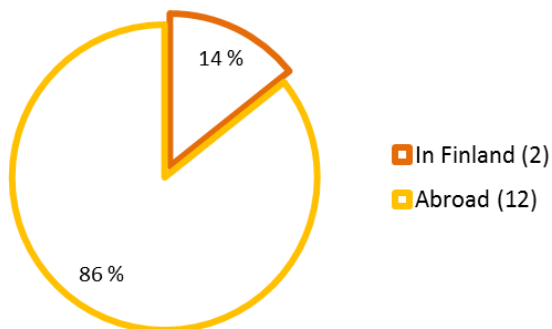
The referral requires the victim's consent. Without the victim's consent, information cannot be given to the assistance system. Even then, it is still possible to talk about the situation with the assistance system on a general level and consider what actions could be taken in the situation.

POTENTIAL UNDERAGE VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING 2017

New underage customers (14)
by gender



New underage customers: abused in
Finland / abroad



In 2017, 14 underage persons were considered potential victims of human trafficking and accepted as clients of the assistance system. Of these underage persons, two were considered to have become victims of human trafficking in Finland. The others had become victims either in their home country or on their way to Europe. In 2017, no underage Finnish citizens applied to become clients of the assistance system.

What did they experience?

Underage clients mainly came from known conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq, or from countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Children passing through Libya in particular had been exploited on their journey. Five children had been subjected to conditions indicative of forced labour and slavery in Libya.

In their home country, underage victims had been forced to become child soldiers, ended up in situations indicative of forced labour, been pimped out or forced into marriage.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION (CHILDREN + ADULTS)

Of the clients of the assistance system, 58 had become victims of human trafficking related to labour exploitation. In the case of 33 of them, the suspected human trafficking had occurred in Finland.

Most often the exploitation indicative of human trafficking had occurred in the restaurant business or in the construction or agricultural sectors.

All of those who had become victims of labour exploitation in Finland were adults. As a rule, they were not EU citizens but were either from countries near Finland to the East, from the Balkan states or from Southeast Asia.

People who had received a negative asylum decision and who were residing illegally in the country were also found to be vulnerable to labour exploitation. In their case, the employment relationship usually started by mutual consent, but the working conditions and terms of work changed considerably as the work progressed.

Several such persons applied to become clients of the assistance system during the year. Usually, they had

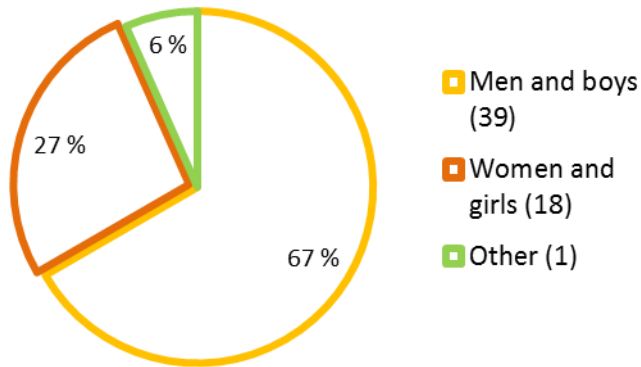
Asylum seekers residing illegally in the country are vulnerable to exploitation.

become victims of labour exploitation in the restaurant business in Finland. However, only two of them were accepted as clients of the assistance system, because their situation was generally not considered to constitute human trafficking.

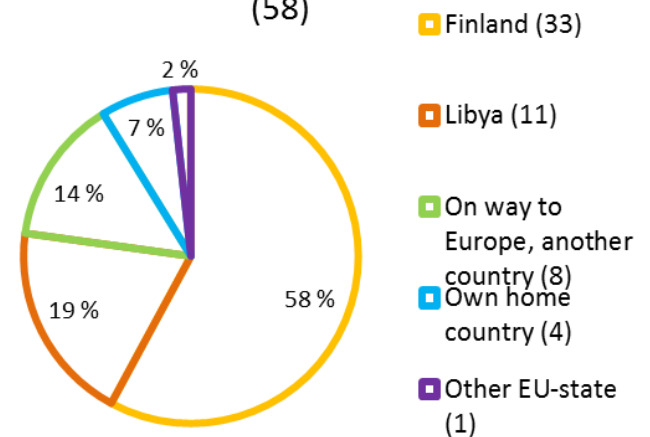
Abroad, people have become victims of human trafficking related to labour exploitation especially on their journey from their home country to Europe: 11 people had become victims in Libya and eight in European countries.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION (CHILDREN + ADULTS)

