



ISSN : 2350-0743



RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEGAL PROTECTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING IN SAUDI ARABIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received 08th February, 2024

Received in revised form

20th March, 2024

Accepted 27th April, 2024

Published online 30th May, 2024

Keywords:

Victims, Sexual Abuse, Human Trafficking, Psychopathology, Protection.

ABSTRACT

Child sexual abuse and human trafficking stand as significant global phenomena, casting their impact across a wide spectrum of individuals, irrespective of their social, religious, ethnic, or educational backgrounds. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of legal protections available for human trafficking victims in both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, it seeks to explore the psychological, behavioral and other consequences experienced by victims, alongside examining techniques for identifying instances of child sexual abuse and proposing strategies for future enhancements. Existing research indicates that victims of child sexual abuse and human trafficking face an elevated risk of developing various forms of psychopathology, encompassing depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, and psychotic disorders. These findings emphasize the urgent necessity for bolstering legal frameworks and psychological support systems to alleviate the adverse outcomes for victims and prevent future occurrences. Employing a multidisciplinary approach, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding child sexual abuse and human trafficking, while advocating for proactive measures to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable individuals.

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Citation: Azra ADŽAJLIĆ-DEDOVIĆ, Elvira ČEKIĆ and Anwar ALANAZI. 2024. "Legal protection and psychological impact of child sexual abuse and trafficking in saudi arabia and bosnia and herzegovina", International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Research, 11, (04), xxxx-xxxx

INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a global issue present across all segments of society, with estimated prevalence rates ranging from 8% to 31% for girls and from 3% to 17% for boys (Vrolijk-Bosschaart et al., 2018). CSA often goes unnoticed due to the absence of specific symptoms and disclosures related to child sexual abuse. Human trafficking is also a significant and widespread violation of human rights on a global scale. According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, "severe forms of human trafficking" encompass the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of individuals for sex trafficking induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or involving individuals under 18 years of age; as well as labor or services coerced through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Coercion may involve threats of psychological or physical harm to children and/or their families (Maioriello, 2019). Any child under 18 engaged in commercial sex is considered a victim of trafficking. Human trafficking is a highly organized and clandestine crime, resulting in mental health disorders, life-threatening infections, negative social, health, and legal ramifications, and is a lucrative enterprise for criminal organizations. Major risk factors for victims include poverty, marginalization, social injustice, disasters, substance abuse, family breakdown, and homelessness (Sweileh, 2018). Developing countries, particularly those often referred to as the third world, are still striving to establish comprehensive victim protection measures, often grappling with legal frameworks that conflict with societal institutions' quality, hindering the implementation of effective policies and measures.

On the ground, bureaucratic, flawed, and often nonsensical procedures fail to uphold human dignity, particularly for those victimized by crimes. Initially, our inquiry will center on the legislative examination concerning victims of human trafficking within the legal frameworks of Saudi Arabia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Protection of child trafficking victims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the state demonstrates a genuine commitment to achieving criminal justice and providing redress for victims of crime. This is done through both punishing the perpetrator and working to protect the victims, ensuring their rights to compensation for psychological, social, and economic damages, restoring their status, and safeguarding their dignity. However, recognizing the necessity for improvement is essential. During the previous reporting period, the government established a committee, advised by an international organization and composed of the Ministry of Interior (MOI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Public Prosecutors Office (PPO), the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD), and the Saudi Human Rights Commission (HRC), to consider amendments to the 2009 Anti-Trafficking Law. In 2021, the committee completed a review of seven suggested amendments to the law.¹ There is an increased focus on refining the procedures applied in terms of quality of performance, speed of implementation, and ensuring a high level of victim satisfaction, especially for women and children. Consequently, the state is continually working to amend laws and develop police, public prosecution, and judiciary procedures to better protect the rights of victims and provide them with compensation. The 2009 Anti-Trafficking Law criminalized sex and labor trafficking and prescribed punishments of up to 15 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both; penalties increased under aggravating circumstances, including trafficking committed by an organized criminal group or against a woman, child, or person with disabilities².

Law to combat trafficking in persons crimes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

Article 1: The following terms - wherever they are mentioned in this Law - have the meanings indicated opposite each of them, unless the context requires otherwise:

- Trafficking in persons: The use, recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation.
- Transnational crime: A crime shall be deemed transnational in the following cases:

A - If it is committed in more than one country.

If it is committed in one country, yet, a significant part of the preparation, planning, direction, or supervision thereof is carried out in another country.

If it is committed in one country with the participation of an organized crime group engaged in criminal activities in more than one country.

