

## SOUTH AFRICA

Vulnerability factors such as poverty and unemployment render many South Africans particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.<sup>1</sup> Sex trafficking remains the most common type of trafficking that is identified and reported, with general agreement by experts in the field that labour trafficking is prevalent but underreported. The majority of victims identified by the National Human Trafficking Hotline<sup>2</sup> (NHTH) this year were South African. However, it should be noted that the number of foreign nationals identified this year has increased from 2021. Victims hailed from countries such as Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Nigeria, as well as countries further afield such as China and Thailand. The U.S. State Department observed that although more victims were identified and more shelters were accredited to accommodate victims of human trafficking, there was still limited coordination and training for key government agencies responsible for identifying and assisting victims; South Africa therefore remains on the Tier 2 watchlist for the second consecutive year.<sup>3</sup>



### RECESSION AMPLIFIES ECONOMIC TURMOIL FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

The ripple effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 manifested in Africa escalating fuel and food prices, inflation and financial instability. The poorest and most vulnerable were disproportionately impacted with the sharp increase in cost for basic needs such as food and transport, resulting in hunger and hardship for thousands of households in South Africa. The petrol price in South Africa for example has increased by 53.8% in one year.<sup>4</sup> South Africa experienced steep increases in core food items most frequently purchased by lower-income households,<sup>5</sup> which comprise most of the households in the country.

In addition, the war has served to exacerbate South Africa's nation-wide power outages, known as 'load shedding'. Eskom (South Africa's state owned power supplier) has experienced great difficulty in securing diesel to burn its turbines and has imposed rolling nation-wide power outages for anywhere between 2.5 to 12 hours per day. This continues to have a detrimental effect on businesses, employment and the financial stability of the country.<sup>6</sup>

The long-term implications of the war include a possible geopolitical realignment, social and economic instability and debt unsustainability, leading to widening inequality and deeper poverty. Food insecurity is likely to last and have a negative impact on all aspects of human development from income to health and education, significantly increasing the vulnerability of the South African population to many social ills, including human trafficking. These factors have increased vulnerabilities as A21 South Africa has observed an noticeable increase of victims initially recruited or attempted to be recruited into trafficking through false employment and study opportunities.

### A21'S RESPONSE

Since 2013, A21 South Africa (A21) has operated using a three-pronged strategy to combat human trafficking. Prevention and awareness strategies actively work to reduce the prevalence of trafficking; identification and intervention programs aim to disrupt the ongoing criminal activities and identify victims including through the NHTH; and restorative aftercare services and reintegration programs support survivors of trafficking in their journey after identification.

### PREVENTION & AWARENESS

Prevention and awareness efforts at A21 focus on reducing vulnerability to exploitation through educational curricula, prevention programs, and awareness campaigns. As a result of these efforts, in 2022 a total of 10,175 were reached with prevention programs, compared to 2,832 in 2021. Awareness campaigns and materials had five times the impact across the year reaching 14,911 people in contrast to 2,528 individuals in 2021. One explanation for these increases may be partially due to the impact of the transition out of the National State of Disaster caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, thus allowing for more in-person events, such as school presentations. The lifting of the restrictions also enabled A21 to implement a new targeted approach to prevention efforts. This strategy involved targeting schools, community policing

forums, youth organisations, social workers and police stations all within a specific community, and building strong relationships with these partners. This has resulted in great momentum and valuable partnerships for longer-term impact.

## DEMAND FOR PREVENTION MATERIALS TAILORED TO CHILDREN INCREASES

Understanding that children are especially vulnerable to exploitation, A21 has created resources tailored to children based on their age. After a successful pilot project in 2021, the Early Childhood Prevention Program (ECP) was officially launched in South Africa and across A21's global channels in 2022. The ECP equips children between the age of 3 and 6 with safety tools as they navigate potentially dangerous situations in their young lives. The program content and 'Steps to Staying Safe Storybook' have been translated and filmed in three different languages (English, Afrikaans and Xhosa), allowing more high-risk communities in South Africa to be reached. The translated versions will officially be launched and available to download in 2023. Working alongside a community organisation in a hotspot area, A21 also hosted an afterschool program. This project resulted in 66 minors completing the ECP and more program roll outs secured for early 2023. Moreover, through a grant secured at the end of 2022, A21 intends to expand ECP distribution in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in 2023, including translating the program content into more languages and training teachers to facilitate the program. This expansion has the potential to reach 200 Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities and thousands of children across the two provinces.



The Primary Prevention Program (PPP) teaches children at the primary school level to make informed decisions that protect themselves and others, as well as empowers them to be vocal. As a result of the great demand for presentations from primary schools, 7,246 minors were reached in 2022 compared to 1,749 minors in 2021, accounting for a 314% increase.

In November 2022, A21 launched 'Staying Safe Online', a digital safety comic book that is available for download. This comic book helps children better understand the dangers of interacting online and to recognise an unsafe online situation. This global resource incidentally coincided with South Africa's release of 'Disrupting harm in South Africa: Evidence on online child exploitation and abuse'<sup>7</sup> further evincing the timeliness of this resource as South Africa focuses on addressing online exploitation.

## A21 COLLABORATES IN THE '16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE' EVENTS

The South African government sponsors an annual campaign '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence' from 25 November to 10 December 2022. This campaign mobilises government departments

such as the Department of Health, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Social Development (DSD), amongst others, to equip a number of vulnerable groups in society, with a focus on women and children with the necessary tools and information to protect themselves. A21 attended 11 government-initiated events, attended by 1,981 individuals, resulting in a potential impact of 46,592 people through materials distributed over the 16 day period. These government sponsored events focused on educating vulnerable groups and the public about gender based violence generally, which includes aspects of human trafficking and in particular, sex trafficking.

