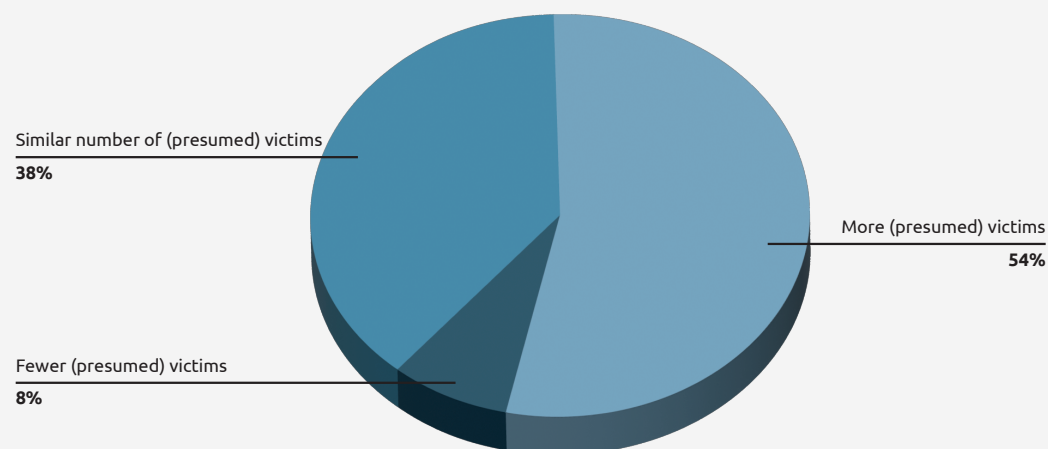


2023 Trafficking in Human Beings Assistance Statistics and Trends

NUMBER OF PRESUMED VICTIMS ASSISTED IN 2023 BY MEMBERS OF LA STRADA INTERNATIONAL

In 2023, our members assisted **5103** (presumed) victims of trafficking. The majority of our members (54%) reported an increase in assisted cases.



GENDER

The number of assisted female victims is still higher than the number of assisted men. While women are still often trafficked for sexual exploitation, they are also subjected to labour exploitation or forced criminality, though in those sectors most victims are males. Generally, increases are seen in identified male victims for labour exploitation and forced criminality.

NATIONALITY OF VICTIMS

Generally, the nationality of assisted victims differs widely among LSI member organisations; those that assist many foreign victims, see that victims originate from all parts of the world. In 2023 members noted:

- An **increase** in the number of Vietnamese, (female) South American¹ and African victims and victims from Guinea Conakri
- A **decrease** in cases involving persons from Afghanistan
- An **increase** in the number of non-EU workers (through posting)
- An **increase** in the number of Ukrainian men being exploited
- The number of Nigerian women benefiting from the assistance of NGOs is still high and concerns persons often requiring long-term assistance.

Interestingly over the last years, some Western European countries such as Germany and The Netherlands have assisted an increased number of presumed victims that are national citizens. However, many victims still have foreign origins, and come mostly from South-East Asia, Latin America or Africa.

¹ For instance, one of our members reported that Colombia continues to be the main nationality of victims trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation, with an increase in victims from Venezuela and Paraguay (for sexual exploitation).

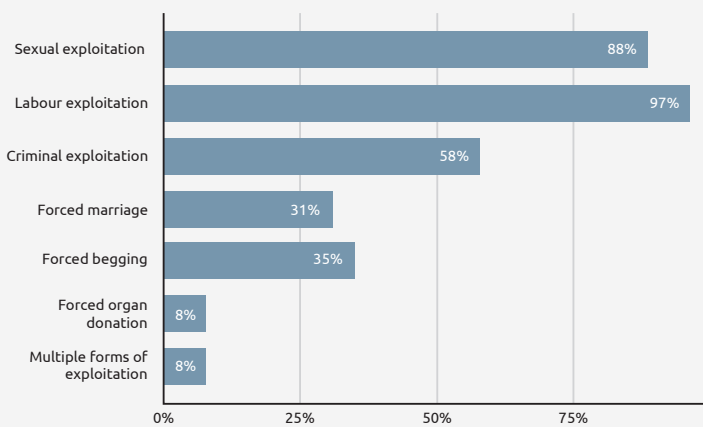
NUMBER OF UKRAINIAN VICTIMS ASSISTED

At least **187 (potential) victims from Ukraine** were assisted in 2023 by our members.² However, there was no overall increase in the number of victims assisted from this country in comparison with 2022.

