Short Session Report

**Session Title:** “Greasing the wheels: understanding how Human Traffickers exploit corruption networks; and what to do about it”

**Date & Time:** December 2, 2016, 9-11:00

**Report prepared by:** Natalia Suzuki, Repórter Brasil; and Ruth Freedom Pojman, Senior Advisor, OSCE

**Experts:**

Name, Position, Organisation
Dr. Louise Shelley, TraCCC, GMU
Paul Radu, OCCRP
Natalia Suzuki, Repórter Brasil
Daniela Pastrana, Periodistas de A Pie

**Moderated by:** Ruth Freedom Pojman, Senior Advisor, OSCE

**Session coordinated by:** Ruth Freedom Pojman, Senior Advisor, OSCE

**Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What’s the focus of the session?**

Human trafficking undermines global justice as a human rights violation and transnational crime, facilitated by corruption.

How corruption is both a causal factor and a consequence of human trafficking, and how to translate multi-disciplinary knowledge into actionable recommendations for change in policy and practice, to prevent injustice and to improve access to justice.

Dr Louise Shelley spoke about human trafficking as a low risk high profit crime,
and on the convergence of human trafficking with other crimes, as well as how it benefits from the corruption to facilitate other forms of transnational crime. In 2014 the ILO said that forced labour in the private economy generates US$ 150 billion in illegal profits per year. However, few victims are identified or perpetrators convicted, making this a low risk high profit crime.

Paul Radu spoke on the use of technology in tracking down corruption and crime networks involved in THB (especially for forced criminality involving identity theft) and following the trafficker’s money via advanced investigative techniques.

Natalia Suzuki spoke about how to enable communities to prevent trafficking of workers into slavery in Brazil by creating the knowledge, collective decisions and sustained action of vulnerable communities so they can oppose this violation of human rights. She highlighted the cynical corruption of companies who won bids before the Rio Olympics and World Cup, by promising to create jobs and improve local development, but they created slave like conditions for work, profiting through exploitation of Brazilian workers in civil construction, etc.

Daniele Pastrana presented her experiences of interviewing victims of trafficking and the difficulties in documenting these cases when all you have are testimonies implicating powerful politicians. Thus corruption has a direct impact on the human rights of trafficked persons, and leads to injustice, as an innate part of the lucrative business of trafficking, along with violence.

What initiatives have been showcased? Briefly describe the Game Changing strategies/ideas (if applicable)

1. Reporter Brasil NGO is in charge of researching supply chains, producing journalistic content in order to expose human rights violations. The organization is responsible by prevention, through its educational program (Slavery NoWay), at schools in vulnerable communities and by political advocacy to influence decision makers to create public policies against forced labor in Brazil.
2. In Brazil there is a formal compromise, called National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor, established by private institutions. By signing this pact, they compromise not to have slave labor in their supply chain, it means that they will not produce using this kind of work or buy from other companies that use it. The Pact was a joined initiative that involved Reporter Brasil as one of the protagonists.
3. A research project has been developed by OCCRP (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project). The initiative aims to identify patterns and investigate corruption and human trafficking globally as well as to describe the connections with others kinds of crimes. The organization also implements the RISE Project, a new platform for investigative reporters and hackers. The organization had a previous research dedicated to interviewing convicted traffickers in order to understand their profile and possible patterns.
4. Mrs Shelley dedicates efforts to describe in her next book how illicit trades converge undermine sustainability. Her books include “Dirty Entanglements” and
“Human Trafficking”.
5. Journalist content is used in order to give visibility to victims’ human trafficking stories approaching the individual perspectives of these cases, but this is also relevant to expose the human trafficking mechanisms. Daniela Pastrana’s work is an example of this.
6. Ruth Pojman discussed government efforts to prevent human trafficking which also address corruption such as transparency in supply chains under the UK’s Modern Slavery Act, as well as the Gangmaster’s Licensing Agency; the US Federal Acquisition Regulation which leverages public procurement to prevent human trafficking in supply chains, the Brazil Dirty List, as well as work on addressing Mega-sporting events and human rights (by the IHRB, ILO, IOE, ITUC, etc.)

**Briefly describe the highlights including the thematically interesting questions and ideas that were generated from the discussion or from the floor, and session quotes.**

It is necessary to coordinate investigations of different crimes, which are connected to one another (examples were given on: corruption, drug trafficking, human trafficking/forced labour/modern slavery, wildlife trafficking, money laundering, identity theft, and other organized crimes.

Financial institutions can play an important role in combating human trafficking, and financial investigations should be linked to human trafficking investigations.

There must be viable mechanisms in place to punish companies, organizations and individuals, which/who take advantage of opportunities for corruption and profit from exploitation of other human beings through human rights violations, such as human trafficking.

Access to Justice, Remedy and compensation important for trafficked persons.

Listening to trafficking survivors and workers is vital, and their views should be considered as a key stakeholder and integrated into policy making.

Technology can be used to map and identify patterns; to investigate networks, transactions, and disrupt money flows. Technology is an effective instrument to investigate corruption and human trafficking and to understand its connections with other crimes.

