

# Stop Trafficking!

# Awareness Advocacy Action

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## Jean Schafer, SDS

### Founder and Publisher of Stop Trafficking Newsletter Retires

*Jean Schafer, SDS, founder of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter, has retired from the newsletter she has published for the past 17 years.*

Jean is a member of the Sisters of the Divine Savior (SDS Salvatorian Sisters) and currently resides in California. In 1989 she was elected Superior General of the Congregation's 1200 members serving in 27 countries. She served in that capacity for 12 years.

As a member of the Rome-based International Union of Superiors General (UISG) Jean became aware of the global scourge of human trafficking. Her Order, along with many other women's religious orders, undertook a ministry of educating people about human trafficking and working as advocates for its victims. Returning from the central Mother House in Rome in 2002, Jean took sabbatical time and then relocated to California to begin anti human trafficking efforts.

She started the 'Stop Trafficking' e-newsletter, now in its 17th year, and co-directed SDS Hope House, a home for women coming out of situations of enslavement. In 2016 management of the home was transferred to another faith-based group. Jean then took up ministry to refugees, tutoring English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) to women in their homes.

Currently she serves as secretary/treasurer of the Salvatorian Advocacy for Victims of Exploitation (S.A.V.E.) Inc. Board, which is undertaking advocacy for Native American women in the northern California area. Jean was a member of a women's group that established a Blue Ribbon Commission charged with conducting research to validate the need for a County Commission for Women and Girls in Sacramento, CA. Jean serves on the Board of the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) and chairs its Survivor Services Working Group.

In addition to these ministries Jean has been an active member of various Salvatorian-related committees nationally and internationally. She has volunteered at various non-profit agencies that serve refugees, homeless, and trafficked survivors.

Jean earned a Ph.D. in Human Physiology and taught at Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI for a number of years, until she was elected to the Provincial Leadership Team of her Order. In that capacity she was responsible for vocation promotion and mission advancement.

When Jean initiated the Stop Trafficking Newsletter, few people knew about the scourge of human trafficking. Her work has served to significantly increase public awareness of the trafficking of human beings in the United States and globally. Moreover, through the newsletter she has provided a forum for advocacy and action to eradicate modern-day slavery.



*"As I reflect back over the years of this ministry of preparing issues of 'Stop Trafficking' it reminds me of the parable of the mustard seed — a small first step that grew and grew into a large network of persons and organizations able to use the information in the newsletter to spread the awareness of and convince others that they too can be involved in anti trafficking efforts wherever they are. I am so grateful for that growth!"*

## Focus of this issue:

The intersection of migration and human trafficking.



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## Massive Disparity in Need for Resettlement

In September 2019, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) reported that on September 17, 2019 the number of international migrants reached 272 million which outpaces the growth rate of the world's population.

The large number of displaced people increases competition over already limited resources and thus increases desperation making displaced populations more willing to take risks and more prone to falling into the hands of traffickers.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees resettles a small percentage (5%) of refugees. Massive disparity between those with a need for resettlement and those who actually receive resettlement creates tremendous opportunities for traffickers. Moreover, the more heavily secured the border the greater need migrants feel to secure the assistance of smugglers which often leads to trafficking.

## Trafficking Risks for Refugees

Human trafficking is always an exploitation of vulnerability; migrants are among the most vulnerable populations. This vulnerability can arise in an instant, as a result of conflict escalation or after a natural disaster. The journey of a refugee is beset with vulnerabilities at every stage. People forced to migrate usually need money, food and shelter. The trauma they experienced may dispose them to be less self-protective and enable them to be easily coerced as victims of trafficking.

Perhaps more importantly people forced to migrate lack community, family and social structures and networks; if they are trafficked nobody would miss them and nobody would look for them. Traffickers also exploit the drive of people who want a better life for themselves. The International Organization for Migration identifies hopelessness as a determining factor in victim recruitment.

## Victims Protection Act Passed

*In May 2019, Yael Schacher released a report from Refugees International on protections denied to women and children trafficked across the southern border to the United States. A new and very restrictive interpretation of requirements under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act has led to a dramatic decrease in visas for victims of trafficking. Recent policies have effectively pushed victims into the hands of traffickers.*

In 2000, Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which, in part, created T visas for victims of human trafficking. Applicants for these visas must comply with reasonable requests to assist law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting their traffickers. Applicants must also prove they are in the United States on account of trafficking, and that they would face "extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm" if removed from the United States.

T visas allow victims of trafficking who are in the United States without authorization to legalize their status and petition for the legal entry of certain family members. They also provide access to work permits and federally funded health and other benefits. Congress capped the number of T visas at 5,000 per year, but never more than one-third of that total have been provided in any given year.

