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**HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESPONSES IN EUROPE WITH
EMPHASIS ON ROMANIA**

Abstract:	<p><i>Human trafficking, one of the worst violations of human rights, dignity, and integrity, usually takes place over a large territory, where traffickers take advantage of the naivety and vulnerability of victims. Traffickers also exploit a lack of synchronization between state institutions with the responsibility of preventing and combatting this phenomenon. Considering the pandemic and digitalization have directly contributed to the evolution of human trafficking, the paper aims to present the risk factors, threats to public order, and public safety caused by human trafficking.</i></p> <p><i>The fundamental nature of human trafficking is dehumanization for profit, which is the distinguishing factor from other criminal activities. The paper also presents the European and Romanian legal frameworks which organize the fight against, prevention, and prosecution of this transnational crime.</i></p>
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Introduction

Since the collapse of communism in the early 1990^s, Europe has faced an increase in human trafficking, in part due to the disparities between the West and East. Central and Easter European countries experienced economic crisis after the fall of communism, exacerbated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout

and policies requiring restructuring for the transition into Western markets¹. These policies required cutting government expenses by cutting social services, leading to harm to the people who needed those services the most. Prices became regulated by the market, to encourage competition, but this resulted in lowering the value of local currencies. Markets became open to foreign investments to encourage free-flow capitalism and growth, but this resulted in hot money which devastated local markets. Privatization of previously government-run institutions was done to increase efficiency and promote competition, but the billions in wealth only benefited western investors and corrupt businessmen and politicians. Interest rates skyrocketed to attract foreign money and to lower inflation, but resulted in default in loans, massive job cuts, and economic collapse².

In countries like Romania, these factors led to mass unemployment, and poverty, especially in rural areas, lowered living standards, widened the gap between the rich and poor, and created social instability. Minorities and women suffered the greatest during these times due to deep-rooted bias and socioeconomic disenfranchisement. Traffickers took advantage of the economic collapse, lack of opportunities, and desperate migrants, especially minorities, women, and children, by offering better opportunities in Western Europe³. Deception schemes such as false employment or study opportunities and fake marriages attract victims with the promise of a better life in Western Europe. Once engaged in the scheme, the victims are forced and coerced into trafficking. Romania's entrance into the European Union created optimal circumstances for the business of human trafficking. Desperate people were easy to procure, and open borders facilitated easy transport⁴. While many factors contribute to human trafficking in Romania, such as the socioeconomic conditions, corruption, culture, and treatment towards women, solutions, and mitigation of these challenges can include international task forces and targeted investigations, community education and vigilance programs, and efforts to eradicate poverty and corruption.

Human trafficking in Romania

Romania is a country of origin and transit for human trafficking and makes up the primary force for sex and labor trafficking victims in Europe⁵. The country's socioeconomic situation, optimal location, benefits of open travel to EU countries, and easily bribed public employees, have made Romania a dream come

¹ Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, Columbia Univ. Press, E-book, 2017, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/kara13960?turn_away=true, (9.08.2022)

² *Ibidem*, pp. 41-42

³ Siddharth Kara, *Op.cit.*, pp. 42-44

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 40-41

⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Romania (years 2018, 2020, 2021)*, <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/> [hereinafter *TIP Reports*], (10.08.2022)

true for the business of human trafficking¹. Emigration to Western Europe, after the fall of communism, after Romania's accession to the EU, and in the last 10 years, has increased due to a lack of local opportunities. Families have relied on money sent home from members working abroad for survival, so emigration intentions remain very high among young people. In 2017, it was estimated Romania received EUR 3.8 billion in remittances, representing significant resources for households. The main countries of emigration in the last decade are Italy, Germany, and Spain, followed by the UK, the US, Hungary, France, and Canada². It is worth noting that highly educated Romanians migrate mostly to Germany, the US, and Canada, followed by France and UK. The least educated Romanians migrate to Italy and Spain.

