

GREECE ANNUAL HOTLINE REPORT 2024

ABOUT THE 1109 HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

For the past 12 years, A21 Greece has operated the 1109 Hotline, a nationwide counter-human trafficking hotline. The 1109 Hotline is accessible by phone, email, social media, and online webform on its dedicated website (1109.gr). It is the only hotline in Greece solely dedicated to human trafficking. Specially trained call specialists handle calls in Greek and English, with the support of an interpretation service with access to over 230 additional languages. Moreover, the Hotline provides general information on human trafficking in Greece and responds to training requests. The 1109 Hotline collaborates closely with law enforcement, government agencies, and civil society organisations to ensure a fast and effective response to each case.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRENDS IN 2024

Throughout 2024, the 1109 Hotline observed a concerning trend of labour trafficking cases involving victims from Nepal, the Philippines and India. Many were recruited under false job offers, resulting in debt bondage upon arriving in Greece. Victims often began their journey through job agencies in Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania, and Romania before being trafficked to Greece. The Ministry of Immigration and Asylum responded by convening a round table, attended by A21, to assess emerging trafficking patterns and coordinate a response.

In 2024, law enforcement conducted four successful operations, recovering 24 victims from Nepal, India and the Philippines. The cases were identified through victim reports to the Hotline, partnerships with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Labour Inspector's Office, and direct referrals to the 1109 Hotline. Victims frequently escaped and sought assistance through official channels.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Hotline received a total of 3232 CONTACTS, a 35% increase from 2023
- 66.6% of contacts were specifically related to Human Trafficking
- The Hotline identified and/or assisted 107 Victims of Trafficking, 76 of whom entered the A21 Aftercare Program
- Of the human trafficking contacts 14.6% related to labour exploitation and 45.6% to sexual exploitation
- Of confirmed trafficking cases, labour exploitation accounted for 51.4% with 74.5% of labour exploitation victims being MALE
- The majority of victims reported to Hotline were FEMALE (57%), although there was a significant increase of 277.2% in the percentage of MALE victims
- The majority of victims reported to Hotline were from NEPAL or SIERRA LEONE
- 40.3% of contacts came from the GENERAL PUBLIC
- 115 reports were sent to Greek Law Enforcement
- The top countries where exploitation took place were GREECE and TURKEY

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

'Reports' only include contacts to the 1109 Hotline relating to a potential human trafficking situation.

The statistics below are exclusively drawn from substantive contacts made to the 1109 Hotline from January - December 2024 concerning human trafficking matters. This report is not a reflection of all substantive calls to the 1109 Hotline which may include calls related to high-risk crimes, labour exploitation and other non-trafficking issues.

Disaggregated data has been collected on each individual case based on descriptive factors including gender, age, type of trafficking, methods of control and recruitment methods. The data contained herein is based on the cases where the information was available. In the majority of cases, the call specialists were unable to glean full or specific details about the case. Therefore the data below is based on cases where the specified information was made available.

In one case, a survivor reached IOM independently, while in another, the Labour Inspector’s Office contacted the 1109 Hotline regarding two victims in urgent need of support. Additionally, the Anti-Trafficking Police recovered 21 victims after two individuals reported their situation to local authorities.

In response to this emerging trend, A21 Greece has intensified prevention and awareness efforts, focusing on vulnerable communities at risk of labour trafficking in Greece.

“I had no future, but through your referral and the help of the 1109 Hotline, my child and I were able to live in a safe environment, giving us the peace of mind to face tomorrow.”

