

Anette Brunovskis and Rebecca Surtees

Vulnerability and exploitation along the Balkan route: Identifying victims of human trafficking in Serbia



Anette Brunovskis and Rebecca Surtees

Vulnerability and exploitation along the Balkan route: Identifying victims of human trafficking in Serbia

© Fafo 2017

ISBN 978-82-324-0370-7

ISSN 2387-6859

Cover photo: Peter Biro /ECHO

Cover page: Fafo Information Office

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations	4
Introduction	5
The approach	6
The use of terms and definitions	8
The Balkan route	11
Exploring trafficking risk and vulnerability along the Balkan route	12
Types of exploitation	12
Points of vulnerability – exploitation at different stages of the journey	14
Trafficking triggers flight. From trafficking victim to migrant/refugee.....	15
Human trafficking <i>en route</i> . Trafficked because migrants/refugees need to keep going	16
Trafficking in transit. Exposure to human trafficking in migration/refugee settings	17
Challenges to identification of trafficking vulnerability and exploitation	21
The visibility and invisibility of trafficking risk and vulnerability.....	21
Gendered assumptions of vulnerability	24
Vulnerability linked to nationality and ethnicity	25
Overlapping roles. Vulnerability and exploitation	26
Reluctance to be identified; identification does not offer what people want or need	27
Conclusion and recommendations	29
Bibliography	34

Acronyms and abbreviations

CYI	Centre for Youth Integration
EU	European Union
FSU	Former Soviet Union
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
TIP	Trafficking in persons
TRP	Temporary residence permit
UASM	Unaccompanied and separated minor
UN	United Nations
VoT	Victim of trafficking

Introduction

In recent years, the flow of migrants and refugees into Europe has significantly increased. This has primarily involved a dramatic influx of Syrian, Iraqi and Afghani migrants/refugees who have moved through the Balkans (often referred to as “the Balkan route”) in their attempt to reach and resettle in northern Europe. Along the way and at various stages of their journeys and flights, many of these migrants and refugees are exposed to different risks, vulnerabilities and exploitation, including, in some cases, human trafficking. And yet, to date, there has been limited empirical evidence of when, why and how vulnerability to human trafficking arises in mass movements of migrants and refugees¹ and how new patterns of vulnerability and exploitation challenge established procedures for identification of and assistance to trafficking victims. More knowledge and evidence of these risk and vulnerability factors are essential to better inform improved policy and programmatic responses in the fields of migration, asylum and human trafficking. Furthermore, current discussions and media coverage often conflate human trafficking and human smuggling, which are not only separate legal categories but also require fundamentally different policy and practical responses. Against this backdrop, it is important, indeed urgent, that an understanding of these complex issues and the related policies and programmes are empirically anchored.

This paper contributes to this emerging body of knowledge by presenting different experiences of trafficked migrants and trafficked refugees who have moved to and through Serbia over the past two years. The paper also explores the different ways and situations in which migrants and refugees have become vulnerable and been subjected to human trafficking while *en route* or in transit in Serbia as well as challenges and barriers to their formal identification and assistance as victims of human trafficking.

Amongst migrants and refugees who are staying temporarily in Serbia there is a great fluidity in terms of these different categories; there is neither a linear nor obvious trajectory between the identities of “migrant”, “refugee” and “trafficking victim”. For some individuals, trafficking exploitation led them to become migrants or refugees. In others cases, migrants or refugees were trafficked at some stage of their journey or flight. This paper provides an overview of some of the trafficking pathways that have been endured by migrants and refugees who have transited through or were accommodated in Serbia over the past two years. These cases are far from exhaustive; many more examples of trafficking vulnerability and exploitation have likely been experienced in this period in the country and along the Balkan route more broadly. However, this paper is a starting point in building the evidence base on this critical issue by presenting a

¹ Exceptions include an ICMPD 2015 study on the impact of the Syrian war on human trafficking (ICMPD, 2015); IOM’s prevalence indication survey on human trafficking and other exploitative practices (IOM, 2016) and Miriam van Reizen and Conny Rijken’s study of human trafficking in the Sinai (Reizen & Rijken, 2015).

range of experiences documented to date as well as analysing and disentangling these discrete and yet overlapping identities and legal categories.

Moreover, as the migrant/refugee situation in the Balkans continues to evolve, vulnerability and risk may also change and evolve, translating into other forms of human trafficking. The dynamic nature of (forced and voluntary) migration means that responses to vulnerability and need amongst migrants and refugees must be flexible and rapidly adjust to new and changing circumstances, including as they relate to other dynamic issues like human trafficking. This has become starkly relevant in the context of the massive migration and refugee flow that has unfolded in the Balkan region over the past two years. And in these emergent and specific circumstances, human trafficking does not necessarily follow the same patterns as it has previously, nor even follow commonly understood vulnerabilities in general trafficking discourse. Vulnerability and risk take different forms and mean different things for people who are on the move and indeed in flight as compared with people who are vulnerable within their own communities and in countries where they have legal status and access to rights and protections. Human trafficking within a context of the massive and rapid movement of migrants and refugees and widespread human smuggling may not be easily recognisable as human trafficking. This is both because it may “look” different from “typical” forms of trafficking and because the circumstances of mass migration/flight (i.e. swift passage through a country, mixed nationalities, lack of a common language, lack of trust in authorities) make it difficult for frontline responders to gain an immediate and thorough knowledge of each individual’s circumstances and vulnerabilities, including when these rise to the level of human trafficking. Furthermore, the boundaries between human trafficking and human smuggling are already challenging to implement in practice on the frontlines of identification and intervention (Skilbrei & Tveit, 2008) and may become less clear in cases where migrants/refugees have been subjected to violence and/or extortion by smugglers, which may or may not meet the criteria for trafficking.

This research has been undertaken in collaboration with Serbian NGOs Atina and Centre for Youth Integration (CYI), which, for many years, have assisted trafficking victims and, more recently, have assisted migrants and refugees staying in and transiting through Serbia. In assisting migrants and refugees these NGOs pay particular attention to especially vulnerable groups, including trafficking victims. As such, they have worked with many different trafficking victims, refugees and migrants over the years, including those who may straddle these different identities and legal categories at various stages of their lives and journeys. The paper was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The approach

Trafficking cases and patterns are based on data collected by NGOs Atina and CYI, our partner organisations in Serbia, over the past two years in the context of their frontline work with trafficking victims, refugees and migrants in Serbia. This data is comprised of case files of trafficked migrants/refugees compiled by frontline NGO staff working with and assisting the migrant/refugee population in the country. Both organisations have been – and are – involved in

current efforts to aid the migrant/refugee population in Serbia. They work in different settings to provide a range of services to migrants and refugees including through child-friendly spaces in drop-in centres, undertaking case management and cultural mediation in refugee/asylum centres, operating mobile teams at border crossings and providing assistance in shelters and semi-independent living settings. Both organisations also work on the identification and assistance and long-term reintegration of trafficking victims in Serbia and provide a raft of comprehensive reintegration services, including through a transition housing programme, at day centres and through field support teams. As such, NGOs Atina and CYI are uniquely positioned to provide concrete and first-hand information about this issue and have valuable experience in working with these groups of vulnerable persons.

Case data collected by Atina and CYI were shared with us in anonymised form for review, systemising, coding and analysis, according to ethical protocols with respect to confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. We conducted discussions with frontline staff, undertaking a case-by-case analysis during fieldwork in Serbia in October 2016. We then went on to systematise and analyse the data sets, identifying different categories of human trafficking cases documented and assisted by the NGOs,² within the migrant/refugee population. This also involved pinpointing the different forms that human trafficking may take in the context of mass migration/flights as well as where, when and why in the process of movement or flight that migrants and refugees had been at risk, including when this had translated into human trafficking. The final analysis and presentation in this paper is based on a selection of 32 cases that represented different patterns and experiences of human trafficking as well as different challenges in detection/identification of victims and assistance provision. An important part of our data is also our discussions with staff at Atina and CYI over a period of several months about both successes and challenges in the identification and assistance of human trafficking cases in the context of their frontline work.

² While recognised and assisted as trafficking cases by the NGOs, these victims were not officially identified as victims of trafficking by the State agency tasked with victim identification (Centre for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking). Because the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking is the only institution in Serbia that can formally identify trafficking victims, these individuals could not be assisted as trafficking victims as they are considered to be “presumed” victims of trafficking.

The use of terms and definitions

Migrant and refugee. A **refugee** is defined in the 1951 United Nations *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (and the 1967 *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*)³ as any person who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Article 1.A.2)

There is no universally accepted definition of **migrant** and disparate descriptions abound. Migrants may be defined by foreign birth, by foreign citizenship or by their movement into a new country to stay temporarily (sometimes for as little as a year) or to settle for the long-term. In addition, migrant is sometimes distinguished from, and sometimes includes, foreign nationals who are seeking asylum (Anderson & Blinder, 2017).