Traffickers exploit these emigration trends by offering false employment, study opportunities, and marriage proposals. Recruitment agencies are also complicit by charging high fees which cause large debts to be exploited. Often, traffickers are Romanians part of the family or ethnic crime groups. The top trafficking destinations for Romanian victims are Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and the UK³. The trends in the last five years suggest victims of sex trafficking account for about 70% of the total and involve mostly women and children. Female victims are also often used as recruiters of other girls from the same area⁴. Labor trafficking in agriculture, construction, hotels, manufacturing, domestic service, and forced begging involves men, women, and children and accounts for about 30% of the total. Children account for 50% of the total victims and they usually come from government-run homes and institutions. Girls are nearly always forced into sex trafficking. Begging and theft are commonly forced upon young Romani children and disabled persons⁵.

Enablers of trafficking

Aside from the exploitation of emigration needs and trends due to a lack of opportunities, trafficking has been enabled by a lack of public education on potential threats and risks in seeking opportunities abroad. Due to the pandemic, there is also an increase in internet and social media-based recruitment of children⁶. Confusion regarding prostitution and sex trafficking and the negative

¹ European Commission, *Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings: Romania*, https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-countries/romania_en, (10.11.2022)

² Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Executive Summary, Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants, Jul. 16, 2019*, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/27927b96-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/27927b96-en>, (10.08.2022)

³ European Commission, *Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings: Romania*, https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-countries/romania_en, (10.08.2022)

⁴ *Trafficking in Person Reports*, Trafficking in Persons Report - United States Department of State, (10.11.2022)

⁵ *Idem*

⁶ *Idem*

stereotypes associated with them lead not only lay persons but also criminal justice professionals to disregard victims¹. Preconceived notions that a person deserves the consequences of exploitation if they don't take the necessary precautions is also a popular narrative among professionals. Insufficient relevant education programs aimed at youth on how to deal with modern social problems prevent resilience. Sensationalism in the media distorts the facts and the anti-trafficking messages².

In the criminal justice system, a lack of assumed responsibility for victim assistance and protection leads to a lack of cooperation and ineffective interventions, leaving victims vulnerable to re-victimization. Limited knowledge of human trafficking and child trafficking by law enforcement and criminal investigators prevents full implementation of legal frameworks and a lack of data regarding human trafficking has a negative impact on prevention, combatting, and cooperative efforts³. Lack of financial resources leaves institutions with human trafficking activities incapable of conducting effective national and international projects. Romania, being a transition point for three main western routes (Eastern, Mediterranean, and Balkans routes), increases vulnerabilities for exploitation and decreases law enforcement's ability to identify victims⁴.

Corruption coupled with the unforeseen negative effects of rapid privatization in the 90s resulting in unemployment and poverty created a huge disparity between the rich and poor⁵. Regardless of the numerous reforms attempted, corruption, fraud, and exploitation for personal gain are still a problem in the government and the business of human trafficking takes advantage of corrupt officials willing to take bribes⁶.

Discrimination and Violence

Romania is one of the most religious nations in Europe, with over 85% of the population belonging to the Orthodox Church. The church thus assumes a highly influential position in all aspects of society and politics, even though the law calls for a separation of state and church. Deep-rooted religious values have long considered women inferior to men, aiding in the discrimination of women⁷. Liberal ideas towards sexuality, women's rights, gay rights, prostitution, and

¹ General Secretariat of the Government, National Strategy Against Trafficking in Persons for 2018-2022 (Romanian language), Annex No. 1, <https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ANEXA-1-22.pdf>, (12.09.2022)

² *Idem*

³ *Idem*

⁴ *Idem*

⁵ David Clark, *Fighting Corruption with Con Tricks: Romania's Assault on the Rule of Law, 2017*, Fighting Corruption with Con Tricks: Romania's Assault on the Rule of Law - Henry Jackson Society, (12.09.2022)

⁶ *Idem*

⁷ US Department of State, *Romania 2020 International Religious Freedom Report*, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/240282-ROMANIA-2020-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>, (12.09.2022)

trafficking are often met with hostility by the church. Progress in decriminalizing homosexuality, abortion rights, contraception, and prostitution has been slow¹. Religious freedom is guaranteed by law, although minority religions are considered a threat and often discriminated against. Anti-Semitism is deeply rooted in communist ideals that still exist in Romania. While the law prohibits denial of the Holocaust and prohibits racist expressions, discrimination, oppression, and attacks on Jewish people occur².