—Survivor Recovered after Calling the Hotline

OVERVIEW OF DATA¹

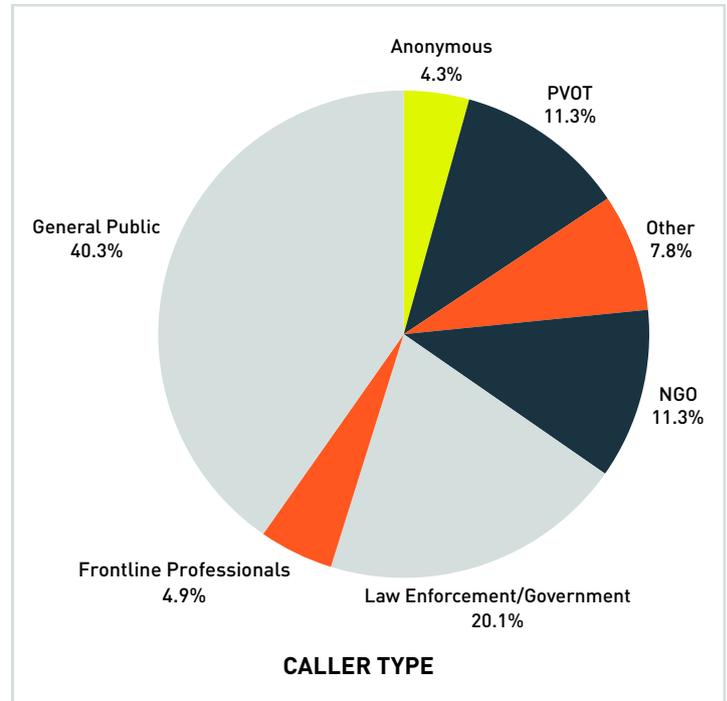
In 2024, the 1109 Hotline received 3,232 contacts via phone, email, social media, and the online web form, available on the Hotline’s webpage (1109.gr). Of these, 133 contacts were made through SMS, the website, and email. This represents a 35% increase from 2023, largely as a result of frequent calls from the Greek Labour Relations Inspection Department, which also promoted the Hotline on its official webpage.

Human trafficking-related contacts accounted for 66.6% of total calls, a decrease from the previous year due to fewer referrals and reports from refugee camps. However, there was a 64% increase in the number of cases reported to the Hotline related to labour trafficking compared to 2023, reflecting a growing concern over exploitation in sectors such as agriculture, domestic work or manufacturing. This rise is attributed to increased awareness efforts, and increased targeted training of labour inspectors leading to more accurate identification of exploitative labour situations, and stronger collaboration with labour authorities and civil society organisations.

Despite the restructuring of the anti-trafficking police departments across Greece, the Hotline compiled and submitted 115 reports to law enforcement and participated in multiple operations in cooperation with authorities in Athens, Thessaloniki, and regional police stations. Newly formed anti-trafficking police departments familiarised themselves with A21 and the Hotline’s work, ensuring continued collaboration in trafficking investigations.

CALLER DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2024, 40.3% of contacts to the 1109 Hotline came from community members. Notably, contacts from law enforcement and other government institutions rose to 20.1%, reflecting a positive trend in awareness and utilisation of the Hotline by the government.

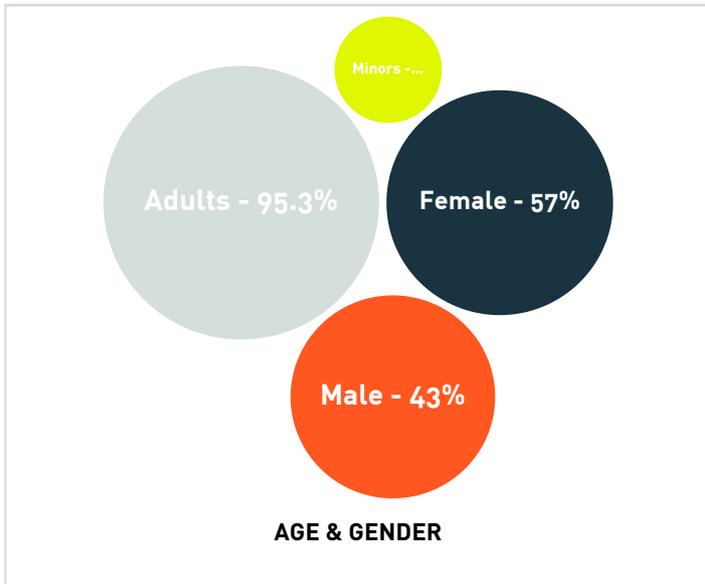


VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

The 1109 Hotline call specialists are specially trained to identify and respond to human trafficking situations in Greece. The 1109 Hotline protocol varies based on the caller’s needs. When potential victims contact the hotline directly, call specialists conduct screening interviews to assess their trafficking situation. In 2024, the 1109 Hotline conducted 130 screenings. The following data is based on confirmed trafficking victims, either identified directly by call specialists or referred by partner organisations.