The choice of appropriate and accurate terminology for this highly sensitive, political and unique situation is vexing. Various organisations, institutions and individuals use different terms to refer to the same situation; different agendas and perspectives inform the choice and use of terms. The political and sensitive nature of terminology related to the mass movement and flight of persons into Europe came to the fore in August 2015, when the news outlet Al Jazeera published a piece by online editor Barry Malone, announcing that it would no longer use the term “Mediterranean migrants”, but rather “refugees”, to more accurately capture the experience and motivations of those crossing the sea to Europe (Malone, 2015). This position was in reaction to the political climate that had developed, referring to “swarms” (ITV, 2015) or “hordes” (The Sun, 2015) of migrants waiting to cross the borders. The term “migrant”, argued Malone, had become a tool to dehumanise and create distance from these individuals and the term “refugee” more accurately reflected the situation faced by the majority of these people who were fleeing war and persecution. Using the term “refugee” instead of “migrant” would serve to counter the impression that these were largely “economic migrants”, with the implication that this was opportunistic rather than essential. The article was widely shared and promoted on social media and Al Jazeera’s position was widely supported and gained widespread credence.

However, there were also opposing voices that argued that by insisting on using the term “refugee” to restore dignity, Al Jazeera was inadvertently reinforcing a notion of “good refugees” and “bad migrants”, implicitly condoning the perspective that the former are entitled

³ The Convention entered into force on 22 April 1954 and it has been subject to only one amendment in the form of a 1967 Protocol, which removed the geographic and temporal limits of the 1951 Convention. The 1951 Convention, as a post-Second World War instrument, was originally limited in scope to persons fleeing events occurring before 1 January 1951 and within Europe. The 1967 Protocol removed these limitations and thus gave the Convention universal coverage. See: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html>

to our sympathy and help, while the latter are not (Vonberg, 2015). It also served to undermine recognition of the vulnerability of many migrants who, while not at risk of refugee-related persecution, were coming from extremely vulnerable positions in their home countries. The argument for using “migrant” as a more inclusive category is, as pointed out by Jørgen Carling (Carling, 2015), in line with UN recommendations on migration statistics as “migrant” is a neutral category to designate persons who move, regardless of circumstances, thus *including* those fleeing war or persecution (United Nations, 1998). This argument rests on the critical position that when referring to and working with people who, for different reasons, are perilously on the move, we should not make a distinction between the “worthy” and “unworthy”.

Both are important arguments on issues of terminology and conceptualisations in a highly complex, political, sensitive and evolving field of work with highly vulnerable persons. And both offer important contributions to our thinking on the issue, including that we should regularly and carefully consider our use of terms and concepts, especially when facing new, emerging and evolving situations like the mass movement of people unfolding in the Balkans and Europe. Recognising this complexity, in this paper we have used the combination term “migrant/refugee”, in an attempt to acknowledge and relate to both positions and the importance of problematizing these concepts and categories in an evolving social, political and economic context. Our choice of language also aims to reflect common understandings and usages, not least in a context where we hope that this paper will inform policy and practice on the ground where this distinction matters a great deal in terms of how agencies and institutions can and do react and what rights and opportunities these migrants/refugees have. In practical interventions on the ground, “migrant” and “refugee” are qualitatively and legally different categories and for practitioners working with these populations “migrant” does not automatically include “refugee”. More generally, we opt to use this melded term to be inclusive of and acknowledge this broader discussion and so as not to distract from the general findings of this paper.

Human trafficking. According to the United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons*,⁴ human trafficking is defined in Article 3a as:

[...] recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Further, the protocol specifies in Article 3c that if any of the means listed in Article 3a have been used, the consent of the person is of no relevance, and further, that if the person is a child (i.e. under 18 years of age), exploitation, as described above, is trafficking, regardless of whether any of the means have been used. The Serbian anti-trafficking article is comprehensive in

⁴ Also known as the Palermo protocol, this protocol is one of the three protocols, which supplement the *UN Convention on Trans-national Organised Crime*, adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 15, 2000.

covering all forms of trafficking exploitation and in line with the UN Protocol. Serbia criminalises trafficking in Article 388 of the Criminal Code and defines trafficking as “recruit[ment], transport[ation], transfer, sell[ing], buy[ing], act[ing] as intermediary in sale, hid[ing] or hold[ing] another person with intent to exploit such person’s labour, forced labour, commission of offences, prostitution, mendacity, pornography, removal of organs or body parts or service in armed conflicts” by means of “force or threat, deception or maintaining deception, abuse of authority, trust, dependency relationship, difficult circumstances of another, retaining identity papers or by giving or accepting money or other benefit”.⁵

Victim of trafficking. Within a human rights framework, the term “victim” is important as it designates the violation or crime experienced and the necessity for responsibility and redress. Our use of the term “victim” denotes someone who has been the victim of a crime and does not refer to the person’s agency or any other characteristics. The term “trafficked person” offers a possible alternative formulation. We also use the terms “trafficked migrant/refugee” to indicate someone who falls into both of these categories of vulnerability and exploitation at some stage of their lives – as a migrant or refugee and as a trafficking victim. As discussed later in this paper, some migrants or refugees become trafficking victims and some trafficking victims become migrants or refugees.

Migrant smuggling, according to the United Nations *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, which supplements the United Nations *Convention on Trans-national Organised Crime*, is defined as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (Article 3). Article 6 requires States to criminalise both smuggling of migrants and enabling of a person to remain in a country illegally as well as aggravating circumstances that endanger lives or safety or entail inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants.

⁵ The Criminal Code also addresses trafficking in Article 390 *Holding in Slavery and Transportation of Enslaved Persons* by punishing anyone who in “violation of international law enslaves another person or places a person in similar position, or holds a person in slavery or similar position, or buys, sells, hands over to another or mediates in buying, selling and handing over of such person...” <http://www.warnathgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Serbia-Criminal-Code.pdf>

The Balkan route

The “Balkan route” is the path stretching from the Middle East to the European Union through Turkey and South East Europe, *via* the well-documented and sometimes deadly journeys by sea from Turkey to Greece, on to Macedonia and onward to the European Union, either *via* Serbia and Hungary or Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia (Bechev, 2016).

In 2015, there was a drastic increase in the numbers of migrants and refugees crossing into Macedonia and Serbia from Turkey and Greece and, to a lesser extent, from Bulgaria. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that more than half a million people entered Serbia between October 2015 and September 2016,⁶ the vast majority of these migrants/refugees passing through Serbia on their way to other countries. Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic stated in December 2016 that, since the outset of the crisis, the number of migrants/refugees that had entered Serbia was as high as 900,000 (Sputnik International, 2016). According to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the Western Balkan region in 2015 saw a 16-fold increase in illegal border crossings from the year before, primarily by people from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Frontex, 2016).

Countries in the West Balkans initially kept their borders open, allowing migrants/refugees to travel onward. But EU countries bordering the Balkans did not allow this to continue in the long term. By September 2015, Hungary had built a wall along its southern borders with Serbia and Croatia to block further migrant/refugee crossings. On October 16, 2015, Hungary officially closed its border crossing with Serbia, officially blocking the route from Serbia into Hungary (The Guardian, 2015). At the time of writing, NGOs reported that Hungary allowed 20 migrants/refugees to cross into the country per day (Deutsche Welle, 2016) and only those from the “priority refugee” countries of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Official numbers report an estimated 6,400 migrants/refugees were in Serbia at the time of fieldwork (UNHCR, 2016)⁷, most of whom are “stranded” – i.e. wishing to move on to the EU but unable to do so due to the closed borders. Some 5,200 people are accommodated in official refugee camps/centres, while 1,300 people are without registered accommodation (B92, 2016), many sleeping in the parks of Belgrade or in defunct barracks by the train station, lacking heating and sanitation. These conditions, combined with the onset of winter, are of great concern in terms of how the situation will develop in the cold winter months (Botic, 2016). Severe weather conditions in early January in Serbia, for example, led to serious illness and suffering amongst many refugees who were without adequate housing, clothing or food (Le Blond, 2017; Pasha-Robinson, 2017).⁸

⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1940>

⁷ This number has since increased to between 7,300 to 7,500 refugees (UNHCR, 2017).

⁸ In Greece and Bulgaria, some refugees reportedly died as a result of exposure to extreme weather conditions (Dearden & McIntyre, 2017).

Exploring trafficking risk and vulnerability along the Balkan route

This chapter provides an overview of different types of cases of human trafficking reported in the migrant/refugee population in Serbia over the past two years. As noted in the previous section, these are potential trafficking experiences reported by migrants/refugees to frontline NGO staff working with the migrant/refugee population in the country. Most migrants/refugees arriving in and transiting through Serbia over the past two years were from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and victims of trafficking were also documented amongst these nationalities. Other significant countries of origin for migrants/refugees included Iran, Pakistan and Somalia and some trafficking cases were also found within these national groups.

We then discuss the different points along the journey that migrants/refugees were trafficked and exploited (before and at different stages of their journey/flight), including when, why and how risk and vulnerability to human trafficking arose within these migration/refugee movements. In many cases, the categories of “refugee”, “migrant” and “trafficking victim” were not mutually exclusive. Rather, these categories and experiences can best be understood along a continuum, with individuals occupying multiple “identities/statuses” at different stages of their lives and migrations/flights as well as, sometimes, occupying these different identities simultaneously.

Types of exploitation

This section provides an overview of the different types of human trafficking that were documented amongst migrants/refugees in Serbia by frontline NGO responders over the past two years. Reported human trafficking cases included male and female victims, adult and child victims, victims from different countries and individuals trafficked for different forms of exploitation. While these typologies are summarised below, we will return to these categories and experiences in more detail when discussing the various stages and in which ways migrants/refugees have and may become vulnerable to human trafficking during their journeys.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation: Trafficking for sexual exploitation was reported amongst males and females, both minors and adults. Some cases involved migrants/refugees being forced into prostitution in countries along the route. Survival sex has also been reported amongst refugees, referring to situations in which persons have been forced to sell sexual services to survive along the route (e.g. to pay for food and accommodation, to pay smugglers for the

onward journey). In some cases, “survival sex” may constitute human trafficking – e.g. situations in which migrants/refugees were forcibly required by traffickers to provide sexual services.

