

GREECE ANNUAL HOTLINE REPORT 2023

ABOUT THE 1109 HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

For the past 11 years, A21 Greece has operated the 1109 Hotline, a nationwide counter-human trafficking hotline. The 1109 Hotline, accessible via phone, email, social media and an online web form, is the only hotline in Greece solely dedicated to both responding to reports of and supporting victims of human trafficking. Specially trained call specialists receive calls in Greek and English, with support for an additional 230 languages through a tele-interpreting service. Moreover, the Hotline offers general information about trafficking in Greece and responds to requests for training. The 1109 Hotline collaborates closely with law enforcement, other government agencies and civil society organisations to ensure fast and effective responses to each case.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRENDS IN 2023

Throughout 2023, the 1109 Hotline observed victims being recruited from Latin American countries to Greece under the false pretence of legal sex work, only to be forced into sex trafficking through debt bondage upon their arrival. This same recruitment from Latin America has been observed across European countries where A21 operates. As a result of information to the 1109 Hotline highlighting this trend, the 1109 Hotline successfully provided critical intelligence to law enforcement, leading to successful large-scale operations by law enforcement on four occasions. These efforts resulted in the recovery of over 60 trafficking victims from Latin America and arrest of traffickers. Tips from concerned citizens were vital, with one operation alone resulting in the recovery of 52 sex trafficking victims after a concerned neighbour reported her suspicions to the 1109 Hotline. In another case, the 1109 Hotline passed on a tip reported to A21 Spain, prompting law enforcement to conduct a major operation in Greece. This operation led to the recovery of 10 victims, predominantly from Venezuela, and the arrest of six members of the trafficking ring. In response to this trend, A21 has increased prevention and awareness efforts targeting this vulnerable group in Greece and other European countries.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 1109 Hotline received **2,394 CONTACTS**, a 41.7% increase from 2022
- **88.1%** of contacts were specifically related to **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
- The Hotline received reports about **370 POTENTIAL VICTIMS** of trafficking, of which **87.6%** were **FEMALE**
- **37%** of confirmed victims of trafficking were from **LATIN AMERICAN** countries
- **46.2%** of all contacts came from the **GENERAL PUBLIC**
- The top three cities where trafficking was reported were **ATHENS (28.9%)**, **THESSALONIKI (26.6%)** and **ISTANBUL (9.1%)**
- **143** reports were sent to Greek Law Enforcement
- The 1109 Hotline identified and/or assisted **145 VICTIMS** of trafficking, **111** of whom entered the A21 Aftercare Program

Contacts to the 1109 Hotline comprise all incoming enquiries to the Hotline through any manner, including but not limited to phone calls, emails, SMS messages and online web submissions. These enquiries include all reports on potential human trafficking, various crimes both related and unrelated to human trafficking, general queries about human trafficking, and requests for various types of assistance related to human trafficking, such as safety planning or job vetting.

The statistics in this report are exclusively drawn from substantive contacts made to the Hotline from January–December 2023 concerning human trafficking matters. This report does not reflect all substantive calls to the Hotline, which may include calls related to other high-risk crimes, labour exploitation, and other non-trafficking issues.

When available, disaggregated data on descriptive factors, including gender, age, type of trafficking, methods of control and recruitment methods, has been collected on each individual case.

'This police operation wouldn't be as successful without A21's contribution. The news of this case has travelled all around the world.'

—Minister of Civil Protection

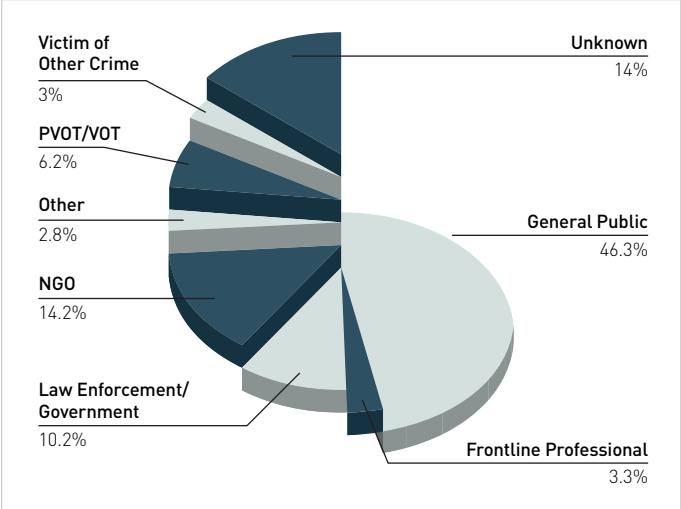
OVERVIEW OF DATA[1]