A21 partnered with various government departments to conduct workshops, informational sessions and exhibition stands at these events. One workshop hosted by A21 focused on prevention material for 40 homeless individuals at high risk to be exploited, such as through false job opportunities. At another event sponsored by SAPS, A21 empowered 200 destitute and vulnerable individuals exposed to risk factors such as instability, poor education, substance misuse, poverty and homelessness. Through this annual campaign, A21 observed the government's concerted national effort to protect the country's most vulnerable from exploitation.



A21 had another successful year implementing its *Can You See Me?* (CYSM) public awareness campaign (See Appendix A). CYSM educates the public on the common types of human trafficking seen locally, prompting viewers to report any suspicious activity to the NHTH. CYSM increased exposure with a digital billboard in a reported hotspot in Kimberly, situated in the Northern Cape, reaching an estimated 524,000 people per month over a 6 month period (more than 3 million people in total). A continued partnership with Intercap, the largest intercity passenger transport in Southern Africa, also allowed the CYSM scenarios to be aired on selected bus routes, on an ongoing basis. Intercap's services extend to main cities across South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi and Namibia.



The online and hard copy distribution of other A21 prevention resources including the Safe Relationship Guide, Safe Employment Guide and Student Digital Safety Guide increased by 125% and reached 2,158 people in 2022, compared to 959 in 2021.

## IDENTIFICATION & INTERVENTION

Understanding that training individuals most likely to encounter human trafficking is necessary for successful intervention, A21 regularly provides training to key government and civil society stakeholders. In 2022, A21 provided training to 584 such individuals, more than doubling the number of frontline professionals trained in 2021. A21 focused its training on improving understanding of and responding to human trafficking cases, and decreasing the misidentification of victims.

### NEW FRONTLINE TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022, A21 forged a partnership with the Department of Health to initiate an annual train-the-trainer workshop. Notably, this is the only partnership the department has with a counter-human trafficking organisation. The first workshop occurred in April 2022 and trained healthcare workers to first identify and respond to human trafficking, and then to conduct similar trainings of their own. The second workshop, scheduled for the end of May 2023, provides both refresher training and an opportunity to train new staff. A21 also continued their relationship with nonprofit organisation FAMSA (Family and Marriage Society of South Africa) and developed a new one with Rape Crisis,<sup>8</sup> resulting in the training of 50 volunteer counsellors from across the two non-profit organisations.

Other professional training included one specifically tailored for DSD for 75 child protection social workers across the Western Cape and for professionals in the financial sector, including those in South Africa's Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force (SAMLIT).<sup>9</sup> Training was provided to a wide range of professionals in the financial industry including professionals in non-customer facing roles. While those professionals are unlikely to encounter a victim of trafficking in their daily work, their expertise can still significantly contribute to minimising revictimisation. Training in this sector for example, showcased the need for survivor specific bank accounts in

South Africa. Survivors can struggle to open up a bank account once they have exited their trafficking situation due to a lack of proper identification. The lack of access to a formal banking institution can subsequently result in an inability to obtain a stable job, enter into a rental agreement and in some circumstances, even undertake basic tasks like booking a bus ticket, thus increasing a survivor's vulnerability and increasing the likelihood of being re trafficked. The banking sector, and specifically SAMLIT, are looking at ways to ease the normal compliance requirements to enable survivors to obtain an account without the need for the usual documentation.

*'[The training has helped me] to become more vigilant and to always have in mind that what sometimes looks obvious is not so obvious. Also that we don't have to look at dealing with human trafficking as extra work because we have the tools we just had to broaden our mindset and educate ourselves on things we are not familiar with. It's doable!'*

- Child Protection Social Worker, DSD

### INCREASE IN VICTIMS RECRUITED WITH FALSE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The NHTH serves as the only hotline in South Africa dedicated to receive solely reports on suspected human trafficking. Reports are routinely compiled and submitted to relevant investigative authorities, the Trafficking in Persons Provincial Task Teams (PTTs) and victim support services.<sup>10</sup> In the Western Cape, DSD authorises caseworkers to assist law enforcement screen potential adult victims of trafficking, and to facilitate identified victims' initial access to essential services such as medical, shelter and psycho-social care.

Trafficking related contacts to the NHTH overall increased in 2022 to comprise 76.6% of all contacts, in contrast to 64.5% in 2021. Community members remain the highest number of caller types for the third consecutive year, accounting for 42.7% of contacts to the NHTH, demonstrating confidence from community members in reporting concerns to a non-law enforcement body. Crucially, 13.6% of contacts originated from government and law enforcement bodies compared to just 5.4% and 6.3% in 2021 and 2020 respectively. Building and strengthening partner networks in both government and civil society sectors has been a key strategy in 2022. This significant increase in contacts from government and law enforcement bodies communicates an increase in trust and confidence in the partnership and services offered by the NHTH.

The NHTH conducted 78 screenings of potential victims of human trafficking through the year, with 50 resulting in positive identifications. At least 17 of these identifications resulted from law enforcement or government-initiated contacts. Although the majority of reports involved female potential victims, reports of male victims increased from only 5.4% in 2021 to 20% this reporting year. This may be attributed to an increase in reports of labour trafficking. One such case involved a Chinese-owned



factory where Chinese nationals were trafficked for forced labour in South Africa. A full breakdown of this case as well as other victim demographics, recruitment tactics and other data insights can be found in the accompanying NHTH Report.