If it is committed in one country but gravely affects another country.

The organized criminal group: Any group of two or more persons carrying out planned acts to traffic in persons in order to receive, whether directly or indirectly, material, financial, or other benefits.

Child: Any person not exceeding 18 years of age.

Article Two: It is prohibited to commit any act of trafficking in persons, including coercion, threat, fraud, deceit, or abduction of a person, abuse of position or power or any authority thereon, taking advantage of the person's vulnerability, giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of sexual assault, forced labor, services, mendicancy, slavery or slavery-like practices, servitude, removal of organs, or for conducting medical experiments thereon.

Article Three: Any person who commits an act of trafficking in persons shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding 15 years or a fine not exceeding 1,000,000 riyals, or by both penalties.

Article Four: The penalties stipulated in this system are increased in the following cases:

- If the crime is committed by an organized criminal group.
- If the crime is committed against women or people with special needs.
- If the crime is committed against a child, even if the perpetrator is not aware of the fact that the victim is a child.
- If the perpetrator uses or threatens to use a weapon.
- If the perpetrator is the spouse, ascendant, descendant, or guardian of the victim, or has authority over him.
- If the perpetrator is a law enforcement officer.
- If the crime is committed by more than one person.
- If the crime is transnational.
- If the victim is severely harmed or becomes permanently disabled as a result of the crime.

Through those laws these laws, which are adapted to the changing nature of criminal phenomena in order to develop laws and add or modify procedures, the protection of crime victims can be achieved at an acceptable level in accordance with international laws and conventions. This raises optimism about the procedures and the level of interest for the category of crime victims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For example, the system for combating trafficking in persons and what was stated in the royal decree:

- Royal Decree No. M / 40 dated 7/21/1430 AH.;
- King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- And upon perusal of the Shura Council Resolution No. (57/84) dated 11/26/1429 AH.;

¹ 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Saudi Arabia, OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

²2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Saudi Arabia, OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- And after reviewing Cabinet Resolution No. (244) dated 7/20/1430 AH.

We mapped out what comes next

- Approval of the system to combat crimes of trafficking in persons, as attached;
- Resolution No. 244 dated 7/20/1430 AH.

The Cabinet instruction

- After reviewing the transaction received from the Office of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers No. (47832 / B) dated 12/3/1429 AH, which includes a draft law on combating trafficking in persons crimes.
- And after reviewing the meeting minutes No. (185) and the date of 12/5/1428 AH, No. (52) and the date of 2/5/1429 AH, and No. (340) and the date of 24/7/1429 AH, and Memorandum No. (388) dated 8/30/1429 AH, Prepared in the expert body of the Council of Ministers.
- Decide the following:

First: Approval of the system to combat crimes of trafficking in persons, as attached. A royal decree draft has been prepared for this, the wording of which is attached to this.

Second: A committee to combat trafficking in persons shall be formed in the Human Rights Commission, consisting of representatives from: the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, the Ministry of Culture and Information, and the Human Rights Commission.

Third: This committee is entrusted with the following tasks:

- Monitor the situation of victims of trafficking in persons to ensure that they are not harmed again.
- Establishing a policy that encourages the active search for victims and training individuals on means of victim identification.
- Coordination with the competent authorities to return the victim to his original home in the country to which he belongs with his nationality, or to his place of residence in any other state if he so requested.
- Recommending that the victim remain in the kingdom and adjusting his statutory status to enable him to work if necessary. This recommendation - upon approval - is subject to review by the same procedures every year as a maximum.
- Preparing research, information, media campaigns, and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. 6- Coordination with state agencies regarding information and statistics related to trafficking in persons crimes.

Fourth: The President of the Human Rights Commission issues a decision arranging the work of this committee.

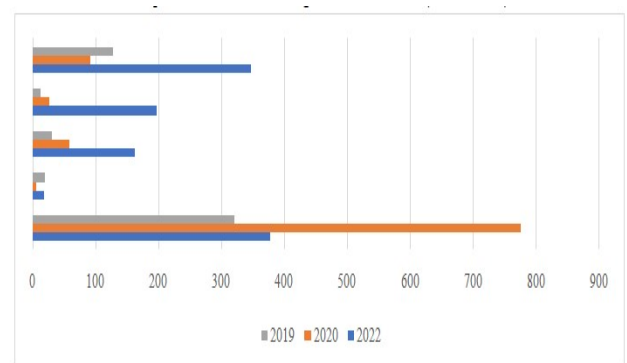
Conclusion: Based on the analyzed documents and provisions, it is evident that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined to combat human trafficking, particularly concerning children, within its borders. However, the