Other cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation along the route involved migrants/refugees being raped and sexually assaulted by smugglers, which, in some cases, involved extortion that may cumulatively have constituted human trafficking. In some cases, smugglers reportedly isolated an individual and raped him/her to pressure their family members (either traveling with them or in the home country) to pay more money for their release and/or safe passage. Both female and male migrants/refugees reported having been sexually assaulted in this manner as well as subjected to other forms of violence.

Trafficking for labour exploitation: Cases of labour trafficking were reported amongst migrants/refugees while in transit, largely because individuals needed to work to make money to be able to continue their journey. Migrants/refugees (male and female) reported being trafficked for labour along the route in different fields of work (e.g. agriculture, tailoring, bakery), while having their passports seized and held by “employers”, being refused pay, unable to leave the “work” situation and subjected to threats and various forms of violence. Labour trafficking had also, in some cases, led to persons becoming migrants/refugees, as in the case of one woman who escaped labour and sexual exploitation as a domestic worker and fled to Europe as a migrant/refugee.

Trafficking for the removal of organs: A few cases of trafficking in persons for the removal of organs were reported – before flight, during the journey/flight and while in transit.

Trafficking for criminal activity: Some migrants/refugees were forcibly involved in criminal activities (e.g. assisting in smuggling operations) during their journey/flight.

Trafficking for forced marriage: Some women were forced into marriages that corresponded with international definitions of human trafficking. Some women were forced into marriages or relationships while in transit or during their journey. In addition, some women and girls became migrants/refugees to escape forced child marriages, which were akin to trafficking.

Trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation: Some migrants/refugees, both male and females, who were trafficked for labour exploitation were also sexually abused by their exploiters.

Points of vulnerability – exploitation at different stages of the journey

This section explores the lives and experiences of individuals who have moved along the Balkan route over the past couple of years. These include people from countries in conflict like Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those who have fled various countries in Africa and Asia. As noted above, it is not always easy for frontline responders to disentangle the categories of “refugee”, “migrant” and “trafficking victim”, with many individuals occupying different identities and vulnerabilities at different stages of their lives, as well as, sometimes, simultaneously. To some extent this is a function of individual life stories and different trajectories. It is also important to stress that, because migrants/refugees are in transit along the Balkan route, there is not always the time or opportunity to clearly establish whether a migrant/refugee is (or at some stage was) also a trafficking victim. Issues of trust as well as cultural and language barriers further complicate such determinations, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

There is a raft of vulnerabilities faced by migrants/refugees who have travelled the Balkan route over the past two years, many of which are mutually reinforcing. These include, but are not limited to:

- lack of legal status (including often a lack of identity documents);
- language barriers and an inability to communicate with authorities along the route;
- lack of knowledge about rights and assistance (including not understanding protection options, options for legal stay/work and available services);
- lack of resources (e.g. for basic needs and survival, to continue the journey/flight);
- inadequacy or lack of humanitarian aid for some categories of migrants/refugees;
- risk of exploitation and abuse in work situations;
- threats to personal safety (including physical, sexual and mental well-being); and
- exposure to violence and abuse within the family or community.

While these factors in and of themselves do not automatically signal or necessarily lead to human trafficking, they are potential contributors and risk factors. And there are situations in which the interplay of these vulnerabilities may translate into different forms of trafficking at some stage of the journey.

In analysing trafficking cases documented in Serbia, we noted three main stages at which the statuses and identities of migrants/refugees intersected and overlapped with that of trafficking victim. These included:

- Trafficking triggers flight. From trafficking victim to migrant/refugee;
- Human trafficking *en route*. Trafficked because migrants/refugees need to keep going;
- Trafficking in transit. Exposure to trafficking in migration/refugee settings.

Trafficking triggers flight. From trafficking victim to migrant/refugee

In some situations, there is a direct causal relationship between exposure to trafficking and becoming a migrant/refugee. Some individuals were trafficked for marriage, domestic work and/or sexual exploitation and their escape from trafficking exploitation led them to become migrants/refugees. This was the case for one African woman, who migrated as a domestic worker to one of the Gulf States where she was exploited for three years, forced to work, unable to leave the house and repeatedly raped by male members of the household. When she finally escaped, she encountered fleeing refugees on their way to Europe and joined this group, traveling with them to Serbia where she stayed briefly at an asylum centre before attempting to travel onward to the EU.

For some individuals, exploitation and trafficking took place in the context of war and conflict in their home countries, with trafficking perpetrated by combatants (see also Tillinac, Craggs, Lungarotti, Kimura, & Macchiavello, 2015). One Iraqi woman was sexually exploited by rebel fighting forces when men in her home village refused to join the rebels. The rebels killed all of the men in the village and all the women were imprisoned as “sex slaves” and systematically raped over a period of many weeks. She managed to escape and fled Iraq for the EU country where her husband was working. She travelled largely by foot and without documents or money. In Turkey her husband sent her money to be able to reach Greece where she worked until she had funds to continue her journey to Serbia. She learned that she was pregnant as a result of being raped in Iraq.⁹

In other cases, women and girls sought to escape forced marriages, some of which fit the criteria of human trafficking. One African girl was 14 years of age when she was forced by her parents to marry a man many years her senior (65 years of age), with whom she was forced to have sexual intercourse. She was desperate to escape the marriage and her older sister, who was already living in the EU, sent her money to pay smugglers to bring her to Europe and escape this marriage.¹⁰

In some cases, while trafficking triggered escape, it was only the start of on-going vulnerability and different forms of exploitation suffered along the journey, inflicted by different perpetrators. One girl was forced by her family to marry when still a child in her home country. Her husband abused her physically and sexually and she gave birth to a son while she was still herself a girl. She fled this “marriage” and went to a neighbouring country, where she found work as a domestic worker. She was exploited in this home, abused both physically and sexually by her employer on a daily basis. She escaped and contacted smugglers to help her migrate to Europe. She was raped and beaten by the smugglers throughout her journey and became pregnant due to the repeated rapes. She tried to kill herself when she learned that she was pregnant; she miscarried after the suicide attempt.

⁹ This type of exploitation was also suffered by children. One group of children from Iraq travelled through Serbia on their way to the EU where their mothers were working. The children were both boys and girls and ranged in age from eight to seventeen years of age. When the children were quite small rebel forces came to their village, killed all the adult males and kept the children as “sex slaves”. When the army liberated the village and the children were freed, their mothers sent money to pay for the children to escape from Iraq and join them in the EU.

¹⁰ She found out later on that following her escape her family had given her twelve-year-old sister to the man in marriage to “replace” her.

Human trafficking *en route*. Trafficked because migrants/refugees need to keep going

Migrants/refugees are at risk at various stages while *en route*, often because of the need to keep moving toward their final destination and the limited possibilities to protect themselves. Many migrants/refugees need to generate income to sustain themselves along the way as well as pay for their travel and to cross borders, often having to pay smugglers. This led to different types of trafficking exploitation amongst migrants/refugees. One Syrian man fled war in his home country, traveling with his wife and children initially to a neighbouring country. He lacked the funds to travel onward to Europe and was offered “assistance” by a man who arranged for him to sell his kidney to fund his family’s flight. A social worker retold his story as such:

He said, “I have to do it. I knew I didn’t have the money. My wife and my children were staying in really, really terrible conditions. I saw my wife devastated. I saw my children devastated. And I just wanted to continue the journey”. And then he said, “I met a man, he was telling me, ‘I can help you. I know a man who is buying organs, who you can give your kidney to and then we will give you some money’”. And he continued the journey. He received 500 Euros... But he said, “I was able to reach Turkey”. And in Turkey then he was working to earn the money, selling and so on.

Labour trafficking is seemingly prolific amongst migrants/refugees moving along the Balkan route. The high cost of moving on and paying smugglers leave migrants/refugees in a vulnerable situation. There are often limited or non-existent possibilities for legitimate work and migrants/refugees are in a very weak bargaining position *vis-a-vis* potential employers. Labour exploitation has been documented amongst male and female migrants/refugees (adults and children) in Greece, Turkey and Macedonia and some cases rose to the level of human trafficking. Assistance organisations in both Serbia and Macedonia have documented cases of migrants/refugees being exploited as factory workers, agricultural workers, tailors, carpenters, mechanics and street sellers. Three Syrian brothers (all teenagers) were trafficked for labour in Turkey where they lacked the funds to travel onward to Greece (1,800 Euros each). They worked in a bakery for three months but were not paid. They then worked on a farm where their employer took and held their passports, explaining that it was “in their best interest” and that he would protect them, as they were in Turkey illegally. He did not pay them and, when they tried to leave, physically beat them. They eventually managed to run away and contacted their parents who collected enough money to pay for the boys to continue their journey to Serbia *via* Greece and Macedonia. Similarly, one group of Afghan men and boys who arrived in Serbia described being exploited for work for several months in Turkey as tailors, carpenters and mechanics. There were also indications that the boys in this group were sexually exploited by employers in Turkey.