Government and private institutions must have more transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Finding the origin of human trafficking crime is important but can be a challenge due to the characteristic of this crime, which is why it is important to make efforts to create mechanisms to punish those who profit and benefit from the exploitation.

Investigating and mapping supply chains is an efficient way to understand how human
trafficking happens and which actors are involved in it.

Giving visibility to human rights violations is necessary in order to raise awareness about their existence.

“Individuals are trafficked to commit other illicit acts, because no cares if they go to jail”.  
“There is a domino effect where one crime sets off another, leading to other crimes.” (Louise Shelley)

“We try to understand what is going through the trafficker’s minds. Most of those in jail are small fish, not the big fish who we need to go after. Traffickers treat different crimes as commodities, as merchandise. We realized that some of those we interviewed in jail even think they are doing good service for their countries”

“there is no global law enforcement that can address this problem adequately, partnerships are needed to work effectively and innovatively” (Paul Radu)

“The Federal Government has pointed that the amount of inspections (in civil construction sector) was an excess and they were responsible to block the constructions and made Brazil grows slowly. This speech was applaud by part of the companies”. (Citation mentioned by Natalia Suzuki).

“If the social argument (creation of millions of jobs) justifies the great amounts of investments for civil construction companies it is a paradox to think that workers are not able to access their labor rights fully” (Natalia Suzuki)

“If there are strong laws to combat human trafficking, why is there still THB, and a real question is whether some governments want to avoid corruption and human trafficking or not. If it were a priority, there would be sanctions for politicians, and THB would be recognized as a serious crime and serious human rights violation”

Children are being used as soldiers in drug networks. First they are kidnapped and then used as assassins in the drug war. (Daniela Pastrana)

“Human trafficking is in fact stolen labour and the costs of corrupt practices are passed on to the victims by the human traffickers, while the proceeds are re-invested in criminal or legitimate activities. To compound the problem, traffickers can obstruct criminal justice to escape prosecution, and can undermine the safety of victims. This is not a crime that can be solved by criminal justice alone, but by access to justice and addressing transparency in supply chains” (Ruth Freedom Pojman)

What are the key recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)

It is important for policy makers and practitioners to connect human trafficking and corruption in their anti-corruption and anti-trafficking strategies, policies and concrete
Mechanisms should be developed and improved in order to expose and provide evidence on them. More resources should be devoted to anti-human trafficking and anti-corruption to address these serious and profitable crimes (currently OECD countries spend under a billion USD on anti-trafficking, while the US alone spends 36 billion USD/annually on the war on drugs).

Cooperation and partnerships are vital. Much more can be done through unifying the efforts of different actors, including academia, civil society organizations, international organizations, media, financial sector and governments. In this sense, the exchange of experiences is necessary because each of these actors may be contribute with its expertise and knowledge.

Human trafficking and corruption are both transnational crimes and require global cooperation, which reinforces the necessity of a multilateral approach. However, it is relevant to consider that human trafficking is a widespread practice inside countries (within borders, whether one country or the EU); for these internal trafficking cases, which are estimated to be one third of all human trafficking cases, special measures are required considering internal and specific social and economic contexts.

In order to make the fight against human trafficking and corruption effective, the role of governments and the private sector cannot be underestimated because they have the responsibility to curb these practices. If corruption schemes between these two actors exist they are no longer able to guarantee the well-being of citizens, but in fact undermine it through exploitation, violations of human rights, public waste and tax evasion, instead of justice, public works and protection.

Implementation of laws and policies, including their Monitoring and enforcement, is vital. Laws must have teeth.

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**Key Insights that could be included in the IACC Declaration**

- Human trafficking is a low risk high profit crime, and leveraging anti-corruption and anti-money laundering is critical to turn it into a low profit high-risk crime.
- It is important for policy makers and practitioners to connect human trafficking and corruption to one another at the government level in anti-corruption and anti-trafficking strategies, policies and concrete implementation of these.
- Human trafficking can be connected to the very highest levels both in the political class and in large companies. It is also rooted in daily relationships.
- High-level corruption fosters human trafficking in concrete cases.
- Impunity is a great challenge for combating human trafficking.
- Impunity is generated by two elements: lack of capacity and resources to apply legislation properly, and the lack of political will, which can also be linked to corrupt practices.

- Human trafficking is connected to others serious crimes, such as corruption, laundering money, drug trafficking and many kinds of exploitation, such as forced labor and human trafficking. Up till now, too many efforts are disjointed. Cross sectoral work is key, integrating the issues in policy and practice across both criminal justice and human rights work, rather than stove piping issues.
- National development and economic growth are undermined by corruption and human rights abuse/violations, and are stimulated when there is integrity, justice and an equal playing field for businesses and government officials doing the right thing.
- Human trafficking and corruption are correlated—where high corruption usually also high incidence of human trafficking—there is a fertile environment where social inequality is strong, and in “Cleptocracies” where money flows out of the country.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted

Natalia Suzuki, December 2, 2016

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