examined legal framework and specific laws do not explicitly outline special protection measures for child victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Instead, decisions regarding the treatment of child victims of trafficking are made on a case-by-case basis according to the provisions of existing laws. During the reporting period, the government investigated 346 potential trafficking cases involving 377 alleged traffickers. Among these, 18 cases were related to sex trafficking, 162 cases involved forced labor, and 197 cases involved forced begging and "slavery-like practices." This marks a decrease compared to 2020, which saw 775 cases, and 2019, which had 320 cases. Of the 90 individuals prosecuted, 58 were prosecuted for forced labor crimes, 26 for forced begging and "slavery-like practices," and six for sex trafficking. Courts convicted 64 traffickers under the 2009 Law, compared to 62 convictions in 2020 and 46 convictions in 2019. Of these convictions, 30 were for forced labor, 19 for sex trafficking, 13 for forced begging, and two for "slavery-like practices."³

Table 1. Human trafficking in Saudi Arabia (2019-2022)

Human Trafficking in Saudi Arabia	Number of human traffickers	Sexual exploitation	Forced labor	Forced begging	Processed
2022	377	18	162	197	346
2020	775	6	58	26	92
2019	320	19	30	13	127

During the reporting period, the government identified 1,175 potential victims of trafficking and referred 185 of them to government shelters for care. This marks a decrease compared to the identification and referral of 1,255 trafficking victims to government-run shelters in 2020. It's worth noting that the government did not report whether the remaining 990 potential victims identified in 2021 received any services. Additionally, NGOs and international organizations identified and referred 105 potential victims to care. Among the 1,175 potential victims identified by the government, 505 were for forced labor, 54 for sex trafficking, and 616 for forced begging and "slavery-like practices."⁴



Graph1. Human trafficking in Saudi Arabia (2019-2022)

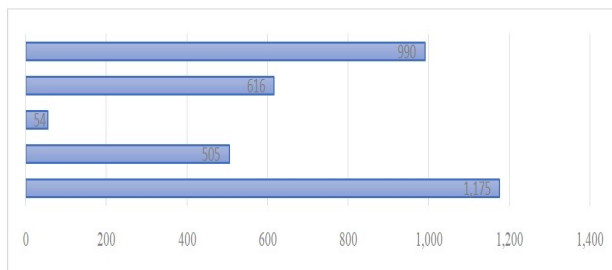
Conclusion: Over the period from 2019 to 2022, there has been a decrease in the number of trafficking victims identified in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

³ 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Saudi Arabia, OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

⁴ 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Saudi Arabia, OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Table 2. Victims of human trafficking in Saudi Arabia (2021-2022)

Victims of human trafficking in Saudi Arabia during 2022.	Victims of forced labor during 2022.	Victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation during 2022.	Victims of forced begging and slavery-like practices during 2022.	The number of identified victims of human trafficking in 2021.
1.175	505	54	616	990

**Graph 2. Victims of human trafficking in Saudi Arabia during (2022)**

However, it is concerning to note that the number of convictions handed down is also lower, with only 50% of accused human traffickers being sentenced for their crimes. While legislative changes related to the protection of trafficking victims in Saudi Arabia have led to improvements in victim protection, they have also resulted in lighter punishment for perpetrators. This outcome can be demotivating and unjust for victims of human trafficking. The data shows that in 2022, the largest number of victims identified in Saudi Arabia was 1,175, with 616 of them being victims of forced begging and slavery-like practices. This highlights the ongoing need for comprehensive measures to combat human trafficking and ensure the protection and support of its victims.

Protection of child trafficking victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government increased overall victim protection efforts by identifying more victims, combining domestic and foreign victim funds, disbursing funds to anti-trafficking NGOs, and drafting guidelines to standardize victim assistance, particularly for children.⁵

There are a numerous international legally binding documents related to the prevention and suppression of organized crime, corruption, money laundering, terrorism, and human trafficking:

Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (ETS No. 173, 2001): according to Article 22, states are obliged to ensure effective and appropriate protection measures for persons who report bribery and corruption, and especially witnesses to these crimes;

Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on International Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (ETS No. 182, 2001)

According to Articles 9 and 10 of this Protocol, the state must ensure the application of procedural protective measures for cross-border testimony via video or telephone connection;

According to Article 23, states are obliged to ensure, on the basis of international cooperation, non-procedural protection measures, but also cooperation between witness protection programs.