As highlighted throughout the report, vulnerability has only been exacerbated with the current economic climate in South Africa. The recruitment methods disclosed by victims identified this past year further substantiated this finding. False promises in the form of education, scholarships or travel and false job opportunities overwhelmingly constitute the majority of recruitment methods at 32% and 28% respectively. Notably, the percentage of recruitment via false job opportunities has increased annually since 2019. In an attempt to disrupt trafficking schemes using this tactic, the NHTH has offered a job vetting service since 2021, where the NHTH reviews employment opportunities upon request to assess possibly exploitative schemes. In 2022, the NHTH conducted 51 job vettings; 72.55% of all jobs vetted were found to have high risk factors and identified as either fraudulent or potentially related to trafficking.



## AFTERCARE

Once identified, a victim's access to specialised services often determines the survivor's future between revictimisation or independence. A21's Aftercare Program is designed to empower survivors of human trafficking on their unique journey toward restoration and independence. Services offered include holistic and individualised case management with a caseworker, Life Programs, vocational training, employment support, safe accommodation options and relocation services (See Appendix C).

A21 also provides funding and referrals for medical, dental and psychological support, accommodation, and other basic needs such as food and clothing through its Freedom Centre. The Freedom Centre serves as a drop-in centre to provide support for survivors of human

trafficking in a safe environment that provides the opportunity to build community with other survivors. In 2022, 17 new survivors entered the Aftercare Program, a stark increase to previous reporting years, with only nine and ten new survivors in 2021 and 2020 respectively. This noticeable increase can be attributed to a number of factors including in-person services returning to full operation after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in April 2022, as well as A21's robust professional training and targeted awareness events. Additionally, A21 hosted a 'Freedom Centre Expo' to present the services offered at the Freedom Centre to stakeholders and organisations in the counter-human trafficking field with the aim of increasing referrals.

## SURVIVOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the new survivors entering A21's care in 2022, South Africans comprised 88.2% with the remaining 11.8% being of Nigerian and Zimbabwean heritage. This contrasts with 2021 where South Africans constituted 100% of new survivors. The 2022 data is far more consistent with pre-Covid-19 trends, and A21 expects this continued diversity of survivor nationality in coming years.

Based on the demographics of survivors entering A21's Aftercare Program in 2022, the following recruitment methods were observed: sold by a friend or family (47.1%), false job opportunities (35.2%), loverboy method (11.8%), and recruitment by a 'perceived liberator/benefactor'<sup>11</sup> (5.9%). These recruitment tactics mirror those employed in 2021 as well. Survivors in A21's Aftercare Program were mainly trafficked for sex or labour, with sex trafficking accounting for 70% of cases. Other types of exploitation included domestic servitude and child sexual exploitation.



## FREEDOM CENTRE INCREASES RETENTION OF SURVIVORS IN A21'S AFTERCARE PROGRAM

A21 launched its Freedom Centre in December 2020 and completed its second full year of operation in 2022. The presence of the centre continues to provide overwhelming evidence of its need and effectiveness. One issue encountered in many survivor assistance

programs is early or premature exit. Since the launch of the Freedom Centre, A21 has seen a marked decline in survivors exiting the program prematurely, i.e. before their goals for independence have been met. In 2022, only two survivors prematurely exited the program, a 60% decrease from the previous year where five survivors exited. Survivors transitioning out of A21's Aftercare Program is significantly more favourable than 'exits' from the program. Those transition out after receiving effective services whereas 'exits' tend to occur suddenly, and without further contact, thereby increasing vulnerability to being re trafficked. Some of the survivors who transitioned out of care did so after stabilising and finding employment; still others transitioned out once they were ready to reintegrate and seek employment in their hometown fulfilling their ultimate goal from when they first entered A21's Aftercare Program. Across the year, A21 was able to support this process by conducting six domestic relocations for survivors ready to return home.

Survivors in A21's Aftercare Program continued to receive a range of direct services to achieve their ultimate goal of independence. A21 supported seven survivors with either emergency accommodation or other type of housing in one of A21's apartments. After receiving critical accommodation assistance from A21, two survivors displayed significant growth and movement towards their personal goals when they moved into their own independent residence. Life Programs facilitated by caseworkers as part of the weekly program in the Freedom Centre were com-

pleted by 64.7% of survivors, compared to 29% in 2021. Access to vocational training also increased in 2022. In partnership with Sparrow Society's Sew Boss Program, nine survivors completed a job training program.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this training and other opportunities, 38.2% of survivors in the program (13 survivors) started new employment in 2022, compared to 29% (9) in 2021.



## NHTH ASSISTS NATIONAL PROSECUTION AUTHORITY IDENTIFY TRAFFICKING VICTIMS FROM POTENTIAL SUSPECTS

The South African National Department of Social Development (DSD) sought the human trafficking expertise of the A21 operated NHTH, suspecting that two women from the Democratic Republic of Congo accused of smuggling were, in fact, victims of human trafficking. The National Prosecution Authority (NPA) had brought criminal charges against the women after the provincial DSD determined that the women were involved in smuggling. However, a Director at the National DSD contacted the NHTH as a reliable authority on identifying victims of human trafficking, after review of the case supported the women may actually be victims. Upon screening the women, the NHTH identified elements of human trafficking; the women had been recruited via

the promise of false jobs and had the intention to study in South Africa. Following their arrival in South Africa, the perpetrator subjected them to domestic servitude, for which they received no payment. The perpetrator restricted their freedom of movement, and they experienced constant physical, emotional and verbal abuse. The NHTH call specialists advocated on behalf of the women, sending a report to the investigating officer who reopened the case, and the NPA dismissed the smuggling charges. The two women are now being treated as victims of trafficking and are receiving aftercare services. Moreover, based on information provided by the victims, the prosecutor was able to bring trafficking charges against their actual trafficker.

## ENDNOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> Global Slavery Index. Walk Free. (2023, May 26). <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/> (last accessed June 14, 2023).
- <sup>2</sup> The National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) is a dedicated service to support victims of human trafficking and provide advice and assistance on human trafficking issues. Operated by A21 South Africa, the NHTH works in partnership with law enforcement, key government entities and public sector partners across the region. The NHTH is available to receive reports of suspected trafficking 24 hours a day, seven days a week through calls and electronic means. Reports are handled by call specialists, specifically trained in the area of human trafficking.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 22nd Ed., 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/>
- <sup>4</sup> The petrol price changes are as follows: R17,39 per litre in July 2021 to R26,74 per litre in July 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> The Household Affordability Index (2022). Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group. <https://pmbejd.org.za/index.php/household-affordability-index/>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/za/Policy-Brief---UNDP-SA---The-Impact-of-the-Ukraine-War-on-the-South-African-Economy.pdf>.
- <sup>7</sup> ECPAT, INTERPOL and UNICEF. (2022). *Disrupting Harm in South Africa: Evidence on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.
- <sup>8</sup> Rape Crisis Trust Cape Town is a nonprofit organisation with the mission to to promote safety in communities, to reduce the trauma experienced by rape survivors, to encourage the reporting of rape and to work actively to address flaws in legislation. One key aspect of their services is to provide counselling for anyone from the age of 14 years and upward who is affected by sexual violence – survivors and the people supporting them. <https://rapecrisis.org.za/>
- <sup>9</sup> SAMLIT is South Africa's Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force. It is South Africa's first public private partnership, between the banking sector and government regulatory authorities, aimed at enhancing collaboration and coordination in combating financial crime, money laundering and terrorist financing.
- <sup>10</sup> Provincial Task Teams (PTTs) are an official coordinating structure of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 2013 and are outlined in the National Policy Framework. PTTs are present in all nine provinces and develop provincial anti-trafficking responses in South Africa. Justice and Constitutional Development, Republic of South Africa, *Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons National Policy Framework*, April, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov.za/docs/other-docs/2019-TIP-NPF-10April2019.pdf>.
- <sup>11</sup> Recruitment by a 'perceived liberator/benefactor' occurs where a perpetrator promises to liberate someone from exploitation, harm, or hardship, only to then exploit them.
- <sup>12</sup> Sparrow Society is a nonprofit based in Cape Town, working to create viable and dignifying economic opportunities for women in a range of industries including textiles manufacturing, promotional products and even coffee. <https://sparrowsociety.co.za/>

# SOUTH AFRICA ANNUAL HOTLINE REPORT 2022

## ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

The National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) in South Africa is a dedicated service that supports victims of human trafficking and provides advice and assistance on human trafficking issues. Operated by A21 South Africa (A21), the NHTH works in partnership with law enforcement, key government entities, and public sectors across South Africa. The NHTH is available to receive reports of suspected trafficking 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through phone calls and electronic means. Reports are handled by call specialists specifically trained in the area of human trafficking, utilising a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach. Call specialists are equipped to respond to calls in English, Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and Shona, plus an additional 230 languages through a tele-interpreting service. The NHTH also offers a 'job vetting' service through which call specialists research potential job opportunities to determine their validity. The NHTH then provides potential applicants with feedback on their research findings, as well as safety advice to avoid being defrauded or otherwise exploited.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRENDS IN 2022

False job opportunities remain the most prevalent recruitment method for the third straight year. Of the human trafficking cases reported to the NHTH in 2022, 60% were confirmed trafficking cases involving recruitment by fraudulent means, either through false job opportunities or false promises. Recruitment through 'false promises' involves situations where traffickers lure victims into trafficking initially through promises to improve their current life circumstances. This type of recruitment can manifest in several ways so long as a victim leaves home to travel in reliance on that false promise. One victim confronted with health issues relocated to a different province under the belief that her medical expenses would be sponsored, only to be sex trafficked upon arrival. Other examples of false promises involve 'free' education opportunities such as scholarships or study abroad. The NHTH has received several requests to ascertain the validity of a number of study opportunities and scholarships.

Reports to the NHTH showcase a pattern of traffickers using the recession and economic instability in South Africa to lure desperate South Africans with employment opportunities which are actually exploitative. The South African government department 'Statistics South Africa' (Stats SA) released data that revealed that by the fourth quarter of 2022, 7.8 million persons in South Africa were unemployed and actively seeking employment.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, the NHTH researched 51 'job vetting' requests of potential employment opportunities with 37 (72.6%) determined to be fraudulent.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The NHTH received **3,374 CONTACTS IN 2022**
- **76.6%** of contacts were **HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED**, an 18.7% increase from 2021
- **SEX TRAFFICKING** remained the most common form of exploitation reported at **49.5%**
- **MALES** accounted for **20%** of confirmed cases, an increase from **5.3%** reported in 2021
- **391 POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING** were reported to the NHTH
- **42.7%** of all contacts were from the **GENERAL PUBLIC**
- **35.5%** of contacts to the NHTH originated from **GAUTENG PROVINCE**, with **30.9%** from the **WESTERN CAPE**
- **72.6%** of all jobs vetted were identified as **FRAUDULENT**
- The NHTH identified and assisted **50 VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING**
- **60%** of trafficking victims identified were recruited by **FALSE PROMISES OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Contacts to the National Human Trafficking Hotline comprise all incoming enquiries to the NHTH 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 South African National Human Trafficking Hotline relating to a potential human trafficking situation.