Migrants/refugees also told of being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation *en route*, although social workers reported that it was often difficult and sensitive to approach the issue with migrants/refugees, especially in the often short time that they were in contact with them. One particular pattern that emerged from the cases that we have analysed is rape and sexual

abuse of both male and female migrants/refugees by smugglers.¹¹ In some cases, rape and sexual assault were part of a larger scheme to extort money from families to pay for onward travel, with abuse often perpetrated over time, as explained by one social worker:

...we have heard of situations [along the Balkan route] where the women were locked up for 40 days, a month, more than a month, staying in houses with the smugglers and they didn't have the opportunity to pay the services to be transferred in another country. So the smuggler would rape a woman and wait for the man to find a way that somebody sends him the money so they [the smugglers] will release them to go.

Similarly, one teenage East African girl was smuggled with her younger brother in a group of others from the same country. When the children were unable to pay the onward journey from Macedonia they were separated from the larger group, and detained by the smugglers in a house. The girl was locked in a room for two days where she was physically and sexually brutalized by the smugglers. Her brother, who was in the same house, could hear her screaming and begging for help throughout her ordeal.

Service providers were also told of cases where smugglers along the Balkan route were exploiting male migrants/refugees – photographing them naked and threatening to post photos on the Internet to embarrass or extort money from their families. The different patterns of these attacks again point to the fluidity between violence, exploitation and human trafficking.

Several migrants/refugees reported being forced to provide sexual services as a means of continuing their journey toward the EU. In some cases, this involved being forced into prostitution by smugglers or “traveling companions” to earn money to fund the onward travel. In other instances, this involved what is referred to as “survival sex”, with migrants/refugees being forced to sell sexual services to survive. The nature of these exchanges renders the migrants/refugees especially vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. One social worker related the experience of one woman from the Middle East who was compelled to sell sexual services to enable her family to continue their flight to safety, but with grave and long-term impacts on her relationship with her husband who she said blamed her for this decision and action.

Trafficking in transit. Exposure to human trafficking in migration/refugee settings

Migrants/refugees may also be exposed to trafficking when they arrive in more formal refugee settings, like asylum centres and refugee camps. In some cases, this is a function of risk and vulnerability that occur when large numbers of people are forcibly living together and there is inadequate monitoring, security and protection within the refugee camps and asylum centres. There are two aspects of trafficking in a transit context that are useful to distinguish for the purpose of this discussion.

The first feature of trafficking in transit is that some people may arrive in such a setting already trafficked (as described above) and in an on-going trafficking or other exploitative situation. Examples from this study include trafficking for forced marriage and sexual

¹¹ This is similar to experiences of trafficking in the Sinai peninsula in Egypt (Physicians for Human Rights, 2010; Reisen & Rijken, 2015).

exploitation. One woman was traveling with a man when she arrived in Serbia and initially said that she was married to him. But, over time, she disclosed that she had met him during her journey/flight and was being forced to travel with him because he was blackmailing her. He had taken pictures of her when she was naked in the shower in one asylum setting and he was threatening to expose these publicly, including to her family at home. One African woman initially paid smugglers to facilitate her movement to the EU, but, when she arrived in Greece, she was taken to a refugee camp where she was forced to provide sexual services. She became pregnant as a result of this sexual exploitation.

However, trafficking in transit may not always be detected or identified as human trafficking for several reasons. One critical issue is that, for many migrants/refugees, their journeys, while fraught, offer the hope of a new life and new opportunities in the destination country and migrants/refugees are often careful in ensuring that vulnerability and even violations *en route* do not derail their opportunity for a new beginning.¹² This is a central issue for improving the anti-trafficking response in mass migration and refugee contexts and an issue we will return to in the next chapter, where we discuss barriers to identification.

The second feature of trafficking in transit is that migrants/refugees may become vulnerable to trafficking *in* the transit setting, such as within asylum centres and refugee camps. Some cases of trafficking for forced criminal activity were documented by NGO social workers that included smugglers targeting particular migrants/refugees in asylum centres and refugee camps to force them to facilitate the smuggling operations. One Middle Eastern man in his late 20s was trafficked while staying in an asylum centre in Serbia while his asylum application was being processed. He was threatened and coerced by four Serbian citizens to assist them in smuggling, facilitating communication with others from his home country and building their trust. He was forced to work for the smugglers for a period, during which time he was under the smugglers' constant surveillance even while inside the asylum centre. He eventually reported his situation to the authorities, as he explained to the NGO staff who assisted him: "I couldn't stand it anymore. I had to tell someone. Even though I was scared that they will find me, I just couldn't live like that any longer. That was no life." NGO staff also reported that smugglers targeted

¹² This is an issue that is relevant not only for trafficking victims. NGO staff had also observed that women exposed to violence in camp settings refused to report it, because it did not offer them a solution. Rather, they feared that starting an official procedure could potentially force them to stay and be part of prosecuting a case instead of moving on. Social pressures were also believed to deter women from reporting and being identified as trafficking victims, as one social worker explained:

And also women, when we speak about women, there are smugglers in the camp "are you having some kind of problems and so on?" They say "even if I had a problem, what, I say that I was, for example, raped from a smuggler – what then? Will this smuggler be prosecuted? How long will the prosecution last? Will I be able to continue my journey? And will all the local community, the Serbians, Afghanistan, for example, from whichever country she is, they will look at me [like] I did something bad. Nobody will support me". Most of the women that suffer physical, psychological, sexual violence, they are afraid to even speak because they will not be supported from their local communities

younger children with good language skills, as the children were useful as translators and guides for smugglers, but, at the same time, not criminally liable when under 14 years of age.¹³

The different resources available to migrants/refugees creates different pathways and opportunities as well as risks and vulnerabilities. Being without money while in transit means being unable to pay for food and water, a place to stay, clothing and also for smugglers to facilitate onward travel. For instance, many people who are currently in transit in Serbia are those who were without the resources to transit the country before the borders closed or pay smugglers to assist with the movement once borders had closed. In some situations, when families could not afford for the full family to travel onward, one family member went ahead to get settled and send for the remaining family members. Even when accommodated in the State-run refugee camps in Serbia, refugees' needs cannot always be entirely met, which means that some refugees need to earn money to supplement the support they receive from the State and civil society organisations. Needing to earn money to survive while in refugee camps, especially during long stays in Serbia after the EU borders closed, may also lead to risk and vulnerability. One NGO staff working in the refugee camps explained that while most basic needs (e.g. food, shelter) are generally covered by the State and NGOs, people often had other needs that were not always met (clothing, diapers, footwear). One service provider raised concerns about the potential risk that migrants/refugees (women and men) will be forced to engage in prostitution (either forced through trafficking or as a means of survival) to support themselves and their families:

There are a lot of women that are traveling alone and some of the things that we have seen with the women that are staying for a longer time is that they are out of money. When you are staying in Serbia, for example, for two months and for these two months you have the basic needs covered, food and clothes that you can change once a week. But this is not all that these people need. When they need to buy something for their children or for themselves and they have no money for two or three months and don't know how they are going to continue, then some of them can end up trading sexual services.

The emergency nature and massive scale of the migrant/refugee situation, particularly at the outset, meant that assistance needs were viewed by authorities in general terms, without adaptation and tailoring by sex, age, culture or other “individualised” lens. For instance, NGO staff noted the lack of gender segregated areas in the camps in the initial stages of the refugee response, including women and girls being placed in the same sleeping areas as men and boys, even when not from the same family. Persons of the same nationality were accommodated together as it was assumed that they would feel more comfortable with those from the same country. But, as one NGO staff observed, women preferred to be accommodated with other women, even when from the different country:

¹³ According to Article 2 of the Serbian Law on Juvenile Criminal Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles, children under 14 years of age cannot be prosecuted.

When we ask the women, they say, 'Yes, I feel much safer if I'm traveling or staying in the room with Syrians and not with Afghan men because I understand what they are saying. But if you ask me if I would prefer to be with Afghan women or Syrian men, I would prefer Afghan women'.

A related concern was security measures at night-time, which varied from camp to camp. While some camps had police or guards during the night, they were often outside the camp or not close to where the migrants/refugees were sleeping, limiting options for protection. A further concern was that toilets were isolated and lacked sufficient lighting, exposing both male and female migrants/refugees to possible assault or harassment when using the facilities at night or when unaccompanied.

Not all abuses and violations within the refugee setting while in transit are instances of human trafficking. Many individuals were exposed to other types of violence and violations while in refugee camps and settings, including instances of rape and physical assault. One Middle Eastern woman who was traveling alone was raped while staying in a camp in Greece, becoming pregnant as a result. These are different and discrete violations, distinct from human trafficking. However, the many reports of violence and violations, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), signals the potential risks and general lack of safety in such asylum and transit settings, which potentially creates significant risk also for human trafficking.

Challenges to identification of trafficking vulnerability and exploitation

The identification of and assistance to human trafficking victims is a challenge in anti-trafficking work generally and an issue we have discussed in past research (see for instance Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007, 2012; Surtees, 2008). In particular, obtaining or developing sufficient information to ascertain whether someone is a victim of trafficking generally presents substantial obstacles to be navigated. Barriers to victim identification include a raft of practical, institutional and personal barriers including, but not limited to: lack of a common language, lack of trust, cultural barriers, settings that are un conducive to information sharing and disclosure, fear of retaliation from traffickers or resistance to available assistance options. Further, the institutional response to trafficking can be inadequate and not sufficiently sensitive to indications of vulnerability or exploitation. Institutional responses, based on variable laws and policies, are also often not sufficiently inclusive of all groups of victims or all forms of trafficking exploitation. In many instances, there is a bias towards certain groups of victims (e.g. women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation), and less awareness of and/or attention to other victims (e.g. males), or to other forms of exploitation (e.g. trafficking for labour, criminal activity, begging/delinquency, forced marriage, organ removal).