Recommendation No. Rec (85)11 on the position of the victim in criminal proceedings:

- Indicates the importance the importance of recognizing and engaging the victim to cooperate with the judiciary as a witness;
- Indicates the obligation that the victim should be interrogated in a manner that is appropriate and respects the victim's personal situation, rights, and dignity;
- Indicates the obligation that the victim witness should be protected from intimidation and the risk of revenge from the perpetrator of the crime;

Recommendation no. Rec (85) 4 on domestic violence

- Recommends measures for the prevention and reporting of acts of domestic violence by victims;
- Suggests the establishment of administrative departments or multidisciplinary bodies responsible for the care of domestic violence victims;
- Calls for appropriate professional training for individuals within the criminal justice system who work with victims of domestic violence;
- Advocates for priority protection of child victims of domestic violence;
- Mandates respectful treatment in handling cases of domestic violence;
- Calls for the protection of the victim and engagement of an expert to support the witness;
- States that testimony without an oath should be considered equally important as sworn testimony.

Recommendation no. Rec (87) 21 on victim assistance and prevention of victimization:

- Suggests that the state publicize the names and addresses of all public and private services available to assist victims, including emergency assistance for immediate needs, protection against retaliation for victim witnesses, establishment of permanent medical, psychological, social, and material assistance, counseling on prevention of secondary victimization and re-victimization, and assistance during criminal proceedings;
- Orders the prevention of disclosure of information about victims and witnesses to third parties;
- Suggests the coordination of victim assistance services with the criminal justice system and other public services.

⁵ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

Recommendation

- States are obligated to ensure free testimony without intimidation and with respect for the right of defense;
- The terms "witness," "intimidation," "anonymity," and "collaborator of the judiciary" should be clearly defined in legislation;
- Witness protection protection must be provided before, during, and after the conclusion of criminal proceedings
- Addressing the issue of sensitive witnesses;
- Recognizing the need to protect witnesses, the defense, and the prosecution;
- Developing procedural and non-procedural protection measures;
- Protecting individuals close to the witness;
- Proposing modalities of international cooperation.

Recommendation no. Rec (2001) on the basic principles of fighting organized crime:

- Requires states to provide effective cooperation and comprehensive protection to witnesses, both extra-procedural and procedural;
- Mandates the development of national witness protection programs

Recommendation no. Rec (2005) 9 on the protection of witnesses and associates of the judiciary:

Expands provisions on cooperation regarding terrorism and organized crime. the provisions on cooperation regarding terrorism and organized crime.

Resolutions of the Council on the protection of witnesses in the fight against organized crime:

- Calls for protection from direct and indirect threats, pressure, or intimidation before, during, and after the trial;
- Advocates for the protection of secondary victims (such as parents, children, and other close persons);
- Allows for the possibility of giving evidence remotely, through audiovisual means;
- Emphasizes the importance of improving international cooperation.
- Framework decision of the council on the status of victims in criminal proceedings
- Includes provisions for the protection of secondary victims.
- The most significant of all is Article 6 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), also known as "the right to a fair trial."

The Ministry of Security (MoS) Department for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings reported that in 2017, 83 Persons Identified as Victims of Trafficking (PVOTs/VOTs). Out of this figure, there were 36 adults and 47 minors, with 58

being female victims of trafficking (VOTs) and 25 being male VOTs.⁶

Conclusion: In 2017, Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed a significant number of human trafficking victims, with minors comprising the largest group at 47 individuals. Additionally, out of the total of 83 registered and protected victims, 58 were women and girls. This suggests that human trafficking for sexual exploitation was the predominant form of trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina during that year. Paragraph 3 (d) states that the court has the discretion to determine what evidence qualifies as "witness evidence" under the Convention, and it is not required for the witness to testify in court directly. Statements given to the police, recorded through a police report, can also be considered as witness evidence. However, all evidence must be presented in the presence of the accused during the main hearing, allowing the defense to cross-examine the witness publicly. Special protections are provided for witness victims, including the use of video-link, voice alteration, or reading of testimony to anonymize the witness while safeguarding their dignity and identity, especially for minors and individuals with disabilities or communication limitations.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the government's efforts to protect trafficking victims decreased in the reported period. Only 61 trafficking victims were identified, a decrease from 80 in 2020. These victims included six victims of sex trafficking, 54 victims of forced labor, and one victim whose exploitation was unspecified. Among them were six women, one man, 27 boys, and 27 girls, including five foreign nationals victims.⁷ The government took steps such as creating a new database for standardized data collection, establishing 18 regional monitoring teams (RMTs) to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts, and recruiting and training 25 Romani activists to join to join RMTs. ⁸However, proactive identification efforts were lacking, leading to victims being penalized for crimes they were forced to commit, particularly with misdemeanor charges for minor offenses.⁹ The government also operated drop-in centers for children and a mobile team in Sarajevo to assist vulnerable children, though the number of victims identified by the mobile team decreased compared to the previous year. NGO-run shelters provided assistance to child victims, appointing a guardian for each, and one shelter accommodated male trafficking victims but lacked specialized services. Overall, 56 victims received assistance from NGO-run shelters (41 in 2020).¹⁰ Conclusion: The analysis of the report on human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the year 2020 reveals that approximately 80 victims were identified and protected. Among these, 54 were victims of human trafficking for forced labor. This indicates a significant prevalence of forced labor trafficking within the country during that period. In parallel, EUROPOL has played a vital role in the development and harmonization of witness

