

# Our role as migration officers faced with the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents

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International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
International Labour Office,  
International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour  
(ILO/IPEC)



IOM International Organization for Migration



ILO  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE  
FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

IPEC

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*“Without detriment to the international commitments on the free movement of persons, the Party States will reinforce, as far as possible, the necessary border controls for preventing and detecting human trafficking”.*

**Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Article 11. Paragraph 1.**

In this leaflet we will inform you as to certain indicators of possible trafficking situations and what to do if they are detected.

### Situations we must pay attention to

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The examples described below are indicators of a possible smuggling, trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation situation. If you observe or detect one or several of the following situations, you should investigate the case further:

- The boy, girl or adolescent is travelling with a person with whom they do not have any family ties, or are not related to.
- False documents are presented for the underage person or the person accompanying him/her.
- The boy, girl or adolescent appears frightened, anxious or disorientated in the company of a person who is indifferent to what is happening.
- The person who is trying to cross the border appears on INTERPOL records or its database as a person wanted for procurement, smuggling, trafficking or sexual abuse.
- On checking a means of transport, you realize the documents presented at the Migration office do not correspond to the underage persons who are being transported.
- An underage person is hidden in a lorry, bus, car or any other means of transport so that they may cross the border illegally.
- Material containing child or adolescent pornography (magazines, videos, etc.) is confiscated when baggage is checked.



## Detecting a trafficking situation

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If one or several of the situations mentioned above is detected and an underage person is involved, it is recommended that the boy, girl or adolescent and the person accompanying them be briefly interviewed.

If a case of possession of child or adolescent pornography is detected or if a person is detected as wanted by INTERPOL, they may be immediately reported in this respect to the State Prosecutor authorities in order that they may begin an investigation.

### **Interviewing the underage person:**

- They should be interviewed alone without the person who is accompanying them.
- Find an office or room with some privacy, in which they feel comfortable to talk.
- Present yourself as a migration officer, in charge of protecting boys, girls and adolescents crossing the border.
- Make it clear to them that they should not be afraid, that you are concerned for their safety and this is why you are going to ask them a few questions.
- Ask where they live, who they live with, where their father and mother is, who the person accompanying them is, where they met them, where they are

travelling to and why. Mention their name and find out if they respond naturally to the name on their identification document. Think of other personal questions you may ask (if they have pets or if they study, for example) that are related to what they have answered, and which could be useful information that you could later confirm in the interview with the person who is transporting them.

- Avoid scolding them, complaining or accusing the boy, girl or adolescent and remember that, if you detect a situation of trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation, he or she is the victim and is not guilty of what is happening.
- Thank them for their collaboration in providing information.

### **Interview with the person accompanying the boy, girl or adolescent:**

- Find out who they are, what they do for a living, where they live, where they met the boy, girl or adolescent, what information they can provide about them, how they are related, why they are accompanying them, where their father or mother is, where



they are travelling to and why, or ask any other question that you consider necessary, in addition to trying to confirm the personal information the underage person gave you.

- If you are in any doubt as to whether the person you are talking to is telling the truth, ask for some documents or additional information (telephone

numbers, contacts, etc.) that would be proof of what they said.

Once you have spoken to both, you can compare the information they provided and decide whether it coincides or is contradictory in some aspects, as well as analyzing their attitude when they were being interviewed.

## **What to do if a trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation situation is detected?**

- Inform your immediate boss in order that he/she may decide what action should be taken
- Immediately contact your country's institution in charge of child and adolescent protection.
- Ensure the safety and protection of the boy, girl and adolescent until the children and adolescent's institution takes charge of the protection and care of the underage person.
- Listen to the victim's opinion and keep them informed of the procedures that will be followed for their protection.
- Take into account that an underage person should never be deported unless you are sure they will be met by a trustworthy relative or that a protection institution will follow up on their case.
- Report the situation to the state prosecutor's office or to the corresponding court.
- If the adult appears on a register or database as wanted for procurement, trafficking, smuggling or sexual abuse in another country, contact INTERPOL immediately.

*In many cases you may be offered money or some other reward for not reporting and allowing irregular situations to take place. A piece of advice: do not accept them because this makes you an accomplice to the crime, and you too will be in trouble with the legal system.*



## Some other measures the migration control offices may take

- Set up registers or databases for detecting and preventing intermediaries, procurers, exploiters, smugglers and traffickers from entering or leaving the country. At the same time, share these registers with other countries.
- Set up records of missing boys, girls and adolescents to enable them to be found if they cross the border and share these records with other countries.
- Put up posters or information (warnings) aimed at potential exploiters and the general public.
- Include in the migration forms that people have to fill in, messages warning potential sex tourists that they will be prosecuted if they use underage persons in commercial sexual activities.
- Establish and agree, as an office, on some procedures to be followed when smuggling, trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation cases are detected.
- If it is discovered that a public official is an accomplice to some of these crimes, they should be reported in order that they are interrogated and that more severe penalties may be imposed.
- Establish protocols that are compatible in the migration offices in the countries for dealing with the victims of trafficking.

All of us can do something to eliminate trafficking in persons and the commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents.

*Let us put a stop to the exploitation  
of their dreams and hopes...*





# RELOCATING BOYS, GIRLS OR ADOLESCENTS FOR EXPLOITATION PURPOSES IS A CRIME



Project: "Contribution to the prevention and elimination of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic"



IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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