Victims of labour exploitation related trafficking (58) by gender



Victims of labour exploitation related trafficking by place of exploitation (58)



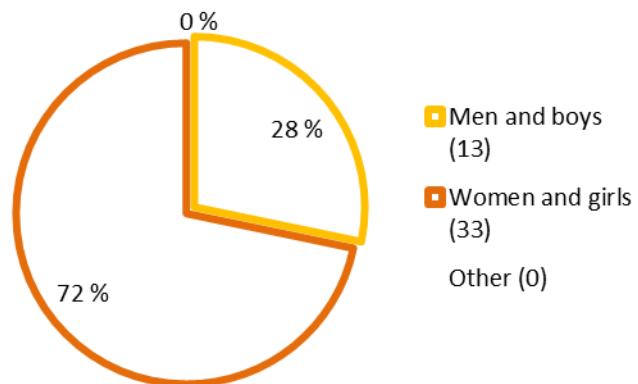
HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CHILDREN + ADULTS)

Human trafficking related to sexual exploitation may often refer to issues such as forced prostitution or sexual slavery, but the phenomenon takes many forms and there are several different types of exploitation. Factors that put people at risk of becoming victims include substance abuse, low social status, disability, debt and being underage.

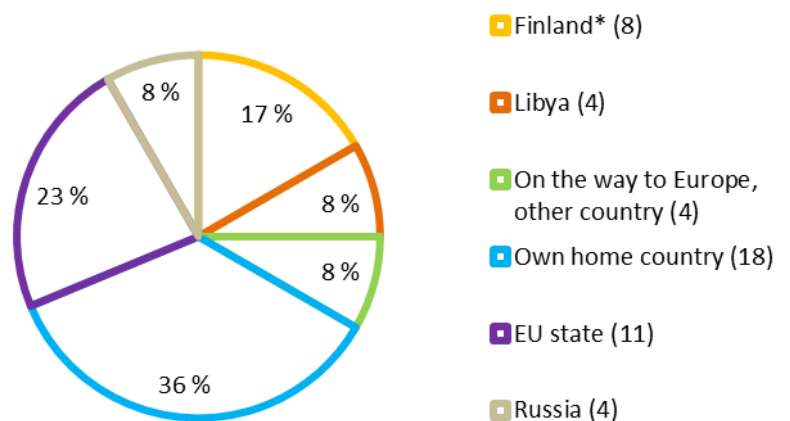
As before, very few persons who have become victims of sexual exploitation in Finland have been referred to the assistance system. In 2017, eight people were accepted into the assistance system, who were considered to have become victims of human trafficking related to sexual exploitation in Finland, or whose circumstances indicating human trafficking had started abroad but continued in Finland. These people did not include any citizens of Finland or the European Union.

In 2017, people who had become victims abroad (outside Finland) had mainly been exploited in their home country by their own countrymen. 11 victims had been exploited in Italy or Spain., where they had been subjected to forced prostitution.

Victims of sexual exploitation related trafficking by gender (46)



Victims of sexual exploitation related trafficking by place of exploitation (46)



SUMMARY – NEW CLIENTS

Most of the assistance system’s new clients became victims outside of Finland. However, the number who became victims within Finland is by no means insignificant: up to 37% of the new clients said that they were victims of exploitation indicative of human trafficking in Finland.