⁶Enhancing Counter Trafficking in Crisis in the Western Balkans, ANALYTICAL REPORT, February 2018

⁷ 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁸⁸ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

⁹⁹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

¹⁰ 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina

protection measures across European Union member states. Two key initiatives by EUROPOL include:

Basic principles of police cooperation within the European Union in the field of witness protection: This framework outlines fundamental principles and guidelines for cooperation among law enforcement agencies within the EU concerning witness protection. By establishing common standards and practices, it aims to enhance the effectiveness of witness protection measures and ensure consistent application across member states

Common criteria for including witnesses in the protection program: These criteria provide a standardized framework for assessing the eligibility of witnesses for inclusion in witness protection programs. By establishing common criteria, EUROPOL facilitates the exchange of information and coordination among member states, thereby strengthening witness protection efforts and enhancing cooperation in combating organized crime and trafficking.

Overall, the collaboration between Bosnia and Herzegovina and EUROPOL, along with the implementation of standardized witness protection measures, contributes to more effective responses to human trafficking and organized crime at both national and international levels.

Important laws and by-laws related to the protection of witnesses under threat and vulnerable witnesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina include:

- Law on the Witness Protection Program of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of BiH, No. 29/04)
- Law on the State Agency for Investigations and Protection (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no. 27/04);
- Law on Police Officers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no. 27/04);
- Law on Judicial Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 3/03);
- Rules of Procedure of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no. 82/05).
- Rulebook of the Witness Support Office of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Procedural witness protection measures outlined in these laws and regulations include:

- Special way of questioning witnesses - established by the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC);
- Measures for the protection of spouses - governed by specific legal provisions (*lex specialis*);
- Participation of witnesses in the proceedings - determined by the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC)

Missing regulations related to the protection of witnesses and victim-witnesses of criminal offenses in Bosnia and Herzegovina include:

- Rulebook on the manner of police treatment of witnesses and especially victim-witnesses of criminal offences;

- Rulebook on the method of implementation of the witness protection program and the use of funds;
- Rulebook on the method of implementing witness protection within the prison system;
- Rulebook on keeping documentation on protected persons;
- Rulebook on how to store original identification documents of protected persons;
- Rulebook on the manner of using financial resources for the application of the Law on Witness Protection;
- Rulebook on the content of the questionnaire to be filled out by the person signing the Protection Agreement.

This regulations are essential for providing comprehensive and effective protection to witnesses and victim-witnesses, ensuring their safety, and facilitating their participation in criminal proceedings. They play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the witness protection program and upholding the rights and dignity of those under protection. Additionally, the laws on criminal procedures outline various actions and measures aimed at clarifying and detecting criminal acts, which are essential for successful prosecution of perpetrators and ensuring justice for victims.

We differentiate:

- Measures and actions of procedural coercion in order to obtain evidence.
- Measures to ensure the innocence of the accused and other collaborators in criminal proceedings.
- Measures and actions of finding a person or their arrest during the commission of a criminal act.
- Measures and actions for establishing facts in criminal proceedings.

Measures and actions aimed at establishing facts in criminal proceedings include:

- Interrogation of the defendant;
- Examination of witnesses;
- Examination of the injured party/victim;
- Expert examination;
- Prow with documents;
- Prow with technical recordings;
- Direct observation.

Injured persons/victims and witnesses must be treated in accordance with witness protection standards, as they often serve as crucial witnesses in criminal proceedings. The successful resolution of a criminal offense typically involves:

- The successful identification of the perpetrator of the crime through testimonies from injured/victims, witnesses, and secret investigators;
- The collection of sufficient physical evidence to support the case;
- Establishing that the perpetrator indeed committed the crime, typically through a combination of witness testimonies, physical evidence, and investigative findings.