From 2005 to 2016, each time Congress reauthorized the TVPA, the pool of applicants eligible for T visas was widened. New groups

of applicants included farm laborers recruited abroad and subsequently underpaid and housed in unacceptable conditions, and young women lured to the United States by relatives or marriage partners who abused them and subjected them to domestic servitude. New and expanded provisions also provided access to T visas for children kidnapped and enslaved by drug traffickers working along the U.S. southern border.

Starting in January 2017 the T visa denial rate began to rise. The number of victims denied visas for the period October–December 2016 was 19 percent, whereas that figure had grown to 46 percent by the first quarter of fiscal year 2019.

Moreover, data indicate that, in addition to an increase in overall denials, applicants from Mexico, and the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have been disproportionately impacted. In 2017, the T visa denial rate for applicants from these countries was 39 percent, whereas for applicants from elsewhere, it was 17 percent.

Rejection of trafficking visa applications since 2017 is based on new interpretations of the standards required to meet the definition of a victim of trafficking. For example, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the branch of DHS that handles applications for T visas, has become very dismissive of claims of cases in which applicants have paid smugglers, regardless of how applicants were later victimized. Recent decisions also do not recognize the need for victims to remain in the United

States due to the trauma they experienced, as the law's regulations permit.

In determining whether an applicant has been trafficked, recent USCIS decisions have also relied on incomplete Customs and Border Protection (CBP) interviews rather than assessments by medical professionals, the Department of Health and Human Services, or even the State Department. Many of these actions are in conflict with accepted best practices for protecting victims of trafficking, including those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Moreover, since 2017, policies have been implemented that discourage victims from reporting their trafficking and accessing the public benefits they (and their children) need. These policies include the deputizing of local police for immigration enforcement and ICE arrest of undocumented victims at courthouses and shelters. Trafficking victims with T visa applications or pending appeals have been deported.

Refugees International is deeply concerned that the administration's metering and "Remain in Mexico" policies at the border have pushed Central American asylum seekers into the hands of traffickers in Northern Mexico. Attempts to shut the border completely and eliminate asylum altogether have led more Central American families to leave home before harsher policies are put in place and cross the border between ports of entry, further increasing business for traffickers.

Click [here](#) to view the source of this article.



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## The Global Compact on Migration

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018. Objective 10 of this Compact focuses on the prevention and eradication of trafficking in persons forced to migrate by strengthening international cooperation to investigate, prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons, discouraging demand that fosters exploitation leading to trafficking, and ending impunity of trafficking networks.

The Compact further commits to protect migrants who have become victims of trafficking, particularly women and children. It promises to monitor irregular migration routes which may be exploited by human trafficking networks to recruit and victimize smuggled or irregular migrants and to share relevant information and intelligence through transnational and regional mechanisms, including on the modus operandi, economic models and conditions driving trafficking networks.

The Compact incorporates awareness raising among the migrant population on both the risks and the reporting of trafficking activities and education and training for all sectors to identify signs of trafficking.

Other objectives of the Global Compact (7, 9, 12 and 14) also provide for specific trafficking-related actions aimed at ensuring protection, referral, counselling, and legal assistance. Objective 5 aims at enhancing availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.



2016 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons

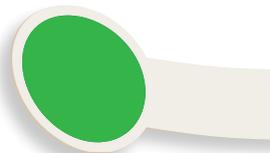
## Statement by the United Nations Network on Migration

On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons last July 30, the United Nations Network on Migration issued a statement to the international community to accelerate its efforts to stop human trafficking and to protect those who fall victim to traffickers. The report focused on migrants who are particularly vulnerable.

Addressing trafficking in persons in the context of international migration requires a holistic approach based on the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status. This includes avoiding the criminalization of migrants who are victims of trafficking; facilitating access to justice and safe reporting without fear of detention, deportation or penalty; responding to the particular needs of child victims such as through the provision of alternative care; and providing migrants that have become victims of trafficking with measures for their physical, psychological and social recovery, redress and compensation, as well as measures that permit them to remain in the country of destination, temporarily or permanently, in accordance with international law.

The international framework to fight human trafficking exists and nearly every country now has legislation in place criminalizing human trafficking; the international community must accelerate and adequately resource efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Click [here](#) to view the source of this article.



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## Child Trafficking Victims Protection and Welfare Act

Contact your legislators and urge them to support and co-sponsor the Child Trafficking Victims Protection and Welfare Act of 2019—S. 661/ H.R. 3729. The legislation would expand protections to vulnerable migrant children while they are in the custody of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), requiring licensed child welfare professionals to be available at certain ports of entry or Border Patrol stations. Such experts will be able to identify victims of trafficking and ensure they receive adequate care while in CBP custody. The bills would also create provisions to prevent family separation and to assist the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services in reuniting separated families. The legislation also calls to establish a program that ensures the safe repatriation and reintegration of children who return to their country of nationality or last habitual residence, to help ensure these children are not placed back into the hands of traffickers.