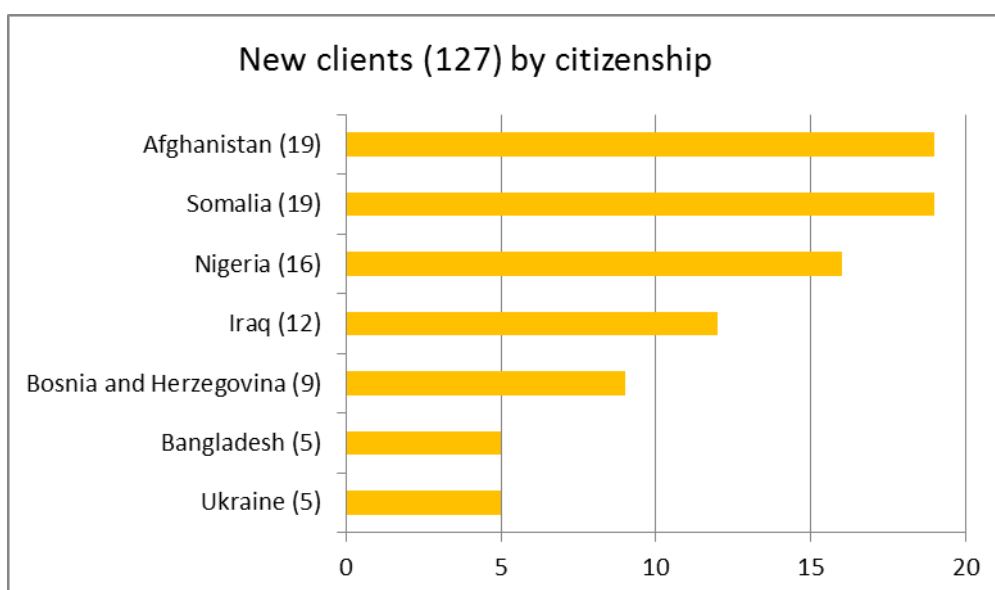
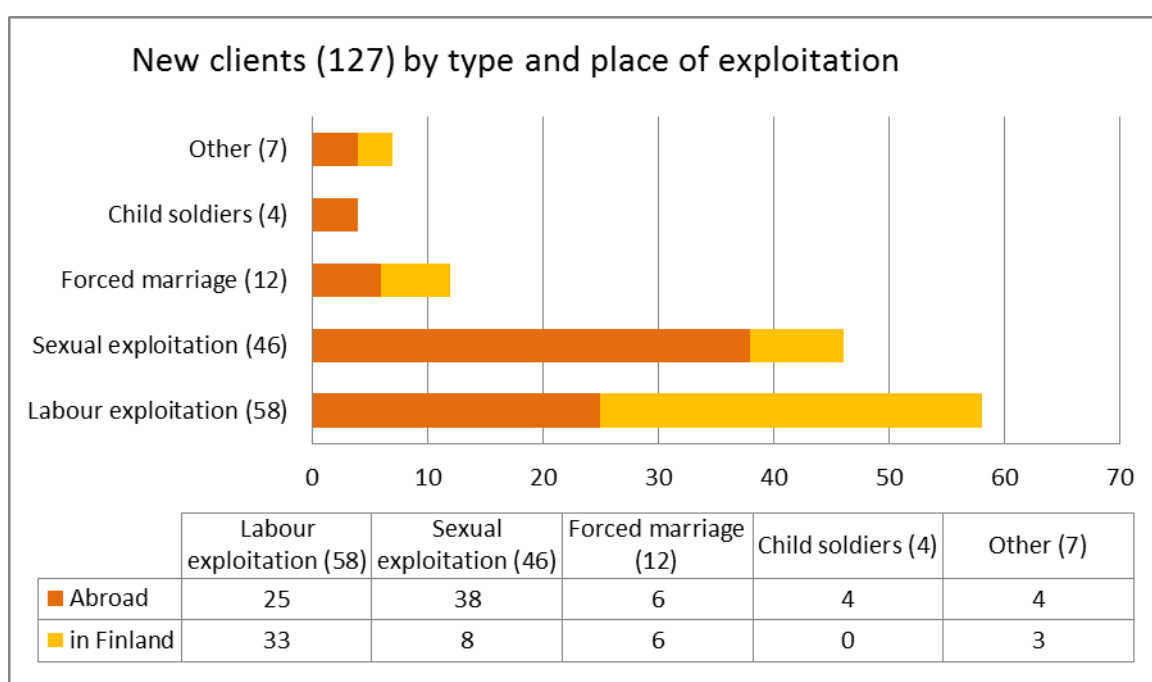
37% said that they became victims in Finland.