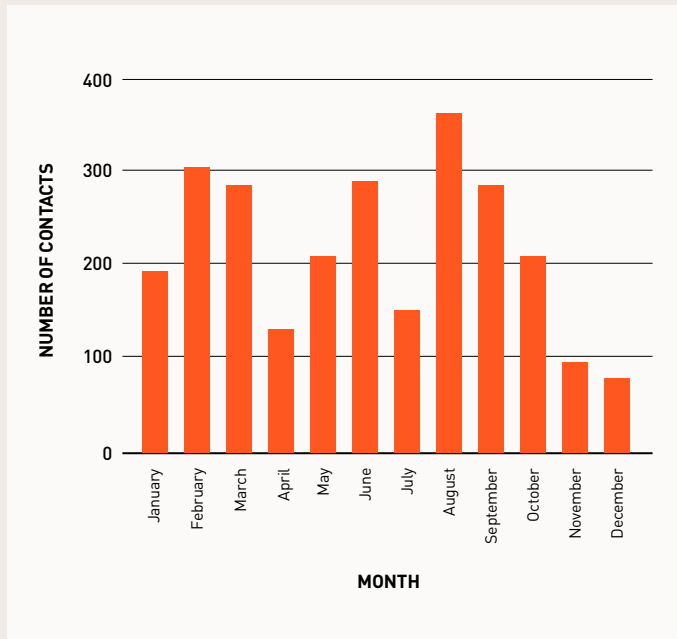
The statistics below are exclusively drawn from substantive contacts made to the NHTH from January - December 2022 concerning human trafficking matters. This report is not a reflection of all substantive calls to the NHTH which may include calls related to other high-risk crimes, labour exploitation, and other nontrafficking 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.



## OVERVIEW OF DATA<sup>2</sup>

In 2022, the NHTH received 3,374 contacts via phone, email, SMS and online web submissions. The number of contacts related to human trafficking increased by 18.7% from 2021 to 76.6% indicating an increase in the understanding of the NHTH's purpose and its services. Consistent with prior years, contacts decreased towards the end of the year as the holidays approached.



The above chart reflects the number of contacts to the Hotline.

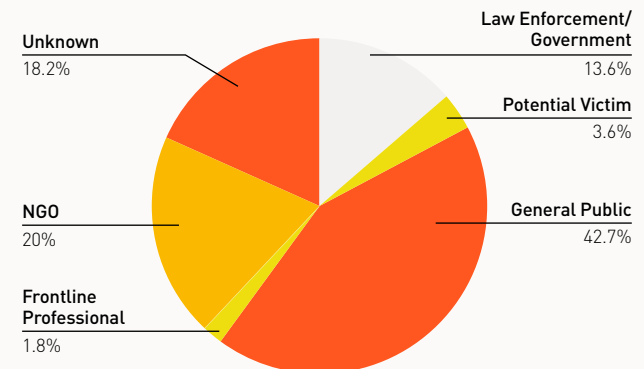
## CALLER DEMOGRAPHICS

The general public account for the highest percentage (42.7%) of contacts to the NHTH, suggesting community members' comfort with reporting human trafficking-related matters to a non-law enforcement body. Other explanations may include the willingness of the NHTH to accept anonymous reports and a lack of public confidence in local law enforcement. Unfortunately, there is a general fear of official complicity. Moreover, in several cases reported to the NHTH, victims have faced obstacles or a lack of support when reporting suspected trafficking cases directly to the local police station.

Throughout 2022, the NHTH focused on building relationships and networking with partner organisations and local law enforcement. As a result, there has been a 151.9% increase in contacts from law enforcement and government departments, as well as a 49.3% increase in contacts from the nongovernmental organisation (NGO) sector compared with 2021. This second consecutive increase for these groups since 2020 amounts to a 78.7% overall increase from 2020 to 2022. This is a result of an increased focus on partnerships both with long-standing partners of the NHTH network as well as establishing new relationships within the civil society sector and key government stakeholders across all nine provinces in South Africa and neighbouring countries. This concentrated focus has directly contributed to the increase in referrals to the NHTH and resulted in more victim identifications in 2022.

**'As coordinator of the Child Protection Empowerment Programme, I am grateful for the A21 hotline where members of our community can report concerns with regards to child trafficking as well as for the collaboration with A21 around particular cases. The hotline is a vital service in countering human trafficking and mobilising relevant services for human trafficking victims. Our hope is that the hotline will grow from strength to strength.'**

-Mariëtte Jacobs, Managing Director,  
Ezrah Community Training and Development



## VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Three hundred ninety-one potential victims were reported to the NHTH in 2022 across 110 human trafficking cases. Call specialists screened each report to identify elements of human trafficking and, as a result, directly assisted 50 confirmed victims out of trafficking situations. Once victims are identified, the NHTH refers the individual to A21 aftercare or the appropriate partner services provided in each province. Seventeen of the 50 survivors assisted out of trafficking in 2022 entered A21's Aftercare Program.

## AGE AND GENDER

Traffickers in South Africa continue to prey on women and children, some of the most vulnerable groups in the country. A common theme emerged in reported cases involving minors in 2022; families forced their children to work to provide for their household, a possible reflection of the current economic circumstances in South Africa. For example, two foreign national minors from a neighbouring African country were sent by their parents to work in Gauteng with



the understanding they would receive wages for their family’s basic needs. However, upon arrival, the siblings were forced to sell bread without pay, and subjected to abuse by their perpetrator.

