

GLOBAL

As the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic continues in its second year of deadly impact and disruption, it ‘challenges national health systems, shutteres businesses large and small, and confines millions to their homes...’ leaving society’s ‘...most vulnerable groups exposed to its most destructive effects.’¹ When unexpected challenges threaten health stability, job security and mobility, individuals already living in precarious situations often become even more vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation. The increased vulnerability brought on from COVID-19 not only exacerbated health and economic challenges, but also increased challenges already faced by marginalised groups and trafficking survivors, as well as service providers. The A21 Campaign (A21), like many other organisations, experienced unexpected challenges throughout 2020, needing to quickly adapt service delivery and resources to work within COVID-19 restrictions amongst newly emerging and changing trends. This report aims to highlight the implications of COVID-19 on human trafficking in 2020 as experienced first-hand by A21 through its various offices around the world.

About the A21 Campaign

A21 is a global non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to combatting human trafficking using a three-pronged operational strategy, namely ‘Reach,’ ‘Rescue,’ and ‘Restore.’ ‘Reach’ programs focus on preventing human trafficking through strategic awareness and prevention efforts targeted to specific vulnerable groups, as well as the general public (see Appendix A). A21’s ‘Rescue’ operational strategy encompasses programs focused on intervention and identification of potential victims of trafficking, often through partnerships and active support of government efforts, as well as facilitating access to justice for survivors receiving direct aftercare services from A21 (see Appendix B). A21’s ‘Restore’ programs have been developed following extensive research into best practices in aftercare services around the world, to provide a holistic approach to empower survivors with the support and necessary tools to reach wholeness and independence (see Appendix C). The availability and degree of implementation of each program is specific to each country.

Currently, A21 has offices in 19 locations in 14 countries: Australia, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Denmark, Greece, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States.



In each of these countries, A21 equips individuals in the fight against human trafficking. A21 operates robust programs to combat human trafficking in a comprehensive manner focusing on vulnerable groups, individuals currently being victimised (both knowingly and unknowingly), and survivors who have exited their exploitative circumstances. While fundamental principles underlie all human trafficking situations, such as the use of some derivation of force, fraud or coercion, or the exploitation of a child, the types of human trafficking and exploitation in each country often contain differences by region, reflecting the varied vulnerabilities and social issues unique to each country. A21 applies a tailored approach to the issue in each country in the creation and application of its counter-trafficking strategy. This report explores in-depth reporting from eight of these frontline countries relating to the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking.

The Global Health Crisis of 2020

In January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a 'public health emergency of international concern' with the coronavirus officially declared a global pandemic in March 2020.² Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in late-2019 and throughout 2020, this unprecedented global health crisis has dramatically impacted governments, economies, and social structures throughout the world with devastating effects. As governments grappled with the health and socio-economic effects of COVID-19, many borders closed or were under strict controls, with varying degrees of lockdown restrictions. Imposed globally, these restrictions severely curtailed movement and limited social interaction in a bid to slow the spread of infection. While responses to COVID-19 have varied between countries, an interim report on the WHO's response to COVID-19 notes that as of 29 April 2020, 'over 100 countries had implemented either a full or partial lockdown, in an effort to contain the spread of the virus and reduce pressure on their health system'.³

The effort to curtail the spread of COVID-19 resulted in increased border restrictions by many countries around the world, greatly impacting global migration⁴ and travel in general.⁵ The pandemic also 'decimated tourism and business travel; severely curtailed labour migration; and dampened movement of all stripes, from that of international students to family reunification'.⁶ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that there were 'nearly 105,000 movement restrictions' implemented around the world in the year following the moment the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on the 11th of March 2020.⁷ The IOM also estimated that the pandemic, by mid-July 2020 had left 'nearly 3 million people stranded sometimes without access to consular assistance, means to

ensure they did not slip into irregular status or sufficient resources to meet basic needs'.⁸ The pandemic also caused 'massive economic and social shocks' around the world, with many workers facing 'the prospect of unemployment and loss of their incomes and livelihoods'.⁹

The global pandemic quickly forced governments throughout the world into states of emergency, and affected all parts of society including all aspects of human trafficking. The pandemic increased vulnerabilities of already vulnerable or marginalised individuals, created obstacles to intervention, and depleted resources for identified survivors in need. As a global organisation, the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted A21's operations in its outworking of national and international counter-trafficking strategies. In response, A21 offices worldwide swiftly modified strategies and programs in light of rapidly changing environments and needs, to provide continuity of services in an effort to ensure stability and resources during this critical period.