AGE AND GENDER

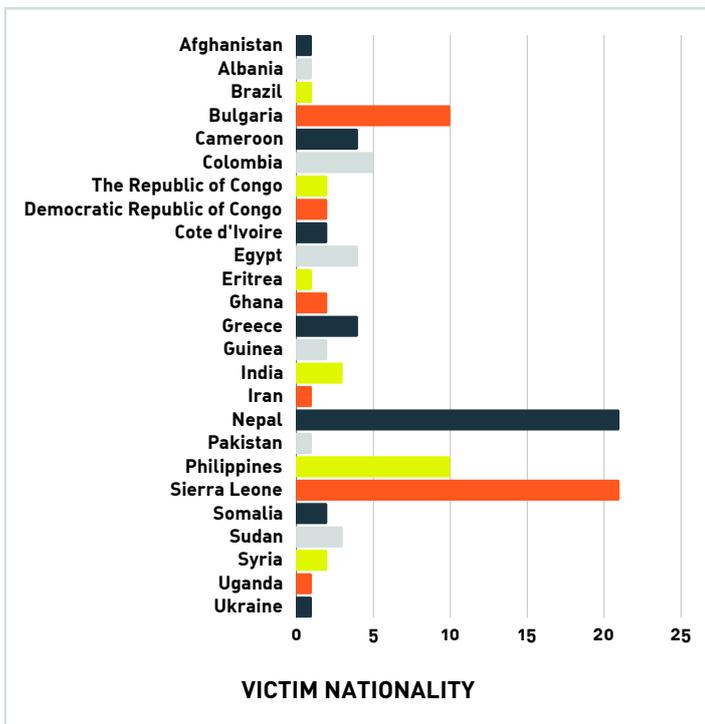
In 2024, 57% of identified victims were female, while the proportion of male victims rose significantly to 43%, from 11.4% in previous years. This sharp increase reflects the noticeable increase in reported labour exploitation, which predominantly involved male victims. Regarding age, adults comprised 95.3% of reported victims, while minors accounted for the remaining 4.7%.



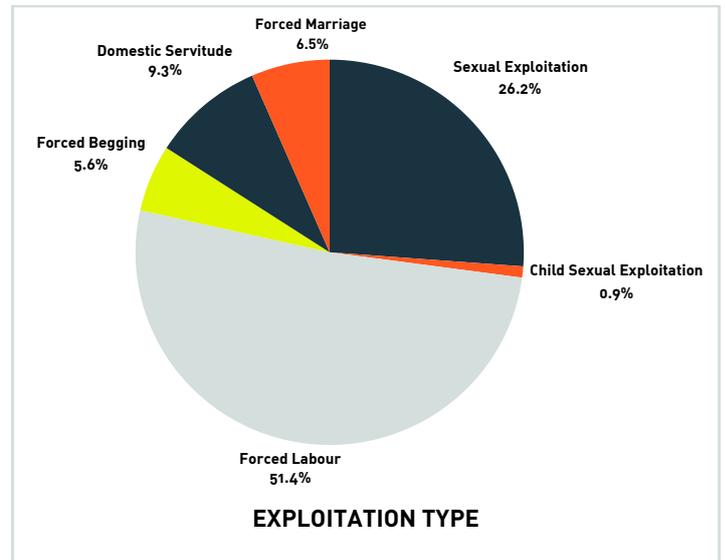
Reports of forced labour significantly increased compared to previous years. In fact, for the first time in the history of the 1109 Hotline, calls to the hotline resulted in the identification of more labour trafficking than sex trafficking victims. While this increase may suggest a rise in labour trafficking generally, based on A21's experience, this sharp rise is likely attributed to increased awareness, such as through the Can You See Me? campaign highlighting agricultural trafficking, and targeted training of labour inspectors amongst others. A lack of general understanding of labour trafficking and how it presents, led to under-reporting of labour trafficking cases in previous years, in which the majority were handled as simple labour complaints. Indeed, this increase underscores the importance of training and awareness in countering human trafficking.

VICTIM NATIONALITY

The four most frequently reported nationalities were Nepalese and Sierra Leonean, each accounting for 21%, followed by Bulgarian and Filipino victims, each representing 10%. Throughout 2024, the Hotline received cases from victims of 25 different nationalities, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of those affected by trafficking in Greece.



Additionally, law enforcement raids uncovered a significant number of forced labour cases, highlighting an increased understanding and awareness of labour exploitation. On at least two occasions, reports received by the 1109 Hotline served as the impetus for law enforcement to initiate the criminal investigations leading to the raids. The 1109 Hotline has noted an emerging pattern of forced labour, with 70.9% of reported labour trafficking cases occurring in the agricultural sector.