All of these factors are also relevant in terms of the successful identification of trafficking victims in the context of mass migration and/or refugee settings. However, there are also specific challenges tied to migration/refugee settings and, in addition, the particular context along the Balkan route that we examine in this paper. These include specific patterns in which vulnerability and exploitation become invisible or difficult to observe; gendered assumptions about vulnerability; heightened vulnerability for certain nationalities or ethnicities; overlapping vulnerability and exploitation; and a resistance to being identified as a victim in contexts where people's priority is to move on to their desired destination. We discuss these challenges in more detail below, recognising that this is only a starting point in exploring the complexity and evolving challenges of identifying and assisting trafficked migrants and trafficked refugees.

The visibility and invisibility of trafficking risk and vulnerability

One significant challenge in identifying trafficking victims along the Balkan route was the very high number of people that moved along the migration/refugee corridor in a very short time span. Assessing vulnerability in general, not to mention specific aspects that indicate human trafficking, was an enormous, if not impossible, task. This issue came into particular focus when

discussing with one NGO staff member the situation on the ground at the height of the influx of migrants/refugees into Serbia. As she described it, in just one asylum centre in the south of Serbia there were more than 7,000 people waiting in line to be registered. NGO staff worked 12-hour shifts only to come back the next morning to find many of the same people still standing in the line waiting to be processed. She also explained the challenge in identifying the most vulnerable persons amongst these migrants/refugees, leading them to rely on simple and more “visible” indicators as a means of at least trying to identify vulnerability – indicators like women who were pregnant, women traveling on their own, unaccompanied children or women with children:

We had certain categories of refugees. Like if you have a woman who is traveling alone or you see a girl who is standing alone. Or you see children that are being pushed back [across the borders] several times or you are see a woman with a lot of bruises, a child that is sick, a group of children who are traveling alone. This is what you look for. And when you see them, you approach them...and assess the situation.

The same social worker also made the point that a new migrant/refugee situation required considerable adjustment and reconsideration of what were appropriate indicators of trafficking as well as how indicators of trafficking were understood and operationalised. For example, whereas previously in Serbia not having one’s own documents might be a reasonable signal that someone was potentially trafficked, this does not resonate in the migrant/refugee setting where very many people are without documents or documents are held by smugglers:

Before, when we were talking about human trafficking, some of the indicators were, for instance, that you don’t have passport... you’re in a foreign country and you don’t have the passport... So really linking and connecting these things - a lot of actors, they would say, “Oh you know they don’t have the papers...” And okay, okay, they’re refugees, it’s quite a different situation. It has really changed, the risks and the vulnerability. It’s not the same any more.

In a mass migration/refugee setting (and perhaps especially in a transit setting like Serbia, where people are highly mobile and motivated to keep moving toward their final destination), there is generally very little time to understand the real situation of each migrant/refugee (including trafficking experiences) and the issues that they may be facing or have faced in their home country of during their journey. For example, what may appear to be a family traveling together may, in fact, be a group of strangers clustered together to appear as a family to smooth and facilitate movement. One service provider in Serbia described a situation in which a large family, including a baby of just a few months, was staying overnight in the family section of the organisation’s centre. Over the course of the evening, one of the small children in the group said that the baby was not their child. After investigating, it was ascertained that the baby belonged to a woman who had been stopped at the border and had asked the family to carry the child onward to safety in the hopes that she would be able to meet them again at the final

destination.¹⁴ Similarly, two Afghani children were seemingly traveling with their grandmother who, it turned out when stopped at the border crossing from Serbia to Hungary, was not their grandmother but rather a neighbour from their home village. This case caused enough concern for the police to get involved and the children were separated from the woman and stayed in Serbia until they could be reunited with their mother, who was living in the EU.

There were also several incidences of family violence in the refugee camps, which is seemingly tolerated (or at least endured) by women because they lack options and means of recourse in a refugee context. One NGO staff member working in an asylum centre recounted her assessment of why some women were reluctant to report their violent husbands to staff in the camp or to NGOs:

[There is] a big tolerance of violence because women are saying, “Okay, no, he was nervous, we have been here for a very long time. I have to forgive him. I cannot separate now. What should I do?” And when you approach the woman, she says, “Yes, he hit me. But what can I do? I cannot separate [from him] now. I need to reach somewhere where I will be settled and then I can speak about this. If I do this now, what will I do? I cannot pass the border.” They want to resolve this problem once they reach the final destination. They are thinking that maybe they should wait for the final destination and then resolve all the issues that they have.

This also illustrates the broader issue that, as a migrant/refugee, filing a report and/or receiving protection in Serbia (or in any transit country) is not necessarily strategic or desirable given that the goal, ultimately and often very immediately, is to move on to one’s final destination, to be able to begin their new life.

Potential signals of vulnerability and risk amongst migrants/refugees – for example, women traveling alone, women with children, pregnant women, unaccompanied and separated minors (UASMs) – have generally been operationalized by service providers in Serbia in their work to identify and assist this population. These groups are, arguably, amongst the more vulnerable in refugee settings and should be considered and included when screening for risk and vulnerability. But these are externally visible vulnerabilities and risk and vulnerability is neither obvious nor always externally visible. As illustrated in the examples in the previous section, risk and vulnerability happens along a continuum and, moreover, may not be visible or easily identifiable, especially in a short time or in particular settings. This highlights the need for a more sophisticated and nuanced lens for assessing and identifying who is at risk, when and in what ways (as well as this being assessed on a case-by-case basis and in response to different contexts and evolving situations).

The visibility (and invisibility) of trafficking vulnerability is also influenced by the capacity as well as perceptions, assumptions and biases of those frontline responders who are responsible for victim identification. Unaccompanied minors are, in theory, a visible group with obvious risks and vulnerability to exploitation due to their age/maturity and unaccompanied status. But, as one service provider noted of her work with vulnerable children, some older children and

¹⁴ In this case the NGO coordinated with the Centre for Social Work, which took custody of the child until the mother could be traced. The mother was found and reunited with her child.

youth may not be easily recognizable as children and their vulnerabilities and risk of trafficking exploitation may be overlooked. By virtue of what they have endured as migrants/refugees, they may appear older than they are and perceived as adults, rendering invisible their vulnerability and the many risks they have and may encounter. This is but one example of trafficking risk that may currently be invisible and more attention is needed as to how to make visible the range of trafficking vulnerabilities within this migrant/refugee population.

Gendered assumptions of vulnerability

Many assumptions about risk and vulnerability are highly gendered. That is, there is a tendency to view risk and vulnerability as female traits and strength and resilience as male traits. Migrant/refugee women and girls are, therefore, commonly perceived as more vulnerable than men and boys in most, if not all, migration/refugee settings. This is not to suggest that women and girls are not highly vulnerable in mass migration/refugee settings. There is substantial evidence that this is indeed the case and, equally, that some vulnerability (including sexual and physical violence) is a direct function of being a woman and or a girl, something to which we need to pay careful attention (Amnesty International, 2016; Ward, 2002).

However, this should not preclude paying attention to how men and boys may suffer similar risks and vulnerability in migration/refugee settings, including the risk of human trafficking. The perpetration of sexual violence against men and boys in conflict situations is increasingly being studied and documented (Apperley, 2015; McMahon, nd.; Ngari, 2016; Sivakumaran, 2007). And the situation of many male migrants/refugees moving along the Balkan route seems to align with this widened lens. As evidenced in the experiences of male migrants/refugees in the previous section, both boys and men are exposed to risks of sexual and physical violence as well as human trafficking along the Balkan route. And boys in particular are too often seen through a prism of their sex/gender (i.e. male and, thus, strong and invulnerable) rather than their age/maturity (i.e. as a child in need of and with rights to protection). For instance, whereas it would raise concerns were a young woman or girl be traveling alone along the Balkan route, young men and (at least older) boys in the same situation seemingly did not raise the same level concern or need for interventions of some frontline responders.

A recent assessment of unmarried male Syrian refugees living in Lebanon finds that these unmarried men are often acutely vulnerable generally as they do not have access to assistance which is commonly earmarked for families. As such, these men face difficulties in accessing aid and protecting themselves from further exploitation, including potentially human trafficking. The study of 500 men found that 53 percent did not register with the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), due to access restraints and misconceptions about their eligibility. As a result, one-fifth of the men interviewed did not have enough food to eat and fewer than one in 10 had received assistance in the past 30 days. Two thirds of these male refugees also reported threats to their personal safety and almost 20 percent reported incidents of abuse and/or exploitation with about half of these incidents related to work, signalling the possibility (if not probability) of labour exploitation which may, in some cases, constitute human trafficking. Gendered

assumptions occur amongst the refugees themselves with at least 30 percent of these unregistered males believing unmarried men are automatically ineligible to register and eight percent believed they would not get aid even if they registered (IRC, 2016; Marsi, 2016).