Violence against women is a serious problem, without adequate investigations and prosecutions. Investigations of rape may not be pursued independently from a victim's complaint even if physical evidence exists. It can be assumed that with coercion and intimidation, the victim would withdraw a complaint and the perpetrator will avoid prosecution. If parties reconcile following spousal abuse criminal liability is removed, which also perpetuates violence against women and desperation to escape³. Women who wanted to leave abusive relationships face blame for domestic violence by authorities. Prosecutors often drop less severe domestic violence cases, implying the damage is too small and insignificant. While the law requires equal rights among men and women there is a 4.5% pay gap, along with segregation by professions, with women holding lower-paying jobs⁴. Child abuse and neglect also constitute a serious problem among families, in state institutions, foster care, and youth shelters. Forced child marriage is common among Romani and authorities do not always intervene due to cultural sensitivities. The migration of parents to other countries often leaves children in the care of elder family members, which increases their vulnerability to abduction, exploitation, and trafficking⁵.

Other Shortcomings

The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP reports) between 2018 and 2021 provides clues to shortcomings in the prosecution of trafficking, protection of victims, and prevention efforts. Between those years, investigations and prosecutions were hindered by a lack of efficiency and coordination. A lack of financial investigators forced investigations to rely solely on other evidence and witness testimony and a lack of asset forfeitures fail to impede the profitability of

¹ Lucian Turcescu, Lavinia Stan, "Religion, Politics, and Sexuality in Romania, in "Europe-Asia Studies", Vol. 57, No. 2, Mar. 2005, pp. 291–310, doi:10.1080/09668130500051924

² US Department of State, *Romania 2017 Human Rights Report* 23-31, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/romania/> [hereinafter *Human Rights Report*], (12.09.2022)

³ *Human Rights Report*, Human Rights Report - United States Department of State, (12.09.2022)

⁴ *Human Rights Report*, Human Rights Report - United States Department of State, (12.09.2022)

⁵ *Idem*

trafficking. Of the offenses prosecuted, some are for offenses other than trafficking and along with inconsistent sentencing makes trafficking a low-risk crime¹.

Victim protection lacks in many critical areas, such as specialized training on victim physiological trauma, leading to the inability to identify potential victims before criminal investigations. The TIP reports observed that authorities fined persons involved in commercial sex without looking for trafficking indicators, even if they were children. Trends show that the government doesn't provide victim assistance for medical and psychological services due to lack of funds and they rely on NGOs, which they also do not fund. Worse, longstanding legislation prevents outside grants from reaching NGOs directly².

The TIP reports identified that complicit officials and employees at youth shelters did not prevent trafficking, but instead perpetuated victimization. During court proceedings, it is common for a victim's testimony to be in front of their trafficker, resulting in further traumatization. Until 2020, the courts were in the habit of publishing all names of trial witnesses, including children, on their public website, compromising the privacy and safety of witnesses. Observations concluded that victim intimidation during and after court proceedings is largely ignored by authorities³ and all these factors contribute to victims choosing not to testify. Victims are entitled to restitution but rarely receive the money, even with court orders, because traffickers refuse to pay. Also, victims often cannot afford to pay the court fees associated with initiating civil trials or to pay court officers to collect money from the traffickers⁴.

Prevention of trafficking also suffers because the enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation fails to hold recruitment agencies accountable for complicit behavior such as illegal recruitment fees. Reports identify a lack of police response to reports of labor trafficking and a lack of competency from labor inspectors in detecting trafficking situations. Labor inspectors also lack the authority to conduct unannounced inspections of certain worksites. Education campaigns have also been lacking, the hotline is largely unused and child labor laws are not effectively enforced, especially in rural areas⁵.

Combatting human trafficking

International and European Legal Frameworks

The main international legal framework for human trafficking, especially in women and children is the Palermo Protocol of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. It addresses the exploitation of vulnerable persons

¹ *TIP Reports, Trafficking in Persons Report - United States Department of State, (21.08.2022)*

² *Idem*

³ *Idem*

⁴ *Idem*

⁵ *Idem*

for commercial sex, forced labor, slavery, servitude, and organ removal¹. The definition applies an “action, means, and purpose” model to previously narrowly focused definitions of white slavery. The distinction between child and adult victims was made, State obligations were imposed, and collaboration and cooperation measures were established. The definition was based on coercion and exploitation, created criminalizing offenses, and created victim assistance mechanisms². Among the European countries to agree to both the UN Convention and Protocol, Romania ratified on 4 December 2002 without any reservations. Subsequently, it has implemented numerous articles in the penal code regarding human trafficking offenses. Customary law and *jus cogens* play an important role in international law because they strengthen treaty obligations and State’s responsibility regarding human rights and victims’ rights³.

