



Trafficking in Human Beings: Visible and Invisible



Human trafficking is a serious, frequently transnational, problem that is often hidden, but effective policies cannot be implemented in the dark. To address the problem of human trafficking, we have to turn on the light: Where does it occur? How large is the problem? What form does it take?

My key message is therefore:

To tackle human trafficking effectively, it must be made visible. Human trafficking that is hidden must be revealed - and once revealed, it must be better registered.

In that way, we can shed a little more light on the hidden face of human trafficking.

Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen

Domestic small-scale sexual exploitation

- Offenders come mainly from the Netherlands, Turkey, Morocco, Surinam or the former Netherlands Antilles, are the youngest, are almost always male.
- Victims are from the Netherlands
- 1 or 2 offenders and victims in each human trafficking situation
- Regularly involves a situation in which the offender feigns a loving relationship with the victim

The parents of a 25-year old Dutch woman go to the police. Their daughter is living with her 'boyfriend', a Dutch man, aged around 30, originally from Morocco, with criminal antecedents. The man has persuaded their daughter to work as a prostitute in order to pay off a debt he has incurred. He earns some undeclared income as a painter and acts as her pimp when she works for him in a licensed sex club.

3 types of human trafficking structures

Source: Chapter 5: Investigation of suspects in the Netherlands, BNRM police investigation study 2009

European sexual exploitation

- Offenders come from Central and Eastern Europe, are older than those involved in 'Domestic small-scale sexual exploitation', are also sometimes female
- Victims are from Central and Eastern Europe
- 2 or 3 offenders and 3 or 4 victims in each human trafficking situation
- Sometimes involves a situation in which the offender feigns a loving relationship with the victim

Three suspects born in Bulgaria exploit three victims in the licensed and unlicensed prostitution sector (window prostitution, brothels, sex clubs and escort agencies). They move the victims around in the Netherlands and between the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. The suspects are a man aged 28 (recruiter and pimp), a woman aged 29 (recruiter and pimp) and a man aged 23 (pimp). The victims are a girl from Bulgaria aged 17, a woman from Bulgaria aged 29 and a woman from Hungary aged 31. One of the victims is in a loving relationship feigned by one of the suspects. The victims' passports and the money they earn are confiscated by the suspects and they and their families are subjected to threats or actual violence, including sexual violence.

International large-scale exploitation outside the sex industry

- Offenders come from Asia and the Netherlands, are the oldest, are also frequently female
- Victims come from Asia
- A large number of offenders (around 4) and victims (ranging from 3 to 100) in each human trafficking situation
- Never involves a feigned loving relationship between offenders and victims

More than ten Indonesians, who were recruited in their home country on the basis of false promises and who are in the Netherlands illegally, are encountered living in a pest-ridden house that is also a fire hazard. In this house, under appalling conditions, they prepare Indonesian food products (such as prawn crackers). Four men from Indonesia aged between 26 and 61 report the crime. There are six suspects who have been engaged in people smuggling and money laundering in addition to human trafficking. They are a Dutch man aged 45 (receiving benefits); his partner, a Dutch woman aged 37 (who has her own business); his mistress, an Indonesian woman aged 29 (who works in the home care sector and who arranged the victims' journey to the Netherlands); his daughter, a Dutch woman aged 25 (who has an administrative job and who provided accommodation for the victims); his son-in-law, a Dutch man aged 38 from Surinam, (who is a civil servant and who also provided accommodation for the victims); and an Indonesian man aged 38, who is the principal suspect's foreman.

Victims

Increase in registered victims from 716 in 2007 to 1,222 in 2011

This does not necessarily mean that there was an actual increase in the number of victims. More likely the identification/registration of victims has improved

Profiles of victims

	Sexual exploitation	Exploitation outside the sex industry
Gender	Almost always female (93%)	Roughly half are female (49%)
Age	The vast majority are below the age of 31 (83%)	Roughly half are below the age of 31 (52%)
Region of origin	Frequently from Africa (35%) and the Netherlands (32%)	Frequently from the member states that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007 (56%) and Asia (17%)
Reporting of offences	42% reported the offence	31% reported the offence

The characteristics of victims of sexual and of other forms of exploitation differ in a number of important respects. Victims of sexual exploitation are more often female, are younger, and are more often from Africa and the Netherlands and less often from Central and Eastern Europe. Victims of sexual exploitation are also more willing to report the offence than victims of other forms of exploitation.

Underexposure of underage victims

In 2011, 16% (=195) of all reported victims were underage victims. There are indications that the proportion of underage victims is far larger, because some agencies do not report underage victims and because at present only the victim's age at the time of notification is registered rather than the age at the time he or she first became a victim. Of the underage victims that are currently reported, 59% have Dutch nationality. More than a quarter (27%) are nationals of an African country.

Non-Dutch victims in the B9 regulation

Because the B9 regulation involves cooperation with the police, it is an important instrument in investigations. For victims, it provides regular residence status and access to facilities (such as shelter).