Materials and resources developed for refugee responses – e.g. the organisation of refugee camps – generally attend to risks to women and girls but not in equal measure to risks and vulnerability of men and boys in the same situation. The humanitarian response is often “category based” (e.g. women, families, etc.) and not individually “needs-based”. This highlights the need for a more nuanced consideration of how gender and sex intersect with trafficking risk, including how assumptions and biases about vulnerability may influence what is recognised and addressed.

Vulnerability linked to nationality and ethnicity

In the current situation in the Balkans (as well as in the EU), nationality and citizenship is of the utmost importance in terms of opportunities for migrants and refugees. Amongst the migrants/refugees attempting to move through the Balkans and enter the EU, priority is given to certain nationalities considered to be at higher risk and those seen as most likely to qualify for protection as refugees – i.e. Syrian, Iraqi and Afghani. This also translates into access to rights in the intermediate term. Refugees (as determined by the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees¹⁵) are afforded different rights and protections than migrants, including the opportunity to resettle in a safe country and to avoid being returned to their country of origin (the principle of *non-refoulement*¹⁶). This is based on the assumed heightened vulnerability of refugees compared with migrants, which may not always be the case when speaking about some categories of migrants and their individual circumstances and vulnerabilities. Moreover, it does raise questions about whether the prioritization of refugees (and some categories/nationalities of refugees) inadvertently renders some migrants more generally vulnerable to other risks and exploitation including human trafficking.

For example, one African woman who had migrated from her home to Serbia (and was *en route* to her daughter in a EU country) was found to be living outside of the refugee camp

¹⁵ The 1951 Refugee Convention is the key legal document that defines the term ‘refugee’ and outlines the rights of the displaced as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them. The core principle is *non-refoulement*, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. A “refugee” is any person who is outside of his/her country of origin and unable to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. (Article 1.A.2)

¹⁶ *Non-refoulement* is a principle in customary international law that prohibits the return of refugees to places where their lives or freedoms could be threatened. Whereas political asylum applies to those who can prove a well-grounded fear of persecution based on certain category of persons, *non-refoulement* refers to the generic repatriation of people, including refugees, into conflict zones or disasters. The principle of *non-refoulement* was officially enshrined in Article 33 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).

having been denied access because she did not qualify as a refugee by virtue of her nationality.¹⁷ This meant that she received no shelter, physical protection and or assistance, despite her extreme physical exhaustion and medical needs and, as such, was extremely vulnerable. The potential for trafficking or other forms of exploitation in her case seem likely to have been acute.

Similarly, a group of North African boys who were attempting to reach the EU were pushed back across Balkan borders many times. This, arguably, put them at risk of abuse, violence and human trafficking at the hands of any number of potential exploiters they might have encountered on these journeys, as one social worker explained:

I remember there were four boys from [North Africa], unaccompanied, who were pushed back from Croatia to Serbia and from Serbia to Macedonia several times. They were continuously pushed back and they were continuously looking for illegal ways to pass. I remember they told us, when we were doing the assessment, that they were going on the train. So they were climbing on the train and trying to pass with the train to reach their final destination. They were coming in some trucks, entering with [trucks] full of merchandise. They were going on trains and staying there for 48 hours from Greece to Serbia, locked in this room with small amount of water and bread, just to reach farther. So they were really, really in a hard situation.

Ethnicity may add an additional layer of vulnerability that is not easily pinpointed in refugee responses. On the one hand, being from an ethnic minority within a priority refugee country may afford rights as a refugee – for example, the Yazidis of Iraq who have been specifically targeted and persecuted by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, one's ethnicity may also be a source of discrimination and vulnerability amongst refugees from the same country when coming from an already discriminated population and this may lead to additional risks and problems when living amongst fellow national in refugee settings or during the journey/flight.

Overlapping roles. Vulnerability and exploitation

Smugglers and potential traffickers may come both from the local population as well as the migrant/refugee population, with some smugglers and traffickers living with and amongst migrants/refugees in camps and other areas. The boundaries between exploited and exploiter (and vulnerability and abuse) are not always clearly delineated in a migration/refugee setting, as illustrated by the case of the Middle Eastern man who was forced to lure fellow nationals in the refugee camp to be smuggled by a group of Serbian smugglers. Similarly, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, NGOs working in the refugee camps in Serbia have documented instances

¹⁷ This occurred in the period when the Balkan route was open and there was such a high number of refugees that the authorities only accommodated refugees in the camps. The situation has now changed and there is greater access to the camps.

of children being pressured or coerced to assist smugglers in their operations – identifying migrants/refugees wishing to cross borders, translating and facilitating transactions with smugglers.¹⁸

In some instances, while being vulnerable did not lead migrants/refugees to hurt or exploit others, it did prevent them from helping those in need including those in a trafficking situation. One Middle Eastern man who escaped his country by paying smugglers to transport him and his two small boys into the EU described the harrowing experience of being deceived and locked in a house by smugglers in Greece along with two Middle Eastern women who were regularly beaten and raped in front of him and his small children. The smugglers moved the family and the women to different locations to avoid detection. The man was eventually able to escape with his sons while the women were being raped. However, one service provider in Serbia who worked with the man during his stay in the country explained how he broke down in tears in recounting this experience and not least because of his “failure” to act to help these women:

...he said to me, “I cannot explain to you. Yes, we have a life. We survived this terror of the war and what could have happened to my children and me, that they take our organs or do whatever they wanted. But the fact that I left these two women and I didn’t turn around, it’s killing me”. And he was really, really, it was really terrible for him. And the children, they were deeply, deeply traumatised.

Reluctance to be identified; identification does not offer what people want or need

Being formally identified as a victim of human trafficking in Serbia affords various rights and protections, including the right to temporarily stay in the country and to receive comprehensive assistance and protection. However, identification as a victim of trafficking also means staying in Serbia and, as such, generally conflicts with the migrant’s/refugee’s main objective, to arrive safely in the EU. One social worker described how migrants/refugees were often under some pressure from family and community members as well as due to their personal goals and aspirations to keep moving to and resettle in the EU:

You have the pressure from society. Because all the local community, Iraqi, Syrians, Afghanistan, whoever, they are saying, “Come on, why would you wait in Serbia for six or seven months? Go with us”. So they are seeing people who are leaving and they feel like they have to be with their local community and continue their journey...they also have the pressures from their families that they’re staying in the destination countries, that are saying, “Come on, move faster, move forward, we’re waiting for you...” And the other

¹⁸ As noted above, Article 2 of Serbia’s Law on Juvenile Criminal Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles prohibits the prosecution of children under 14 years of age.

side is that they had a certain goal that they have in mind to reach some country, to reach somewhere, to have a life... So this is also one of the pressures that is going on with them.

Moreover, assistance to trafficking victims may not sufficiently align with what trafficked migrants/refugees want and need in their lives generally. They may instead find it more useful to access the (albeit less comprehensive) support and services available through asylum systems and procedures as an interim measure on their onward journey/flight. This raises the issue of trafficked refugees who do not want to be identified as trafficking victims because formal identification as a trafficking victim in a transit country like Serbia is not in their long-term interests and trafficking-specific assistance is not what they want or need in their life at that moment in time.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper describes different patterns of human trafficking observed along the Balkan route in the past two years as well as challenges in the identification and assistance of trafficked migrants/refugees in Serbia. People have, in some cases, been subjected to human trafficking before they migrated or fled as refugees. Others were exposed to trafficking at several points along their journey, finding themselves without protection and in unsafe conditions, including in informal and formal refugee camps. People have also been vulnerable to exploitation in settings where they have been “stranded” or unable to move on because they lack resources to pay smugglers or others to help them to continue their journey, a vulnerability that is exacerbated by irregular status and the inability to seek protection from exploitation from authorities. A worrying feature in the current situation, when Serbia’s borders with the EU are closed and opportunities for migrants/refugees to move on are limited, is the extent to which law and policy responses contribute to enhanced vulnerability of migrants/refugees including risks of human trafficking. Many of those who are now “stranded” in Serbia because of the closed borders with the EU appear to be those who did not have the resources to continue their journey/flight. This means that while the numbers of migrants/refugees in Serbia are lower than before, their vulnerability to trafficking and others forms of exploitation is, arguably, deeper and more pronounced (Botic, 2016).

It is challenging to identify trafficking victims under any circumstances for a wide range of practical, personal and institutional reasons. But the current situation in Serbia – the massive and rapid movement of migrants/refugees in a transit setting – brings with it some very specific barriers and obstacles. The extraordinarily high number of migrants/refugees that have passed through Serbia along the Balkan route in a very short time is one such barrier. Setting up appropriate and effective human trafficking screening mechanisms or identifying particular vulnerabilities of human are enormous tasks in this fluid and ever-changing transit setting. Typical indicators and signals of trafficking risk are of variable relevance in identifying trafficked migrants/refugees. Further complicating identification efforts are gendered as well as nationality- and ethnicity-based assumptions about who is (and is not) vulnerable to human trafficking amongst migrants/refugees. Moreover, trafficking exploitation is taking new forms and affecting a diverse set of victims (of varying profiles) in this migration/refugee context, which means frontline responders must act and react to these on-going changes in their efforts to identify trafficking victims amongst migrants/refugees in Serbia.