The EU Anti-Trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU established minimum common rules for determining and punishing human trafficking offenses, replacing the 2002 Framework Decision. The trafficking definition contained the main elements of control, recruitment, transport, transfer, and harboring under threat or use of force or coercion for exploitation. The Directive also specifies sanctions and prosecutions and addresses victim support, consent, and child trafficking. Prevention strategies include awareness campaigns and education⁴. The EU encourages international cooperation and coordination among member states from origin and destination countries. Joint task forces work on investigations and prosecutions to successfully freeze assets and extradite and convict traffickers.

Romanian legislation

Romania implemented the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive and Palermo Protocol into Articles 209-223 of the Criminal Code, Law no. 286/2009⁵. Article 210 defines trafficking as the recruitment, transport, transfer, holding, or receiving of a person to exploit them through

- a) coercion, abduction, deception, or abuse of authority;
- b) taking advantage of the person’s inability to defend themselves or their vulnerability;

¹ General Assembly, *Resolution 55/25, annex II (Jan. 8, 2001)*, A/RES/55/25_United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, (10.08.2022)

² Anne, Gallagher, *The International Law of Human Trafficking* Cambridge Univ. Press 2012, pp. 12-46, pp. 69-89

³ *Idem*

⁴ *Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, 2011 OJ (L 101)*, Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (legislation.gov.uk), (2.09.2022)

⁵ Law No. 286/2009 Romanian Criminal Code

c) offering, giving, or receiving money or benefits in exchange for the consent of the person who has authority over the person trafficked.

Consent of the person trafficked is not relevant and doesn't justify trafficking. Aggravated offenses include trafficking committed by public officials in the exercise of their functions. Article 211 contains the special aggravated offense of trafficking in minors, with added severity if traffickers are family or caretakers or persons of authority. Article 213 describes pimping as causing or aiding prostitution or profiting from prostitution. Aggravated offenses are when prostitution was started or continued under duress and if acts are committed against minors. Using prostitution or the services of a trafficking victim is outlined in Art. 216 and 217. Sexual intercourse with minors, corruption and the recruitment of minors are offenses under Art 220, 221, and 222, although the age difference must exceed 3 years for the offender to incur criminal liability.

Another aspect of human trafficking is the exploitation of begging, outlined in Articles 214 and 215. It stresses persons with physical or mental disabilities and minors, respectively. Article 209 prescribes 3-10 years imprisonment for placing or holding a person in slavery and the slave trade. Article 212 vaguely addresses forced labor as performing work against a person's will or compulsory work. It doesn't specify conditions, consent, or coercion. Facilitating illegal immigration to Romania is punished under Article 264 and Article 439 recognizes slavery and human trafficking as crimes against humanity. Also in related aspects, rape is an offense under Article 218 and sexual assault under Article 219. Both articles contain provisions for aggravated circumstances involving minors, people under care, the production of pornographic material, and resulting in injury or death.

Human trafficking in Romania between 2019 - 2022

When the state of emergency was instituted in Romania in March 2020, a lockdown ensued. The pandemic brought into evidence the economic and social inequalities, which represent the principal causes of human trafficking. It created new risks and threats for victims of trafficking and amplified vulnerabilities for at-risk groups. The capacity has diminished for the authorities and state institutions to offer essential victim services and it has been necessary to reconfigure activities considering the new situation.

During the pandemic, women and children have been more exposed to human trafficking, because they are the most vulnerable category. Homeless children are exposed the most to the risk of trafficking. Due to the restrictions, their access to safe places, medical help, or social assistance was limited.