Although the majority of victims reported to the NHTH remain female, there has been a rise in the number of male victims reported. In the current reporting year, males accounted for 20% of confirmed cases, which is a significant increase from the 5.3% reported in 2021. This is likely a result from an increase in labour exploitation related cases being reported as men have typically been more the commonly reported victims of labour rather than sex trafficking. For example, the NHTH received a forced labour tip where a man was forced to work on a farm in a small town in the Western Cape. He was unpaid and received only sufficient food for one meal a day. The NHTH conducted a telephonic screening, before referring the case to the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), the Department of Social Development (DSD), as well as the Department of Labour (DOL), who extracted the victim and found him safe accommodation. Through this report, the NHTH became aware of more widespread labour trafficking in this town and was able to utilise this situation to build relationships with different stakeholders there. These relationships ultimately led to an opportunity to host an awareness event in that community on human trafficking generally, and more specifically in recognising trafficking.

**VICTIM NATIONALITY**

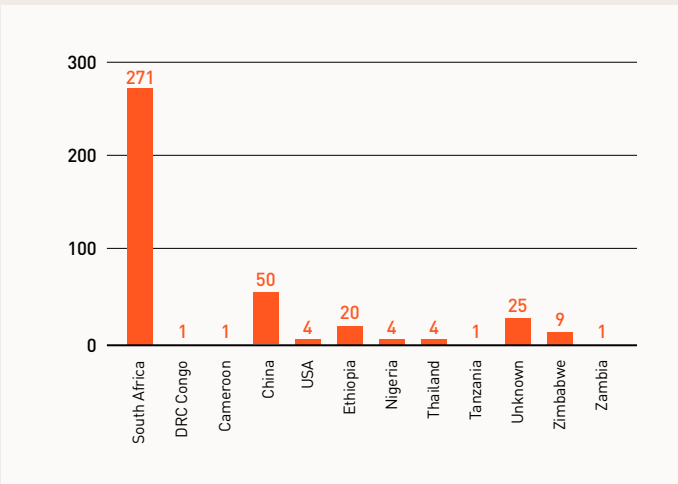
In 2022, South Africans constituted the majority (69.13%) of victims reported to the NHTH. Nonetheless, there has been a surge in reports of foreign national victims, consistent with pre-COVID-19 trends, with reports of victims recruited from different countries including China, Zimbabwe, Congo and Nigeria.

In November 2022, the DPCI requested the NHTH’s assistance in screening a large number of Chinese nationals discovered working in a factory, for labour exploitation. The factory that housed more than 50 Chinese nationals primarily specialised in producing steel resources for various machinery and construction equipment. More than 50 Chinese nationals worked either to maintain the machinery or as cleaners at the factory.

The NHTH call specialists screened a total of 32 potential Chinese victims, willing to be interviewed, using a tele-interpreting service and discovered the potential victims were either recruited through a company in China or heard about this factory position in South Africa from family or friends. The potential victims worked between nine and twelve hours a day, and lived in crowded, unhygienic dorms designed for one or two people, with at least five other people. A senior employer purchased food for the workers, but the workers were required to seek permission to eat. Pay was unequally distributed, and workers were forced to remain in the factory even when there was a pause in the available work. Although the employer promised to arrange their return to China, the employer withheld their visas and passports, preventing them from leaving the situation.

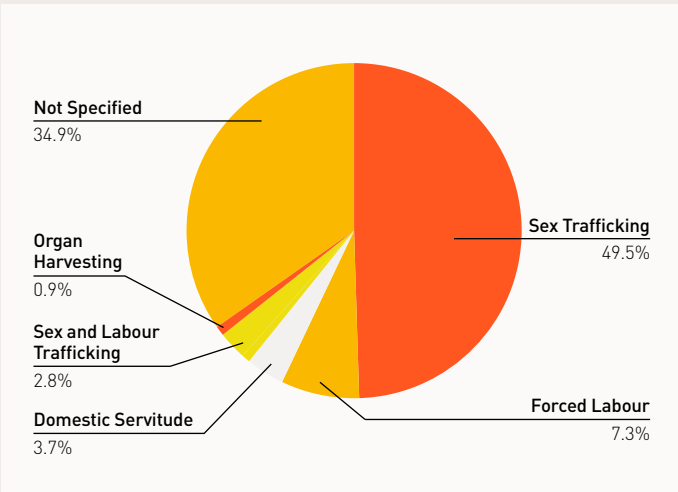
Many of the potential victims appeared apprehensive during the screening and provided limited information. Based on the limited information provided, the NHTH ultimately identified at least ten victims of trafficking. Although services were offered to the ten confirmed victims, they expressed a reluctance to be

separated from the other potential victims, and declined direct services. Consequently all the victims and potential victims were detained and deported back to China.