Approximately 70% of the new clients have an asylum seeker background. This is probably due to both the large-scale immigration that began in 2015 as well as the Finnish Immigration Service and the reception centres specifically distinguishing themselves by referring the

victims to the assistance system. In Finland, very few victims of human trafficking related to sexual exploitation are still identified or referred to the assistance system.

Human trafficking related to forced begging or forced criminality still remains largely unidentified in Finland.

People suffering from substance abuse are also rarely referred to the assistance system. However, they are at a very high risk of becoming victims of forced prostitution or forced criminality, for example.

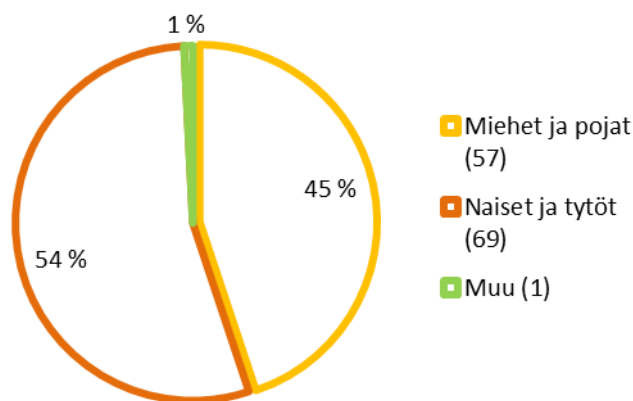


The new clients of the assistance system represented 31 different nationalities. In addition, the clients included some individuals with no nationality and people whose nationality was unclear.

The assistance system only publishes the number of clients per nationality for those nationality groups represented by more than five clients. Citizens of the following countries represent the smaller groups:

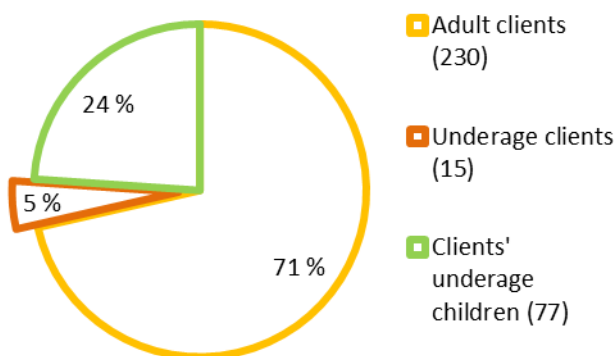
Angola, Bulgaria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Gambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Central African Republic, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Morocco, Nepal, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Russia and Vietnam.

Kaikki uudet asiakkaat: sukupuolijakauma (127)



TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2017

Persons receiving services (322) on 31.12.2017



All in all, there were 322 people within the scope of the assistance system's services at the end of 2017. 34 of them were accepted as clients while underage. At the end of the year, there were 15 underage clients. In addition to the potential victims of human trafficking, the assistance system also provides assistance to the victim's dependent children in Finland. 77 children of the clients were within the scope of the services.

The number of clients rose steadily throughout the year, and it continues to rise. While there were a total number of 232 clients in January 2017, by the end of the year this had increased by 90 people.

At the end of 2017, the assistance system was providing services to 322 people.

FORMAL IDENTIFICATION OF A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A person included in the assistance system for victims of human trafficking is only considered to be a *potential* victim of human trafficking. After this, the person can be formally identified as a victim of human trafficking. The formal identification can be carried out by the pre-trial investigation authority, the Finnish Immigration Service (FIS), or the assistance system. Out of these, the assistance system mainly assesses the identification of clients who became victims abroad.

In 2017, the assistance system was tasked with assessing the formal identification of 61 clients. Out of these, the assistance system formally identified 22 individuals. For seven of

them, identification was not possible. At the end of the year, 32 clients were still awaiting an assessment. Their formal identification will be assessed in 2018.