398 B9 permits granted in 2011

A B9 residence permit is occasionally not granted because of a victim's criminal antecedents, for example a record for shoplifting. However, a B9 residence permit should be granted to every victim, regardless of criminal antecedents.

Source: Chapter 4: Victims and the B9 regulation in the Netherlands, IND 2007-2011

Source: Chapter 3: Registered victims in the Netherlands, CoMensha 2007-2011

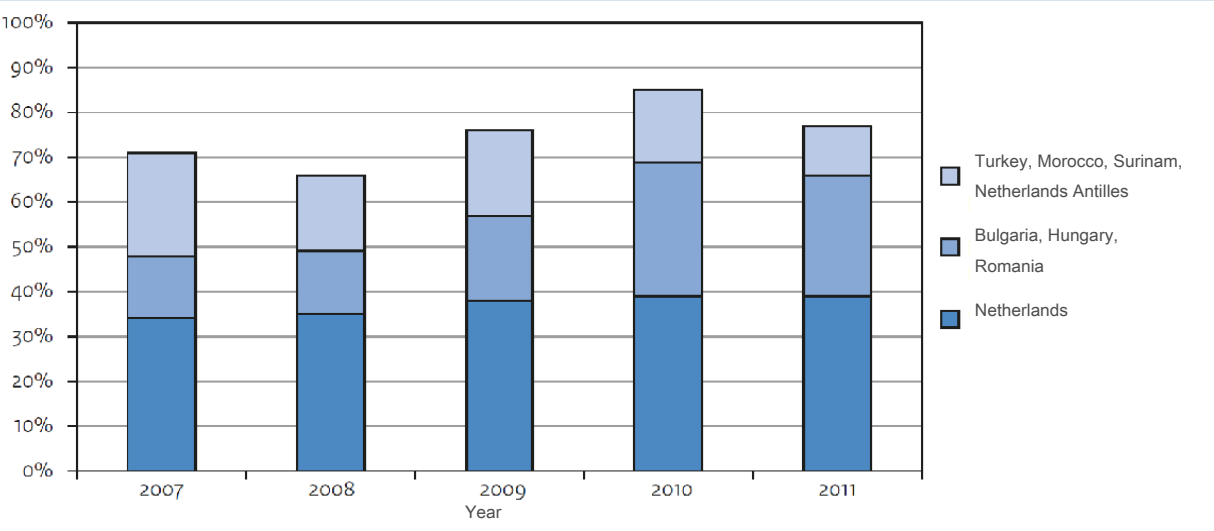
Offenders

Who are the suspects?

- Usually male (more than 80%)
- Average age approximately 30 (occasionally minors or over the age of 50)
- Top 8 countries of birth: the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Hungary, Turkey, Romania, Morocco, Surinam and the former Netherlands Antilles (jointly accounting for 75% of all suspects in 2007-2011).

On average, more than a third (37%) of the suspects are born in the Netherlands. The proportion born in the three Central and Eastern European countries almost doubled between 2007 and 2011, from 14% to 27%. The opposite applies for the group of countries comprising Turkey, Morocco, Surinam and the former Netherlands Antilles: the proportion of suspects born in these countries fell by half, from 23% to 11%, in that period. Far more suspects in this latter category live in the Netherlands than in their own country of birth. The suspects born in the Netherlands are younger (48% are not older than 25) than suspects in the other two categories (28-29% are not older than 25).

Top eight countries of birth of suspects



A noteworthy point is the small number of suspects born in Africa (apart from Morocco) that appear in the data on prosecutions. This is surprising because offenders and victims often come from the same region and Africa is the largest region of origin of registered victims of sexual exploitation.

Source: Chapter 6: Prosecution and trial of suspects in the Netherlands, PPS data 2007-2011

Different roles

Offenders in cases of sexual exploitation often perform a number of different roles in the human trafficking process. They can be **recruiters**, **transporters** (who bring victims across a border), **pimps**, **bodyguards** (who control victims), **operators of sex businesses** and **drivers** (who bring the victims to their place of work). The role of pimp is performed least often by females, and pimps have criminal antecedents more often than other offenders. Bodyguards are younger than other offenders, which could imply that the tasks associated with the role of bodyguard are delegated mainly to 'novice human traffickers'. In contrast, operators of sex businesses are the oldest group of offenders, which might imply that the role of operator of a sex business is reserved mainly for the more 'experienced human traffickers'.

Source: Chapter 5: Investigation of suspects in the Netherlands, BNRM police investigations study 2009

220 prosecutions a year

70% of suspects are charged with human trafficking; the cases against the remainder are often dismissed (because of a lack of evidence, for example). More than half (56%) of those who come before the courts are convicted of human trafficking. In most cases (91%), they are given an unconditional prison sentence, the length of which almost never exceeds four years (in only 7%).