In 2023, the 1109 Hotline received 2,394 contacts via phone, email, social media and the online web form available on the Hotline's webpage (1109.gr). This marks a 41.7% increase in contacts from 2022. Of these contacts, 536 were new unique cases, of which 349 involved a human trafficking-related issue. The Hotline continued to collaborate with law enforcement in 2023, not only with the specialised anti-trafficking units in Athens and Thessaloniki, but also with local police stations, resulting in the submission of 143 reports to the police. Most individuals discovered the 1109 Hotline through an internet search, while others came across it from public service announcements aired on Greek TV channels for three months in 2023. Moreover, frontline professionals and partner organisations received comprehensive information about the Hotline's services through A21's training programs.

In September, A21 launched its *Can You See Me?*[2] *(CYSM?)* public awareness and hotline campaign in Greece in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Protection and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. This campaign included two short films to educate the general public about sex and labour trafficking in Greece and empower them with the tools to report potential trafficking to the 1109 Hotline. Several distinguished guests attended including the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum, the head of the Security Police Division of Attica, the U.S. Ambassador to Greece, the General Secretary for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection and the National Rapporteur on the Trafficking of Human Beings, amongst others.

CALLER DEMOGRAPHICS

Following patterns observed in 2022, the general public comprised 46.3% of all contacts to the Hotline. Such reports include individuals observing a suspicious situation, such as friends, family or even concerned neighbours of a potential victim. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) continue to contact the Hotline, accounting for 14.2% of all callers, primarily to refer potential trafficking victims for supportive services from A21. In 2023, the 1109 Hotline supported the referrals of 58 potential victims of trafficking, mainly from the migrant and refugee populations. Law enforcement or other government institutions contacted the Hotline on 60 occasions, primarily to request assistance for potential victims of trafficking, accounting for 10.2% of contacts. Potential victims themselves increasingly called the Hotline to seek support, accounting for 6.2% of all callers in 2023, a 177% increase from last year. Ensuring that the 1109 Hotline offers a 24-hour interpretation service has proved to be essential, given that most potential victims are foreign nationals. While contacts often involve reports regarding foreign nationals, 86% of hotline contacts originated from within Greece, with 52.3% from its two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki and 24.8% from rural areas throughout the country.

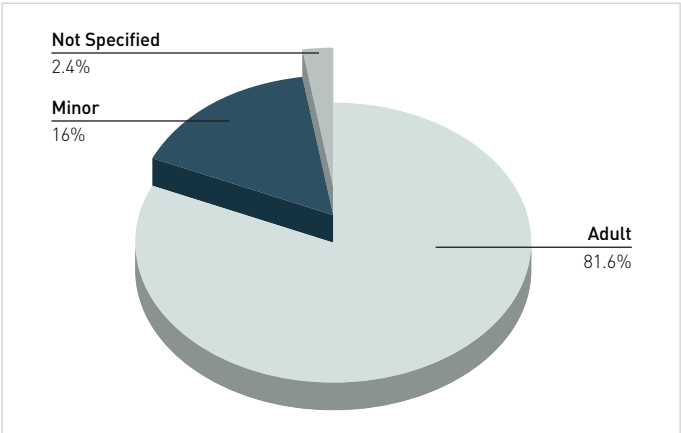


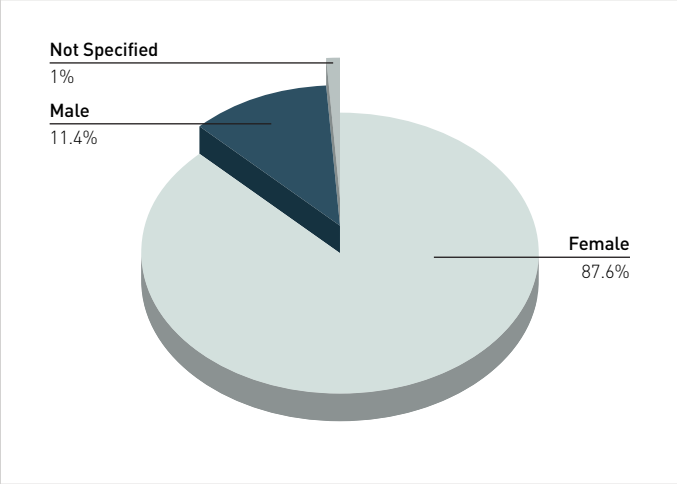
VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

The 1109 Hotline call specialists are specially trained to identify and respond to human trafficking situations in Greece. In 2023, call specialists' responses to contacts to the Hotline resulted in reports involving 370 potential victims of trafficking. While the majority of these reports involved exploitation in Greece (69.3%), a significant percentage involved trafficking in Turkey (14.9%) and in African countries (8.1%).