In the cases we have analysed for this paper there is a fluidity between trafficking and other forms of exploitation and between being vulnerable to trafficking and being vulnerable in general. Of particular note is that being identified as a victim, either of trafficking or of other violations and crimes, may be against the migrant’s/refugee’s self-interest, in cases where their ultimate goal is to move on to their final destination and where the involvement of authorities

or others can be seen as hindering that goal. That is, trafficking victims are entitled to certain rights and protections once formally identified in Serbia from the government and NGO service providers, including the option for a temporary residence permit (TRP) in Serbia. However, identification as a victim of trafficking (which means staying temporarily or even permanently in Serbia) may conflict with migrants'/refugees' goals of reaching the EU and claiming asylum (and the associated protections) as a refugee in the EU. Further, trafficking-specific assistance available in Serbia, which is focused on recovery and temporary or long-term integration in Serbia, may not align with what trafficked migrants/refugees want and need in their lives in the longer-term nor with their families' goals and needs. Instead, services for refugees (temporary stay, humanitarian assistance) may more easily dovetail with what they are looking for in the short-term and further facilitate their onward migration/flight to the EU. There are also many hardships and reported abuses suffered by migrants/refugees that are not covered by the trafficking definition and, by implication, protections available to trafficking victims. This highlights the importance of considering when and how the human trafficking lens is of relevance in meeting the urgent as well as long-term needs of trafficked migrants/refugees in transit in Serbia and how it can be dovetailed with other protection frameworks. In some cases, the asylum and humanitarian architecture may be better equipped to meet the needs of trafficked migrants/refugees, at least in some settings and at some intervals of their lives.

At the same time, it merits consideration when and how a trafficking lens offers an important means of viewing, understanding and responding to the experiences and needs of trafficked migrants/refugees, individuals who have generally suffered and continue to suffer complex physical and psychological traumas. Moreover, in countries like Serbia there is long standing experience and expertise in working with trafficking victims, both foreign and national victims, and services and assistance available to trafficking victims can also be adapted, tailored and offered to trafficked migrants/refugees, potentially filling in gaps in the protections afforded to migrants/refugees.

More generally, in terms of ensuring the rights and protections of trafficked migrants/refugees it is important not to focus too heavily on discrete "identities" and legal categories of "statuses", whether "migrant", "refugee" and/or "trafficking victim". Rather, there is value in engaging with and relating to all of these identities and "statuses", including the needs that result and the protections they afford. This will not only allow for a more holistic assistance response for individuals but also a more inclusive social protection response generally in this country.

The policy framework for human trafficking has been criticised as a simplified blanket approach to migration, legitimising measures to stop migration by governments and others that misconstrue or misapply the law and policy of human trafficking. In discussions of and actions around the handling of the migrant/refugee situation particularly in the Mediterranean in 2015 and 2016, there was widespread conflation of human trafficking and human smuggling, with the latter frequently referred to as human trafficking (Deutsche Welle, 2015; McQuade, 2015; Schmidt & Chan, 2016). That is, the human trafficking term is often used, unfoundedly and imprecisely, in referring to *all* movement of people for instance across the Mediterranean, rather than the, in many cases, more appropriate human smuggling or the more neutral facilitation. When human smuggling is labelled as human trafficking, it shifts the understanding of who is the victim. The victim in human smuggling is the State and actions against human smuggling

can be understood as the State protecting its own borders against those who seek to enter illegally and those who facilitate that entry. By contrast, the victim in human trafficking is the individual who is subjected to forms of exploitation recognized by and defined in international and national law. And in actions against human trafficking, the State can be understood as primarily protecting vulnerable individual victims. Thus, conflating human smuggling and human trafficking serves to legitimise interventions that frame human trafficking as a question of violations and abuses by criminal networks and to which the solution for any State would be to stop these networks by any means possible. One such example was the much criticised plans by EU Ministers of destroying smugglers' boats in Libya by military force to "... destroy traffickers' assets ashore" (Traynor, 2015). Amongst the multitude of criticisms against these plans were arguments that this would block escape routes for refugees and effectively render migrants/refugees even more vulnerable (Neslen, 2015).

Even though the European anti-trafficking legislative and policy framework focuses both on prosecution of traffickers and on protection of victims, in practice, actions against traffickers are generally prioritised and less efforts are made toward the identification and protection of trafficking victims. And, in practice, this is certainly what has happened in the current situation in the Balkans. The framework for identifying and offering assistance to trafficking victims has been fundamentally lacking.

In our view, the discussion of human trafficking in a mass migration/refugee setting needs to be reoriented and expanded toward greater inclusivity, to also include victim protection and to understand and address trafficking risk and vulnerability. There is a particular legal and regulatory framework in place for victim protection in the human trafficking field and trafficked persons have rights that can be leveraged to greater effect. These rights are regulated through national law as well as more broadly under the Council of Europe *Trafficking Convention*¹⁹ and include the right to be identified as a victim, rights to protection, and rights to a temporary residence permit, or a so-called reflection period.

Furthermore, human trafficking cannot simply be reduced to a matter of organised crime without, at the same time, acknowledging the deep structural inequalities that contribute to creating vulnerability to exploitation in the first place. It is also important to acknowledge that different policy responses in some cases increase vulnerability and dependence on smugglers to cross borders and contribute to vulnerability to trafficking.

¹⁹ The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 3 May 2005, following a series of other initiatives by the Council of Europe in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. The Convention entered into force on 1 February 2008, following its 10th ratification. While building on existing international instruments, the Convention goes beyond the minimum standards agreed upon in them and strengthens the protection afforded to victims. The Convention has a comprehensive scope of application, encompassing all forms of trafficking (whether national or transnational, linked or not linked to organised crime) and taking in all persons who are victims of trafficking (women, men or children). The forms of exploitation covered by the Convention are, at a minimum, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs. The main added value of the Convention is its human rights perspective and focus on victim protection. Its Preamble defines trafficking in human beings as a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/about-the-convention>

Human trafficking is occurring in the context of mass migration and refugee flight as seen along the Balkan route over the past two years. And the nature of this trafficking amongst migrants/refugees, already different from more commonly recognised forms of trafficking in the Balkans, must be better understood, including as it changes and adapts over time and in response to the legal and policy responses in Serbia and the wider EU context. The following recommendations offer some overarching guidance on how government and civil society stakeholders may begin to work more effectively on this issue to and to better identify and assist trafficked migrants/refugees.

Improve the empirical evidence-base on human trafficking in crisis. Build the evidence-base on the nature and scope of human trafficking in the context of mass movement of migrants/refugees, including how this differs at different stages along the journey/flight and upon arrival to ensure that interventions are appropriate and responsive to this specific form of human trafficking and the specific needs of trafficked migrants/refugees. More empirical evidence on the trafficking of migrants/refugees through the Balkans is essential to ensure that the issue of human trafficking is integrated into the humanitarian response.

Integrate human trafficking into the humanitarian response. There is a need for greater recognition and understanding of human trafficking amongst migrants/refugees such that policies and interventions adequately take into account and appropriately respond to the needs of these individuals. A critical feature is that many of these individuals may, at different stages of their lives and journey/flight, occupy multiple categories of vulnerability as “migrants”, “refugees” and “trafficking victims”. Anti-trafficking efforts should be mainstreamed into the humanitarian response to ensure inclusive protections and assistance.

Develop tools and guidance specific to identifying human trafficking amongst migrants/refugees. Special tools and guidance will be needed to identify trafficked migrants/refugees in the context of mass movements. Signals and indicators of human trafficking will need adaptation to how trafficking manifests and can be recognised in a situation of mass movement of migrants/refugees. Different forms of human trafficking are also likely to manifest themselves and frontline responders should be equipped to recognise and respond to these emergent and evolving forms of human trafficking. Lessons can be drawn from the experience of the Serbian government and civil society in the recent crisis to inform what can be done more effectively in going forward in the country as well as more broadly in other countries and regions that are facing or may face similar situations.

Undertake anti-trafficking capacity building for humanitarian responders (government and civil society) to identify and assist victims of trafficking. Humanitarian actors (from national governments, civil society as well as the international community) lack knowledge of and skills to identify and assist trafficked migrants/refugees. Human trafficking is little understood or recognised by these frontline responders to crises. They also often lack anti-trafficking tools that are specific and tailored to the context of mass movement of migrants/refugees. Building their capacity to identify and assist trafficking victims has the potential to translate into immediate actions by humanitarian workers.

Ensure sufficient capacity and procedures for formal identification of trafficking victims. With a dramatic increase in the numbers of individuals with a heightened risk to being or having been trafficked, the existing infrastructure for formal identification (and thus individuals' access to rights and services) may be insufficient. When this population is also fast moving, the response and processing time should be continuously assessed and improved as necessary.

Inform migrants/refugees about human trafficking and assistance options available to them. Ensure that migrants/refugees are informed about what constitutes human trafficking, situations in which they may have been exposed to this form of exploitation and options for assistance available to trafficked migrants/refugees including how to access that assistance. This information can also be important to prevent being trafficked at later stages of migrants/refugees' journey/flight.

Ensure that assistance is available to trafficked persons identified amongst migrants/refugees. Trafficking victims (men, women, boys and girls) may need a raft of services to assist them in their recovery. Assistance that addresses these recovery needs should be available to all trafficking victims. At a minimum, this assistance should include safe housing, material assistance, psychological support, access to medical services, translation and interpretation services where appropriate, counselling on legal rights and their eligibility for services, in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, article 12.²⁰

Coordinate protection efforts across different fields of work and “statuses”. It is important that trafficking victims do not suffer as a result of a “status-based approach”, whereby they must fit their needs and access their rights according to only one status – as a migrant, refugee or victim of trafficking. Protection efforts should be integrated in such a way that trafficked migrants/refugees can leverage the assistance and protection to meet their individual needs. Organisations and institutions must increasingly coordinate their efforts such that they complement one another in offering protection to this specific group with their often multi-layered and overlapping “identities” and “statuses”.