In the midst of delivering modified programs and services, A21 witnessed first-hand the impact of the pandemic both directly and indirectly on human trafficking. Traffickers and exploiters forced to change their business practices by the pandemic, altered their recruitment methods and means of control.¹⁰ As recruitment methods shifted, traffickers also tightened means of control, with intensification of surveillance, violence and isolation.¹¹

Amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19, it became clear that the pandemic was not curtailing human trafficking and exploitation, but rather increasing obstacles for counter-trafficking efforts.

INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT & INCREASED VULNERABILITIES TO FALSE JOBS

Lockdown and COVID-19 related restrictions in countries across the world resulted in widespread unemployment, increasing vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking. Financial insecurity or debt as a result of unstable employment or economic disadvantage is often leveraged by traffickers, and use of this vulnerability occurred on a widespread scale during COVID-19. Many people were victimised in their attempt to improve their situation when fraudulent recruitment agencies offered false employment or demanded high fees and fines.¹² Economic turmoil can increase vulnerability to trafficking through desperation and acceptance of unregulated or informal work. A21 operated hotlines received countless requests for employment screening to determine the validity of job opportunities. Review of these requests revealed the advertisement of suspicious employment opportunities which required travel to

other countries without concern about closed borders or the need for valid visas or other legal documents.

As both adults and children moved online for work, schooling and entertainment purposes during the pandemic, one noted trend was the increased use of the internet to advertise false employment opportunities, in an attempt to recruit, traffick and otherwise exploit. False job opportunities were posted on social media and other online platforms to entice individuals to travel for possible employment. Despite clear red flags, individuals desperate for a chance of employment appeared to disregard the potential for exploitation and continued to respond to these suspicious online employment opportunities. Other perpetrators advertised false job opportunities online in an attempt to forge relationships with the ultimate intent to produce sexually explicit materials. Using the prospect of employment, perpetrators engaged with both minors and adults to groom and manipulate, resulting in the creation of online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) or other sexually explicit materials. A21 worked diligently to address this issue by distributing awareness and prevention materials focused on safely seeking employment, providing employment vetting through hotlines, and active intervention attempts when permitted, through proactive victim identification operations.¹³

IMPACT ON SURVIVORS

The state of emergency of countries around the world, the subsequent economic crises, and the immediate needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, stressed existing government infrastructure as governments struggled to urgently adapt pre-existing services in a safe manner consistent with COVID-19 restrictions, while simultaneously responding to the ripple effect of the pandemic in various aspects of society. As governments responded to the crises caused by the pandemic, one tangible impact was seen in the scarcity of available resources for the most vulnerable, including survivors of trafficking. Government and NGO service providers became overwhelmed by need, and with restrictions, reached capacity quickly or shut down due to COVID-19 issues, further limiting available services and referral options for survivors in need of immediate assistance.

COVID-19 Requirements

Some countries subjected recently identified survivors in the midst of exiting their trafficking situation to rigid COVID-19 requirements, such as testing negative for COVID-19 before receiving basic assistance from law enforcement or service providers. Despite imposing such restrictions, government entities neither provided access to nor guidance on the acceptable execution of such COVID-19 protocols in order to facilitate survivors' recovery to safety. In such cases, A21 caseworkers worked to both purchase and facilitate access to COVID-19 tests, personal protective

equipment, assistance with quarantine, and anything else procedurally required to support the stabilisation of survivors exiting their trafficking situation.

Housing Shortages

Occupancy and social distance restrictions consistent with COVID-19 guidelines quickly resulted in housing shortages for the most vulnerable in society, including trafficking survivors. Across the board, many shelters either closed or significantly reduced their permitted occupancy during this time in alignment with government restrictions. Quarantine and COVID-19 testing requirements instituted by many shelters resulted not only in delays, but in gaps of services available to survivors in need of immediate housing. On more than one occasion, many of A21's country offices provided emergency housing in the form of motels/hotels during parts of quarantine or while awaiting space at a shelter. Housing shortages occurred not only at the urgent shelter level, but for those that provided longer stays as well. While housing was in high demand for all survivors, shelters for male survivors, which historically experience shortages, were especially scarce.