We will now proceed to analyze the psychological and behavioral consequences of child sexual abuse and human trafficking.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as the act of inducing, using, or coercing a minor to participate in sexual conduct (or a simulation thereof) with the intent of creating any visual representation of such activity, or involving molestation, rape, or incest (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Di Lillo, 2001; Neumann *et al.*, 1996). A child is incapable of providing informed consent to such conduct due to their inability to fully comprehend it (Fortier *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, in addition to the trauma they endure, children who are victims of sexual abuse often develop negative interpersonal difficulties (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Di Lillo, 2001; Neumann *et al.*, 1996). Extensive literature exists on the negative psychological outcomes experienced by children who have been sexually abused (Kendall-Tackett, Williams & Finkelhor, 1993; Kendall-Tackett, Williams & Finkelhor, 2001).

The study by Adams, Mrug, and Knight (2018) examined the relationships between sexual abuse characteristics and mental health outcomes. The results indicated that sexual abuse onset in middle childhood or adolescence was associated with all forms of psychopathology. Overall, the findings suggested that abuse occurring after age 5 may have the most deleterious impact on mental health. These findings suggest an association between victimization and psychopathology. Furthermore, strong evidence suggests that child sexual abuse is closely related to the development of later mental health difficulties more than any other form of abuse (Fergusson, Boden & Horwood, 2008; Dworkin *et al.*, 2017). Child sexual abuse represents a risk factor for psychological trauma that adversely affects brain development and functionality, and is a strong indicator of enduring psychopathology (Hall and Hall, 2011; Heim *et al.*, 2013).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is considered one of the most common consequences of child sexual abuse. Traumatic responses to sexual abuse also include symptoms such as emotional detachment, re-experiencing the traumatic event, and avoidance of situations that could trigger negative memories (Bennett *et al.*, 2000; Williams, 1994; Trickett, Reiffman *et al.*, 1997). The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), explains the triggers for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation. The DSM-5 specifies four diagnostic groups: re-experiencing, avoidance, negative cognitions and mood, and arousal (Sinanan, 2015).

The emotional distress resulting from psychological trauma can disrupt normal childhood developmental processes (Maltz, 2002). Exposure to such profound threats often leads to functional impairments and detrimental mental and health repercussions, such as anxiety disorders and depression (Hovens *et al.*, 2015; Lev-Wiesel, Bechor *et al.*, 2018). Children who are victims of sexual abuse also exhibit notably higher rates of anxiety disorders, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, and separation anxiety disorder (Spataro *et al.*, 2004; Trask *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, research indicates that a history of child sexual abuse is associated with dysfunctional thinking patterns in adulthood, which is considered a risk factor for depression. Depression is

identified as the most prevalent long-term symptom among victims (Garber & Flynn, 2001; Hankin *et al.*, 2001; Stein *et al.*, 1996).

The elevated emotional distress resulting from abuse may also lead sexually abused children to engage in inappropriate behaviors, often stemming from denied or suppressed emotions (Nalavany, Ryan & Hinterlong, 2009). Externalizing behaviors, including sexual behavioral problems and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are commonly reported among children who are victims of sexual abuse (Weinstein, Staffebach & Biaggio, 2000). Additionally, studies have found that sexually abused children exhibit significantly higher levels of aggression and hyperactivity compared to children who have not experienced trauma (Dubowitz *et al.*, 1993; Swanston *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, researchers have observed a higher prevalence of conduct disorder among sexually abused children (Lynskey and Fergusson, 1997; Romano, Zoccolillo & Paquette, 2006).

Furthermore, children who are victims of sexual abuse often experience difficulties in processing emotions and exhibit specific symptoms such as confusion, disorientation, flashbacks, nightmares, negative self-concepts, suicidality, dissociation, mistrust of adults, self-injurious behaviors, extreme fear of being touched, and a tendency towards re-victimization (King, Tonge & Mullen, 2000). Strong evidence suggests that sexual abuse victimization is associated with an increased risk of multiple forms of psychopathology (Dworkin, 2017).