## Central American Women and Children Protection Act

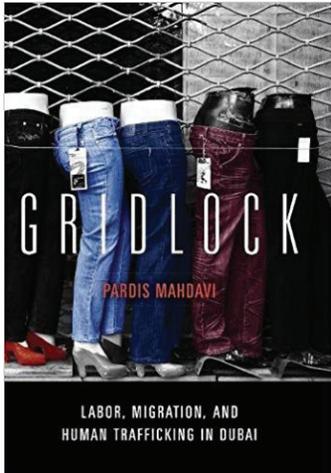
Contact your Senators and urge them to support the Central American Women and Children Protection Act S. 1781 which addresses the root causes of migration. This bill would authorize the U.S. Secretary of State to enter into bilateral “Women and Children Protection Compacts” with the three Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) to establish plans that would strengthen their criminal justice systems and civil protection courts to protect women and children, ensure schools are safe and promote prevention and early detection of gender-based and domestic abuse within communities; and provide security within the region to families and unaccompanied children fleeing domestic, gang, or drug violence.

A companion bill, H.R. 2836, was passed by the House of Representatives as an amendment to H.R. 2615 United States-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement.



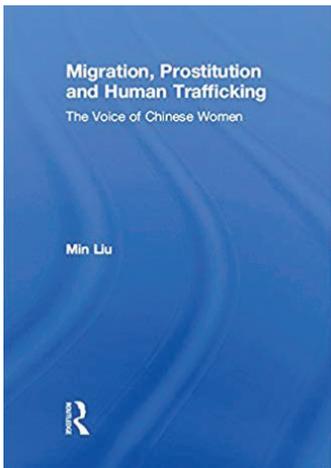
# Action

## Gridlock: Labor, Migration, and Human Trafficking in Dubai



Legislators hoping to combat human trafficking focus heavily on women and sex work, but there is real potential for abuse of both male and female migrants in a variety of areas of employment whether on the street, in a field, at a restaurant, or at someone's house. Gridlock explores how migrants' actual experiences in Dubai contrast with the typical discussions and global moral panic about human trafficking.

Mahdavi powerfully contrasts migrants' own stories with interviews with U.S. policy makers, revealing the gaping disconnect between policies on human trafficking and the realities of forced labor and migration in the Persian Gulf. To work toward solving this global problem, we need to be honest about what trafficking is and is not and to finally get past the stereotypes about trafficked persons so we can really understand the challenges migrant workers are living through every day.



## Migration, Prostitution, and Human Trafficking

Migration, Prostitution, and Human Trafficking examines the nature, magnitude, and gravity of prostitution and sex trafficking — and the relationship between them — in contemporary China. By researching the backgrounds, circumstances, and other factors that drive Chinese women to migrate to Shenzhen, China, Min Liu hopes to shed light on the underlying reasons for their entry into the sex industry.

## Migrants and Trafficking: The Vulnerability of Movement

Migrants have taken a prominent place on the public stage in recent years, from divided political rhetoric on status of migrants in the United States, to news of migrant caravans traveling to the U.S. from South America, to the changing landscape of immigration law in the country, such as the upheaval of asylum availability or family separation at the border. These individuals are at significant risk for trafficking. Many are lured into migration by promise of employment, safety, or legitimate status in the country of immigration. Others are victims of crime such as kidnapping or sex crimes. The result is often enslavement, violence, torture and even threats of death. Please click [here](#) to view this video on YouTube.

## Migration and Human Trafficking

Narciso Contreras is a freelance photojournalist and he's been investigating Libya's status as a transit country for migrants. In this 30-minute podcast he describes how this label only scratches the surface of the situation on the ground. Libya became a trafficking market where a large number of migrants, not just the ones trying to reach Europe but the ones that go to Libya for working purposes, get trapped in a cycle of trafficking and slavery and it evolves from kidnapping, from extortion, from forced labor. Please click [here](#) to access the podcast.

## Forced Gang Recruitment in Central America

Forced gang recruitment is a big problem in the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras), with migrants fleeing out of the region to other countries, including the US. Many are unaccompanied minors due to the fact that gangs are often targeting youth. Guest Amber Moffett joins host Seth Daire to discuss the problem and how human trafficking occurs within gangs and how it's creating hundreds and thousands of migrants, which are then vulnerable to trafficking en route to wherever they are fleeing to. Please click [here](#) to access this 56 minute podcast.



### Global Compact FOR Migration

[Refugees and Migrants](#)

[The Global Compact for Safe,  
Orderly and Regular Migration  
\(GCM\)](#)

[IOM UN Migration](#)



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