Mental Health Challenges

Survivors in A21's Aftercare program, along with the rest of the world, were subjected to their countries' lockdown requirements, and like many during this period, experienced a range of mental health challenges due to the isolation. However, unlike others, many survivors of trafficking were already in the midst of processing their trauma from being trafficked, or other pre-existing trauma which had contributed to their vulnerability to trafficking. Some survivors in A21's Aftercare program disclosed that their traffickers had used isolation to condition and control them during their trafficking and that consequently, mandatory lockdown and isolation served to retrigger that trauma. A21 caseworkers increased emotional support to many survivors who found aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as social isolation or economic insecurity, difficult to overcome.

The legal systems throughout the world initially responded by shutting down courts and delaying court cases, as they determined the best way to adjust future proceedings. While many adjusted within a few months to ensure the continuation of criminal prosecutions,

many countries delayed court cases indefinitely resulting in increased anxiety and trauma to survivors expected to testify. Many survivors expressed a desire to move forward in their lives, but felt impeded from doing so due to their pending court cases.

Economic Impact

The devastating economic impact of the pandemic affected not only those vulnerable to being trafficked, but also survivors who had exited their trafficking situations. Survivors receiving aftercare services from A21 expressed concern about lack of employment opportunities. A number of survivors in A21's Aftercare program delayed their graduation from A21's program either as a result of anticipated employment no longer being available, or difficulty in finding employment. One repatriated survivor who had just started receiving services from A21, even expressed the possibility of travelling back to the country of exploitation in the hopes of employment due to her family's pressure for income. In response, A21 worked closely with survivors in its Aftercare program to obtain proper employment in the midst of limited opportunities, with over 70 survivors successfully securing employment in 2020 despite the pandemic. The economic implications of the pandemic also extended into additional expenses, including COVID-19 testing, personal protective equipment, and the need for electronic devices and access to the internet as all services and communication appeared to move online. A21 provided these items and services to all survivors enrolled in its country's Aftercare program, as needed.

Repatriation Difficulties

Border closures in part or whole at various points throughout 2020 caused extreme difficulties in facilitating the repatriation of survivors for many reasons. The unexpected demands and urgent responses caused by the pandemic stressed existing government structures resulting in delays in other services, including the necessary government processes to facilitate repatriations, such as issuance of travel documents for survivors amongst others. Delays or in some cases, cancellations of flights, further complicated repatriation efforts. In one case, the unavailability of commercial flights resulted in extensive coordination of the governments of the source and destination countries, and the ultimate issuance of a charter flight in order to facilitate a survivor's repatriation. In other cases, difficulties in obtaining travel documents, coordinating quarantine and COVID-19 testing efforts, resulted in a two-week delay for the repatriation of a survivor. Similar delays were faced by survivors in destination countries trying to repatriate back to countries where A21 operates. During these delays, survivors continued to need provision, including housing and basic needs.

While A21 was able to successfully address these needs directly, or through government or partner organisations, these pandemic related challenges significantly increased expenses, time and effort for all involved, in order to ensure provision of the same services available pre-pandemic.

IDENTIFICATION CHALLENGES

Governments throughout the world worked quickly to allocate and divert resources to address the alarming safety considerations created by the pandemic. Simultaneously, varying degrees of COVID-19 restrictions throughout 2020 such as mandated business closures and lockdowns, occupancy limits and social distancing, resulted in vacancy in public areas, and decreased opportunities to report suspected trafficking. In some countries, law enforcement initiated victim identification operations decreased significantly as a result of the pandemic. Other countries overwhelmed by the needs created by the pandemic, diverted resources from counter-trafficking efforts to respond to immediate pandemic needs. Personnel, including law enforcement officers were also affected due to exposure to COVID-19, and quarantine requirements, leading to law enforcement shortages, hindering counter-trafficking efforts. Closure of legal brothels in compliance with COVID-19 regulations did not hinder the operations of illegal brothels, which merely moved to private residences, but did result in a decrease of reports of potential trafficking. Although the reason for the reduced reporting is unclear, as a result of strict lockdowns, the general population decreased its activities and public presence. This necessarily diminished opportunities to observe suspicious activity. Moreover, in Greece in particular, historically many reports of suspected trafficking originated from clients of legal brothels, which were closed during the pandemic. Any 'clients' of illegal brothels would clearly be violating the law and less inclined to submit a report. That, along with the significant decrease of public activity, likely contributed to the reduction in reports, evincing that the pandemic did not stop the trafficking of persons, but merely increased the difficulty in detection.