A formally identified victim can continue using the assistance system's services until they no longer need them. If it is not possible to identify the victim formally, the services of the assistance system will end. In addition to this, formal identifications carried out by the pre-trial investigation authority and the FIS may in certain cases entitle the victim to receive residence permit.

RECOVERY AND REFLECTION PERIODS

If a client of the assistance system does not want to or is otherwise unable to cooperate with the pre-trial investigation authority, the assistance system can give the client either a recovery period or a reflection period. A recovery period can be given to a person *legally* residing in Finland, i.e. also to Finnish citizens. Its duration is of 30–90 days. A reflection period can be given to a person *illegally* residing in Finland. The maximum duration of a reflection period is six months and during that time the victim's residence in Finland is considered legal. During reflection / recovery period the victim can recover and decide if they are ready to report the crime they have suffered to the police.

In 2017, the assistance system gave a recovery period to 30 clients. 11 of them received the maximum amount of time (90 days). Seven clients were granted a reflection period. The shortest reflection period lasted for two months, while the longest lasted for six months.

After the reflection / recovery period, the assistance system must report the potential trafficking crime to the police. The assistance system supports and safeguards the victim as they go through the criminal process.

Further information: www.ihmiskauppa.fi

PERSONNEL OF THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

Three social work professionals and three Senior Advisers work in the assistance system. The offices of the assistance system's social guides are located at the Joutseno Reception Center and at the Oulu Reception Center. The operating area of the social instructor working in Oulu includes Northern Finland and the West coast and the operating area of the social guide working in Joutseno includes Southern and Eastern Finland.

In addition, a social worker with an office in Helsinki started working for the assistance system on 1 November 2017. The social worker works with clients in the assistance system together with the social guides.

The office of the Senior Advisers working in administration is located at the Joutseno Reception Center, but the Senior

Advisers also travel around Finland on client-related matters, providing training to authorities and NGOs, and taking part in various networks and events. A new Senior Adviser joined the assistance system team in August 2017, when the person who previously held that position became Project Manager for the IHME project (below).

Each year, the assistance system offers a traineeship to a student studying at an institute of higher education. The trainees work in the system during the Summer in particular.

The director of the Joutseno Reception Centre and the nurse who takes care of the assistance system's clients issues and provides consultation assistance to the system also make an important contribution to the operation of the assistance system.

THE IHME PROJECT – TRAINING IN ISSUES RELATED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In September 2017, the assistance system started the IHME project, which will last until May 2019. Funding for the project has been granted by the Internal Security Fund (ISF) of the European Union. The purpose of the project is to improve the operational prerequisites for anti-human trafficking measures in Finland.

For example, the project trains pre-trial investigation authorities to identify human trafficking, investigate it, and refer the victims to assistance. The training is realised in cooperation with both the Police University College of Finland and the Border and Coast Guard Academy. The project builds independent training modules for the internal use of pre-trial investigation authorities that can be used both by those who already work as pre-trial investigation authorities as well as students.

The www.ihmiskauppa.fi website will be renewed during the project so that it better meets the needs of those seeking help and information. The new website will be completed at the end of May 2018.

In addition, the project will conduct a study of the status of child trafficking in Finland and in reference countries, as well as arrange two seminars on the subject.

The Project Manager is Veikko Mäkelä (veikko.makela@migri.fi). Further inquiries about the project can be sent directly to Veikko Mäkelä.



INTERNAL SECURITY FUND (ISF-P)
- POLICE COOPERATION, PREVENTING
AND COMBATTING CRIME, AND CRISIS
MANAGEMENT

Supported by the European Union

CONTACT DETAILS

**For further information,
please contact:**

Senior Adviser Katri Lyijynen

Tel. +358 2954 63 223

Senior Adviser Terhi Tafari

Tel. +358 2954 63 240

Director Jari Kähkönen

Tel. +358 2954 63 210

**INFO LINE 24/7:
+358 29 54 63 177**



NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM
FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ihmiskauppa.auttamisjarjestelma@migri.fi

**For further information about the
IHME project, please contact:**

Project Manager Veikko Mäkelä

tel. +358 2954 63 171