Human trafficking is a multifaceted issue with social, economic, and human rights implications that occur globally, involving the exploitation of individuals for monetary or other gains through fraud, force, or coercion (Dimas, 2022). This modern form of slavery not only constitutes a crime against humanity but also poses a significant threat to global health and security (Sweilch, 2018). The psychological effects of human trafficking are profound and include panic and anxiety disorders, depression, substance use disorders, feelings of alienation and isolation, guilt and shame, identity confusion, and suicidal ideation (Altun *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and psychotic disorders have been observed among trafficked individuals (Oram *et al.*, 2015, as cited in Altun *et al.*, 2017). The risk of mental health disorders among trafficked individuals is influenced by various factors, including pre-trafficking abuse, the duration of exploitation, the experience of violence and restrictions on movement during trafficking, unmet needs, and lower levels of social support post-trafficking (Ottisova *et al.*, 2016, as cited in Altun *et al.*, 2017). Given the prevalence of mental health problems among trafficked individuals, survivors often require support to address the psychological impact of their experiences (Altun *et al.*, 2017). To mitigate the negative impacts and symptoms of child sexual abuse and human trafficking, it is essential for victims to seek therapeutic assistance. Psychology plays a crucial role not only in managing and treating the psychological impact of sexual abuse on children but also in preventing such abuse from occurring (Lev-Wiesel *et al.*, 2018). Psychotherapy offers victims the opportunity to process trauma and develop a healthier sense of self (Talbot *et al.*, 2011). Therapeutic interventions focus on addressing trauma, providing emotional

support, building trust, and alleviating distress (Lev-Wiesel et al., 2018). The primary therapeutic objectives in treating child victims of sexual abuse include symptom relief, boosting self-esteem, destigmatization, and preventing future abuse through environmental changes and awareness-raising efforts (Hodges & Meyers, 2010).

INSTRUMENTS FOR BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse often occurs in private settings and may not leave physical evidence, making it challenging to detect (Malthotra & Biswas, 2006). However, several scientifically acceptable methods exist for assessing the validity of alleged child abuse. One indicator of potential sexual abuse in children is the display of sexualized behavior. The Child Sexual Behavior Inventory (CSBI-3), developed by Friedrich (1997), is specifically designed for children aged 2–12 years and consists of a 38-item questionnaire covering nine different domains: gender role behavior, self-stimulation, sexual interest, sexual anxiety, sexual intrusiveness, sexual knowledge, boundary problems, exhibitionism, and voyeuristic behavior (Friedrich, 1997; as cited in Vrolijk-Bosschaart et al., 2018). In the CSBI-3, the child's mother or primary female caregiver evaluates each item based on the frequency with which the child has exhibited the specific behavior in the preceding 6 months. The scoring scale ranges from 0 (never observed) to 3 (observed at least once per week), with a total score range of 0–114 (Vrolijk-Bosschaart et al., 2018). This inventory provides a systematic method for assessing sexualized behavior in children and can help identify potential indicators of sexual abuse.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed risk assessment protocol questionnaires to evaluate children who may be at risk for child sexual abuse (Faller et al., 1993). These questionnaires cover various important areas related to the abuse situation, including the type of sexual abuse, the age of the victim, the relationship between the suspect and the victim, the number of victims and perpetrators involved, and the management of the situation by the non-offending parent. Additionally, they assess the response of the suspect, any family problems such as violence, substance abuse, mental illness, or physical impairments, among other factors. When conducting interviews with children who may have been victims of sexual abuse, it is important to start with general questions and then progress to more focused inquiries. General questions like “Do you know why you came to see me today?” can be asked. However, it has been seen that children usually are not very responsive to general questions. Then one can ask focused questions about the person the child names in the general question like “How do you get along with this person? Or What happens when he/she babysits? Or what does he use to play with your hole?” The child can be given several choices in the question to describe an object that was used to play with his ‘hole’. Other multiple-choice questions can be “Did he/she say anything about telling or not telling? Or did you have your clothes off or on or some off and some on?” Another alternative could be asking Yes-No questions like “Did he/she tell you not to tell? Or did you have your clothes off?” Finally, one can ask leading questions like did he stick his “Weiner” or “Finder” or “Quot” in your hole? The leading questions like the one above should not be

asked when interviewing children as they may answer in affirmative due to suggestibility.” (Faller et al., 1993).

“Do you know why you came to see me today?” may not elicit detailed responses from children. Instead, interviewers can ask more focused questions about specific individuals mentioned by the child, such as their interactions with the person in question or any activities they engaged in together. Multiple-choice questions can also be used to gather information about specific incidents, such as whether certain actions were mentioned or if the child's clothing was on or off during the incident. However, it is essential to avoid asking leading questions that may suggest specific answers to the child. Leading questions can unintentionally influence the child's responses and may lead to inaccurate information. For example, asking if the perpetrator used specific terms or actions can inadvertently suggest those actions to the child and may result in misleading responses. Instead, interviewers should strive to ask open-ended questions and provide a supportive environment for children to share their experiences without feeling pressured or influenced.

The Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC) is a legal guardian-report measure consisting of 90 items assessing the trauma of children and the symptomatology related to the abuse. It comprises of two reporter validity scales and eight clinical scales (*Post-traumatic Stress-Intrusion, Post-traumatic Stress-Avoidance, Post-traumatic Stress-Arousal, Post-traumatic Stress-Total, Sexual Concerns, Dissociation, Anxiety, Depression, and Anger/Aggression*) along with an item which evaluates the contact of the guardian with the child per hours per week. It was found that TSCYC scale had good validity and reliability, considering the PTS subscales as most predictive, followed by the Sexual Concern scale (Briere et al., 2001). An extensive set of guidelines has been developed by Boat and Everson (1986) on interviewing children who claim to be victims of sexual abuse, using Anatomically Detailed (AD) dolls. This method begins with a structured interview which assess cognitive competencies, and then the AD dolls are used to aid children with undeveloped verbal competences to communicate what they had experienced. In its position paper, The American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives (Koocher et al., 1994) recognised the use of AD dolls ‘as a communication and memory aid’ for conducting interviews about alleged sexual abuse. Nevertheless, using Anatomically Detailed (AD) dolls has not been identified as a conclusive diagnostic test that is able to assess with certainty whether a child has been sexually abused. A step-wise interview (Yuillie et al., 1993) is commonly used in the view of the fact that triggering the memory of child sexual abuse can make both the physicians as well as the victim unpleasant. This type of interview includes the following steps: rapport building → asking open – ended questions → telling the truth → introducing the topic of concern → free narration after topic has been introduced → general questions → lastly specific questions. Moreover, related psychological aids such as projective tests (Rorschach, Child Apperception Test) and drawings (Burgess & Hartman, 1993), and Behavioral checklists (Freidrich et al., 1991, Chantler et al., 1993) have also been considered to be useful (Leifer et al., 1991) for assessment of child sexual abuse. Apart from behavioral assessment of sexually abused children, it is necessary to

conduct psychological evaluations in child protection issues. The specific purpose of the evaluation is determined by the nature of the child protection matter at hand. The primary aim is to ascertain whether the child's health and welfare may have been harmed. When it has been established that the child is at risk for harm, the evaluation focuses on rehabilitation designed to protect the child and support the family (Malthotra & Biswas, 2006:24). Due to the nature of child protection matters, the complexity of the legal issues involved, and the potential serious consequences of the evaluation, all professionals involved should be keenly aware of the importance of issues such as informed consent. Efforts toward obtaining informed consent should include clearly explaining to the participants the purpose and nature of the evaluation, to whom the results of the psychological evaluation would be provided, and the role of professionals in relation to the referring party. It should also be made clear whether the child understands the nature of the tests and the evaluation process. Most importantly, the primary interest must be the child's well-being (Ibid).

CONCLUSION

Based on the information regarding the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of female victims of human trafficking, smuggling, and incitement to prostitution has been steadily increasing from 2015 to the present day. In 2015, there was a 31% increase in sexual violence against children (20 cases) and a 25% increase in the exploitation of children and minors for pornography (6 cases). In 2016, the number of crimes involving the exploitation of children and minors for pornography rose to 14 cases, representing a 6% increase from 2015. However, in 2019, there was a significant decrease of 34.0% in such crimes compared to 2018, which saw a decrease of 35%. According to a Situational Analysis of the position of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2020, funded and published by UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina, child marriages most significantly affect Roma children, especially girls. Approximately 15% of Roma women between the ages of 15 and 49 enter their first marriage before the age of 15, and nearly half of Roma women between the ages of 20 and 49 enter their first marriage before the age of 18. These statistics highlight the urgent need for education aimed at protecting children, particularly Roma children, from sexual violence as a proactive measure to prevent victimization. Such education and support systems are lacking in Saudi Arabia, as there is no survey on victimization to inform us of the number of victims and their characteristics. Additionally, psychological help and support measures, as previously outlined, are not intended or applied for child victims of human trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the lack of effective compensation from the state. Consequently, victims often do not have access to psychological assistance and support services due to financial constraints. It is imperative for legislative changes to prioritize the rehabilitation and resocialization of victims of human trafficking, especially child victims, through the application of individual and group psychological therapies to aid in their recovery. The state should not only provide compensation for these victims but also ensure that psychological assistance and support measures become integral components of the Victim Witness Protection Program, extending beyond criminal

proceedings until the full recovery of children. Similar measures are recommended for teams working with child victims of human trafficking in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, it is necessary to establish Centers for the Protection of Women and Children Victims of Sexual Violence, financed by the state, to provide comprehensive assistance, support, and protection to victims in one centralized location. These centers would also facilitate the expedited processing of human traffickers, as improved victim protection would likely lead to increased reporting of traffickers.

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