The data from LSI as well as other international reports still shows that the number of assisted (presumed) trafficking victims of Ukrainian origin is rather low, given the number of displaced persons from this country. However, despite the continuation of the war, there is less attention, and several European countries have sobered their assistance for refugees from Ukraine, which might increase their vulnerability in the coming period.

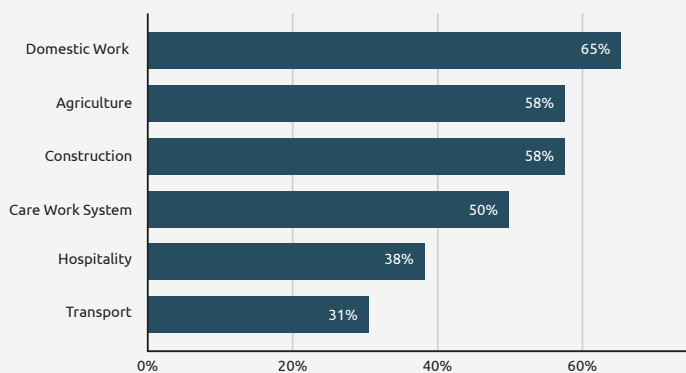
IDENTIFIED FORMS AND SECTORS OF EXPLOITATION

The percentage of member organisations that encountered different types of exploitation



Nearly all our members assisted victims of labour exploitation (97%) and a raise in cases of labour exploitation is noted. However, sexual exploitation remained the most prevalent form of exploitation reported by several of our members. In total at least 20 victims of (trafficking for) forced marriage were supported, which is higher than LSI members reported in the past. There were no cases of illegal adoption.

Percentage of organisations assisting victims exploited in various labour sectors



Some members also reported having assisted victims within the sector of forest work, food delivery, clandestine workshops, car washing, cyber industry, cleaning services, nail and massage salons and factory work but exact numbers were not known.

Members reported increases in:

- Sexual exploitation cases, both online and in apartments and private homes
- Forced criminality cases, in particular forced drug trafficking
- Cases involving forced marriage
- An increase in underaged victims

² For one of our members, it was hard to estimate the number when filling out our questionnaire, so those victims are not counted in the 187 assisted Ukrainians.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to **use of technologies**, the estimations from LSI members about the percentage of assisted persons being recruited or exploited with ICT, differ widely: from 1,2% until 80%. While some members report that only 2% of the assisted victims were exploited online, others report percentages as high as 60% or 80% of the victims. However, since there is no clear definition of online exploitation and this information is not systematically reported, member organisations confirm not to know the exact numbers. As such La Strada International cannot confirm national or global statistics on the issue. This suggests that more data collection is needed to get a more accurate understanding of the frequency and use of technology.

Other trends noted by LSI members:

- Victims, after paying the debts to their traffickers, are recruited by other criminal networks to be re-trafficked.
- Agencies recruiting people in particular from Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia
- An increased misuse of (legal) drugs to control victims
- The 'Loveboy' technique still being used. According to the data of our members, targeting mostly young women (between teenage years until 30 years old) but there have been cases of women older than 30 as well.

In total 26 of the 32 LSI member organisations contributed to the collection of this data. LSI members use slightly different definitions and collect and report data differently, due to which not always all data reported could be taken into account. LSI carefully checked all data reported with the members, to ensure that all information reported is correct.