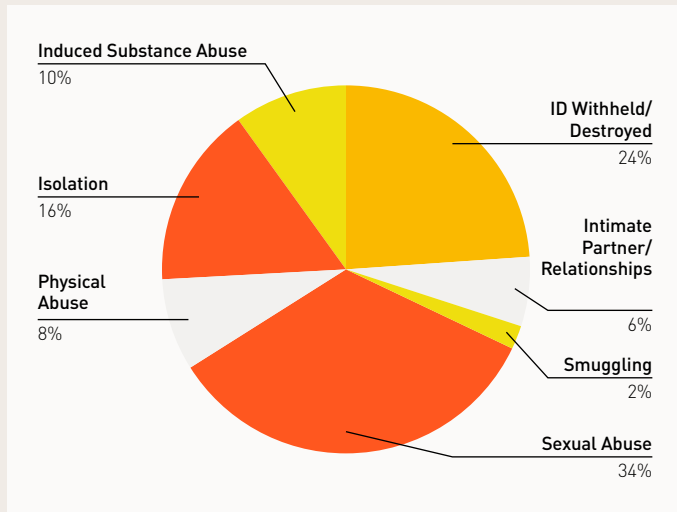


**EXPLOITATION TYPE**

While sex trafficking remained the most common form of exploitation reported to the NHTH accounting for 49.5% of all cases reported, it decreased from 2021 when it constituted 55.5% of cases. Forced labour accounted for 7.3% of cases reported in 2022, an increase from 5.5% from the prior year. Domestic servitude cases reported to the NHTH rose to 3.7% in 2022, a significant increase from only 0.7% reported in the previous year. Vulnerable individuals desperate for employment accept opportunities only to later discover themselves in an exploitative situation. In 2022, a case was reported to the NHTH regarding a woman recruited from South Africa to the Middle East to work as a domestic worker. Upon arrival, she was assigned to a family and worked for them for a few months. She worked long hours without pay, had no access to health care, and was not regularly provided food. Upon expressing her desire to leave, she was told of her obligation to repay the cost for her travel. She eventually received money from her family to give to her ‘employer’ so she could leave. Upon her return to South Africa, the NHTH provided the survivor with a referral for direct services.



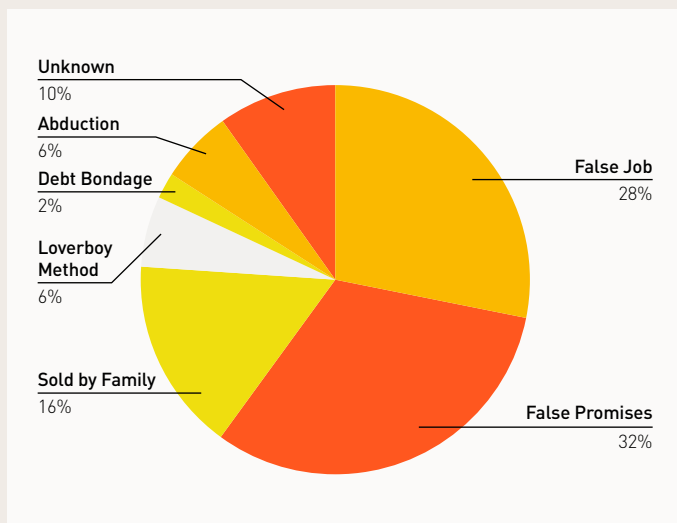
## METHODS OF CONTROL



Traffickers use various methods to control a victim recruited into a trafficking situation. Data captured by the NHTH show the most prevalent methods of control to be sexual abuse (34%), induced substance abuse (10%), isolation<sup>3</sup> (16%) and the withholding or destruction of documents (24%). In all confirmed sex trafficking cases reported to the NHTH, perpetrators forced victims to take drugs before forcing them to participate in commercial sex. Consequently, victims often form a drug dependency, thereby compelling them to remain in the exploitative situation.

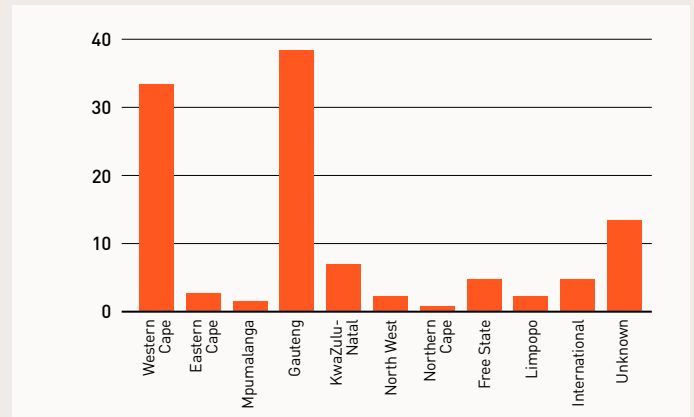
Withholding and destruction of victims' documents as a method of control, most commonly utilised by traffickers in labour exploitation cases, has increased by 352.8% in 2022. This significant increase is most likely a result of the increase in labour trafficking cases reported to the NHTH. Through withholding of documents, primarily of foreign national victims, traffickers are able to increase their control of victims. Victims are restricted not only from returning to their home country, but also from moving freely in the country of exploitation, hindering their ability to seek assistance or escape.

## RECRUITMENT METHODS



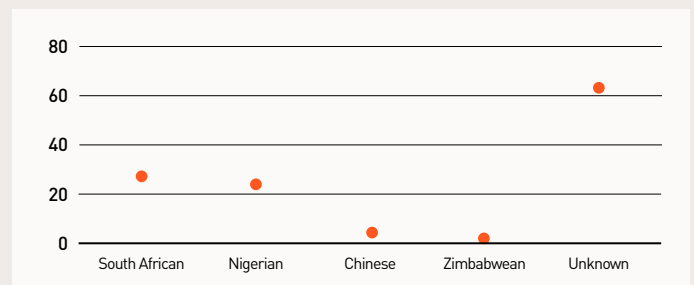
The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the South African economy since 2019, has caused a significant number of job losses and a lack of employment opportunities. Traffickers have been deceiving individuals with false job opportunities to lure them into an exploitative situation. Based on data from confirmed human trafficking cases, false promises (32%) and false job opportunities (28%) are the most prevalent recruitment methods. The percentage of recruitment based on false promises has increased by 102.5% since 2021. The NHTH has seen a wide-array of false job opportunities, including modelling, call centre agents, administrative roles as well as domestic worker jobs.