The internet facilitated sexual exploitation, as most traffickers switched to the online medium, causing an increase in clandestine prostitution and an exacerbation of the exploitation conditions¹. The restrictions on movement and the

¹ Association for the Development of Alternative Reintegration Practices and Education (ADPARE), *Empowering victims of human trafficking to meet the challenges posed by the*

interruption of some economic activities, among which restaurants and accommodations known for their associations with trafficking and exploitation of victims, have contributed to adaptations. Traffickers have begun to look for ways to maintain profits through other forms and modes of operations¹. Interpersonal relations have moved predominantly online, therefore the recruitment of victims through the internet has registered a major increase in Romania. Additionally, as mentioned above, the pandemic has accelerated human trafficking and thus created many victims, who could not be provided the necessary protection and counseling.

Criminal investigations were severely affected, as contact with persons was limited to only urgent cases. For example, although normal procedures require in-person participation of the defendant, during the state of emergency, hearings for deprivation of liberty were done by videoconference at detention centers or other spaces deemed low health risk, without the consent of the persons in question². Even though in March-May criminal investigations were drastically limited, in the period immediately following, legal actions, searches, detentions, arrests, and lawsuits were carried out in an efficient way.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing specialized assistance to victims of trafficking have faced significant challenges in their activities due to a lack of coordination and cooperation with state institutions and law enforcement agencies. These factors negatively impact efforts to combat and prevent human trafficking, prosecute offenders, and protect and assist victims. Although, in general, NGOs, assisting human trafficking victims and other vulnerable groups, are considered more flexible and adaptable to change than state institutions, even though they were similarly affected by the state of emergency restrictions. The activities of these support services have been greatly reduced and supplemental efforts have been necessary to ensure the necessary resources for their continued operation.

Research conducted by the Center for Urban and Regional Sociology (CURS) regarding institutions that should be involved in preventing trafficking, places the police and schools first, followed by, in descending order: local government, church, family, employment agencies, the media, and other institutions³. Knowledge of the quantitative aspects of human trafficking in

COVID-19 pandemic, p. 2, <https://www.adpare.eu/ro/despre-noi/proiecte/cercetare/>, (12.08.2022)

¹ UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), *Virtual Meetings: COVID-19, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Priorities: A Spotlight on Vulnerable Groups*, p. 22, <https://unicri.it/Publications/COVID-19-crimeprevention-vulnerable-populations>, (12.08.2022)

² *Presidential Decree on the establishment of the state of emergency. Update: Approval by Parliament, March 20, 2020*, <https://www.juridice.ro/676227/decret-privind-instituirea-starii-de-urgenta.html>, (12.08.2022)

³ Gh. Mateuț, *Human trafficking. Offender. Victim. Criminal offense*, Alternative Sociale, Iași, 2005, pp. 16-17

Romania is essential for understanding the full magnitude and effects of trafficking and for observing progress combatting trafficking made by the authorities.

Victim assistance is a responsibility held by both public authorities and civil society. Specialists and support organizations are found in both entities to ensure the identification of victims and proper referrals. The responsibility to uphold anti-trafficking policies is shared by all social service organizations. The Ministry of Education and Research ensures school enrollment for young human trafficking victims through the school districts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs aids, upon request, to Romanian victims of human trafficking abroad. They also have an important role in the repatriation of victims through diplomatic missions and consular offices. The Ministry of Justice manages the funds for victim restitution and ensures psychological services through the territorial probation offices. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection provides victims assistance in acquiring professional qualifications and reintegration into the workforce through the National Employment Agency and its territorial structures. The Ministry of Health ensures victims access to free medical care through the Public Health Directorate. The General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC), a subsidiary of local Councils, provide social assistance to victims.

The National Agency Against Human Trafficking is involved in combatting trafficking as the national rapporteur and by collecting, evaluating, and monitoring, at the national level, the activities carried out by the government and by NGOs. The Agency was established in 2006 to better coordinate the work of state institutions against human trafficking. Its main missions are drafting the National Strategy Against Human Trafficking, writing the Annual Report on the evolution of human trafficking, carrying out prevention campaigns and providing victim assistance, facilitating victim participation in criminal proceedings, and conducting studies and research¹.