AGE AND GENDER

Adults constituted the majority of potential victims reported to the 1109 Hotline in 2023, accounting for 81.6% of the reports, with minors at 16%, a 29.5% decrease since 2022. Regardless of gender, forced begging was the predominant form of exploitation experienced by minors. The majority of potential victims reported were female (87.6%), an 18.6% increase compared to 2022, mainly for sexual exploitation.



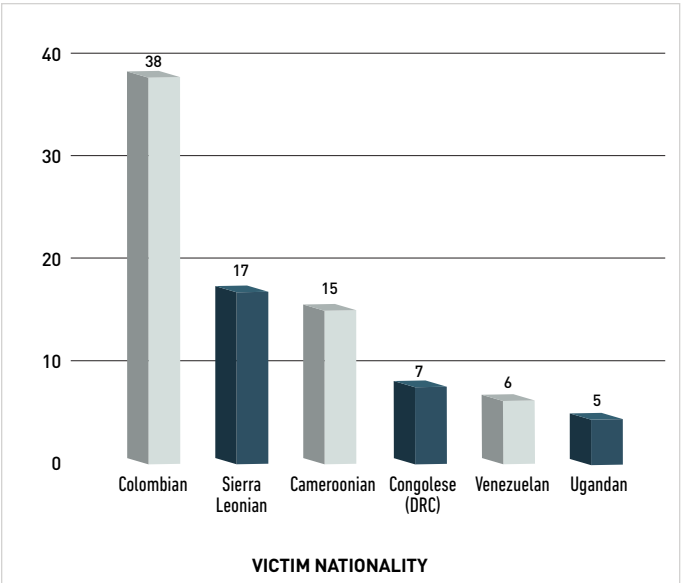


The most common forms of exploitation reported were sexual exploitation (45.8%), forced begging (27.6%), forced labour (8.1%) and domestic servitude (5.7%). These figures highlight the correlation between the high proportion of female victims and sexual exploitation.

VICTIM NATIONALITY

Call specialists' protocol in responding to calls varies depending on the caller. When potential victims contact the Hotline directly, call specialists conduct screening interviews. This process allows the call specialists to ask specific questions about the trafficking situation. In 2023, the 1109 Hotline conducted 133 such screenings. The following data was derived from confirmed victims of trafficking identified directly by a 1109 Hotline call specialist or referred to the 1109 Hotline by a partner organisation.

The six most frequently reported nationalities of trafficking victims to the Hotline were Colombian, Sierra Leonean, Cameroonian, Congolese, Venezuelan and Ugandan. Among confirmed victims, 37% were from Latin American (LATAM) countries, with Colombia being the most common nationality.



In 2023, the 1109 Hotline observed a significant emergence of victims from LATAM countries, predominantly from Colombia, within the sex industry in Greece. Traffickers lure these women to Greece under false pretences, enticed with promises of substantial earnings within three months. However, upon arrival, they discover themselves in debt bondage, required to reimburse overpriced costs, including airfare, accommodation and transportation expenses, ultimately finding themselves with little or no income.

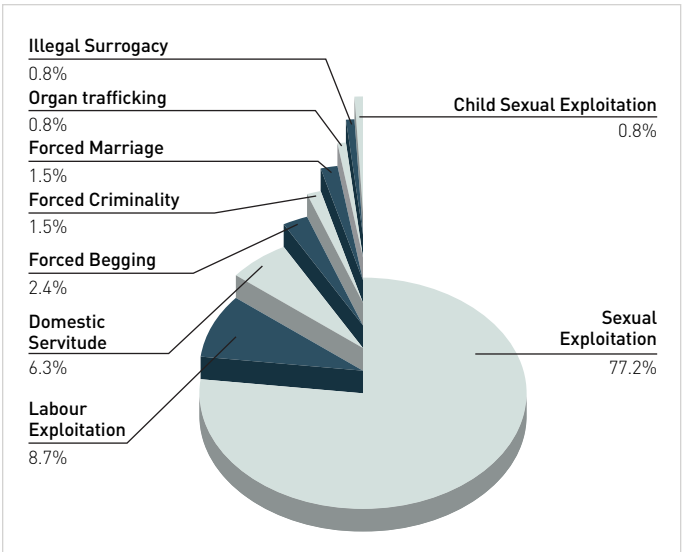
As for the other African nationalities shown in the chart, these victims primarily come from the migrant and refugee populations. Their exploitation occurs either in their home country or in one of the transit countries along their journey towards Europe.