"The package you sent was incredibly helpful to both me and my baby."

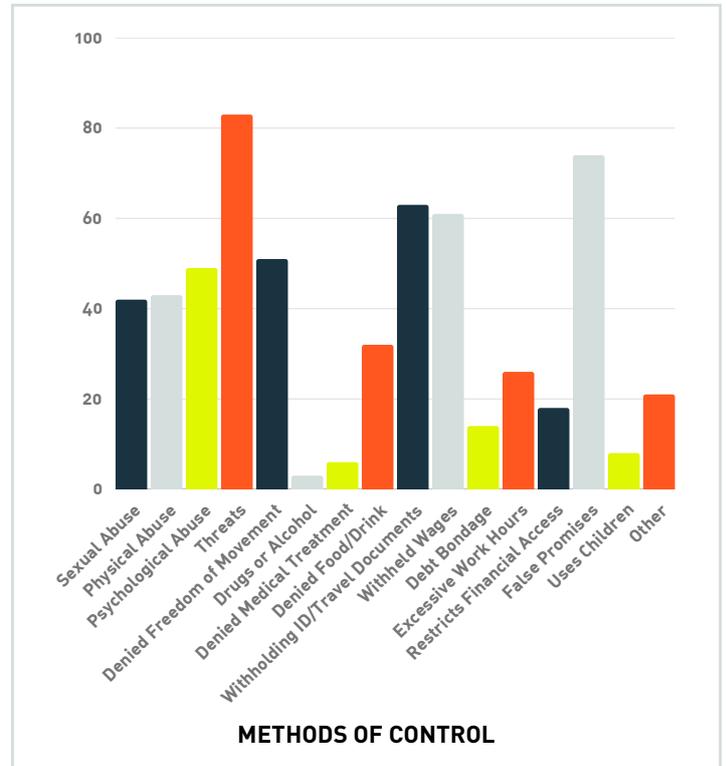
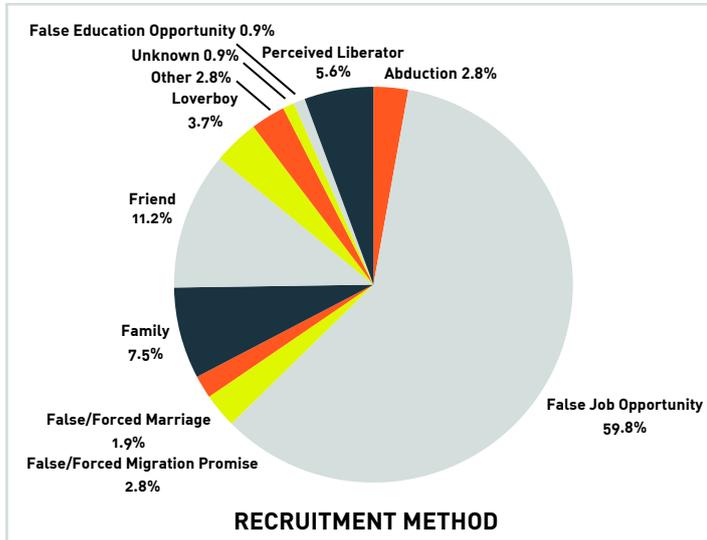
—Survivor Recovered after Calling the Hotline

EXPLOITATION TYPE

In 2024, the 1109 Hotline recorded a notable increase in forced labour as a form of exploitation in confirmed human trafficking cases. Forced labour accounted for 51.4% of reported cases, followed by sexual exploitation at 26.2% and domestic servitude at 9.4%.

RECRUITMENT METHODS

The top three recruitment methods reported to the 1109 Hotline were false job opportunities at 59.8%, followed by recruitment through a friend at 11.2%, and the perceived liberator² method at 5.6%. Consistent with previous years, false job opportunities remained the most common recruitment method reported by victims in 2024.