## CASE ORIGIN

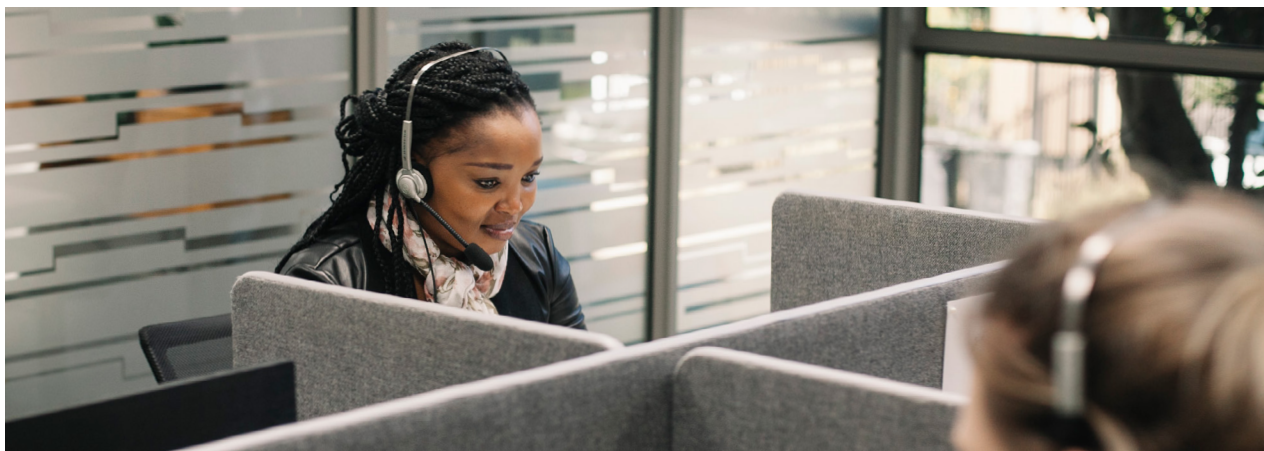


The most prevalent provinces traffickers recruit from remain Gauteng (35.5%) and Western Cape (30.9%). The NHTH has noted a common trend in 2022 whereby victims are recruited from various regions throughout South Africa and specifically brought to Brooklyn, Western Cape to be sex trafficked. In 2022 alone, the NHTH handled six cases involving sex trafficking of victims recruited from provinces such as Gauteng, North West, and Mpumalanga and brought to the Brooklyn area of Cape Town.

## PERPETRATOR DEMOGRAPHICS



South African (22.3%) and Nigerian (19.6%) perpetrators continue to account for the highest number of suspected traffickers in cases reported to the NHTH. A 42% increase in South African perpetrators compared to 2021 may be linked to the rise in cases involving victims sold by family members. In confirmed cases of trafficking, there has been a 100% increase in victims sold by family members compared to 2021. These cases primarily occurred in poverty-stricken communities where families lacking resources for basic necessities, ultimately sold their children to gang members in their local community.



## NEW YEAR'S EVE INTERVENTION

On New Year's Eve of 2021, the NHTH received a third-party tip regarding a sexually exploited minor female. The information provided in the tip advised a woman had tricked a 17-year old girl minor victim into travelling to an apartment in Gauteng province where traffickers were operating an illegal brothel. There, the minor victim was forced to engage in commercial sex acts by her trafficker, a Nigerian man. In addition to being trafficked in the illegal brothel, the trafficker also trafficked the minor victim in night clubs. The trafficker held her in an apartment where she had no freedom of movement, was abused regularly, and was forced to take drugs before being sold for sex.

According to the third-party tip, they feared official

complicity as the traffickers, also alleged drug dealers, had been arrested multiple times but had been released each time due to what the caller believed was bribery. The NHTH reported the case to the DPCI, the law enforcement entity responsive to complaints of official complicity. The DPCI responded immediately by conducting a raid of the premises within a day or two of being contacted by the NHTH, where they arrested four perpetrators. During the raid, not only did the DPCI safely extract the minor victim, but also discovered another adult victim of sex trafficking. Both victims were thereafter placed in shelters, and the four perpetrators were charged with contravening the Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013 for sexual exploitation.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Department: Statistics South Africa, Republic of South Africa, *Incidence of long-term unemployment among women is higher than the national average*. (Feb 28, 2023) Retrieved from: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=16113>

<sup>2</sup> To ensure data integrity, the data presented is extracted from reports submitted to the NHTH 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.

<sup>3</sup> Isolation may include physical isolation or deprivation of liberty, denying access to medical support, surveillance or control of the victim in public, and isolating the victim by moving them frequently from place to place.

*As a service situated to support those in exploitative situations, the South African National Human Trafficking Hotline is at the forefront of understanding emerging human trafficking trends in South Africa. Each year the NHTH commits to expanding its networks and partners across South Africa to ensure that an accurate scope of trafficking is reflected in the data collected. The NHTH welcomes new partners interested in counter human trafficking efforts in South Africa. Partnerships are vital not only to provide services to identified trafficking survivors and communities requesting training, but also to increase awareness about the services provided by the NHTH across South Africa.*



[info@0800222777.org.za](mailto:info@0800222777.org.za)

[www.0800222777.org.za](http://www.0800222777.org.za)

*The observations contained in this report are limited to information communicated to the NHTH during the reporting period. Nothing arising from the data should be interpreted as showing the full extent or prevalence of human trafficking in South Africa.*