EXPLOITATION TYPE

In 2023, sexual exploitation constituted the most common type of exploitation in the confirmed cases of human trafficking reported to the Hotline at 77.2% of cases, followed by forced labour (8.7%) and domestic servitude (6.3%). The large number of victims recovered during law enforcement operations relating to the sexual exploitation of Latina women also highlights an emerging pattern.

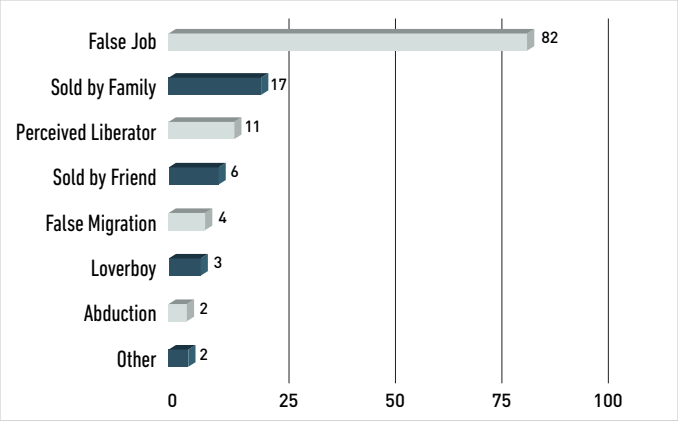
Men comprised the majority of labour exploitation victims reported to the Hotline. Of the 11 confirmed victims of labour exploitation reported to the Hotline, only two were exploited in Greece, both within the agricultural sector. The others had been exploited before their travel to Greece. The limited number of labour trafficking cases however should not be seen as representative of the reality of labour exploitation in Greece. Instead, this merely suggests that while labour trafficking does occur in Greece, it often remains concealed and goes largely unreported.

A rare type of exploitation emerged in 2023 involving a trafficking ring that targeted vulnerable women for egg 'donation' and illegal surrogacy. While the trafficking of individuals for organ or human tissue removal has been rarely highlighted in Greece, according to information provided by investigators, this particular trafficking ring has been active in Greece for more than a decade.



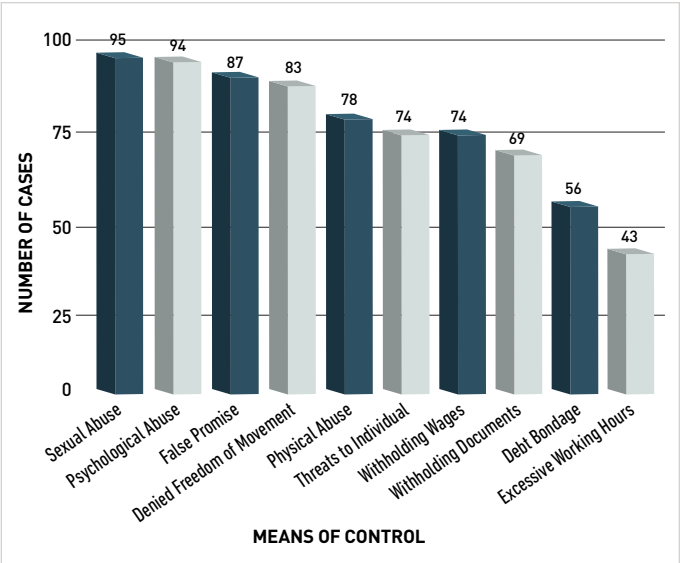
RECRUITMENT METHODS

Consistent with 2022, the three most common recruitment methods used by traffickers in 2023 based on reports to the 1109 Hotline were the promise of a false job, victims being sold or tricked by their family members and perceived liberators.[3] For trafficking cases where the exploitation occurred within Greek borders, the most common recruitment method was the promise of a false job. Recruitment through the promise of a false job extends beyond circumstances where victims are given different work than initially agreed upon. Rather, it also includes misrepresentation of working conditions. Recruitment through sale by family or perceived liberators has been mainly observed in cases involving individuals from the migrant and refugee populations. Many times, a pattern emerged where the family acts as a liaison between the victim and the exploiter. In the perceived liberator circumstances, victims may rely on individuals offering assistance from difficult living conditions, only to discover they've been unwittingly recruited into trafficking.