Refugees and the pandemic: worries for the future

It's not an exaggeration to say that Romanian society, as we know it, has been shaken to its core in recent years. The pandemic has exacerbated some already significant problems in the country. School dropout in rural areas has increased, the unemployment rate has also increased, and a new economic crisis is knocking on the door. On top of it, the war in Ukraine has given rise to unimaginable tragedies, triggering a humanitarian crisis of colossal proportions. According to the latest official estimates, several million people, a majority being women and children, have become refugees², settling or under temporary

¹ National Agency Against Human Trafficking, <https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/despre-noi/>, (21.09.2022)

² UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR updates Ukraine refugee data, reflecting recent movements, June 9, 2022*, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2022/6/62a0c6d34/unhcr-updates-ukraine-refugee-data-reflecting-recent-movements.html?query=Ukrainian%20refugees%20data>; see also UN

protection in European countries, including Romania. With only the basic items in a suitcase, a language is not internationally known, and psychological trauma, they are perfect targets for human traffickers looking to take advantage of vulnerable and desperate people. After all, traffickers are experts in turning human tragedy into profits as seen in the recent cases of Syrian refugees.

All these factors contribute to a bleak picture of the future in which the number of human trafficking victims could increase considerably. More than ever, there is a need for early and preventative actions to anticipate and limit the negative impacts of these systemic shocks. Considering these changes in society over a short period of time, changes should be made to the legislature and the sanctioning structure for illicit acts and human trafficking aimed at refugees.

Analysis and conclusions

Romania has many factors that directly and indirectly facilitate human trafficking on such a great scale to mostly richer Western European countries. After the fall of communism, the rapid privatization of previously government-run institutions led to economic recession and poverty without government support which led to desperation and migration. At the same time, it created great opportunities for corruption in the high ranks of the government. Imbalances of power and lack of judicial independence from political influence have led the rule of law to be used as a political weapon. Failures in the criminal justice system regarding identification, investigation, prosecution, and meaningful sentencing of traffickers coupled with a lack of available support for victims have created a losing situation for combatting efforts. Societal discrimination and violence toward women, children, and minorities have created desperate and vulnerable populations. Due to systemic problems, migration is at an all-time high, which is exploited by traffickers and complicit actors. Desperate people take bigger risks in finding better opportunities and fall prey to several exploitation and coercive techniques.

Considering that globalization, digitalization, and the pandemic have contributed directly to the rise of human trafficking, much closer collaboration is needed between state institutions and NGOs, nationally and internationally. Because human trafficking is a process of dehumanizing and exploiting for profit, social assistance for victims is paramount in recovery, prevention of re-victimization, and protection during legal proceedings. In Romania, until recent years, there was a lack of emphasis on this important aspect, but new understandings are applied to the law to consider the victim's fear, their distrust of law enforcement, and the trauma that continues to constrain and influence them. With the alarming rate of child trafficking, it is imperative for law enforcement to

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation*,
https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.15979956.381398478.1658387102-1267390588.1658387102, (21.09.2022)

recognize vulnerabilities and trafficking situations and act appropriately to ensure the child's safety. The rapid growth of digital technology and the increased use of online platforms by traffickers to find and recruit victims, pose extra challenges to law enforcement and prosecutors.

Short-term tactics to address human trafficking include creating international task forces to work alongside Romanian investigators, prosecutors, and judges. An international staff may discourage corruption and bribery. Initiating community vigilance programs in vulnerable areas, as well as performing targeted raids on establishments of labor and sex trafficking can make the business a risky venture¹. Amending legislation to correct the inconsistent sentencing and creating specialty courts with trained judges and prosecutors to fast-track cases and minimize victim trauma. Penalties proportional to the profits of trafficking would severely hamper operations and enforcement of sanctions must also be a priority to provide the deserved restitution to victims.

Long-term tactics to address human trafficking include efforts to eradicate poverty, not only in Romania but worldwide to decrease the vulnerable populations. Promoting social and economic stability would require reevaluating the global economic scheme, which continually marginalizes already vulnerable people. Reevaluating political systems to weed out corruption is also a necessary step, which may be accomplished through tougher international oversight. Implementation of a stronger United Nations organism, like the EU model, is required to disseminate legislation that's agreed upon globally to facilitate the necessary cooperation to combat, prevent and prosecute transnational crime.

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