In a number of countries, A21 observed that in contrast to previous years, 2020 yielded a larger percentage of domestic trafficking survivors than foreign national survivors encountered. It is unclear however whether closed borders resulted in less influx of vulnerable foreign nationals, or whether decreased identification efforts across the board resulted in a lower number of identified foreign nationals, or other reasoning.

COVID-19 INCREASES VULNERABILITY AMONGST MIGRANTS

The inability for many people to travel back home to family and social support, left many already vulnerable populations in even more precarious situations.

Unemployment ‘amplified the socio-economic vulnerability of those who depend on mobility for survival’,¹⁴ with individuals left unable to work due to local lockdown measures. Many countries implemented stimulus packages for their citizens.¹⁵ However, non-citizens and undocumented populations were often not included and therefore, unable to receive government assistance. This placed an even greater economic strain on many families and individuals, increasing risk of exploitation. The pandemic and resulting restrictions of movement also left many low-skilled migrants ‘disproportionately affected by the pandemic’ having to stay in crowded living conditions.¹⁶ Some migrant communities/camps around the world experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks were completely barricaded and cordoned off with barbed wire or guards,¹⁷ forced to live in cramped situations, increasing their exposure to the virus. In Greece for example, refugee camps situated on the Greek islands during the pandemic experienced significant overpopulation, with one island housing approximately 13,000 people in a camp designed to host 3,000.

Travel restrictions also limited the ‘ability of displaced people to seek refuge’,¹⁸ leaving many individuals in vulnerable and unsafe situations and others more dependent on ‘intermediaries and facilitators, from employment agencies to smugglers’.¹⁹ The combination of desperation and border closures also ‘pushed smugglers to use more dangerous routes and raise their prices’,²⁰ meaning more people explored irregular forms of migration, placing people at an even higher risk of being exploited. These trends were witnessed by some of A21’s staff after interviewing individuals who disclosed known community members using irregular migration channels due to closed borders, in an attempt to find employment outside their country.

INCREASE IN ONLINE EXPLOITATION

As countries responded to COVID-19 by shutting down non-essential businesses and enforcing lockdown restrictions all across the world, much of society, including perpetrators, moved online. As discussed in more detail previously, the pandemic-induced economic crisis resulted in unprecedented global unemployment causing an increase of false job opportunities, with many being advertised online. The increase in the use of the internet to facilitate exploitation was not limited to false jobs, but also to groom and sexually exploit both adults and children, or on occasion to sell sexual services. In South Africa for example, social media accounts were used to ‘auction’ off women for sexual services specifically for companionship during the lockdown. These services were advertised as a ‘charitable contribution’ for women in need of work due to loss of wages resulting from lockdown restrictions.

Law enforcement globally have recognised that school closures, mass lockdowns of cities and social isolation, have also led to an increase of online child sexual exploitation through social media, video games,

and other online activity.²¹ Consistent with that prediction, A21 observed a rising trend in online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) cases in Thailand in 2020 compared to the previous year. Moreover, in 2020, A21 received more requests for resources, and in particular those addressing online child exploitation, from governments, schools, community groups and other NGOs, further substantiating the increase in online exploitation during the pandemic.



While the pandemic brought the world to a standstill in many ways, traffickers shifted to continue to recruit and victimise individuals in spite of the restrictions. Counter-trafficking organisations, including A21, in turn shifted their operational strategies in response to ensure continued services and protections to the vulnerable, the victimised attempting to exit their exploitative situations and identified survivors working towards stabilisation and independence.

A21’s Response

As a direct response to the impact of the pandemic, A21 adjusted its operations to varying degrees depending on the country and consistent with national regulations, in an attempt to provide continuous service to vulnerable populations and identified survivors. Often, A21 filled gaps created unexpectedly by newly implemented COVID-19 restrictions. Such gaps included, but were not limited to, coordinating COVID-19 testing for survivors, including payment as needed; providing various types of housing, ranging from emergency accommodation such as hotel or hostel placement to longer-term accommodation such as financial assistance for rent or placement in an A21 apartment; and provision of electronic equipment such as laptops or tablets, and accompanying internet data, to ensure survivors enrolled in A21’s Aftercare program continued to receive services remotely.