METHODS OF CONTROL

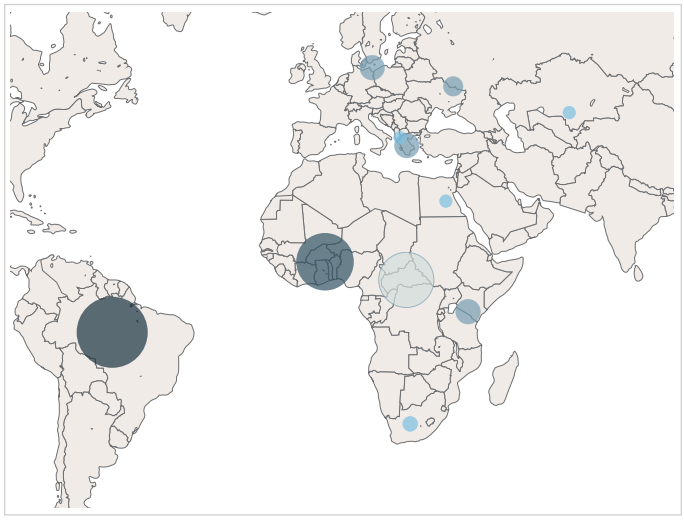
To keep victims in exploitative situations, traffickers use several methods of control. In 2023, the 1109 Hotline observed sexual abuse to be the most common method of control. Traffickers also prevalently used psychological abuse, false promises and denied freedom of movement to control their victims.



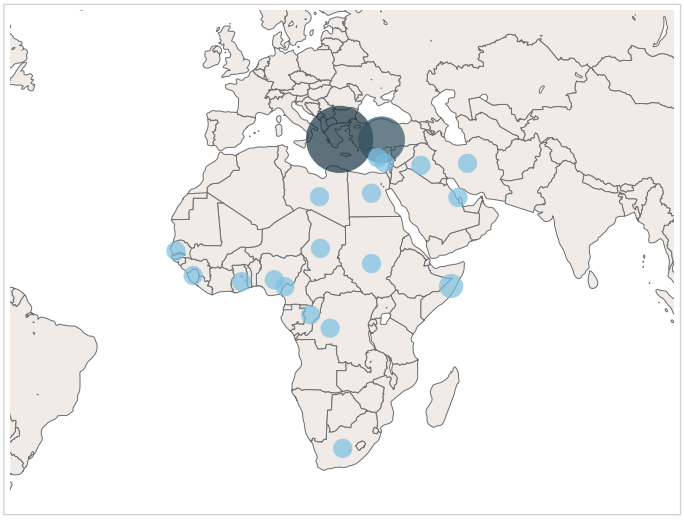
RECRUITMENT AND EXPLOITATION LOCATION

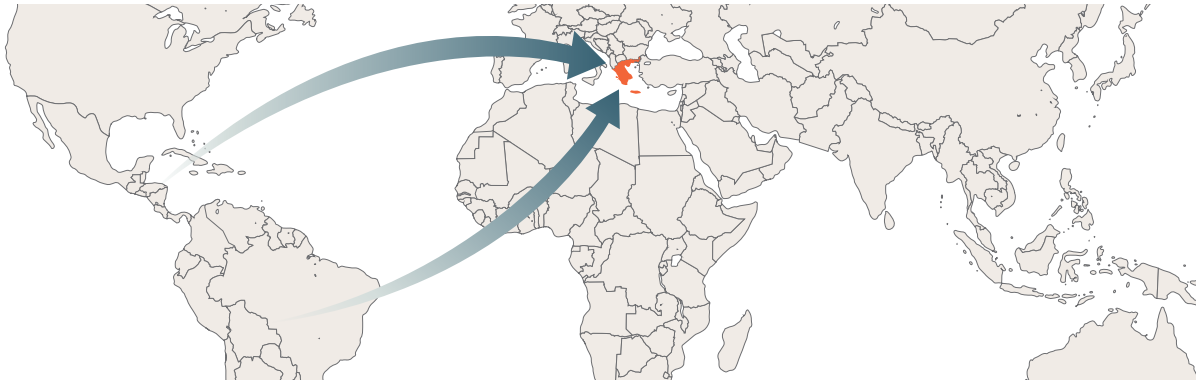
Of the victims identified and/or assisted by the 1109 Hotline in 2023, traffickers heavily recruited individuals from Latin America (32.3%) and Africa (49.6%). While the majority of victims were recruited overseas, the exploitation most often occurred in Greece and Turkey, comprising 81.9% of the reported exploitation locations, with the remainder being countries in Africa and the Middle East.