Identify ways to prevent TIP amongst migrants/refugees. Both the journey/flight and the refugee setting (whether in formal or informal camps or as urban refugees) may expose trafficking victims to human trafficking and measures must be put in place to prevent this additional exploitation.

²⁰<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008371d>

Bibliography

- Amnesty International. (2016). *"I want a safe place". Refugee women from Syria uprooted and unprotected in Lebanon*. Retrieved from London:<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/3210/2016/en/>
- Anderson, B., & Blinder, S. (2017). *Who Counts as a Migrants? Definitions and their Consequences*. Retrieved from Oxford: UK: <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/who-counts-as-a-migrant-definitions-and-their-consequences/>
- Apperley, H. (2015). Hidden victims: a call to action on sexual violence against men in conflict. *Medicine, conflict and survival*, 31(2), 92-99.
- B92. (2016, 21 November). Total of 6,500 migrants currently in Serbia - commissioner. B92. Retrieved from http://www.b92.net/eng/news/society.php?yyyy=2016&mm=11&dd=21&nav_id=99738
- Bechev, D. (2016). Europe's Refugee Crisis and the Balkans. Retrieved from <http://www.sharqforum.org/2016/06/08/europes-refugee-crisis-and-the-balkans/>
- Botic, C. (2016, 30 November). Vanishing Act: The Disappearance of Refugee Aid in Belgrade. *National Geographic*. Retrieved from <http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2016/11/30/vanishing-act-the-disappearance-of-refugee-aid-in-belgrade/>
- Brunovskis, A., & Surtees, R. (2007). *Leaving the past behind: When victims of trafficking decline assistance*. Oslo: Fafo.
- Brunovskis, A., & Surtees, R. (2012). *Out of sight? Approaches and challenges in the identification of trafficked persons* (Vol. 2012:28). Oslo: Fafo.
- Carling, J. (2015). Refugees are Also Migrants. And All Migrants Matter. Retrieved from <http://bordercriminologies.law.ox.ac.uk/refugees-are-also-migrants/>
- Dearden, L., & McIntyre, N. (2017, 11 January). Refugees freezing to death across Europe after 'continued failure' on crisis leaves thousands at risk. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/europe-refugees-freeze-to-death-hypothermia-bulgaria-athens-cold-weather-serbia-sleeping-rough-a7520106.html>
- Deutsche Welle. (2015, 22 May). Libya and human trafficking across the Mediterranean. *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.com/en/libya-and-human-trafficking-across-the-mediterranean/av-18467450>
- Deutsche Welle. (2016, 2 December). Stranded in Serbia - refugees in limbo. *Deutsche Welle*.
- Frontex. (2016). Western Balkans. Retrieved from <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/western-balkan-route/>
- ICMPD. (2015). *Targeting Vulnerabilities. The Impact of the Syrian War and Refugee Situation on Trafficking in Persons*. Retrieved from Vienna, Austria: https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Anti-Trafficking/Targeting_Vulnerabilities_EN__SOFT_.pdf
- IOM. (2016). *ANALYSIS: FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS. THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND OTHER EXPLOITATIVE PRACTICES PREVALENCE INDICATION SURVEY*. Retrieved from Geneva: Switzerland: migration.iom.int/docs/Analysis%20-%20Flow%20Monitoring%20and%20Human%20Trafficking%20Surveys%20in%20the%20Mediterranean%20and%20Beyond%20-%202011%20August%202016.pdf
- IRC. (2016). *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugee Men in Lebanon*. Retrieved from Lebanon:

- ITV. (2015, 30 July). PM blames Calais crisis on 'swarm' of migrants *ITV*. Retrieved from <http://www.itv.com/news/update/2015-07-30/pm-a-swarm-of-migrants-want-to-come-to-britain/>
- Le Blond, J. (2017, 25 January). Desperate refugees and migrants in Serbia face freezing temperatures. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/1/5888861b4/desperate-refugees-migrants-serbia-face-sub-zero-temperatures.html>
- Malone, B. (2015). Why Al Jazeera will not say Mediterranean 'migrants'. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/editors-blog/2015/08/al-jazeera-mediterranean-migrants-150820082226309.html>
- Marsi, F. (2016). Male Refugees in Lebanon Face Abuse and Neglect Alone. Retrieved from <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2016/11/16/male-refugees-in-lebanon-face-abuse-and-neglect-alone>
- McMahon, M. (nd.). Access to Justice for Male Victims of Sexual Violence; Focus on Refugees in Uganda. Retrieved from <http://www.legalaidboard.ie/en/About-The-Board/Press-Publications/Newsletters/Access-to-Justice-for-Male-Victims-of-Sexual-Violence;-Focus-on-Refugees-in-Uganda.html>
- McQuade, A. (2015, 22 April). Migrant crisis: smuggling or trafficking? Politicians don't seem to know *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/apr/22/migrant-crisis-smuggling-trafficking-politicians-dont-seem-to-know>
- Neslen, A. (2015, 18 May). EU to launch Mediterranean naval mission to tackle migrant crisis. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/18/eu-mediterranean-naval-mission-migrant-crisis-people-smugglers-libya>
- Ngari, A. (2016). Male victims of sexual violence: war's silent sufferers. Retrieved from <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/male-victims-of-sexual-violence-wars-silent-sufferers>
- Pasha-Robinson, L. (2017, 25 January). Refugee children suffering dog bites and 'violent' beatings by border police in Balkans. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/children-attacked-dogs-violently-beaten-border-police-brutality-balkans-serbia-belgrade-bulgaria-a7546366.html>
- Physicians for Human Rights. (2010). Hostages, Torture, and Rape in the Sinai Desert: A PHR-Israel update about recently arriving asylum seekers. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/eritrea/hostages-torture-and-rape-sinai-desert-phr-israel-update-about-recently-arriving>
- Reisen, M. v., & Rijken, C. (2015). Sinai Trafficking: Origin and Definition of a New Form of Human Trafficking. *Social Inclusion*, 3(1), 113-124. doi:10.17645/si.v3i1.180
- Schmidt, M. E., & Chan, S. (2016, 11 February). NATO Will Send Ships to Aegean Sea to Deter Human Trafficking. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/12/world/europe/nato-aegean-migrant-crisis.html?_r=2
- Sivakumaran, S. (2007). Sexual violence against men in armed conflict. *European journal of international law*, 18(2), 253-276.
- Skilbrei, M.-L., & Tveit, M. (2008). Defining Trafficking through Empirical Work: Blurred Boundaries and their Consequences. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 12(1), 9-30. doi:10.1177/097185240701200103
- Sputnik International. (2016). Over 900,000 Passed Through Serbia Since Refugee Crisis Began - Foreign Minister. *Sputnik International*. Retrieved from <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201612081048317198-serbia-refugees-crisis/>
- Surtees, R. (2008). Trafficked men as unwilling victims. *St Antony's International Review*, 4(1), 16-36.
- The Guardian. (2015, 17 October). Hungary closes border to refugees as Turkey questions EU deal to stem crisis. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/17/hungary-closes-border-to-refugees-as-turkey-questions-eu-deal-to-stem-crisis>

- The Sun. (2015, 30 July). They think it's all Dover. *The Sun*. Retrieved from <https://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/126977/they-think-its-all-dover/>
- Tillinac, A., Craggs, S., Lungarotti, L., Kimura, Y., & Macchiavello, M. (2015). *Addressing Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Times of Crisis- Evidence and Recommendations for Further Action to Protect Vulnerable and Mobile Populations*. Retrieved from Geneva: <https://publications.iom.int/books/addressing-human-trafficking-and-exploitation-times-crisis-evidence-and-recommendations-0>
- Traynor, I. (2015, 13 May). Migrant crisis: EU plan to strike Libya networks could include ground forces. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/13/migrant-crisis-eu-plan-to-strike-libya-networks-could-include-ground-forces>
- UNHCR. (2016). UNHCR Serbia Update, 21-23 November 2016. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/unhcr-serbia-update-21-23-november-2016>
- UNHCR. (2017). UNHCR calls for help for refugees facing European winter freeze. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/1/5878e1c34/unhcr-calls-help-refugees-facing-european-winter-freeze.html>; http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/serbia_en.pdf
- United Nations. (1998). *Recommendations on statistics of international migration*. Retrieved from New York: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/seriesm_58rev1e.pdf
- Vonberg, J. (2015). Al Jazeera will not say Mediterranean 'migrants', but we should. Retrieved from <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/migration-pulse/2015/al-jazeera-will-not-say-mediterranean-migrants-we-should>
- Ward, J. (2002). If not now when? Addressing gender-based violence in refugee internally displaced and post-conflict settings. A global overview.

Vulnerability and exploitation along the Balkan route: Identifying victims of human trafficking in Serbia



Fafo

P.O.Box 2947 Tøyen

N-0608 Oslo

www.fafo.no

Fafo-report 2017:12

ISBN 978-82-324-0370-7

ISSN 2387-6859

Order no. 20620