Through these adjustments, A21 provided ongoing aftercare services to 302 survivors, including the entry of 130 new survivors into its Aftercare program in 2020. Moreover, despite challenges of repatriation in 2020, A21 assisted in the successful repatriation of 14 survivors. Finally, in the face of economic challenges posed by the pandemic in 2020, over 70 survivors secured employment and 18 survivors graduated from A21's Aftercare program, with sufficient resources to live independently.

A21 continued its intervention efforts, albeit in modified capacity, resulting in a total of 235 victimised individuals assisted in 2020 through various identification efforts, as well as via referrals where A21 played a part in the care or onward referral of already identified survivors.²² Despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, A21 still continued to proactively coordinate and support the identification of those victimised by trafficking through three main programs: A21 Hotlines, outreach activities through its Child Advocacy Centres (CAC) and coordinated multi-agency identification operations. As a result of these efforts, A21 was directly involved in the identification of 139 victimised individuals in 2020. Although in-person identification operations, usually conducted alongside law enforcement, greatly decreased in 2020, A21 still participated intermittently throughout 2020 upon request in some countries with necessary safety measures in place. Adjustment to frontline professional training from in-person to online, resulted in 101 trainings conducted by A21 staff globally, and a total of 2,685 professionals trained. Interestingly, the availability of training online resulted in a broader reach and higher attendance of professionals, as the ease of online access accommodated many busy schedules, and travel no longer had to be coordinated. For instance, in the UK, health industry professionals with limited schedules due to the strain caused by the pandemic, expressed a preference for online training in order to provide flexibility around work schedules, resulting in double the number of participants in sessions, as compared to previous years.

A21 also adjusted its prevention and awareness efforts to conduct its programs online. Through modification of its human trafficking curriculum, Bodies Are Not Commodities (BANC), to an online platform, more than 728,000 students used A21's BANC curriculum and accompanying educational resources, which contain targeted content aligned with nationally contextualised education standards for each country. Moreover, understanding the new vulnerabilities resulting from increased online exploitation, A21 also created new resources in 2020 addressing online safety, as well as launched a free digital course, 'Human Trafficking: A Global Crisis', to help further educate the general public about the realities of human trafficking and online exploitation. This digital course utilised videos from A21's

existing Human Trafficking Awareness Program (HTAP) that informed an estimated 758,000 people globally. Aspects of this program were also highlighted on social media in the week leading up to July 30th, World Day Against Trafficking, where A21 had record-breaking engagement, shares, awareness, and people speaking about human trafficking, reaching over 30 million people through digital media. In total, more than 2,400,000 children and adults were reached with awareness through A21's human trafficking presentations, online materials, and digital courses around the world, reaching 980,000 more individuals than in 2019. A21 also translated and contextualised its Primary Prevention Program (PPP) into seven languages, and 11 versions, and made them available online. In 2020, over 891,000 children are estimated to have participated in the program.

Finally, in lieu of A21's global annual in-person awareness event 'Walk For Freedom' (WFF) which ordinarily takes place in 52 countries, in recognition of the European Union Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October 2020), A21 hosted its first ever 'Global Freedom Summit' (GFS). The GFS utilised an online platform on EU Anti-Trafficking Day to educate the general public with basic human trafficking information as well as to provide avenues for the general public to learn how to further combat human trafficking. The GFS resulted in over 2,000 local COVID-19 safe events organised across 71 countries, reaching an estimated 100 million people through digital media. Through the use of online platforms and digital media, A21's GFS allowed more people to be reached with an anti-human trafficking message than had been reached in previous years.