COUNTRY OF RECRUITMENT



COUNTRY OF EXPLOITATION





1109 HOTLINE TIP RESULTS IN THE DISMANTLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING SYNDICATE AND RECOVERY OF 52 LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN

The Hellenic Police, with INTERPOL, Spain's National Police, and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations via the U.S. Embassy in Athens, dismantled an international human trafficking syndicate, safely recovering 52 victims. According to investigators, these women, primarily from Latin America, were trafficked into Greece with promises of well-paying jobs and great working conditions. When it became evident that they had been deceived, their traffickers threatened, demeaned and forced them to work in brothels. The traffickers forced the women to work long hours, even when unwell, for little to no pay, generating an estimated profit of €160,000 a month for their traffickers. The 1109 Hotline in Greece contributed significantly to the criminal investigation by providing intelligence to the anti-trafficking police department about one of the main locations of the trafficking. The 1109 Hotline received several calls from a concerned citizen over four months, enabling the call specialists to submit multiple police reports with extensive information about the victims and trafficking circumstances. After months of ongoing investigation, the Hellenic Police coordinated a take-down with various international law enforcement and arrested 22 perpetrators of the trafficking ring. A21's aftercare team remained involved following the recovery of these women by providing direct services. The support provided to these survivors varied depending on their individual needs and desires and included providing for their basic needs and emergency housing. In addition, A21 provided legal assistance through a victim's attorney to represent the survivors' interests in the ensuing criminal prosecution. Finally, with the support of other NGOs in various countries, these survivors were repatriated back home and received ongoing support as needed.

After this successful operation, the Minister of Civil Protection invited A21 to a meeting with the General Chief of Police and other high-ranking officials to discuss further collaboration. Within this meeting, A21 had the opportunity to share the full story of the case and the degree of support provided to the survivors. All those present highlighted the significance of the 1109 Hotline and A21's involvement in this operation, and the Minister of Civil Protection announced he would fully support future initiatives to increase awareness across the nation.

As a service situated to support those in exploitative situations, the 1109 Hotline is at the forefront of understanding emerging human trafficking trends in Greece. Each year, the 1109 Hotline commits to expanding its network and partners across Greece and throughout Europe to ensure that the collected data accurately reflects the current trafficking trends. The 1109 Hotline welcomes new partners interested in counter-human trafficking efforts in Greece and Europe. Partnerships are vital to provide services to identified trafficking survivors and to increase awareness about the services provided by the 1109 Hotline across Greece.

1109
ΓΡΑΜΜΗ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΗΣΗΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ **ΕΜΠΟΡΙΑ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ**

The observations in this report are limited to information communicated to the 1109 Hotline during the reporting period. Nothing in the data should be interpreted as showing the full extent or prevalence of human trafficking in Greece.

ENDNOTES

[1] To ensure data integrity, the data presented is extracted from reports submitted to the Hotline consisting of those identified as victims and likely potential victims of trafficking. This report takes a conservative approach in presenting Hotline data and analysis, omitting reports of potential victims of human trafficking which were unable to be minimally substantiated.

[2] The *Can You See Me?* campaign is A21's global campaign intended to equip the general public on recognising human trafficking and reporting suspected trafficking to the country's relevant hotline. The real life scenarios depicted through the *CYSM?* campaign attempt to bring awareness of the millions of men, women and children currently trapped in modern day slavery across the world. By partnering with law enforcement, governments, businesses and NGOs, the goal is to turn awareness into action.

[3] Recruitment through a 'perceived liberator/benefactor' occurs when a perpetrator promises to liberate someone from exploitation, harm or hardship, only to then exploit them.

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