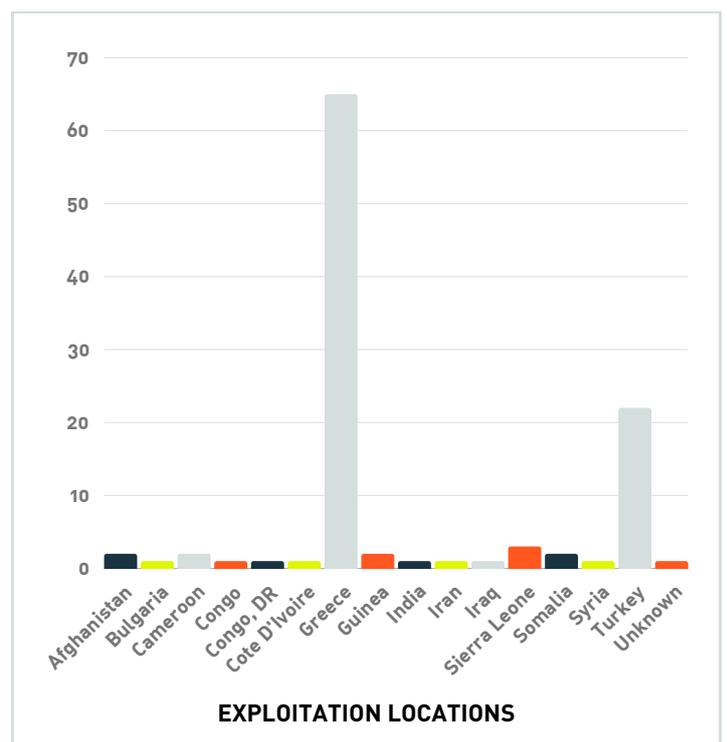


METHODS OF CONTROL

To keep victims in exploitative situations, traffickers use various methods of control. In 2024, the top three methods reported to the 1109 Hotline were false promises seen in 69.1% of cases, withholding ID documents (58.9%) and withholding wages (57%). These tactics reflect the common forms of coercion used to maintain control over trafficking victims.

EXPLOITATION LOCATIONS

In 2024, the 1109 Hotline recorded that the top three countries of exploitation were Greece at 60.8%, followed by Turkey at 20.6% and Sierra Leone at 2.8%. These figures are consistent with 2023 data, with most reported trafficking occurring in Greece and Turkey. The majority of reported incidents have occurred in Greece, particularly within the agriculture sector, where victims often face harsh conditions, extremely low wages, or no wages at all, along with exploitative labour practices.



HIGHLIGHT: CASE STUDY

In October 2024, a partner organisation called the 1109 Hotline about a Bulgarian male survivor of human trafficking they encountered while conducting a street outreach in Athens. The survivor, who was homeless and confined to a wheelchair, had escaped a forced begging trafficking situation. The organisation noted the survivor's urgent need and contacted the Hotline to request services for the survivor.

The 1109 Hotline referred the case to A21's Aftercare Program, and A21 along with the partner organisation assisted the survivor who despite facing significant challenges, had courageously testified against his traffickers. The traffickers however later threatened and pressured him to retract his testimony. After reporting these threats to the police, an investigation led to the identification of three additional survivors in similar circumstances and the arrest of four members of the trafficking ring, including its leader.

The investigation revealed that the trafficking ring had been operating since May 2021 as part of an organised criminal network involved in recruiting, transporting and smuggling vulnerable individuals to Greece for forced begging. The traffickers specifically targeted people facing financial, social, mental or physical challenges in their home countries, offering false promises of legitimate work or a share of the money they would earn from begging.

Victims were transported to Greece, often using buses or operational vehicles. Upon arrival, they were housed in substandard accommodations in Attica, where hygiene and living conditions were severely neglected. To maintain control, traffickers lived in the same building, seized the victims' travel documents and physically abused them to enforce compliance.

The traffickers transported the victims to populous areas in Athens daily and forced them to beg for hours. To manipulate public sympathy, traffickers forced the victims to use wheelchairs and mobility aids, and pretend to have physical disabilities. At the end of each day, the traffickers would collect the money the victims had earned and return it to their residence, where all proceeds were confiscated.

Thanks to the collaboration between the 1109 Hotline and A21 Bulgaria, all four survivors received accommodation, case management, relocation assistance, and repatriation, ensuring their safety and long-term well-being.

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 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.



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The observations contained in this report are limited to information communicated to the 1109 Hotline during the reporting period. Nothing arising from 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 Recruitment through a 'perceived liberator/benefactor' occurs when a perpetrator promises to liberate someone from exploitation, harm or hardship, only to then exploit them.