Conclusion

While A21 was able to quickly adapt its programs to COVID-19 restrictions to ensure continuation of its operations globally, the pandemic had clear adverse effects overall on global efforts to combat human trafficking and exploitation. Although traffickers continued to exploit individuals, with government resources diverted to address the health emergency, and with strict restrictions in place globally, the need for NGOs to continue operations was clearly highlighted. Notwithstanding continued operations, as a result of the challenges presented, the number of survivors both identified and entering into A21's Aftercare program decreased globally in 2020. The

movement of trainings and awareness activities online however, resulted in an increase in the number of front-line professionals and general public being educated and trained on key anti-human trafficking information. Moreover, throughout all of A21's operational countries, collaboration between stakeholders amongst others increased significantly in response to the decrease in resources, as it became quickly apparent that only through working together would human trafficking be deterred. A21 eagerly anticipates that newly formed partnerships and relationships during the pandemic, will continue to grow and strengthen counter-trafficking collaborative efforts in the years to come.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and social affairs (2021) Covid-19 <https://www.un.org/en/desa/covid-19> <https://www.un.org/en/desa/covid-19>.

² World Health Organization (WHO) (2021), Timeline: WHO's COVID-19 response (last accessed 27/3/2021); See also, WHO (2020), Speeches: Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19, 11 March 2020

³ Felicity Harvey, et al. (2020) Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. Interim report on WHO's response to COVID-19, January – April 2020. 3

⁴ There are an estimated 258 million migrants globally, comprising of many different groups of people, including: migrant workers, international students, refugees, irregular migrants, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and trafficked and exploited persons who may have been taken across international borders: International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021a) Global Migration trends. Global Migration Indicators 2018. <https://www.iom.int/global-migration-trends>

⁵ International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021b) Global Mobility Restriction Overview Weekly Update (22nd February 2021), COVID-19 Mobility Impacts Update Series. 2. See also, Migration Data Portal (2021). Migration data relevant for the COVID-19 pandemic (10 March 2021). <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic>.

⁶ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021). COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020. Migration Policy Institute and International Organization for Migration (April 2021), 5. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/covid-19-and-the-state-of-global.pdf>

⁷ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021). COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020. Migration Policy Institute and International Organization for Migration (April 2021), 5. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/covid-19-and-the-state-of-global.pdf>

⁸ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021), 2.

⁹ International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) Policy Brief, May 2020. A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. 2 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745337.pdf

¹⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2020), Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking In Persons https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf

¹¹ OSCE ODIHR and UN Women (2020) Guidance: Addressing emerging human trafficking trends and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/guidance-addressing-emerging-human-trafficking-trends-and-consequences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic>

¹² IOM (2015) Debt Bondage Human Trafficking https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/MAD/07312017/Newfactsheets-DebtBondage.pdf

¹³ 'Victim identification operations' as referenced throughout this report defines efforts to intervene in possible exploitative situations. 'Victims' as referenced in this phrase, include a range of individuals including not only those being actively trafficked, but also 'potential victims', which encompass those in the process of being initially approached, groomed, or recruited, or certain vulnerable populations such as refugees, irregular migrants, and certain marginalised ethnic groups that have been historically targeted by traffickers.

¹⁴ ILO (2020) at 3.

¹⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) Policy Brief, May 2020. A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. 2

¹⁶ Migration Data Portal, Migration data relevant for the COVID-19 pandemic (10 March 2021). <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic>.

¹⁷ See related news articles: <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/health-environment/article/3116773/thailand-outbreak-among-migrant-workers-highlights>; <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/07/coronavirus-doesnt-respect-barbed-wire-concern-mounts-for-greek-camps>; <https://www.refugees-international.org/reports/2020/4/2/rohingya-refugee-camps-in-bangladesh-restrictions-on-communication-fencing-and-covid-19>; <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-europes-forgotten-roma-at-risk/a-53019522>

¹⁸ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021). COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020. Migration Policy Institute and International Organization for Migration (April 2021), 2. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/covid-19-and-the-state-of-global.pdf>

¹⁹ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021).

²⁰ Meghan Benton, et al. (2021).

²¹ INTERPOL (2020) Threats and Trends, Child Sexual Exploitation Abuse: COVID-19 Impact (September, 2020), 8. <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.interpol.int/en/content/download/15611/file/COVID19%2520-%2520Child%2520Sexual%2520Exploitation%2520and%2520Abuse%2520trends.pdf&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1623159005552000&usq=AOvVaw2kFf6Fz5fensjiROseFAWM>.

²² This number reflects the total number of survivors assisted through any intervention program of A21. See Appendix B for an in-depth description of these programs.